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Helping Behavior in Social Contexts:
A Case Study of the Tzu-Chi Association
in Taiwan

submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Wisconsin-Madison
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Jen-Chieh Ting

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* * * \

HELPING BEHAVIOR IN SOCIAL CONTEXTS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE TZU-CHI ASSOCIATION IN TAIWAN

by

Jen-Chieh Ting

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
(Sociology)

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ABSTRACT

This is a case study of the Buddhist Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan, a volunteer, charitable organization that has been expanding rapidly in recent years. From the case of Tzu-Chi, this study tries to discover how helping behavior may actually begin, develop, and be maintained in real social contexts.

Past research projects on helping behavior have often relied on experimental approaches to studying spontaneous helping episodes. The current case study was conducted using qualitative methods, including participant observation and intensive interviews, and was brought about by a specific concern--how helping behavior works in everyday life. This study can compensate for the theoretical and empirical gaps in past studies of helping behaviors regarding the general patterns of helping in social contexts.

Several topics are addressed: 1) Tzu-Chi's recruitment processes and influence of social networks on participants' prosocial commitments; 2) Tzu-Chi's collective action frame and its meaning for participants; 3) the prosocial commitment process among Tzu-Chi participants; 4) the motivation and motive talk regarding commitment among participants; and 5) the institutionalization of the norm of giving in Tzu-Chi's collective settings.

We found that Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitments are socially fostered and constructed in a rather lengthy

interactive process. However, even under these social influences, Tzu-Chi participants usually articulate that their reasons for helping are self-motivated. Tzu-Chi participants talk about their prosocial commitment based upon cultural repertoires and collective norms. By contextualizing themselves in these cultural repertoires and norms, Tzu-Chi participants not only make their prosocial commitment become more meaningful, but also persuade themselves and others that they should continue to engage in this prosocial behavior.

To conclude, we found that in Tzu-Chi, cultural norms and social systems not only determine the possibility and patterns of people's helping behavior in everyday life, but also affect people's perception toward their own helping behavior. On the other hand, we found that in a patterned way, individuals also create their own meanings by situating themselves in the cultural norms and social systems in which they are. As a result, each Tzu-Chi participant thus can continue his or her prosocial commitment in a specific social context.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE FOCUS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

> ***People live in social systems. We spend most of our time with members of primary social systems (with family members, friends, classmates, colleagues, neighbors) and in settings (living quarters, classrooms, kindergarten, playground, bars, clubs, public transportation, hospital, homes for the aged, churches, stores, and so forth) that are characterized by specific interaction rules and social roles. There are specific norms, requirements, possibilities, resources, and restraints to be found in all systems and settings that also offer rules of understanding that once more provide orientations for making decisions. Prosocial behavior has rarely been studied in long-term existing social systems or with special attention to the impact of specific settings. (Montada & Bierhoff, 1991:1)***

A PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTION

This is a case study of the Buddhist Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan. The focus of this study is on how helping behavior may actually begin, develop, and be maintained in a real social context. Certainly, people's helping activities are always enmeshed in cultural contexts and social systems. However,

because past experimental paradigms of helping behavior have dealt only with relationships between a few measurable variables in a "one shot" test, the social and cultural dimensions of helping behavior have rarely been explored. By collecting and analyzing multiple lines of data in Tzu-Chi's collective settings, this case study hopes to show that there is no helping behavior that can be understood outside of its cultural contexts and social systems, nor could helping behavior possibly occur outside of its cultural contexts and social systems.

In contrast to past paradigms of research on helping behavior, which have mainly relied on experimental approaches to the study of spontaneous episodes of altruism, this case study was conducted using various qualitative methods, including participant observation and intensive interviews, and was brought about by a very specific concern--how helping behavior works in everyday life. Thus, this study can compensate for the theoretical and empirical gaps in past studies of helping behaviors regarding the general patterns of helping behavior in social contexts.

Recently some researchers have begun to study helping behavior in nonspontaneous situations. However, these studies are actually quite limited by the traditional way of thinking about helping behavior (which focuses primarily on finding predictors of helping behavior in various settings). Such studies often miss the dynamic picture of helping behavior in nonspontaneous situations.

This chapter will first offer a brief introduction to some of the findings of current studies on nonspontaneous helping and the limitations of these findings. By acknowledging these problems, we are thus led to a more general review of problems in past studies of helping behavior, and the ways we may actually resolve these problems. While some studies on nonspontaneous helping have indeed called our attention to the patterns of helping behavior in natural settings, their research strategies haven't been geared to that object of interest directly, and their findings are also quite problematic. A more thorough understanding of the nature of nonspontaneous helping will reveal the best strategy for studying helping behavior in nonspontaneous situations. With this understanding as background, we then can attend to our agenda of research in the later part of this chapter.

A SURVEY OF CURRENT FINDINGS ON HELPING BEHAVIOR IN NONSPONTANEOUS SITUATIONS

Over the past several decades, the social psychological literature on helping behavior has predominantly used experimental methods to understand emergency intervention and other transitory helping relationships (e.g., Latane & Darley, 1970; Batson, 1987). Recently, researchers have begun to pay attention to helping behavior under naturally occurring situations (e.g., Amato, 1985, 1990; Benson et al., 1980; Clary & Miller, 1986; Clary and Snyder, 1991; McGuire, 1994; Omoto &

Snyder, 1995). In contrast to spontaneous helping--one's immediate response to a stranger in a single, isolated event--nonspontaneous helping involves a longer process of planning and is usually sustained over a longer period of time. The characteristics of nonspontaneous helping suggest a host of dimensions surrounding helpers--such as social roles, internalized needs and motives, past socialization histories, and social networks--which may play important roles in determining one's altruistic responses in nonspontaneous situations.

Among all kinds of nonspontaneous helping, one prototype, volunteering, has received the most notice in past literature (e.g., Cnann & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Clary & Snyder, 1991; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Pierucci & Noel, 1980). Most studies of volunteering have focused only on one's entry behaviors, on the act of becoming affiliated with a new volunteer organization. A few studies have given attention to the longevity or the frequency of participation after initial entry (see Rubin & Thorelli, 1984). Findings from cross-sectional survey data have shown that participants are more empathic, have more internalized moral standards, have generally positive attitudes and moods toward both self and others, have feelings of self-efficacy, have better emotional adjustment, and perceive a lower cost of helping others than non-participants (Allen & Rushton, 1983; Clary & Snyder, 1990; Sundeen, 1988).

Grounded in various kinds of survey data, Clary and Snyder

(1990) offer a functional model of motivations for volunteering. Four functions of volunteering have been identified: (1) value-expressive, (2) social-adjustive, (3) knowledge, and (4) ego-defensive. At the level of the individual helper, "the functional analysis encourages the notion that a volunteer's action may be guided by multiple motives" (p.141).

While Clary and Snyder's work does not explain whether, during the process of helping, actors will maintain the same combination of multiple motives, Piliavin, Evans, & Callero's (1984) study of blood donors provides some answers. Piliavin et al. proposed five categories of motivation that underlay voluntary altruistic blood donation: (1) external social motives, (2) community or social group responsibility, (3) personal moral obligation, (4) humanitarian or altruistic concerns, and (5) hedonistic motives, which involve either conscious pleasure in the activity or unconscious affective "addiction" to the act. Their data support their argument that there is a "developmental process through which donors move. They add to their initial external 'push' factors first, internal 'push' motives and then new internal 'pull' motives" (p.473). Thus, there is evidence for the increasing role of the category of humanitarian or altruistic motivation throughout the stages of the commitment process. New internal motives are added to the more external ones as socialization to the role of committed donor progresses, while the external motives lose their relative importance.

In this new paradigm (Amato, 1990; Smithson, Amato, & Pearce, 1983), social psychological studies on helping behavior begin to focus more intensively on nonspontaneous helping. However, due to the difficulty of observing large numbers of people across different situations over a long period of time, the development of this new paradigm has been limited by its methodological difficulties. Therefore, research on nonspontaneous helping usually has been restricted to paper-and-pencil self-reports of such behavior (e.g., Allen & Rushton, 1983; Amato, 1985; Benson et al, 1980; Omoto & Snyder, 1995), rather than to a more thorough study of helpers' inner life states and external intensive social interactions in settings.

Moreover, the study of the motivation of volunteers is plagued by a particularly difficult methodological problem. It seems that the most obvious way to begin is to ask the volunteers themselves what their motives are. However, first, as indicated by the research, volunteers usually don't know exactly why they are working (see Pearce, 1993, Pp. 3-6). Second, since society praises altruism and condemns "using" charitable activities for the pursuit of selfish goals such as social position, diversion, and socializing, there is a social-desirability bias in stated reasons for volunteering (Smith, 1981).

Past studies have revealed that there are people with particularly strong altruistic personalities and motivations for nonspontaneous helping (e.g., Allen & Rushton, 1983; Sundeen,

1988; Unger, 1991). However, there is actually no further discussion of how and for what reasons the settings encourage people to become more altruistic, to sustain their altruism, and to perceive themselves as helpers. Studies most likely have not treated situational factors in any serious and systematic way due to two main factors: the conscious and deliberate rebellion against the emphasis on situational influences used in the experimental approach; and that the influence of situational factors, such as cultural norms and patterns of social interaction (both discussed later) on individual helpers in nonspontaneous situations is too dynamic to observe and measure.

Actually, once we begin seriously consider situational factors in nonspontaneous situations, we may find that results based upon paper-and-pencil measurements of volunteers may have much more complicated implications than their original face-value. For example, one's reporting of high altruistic reasons for volunteering may be due to the understanding that highly committed volunteers in charitable organizations are supposed to report such motives, since organizations have postulated clearly that we should help based upon concern for others. While the most highly committed volunteers may have better emotional adjustment, this may not be due to any inherent qualities, but because stronger social validation in the settings may make them feel good.

Certainly, in natural settings an individual may believe that his/her prosocial commitment is purely due to altruistic

concerns, thus enabling him/her to sustain the commitment without any relations with social contexts. However, in everyday settings, both one's role playing as a helper and one's motivational talk regarding prosocial activities are highly enmeshed in the social system and cultural repertoire; therefore, any specific altruistic concern, as it can be articulated, is also highly culturally framed. Moreover, the chances of reaching out our hands to help are also bound by our personal network. By not taking into account how individuals interact with their situational cues in their processes of conducting nonspontaneous helping, the studies of nonspontaneous helping have been quite restricted in examining social reality.

The shift of focus in the new paradigm begins to make researchers take notice of the importance of studying nonspontaneous helping. However, the majority of studies on nonspontaneous helping still invest most of their efforts in locating variables that may predict helping in a variety of nonspontaneous settings (e.g., Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Pierucci & Noel, 1980; Rubin & Thorelli 1984; Sundeen, 1988), this may be due to the reasons we describe above (that situational factors in nonspontaneous situations are difficult to observe and measure), and also due to reasons such as a residual influence of past paradigms emphasizing finding predictors of helping, or the possibility that situational factors in nonspontaneous situations are just not salient enough for researchers to explore. The authors of such studies are not aware that in

natural settings the basic differences between nonspontaneous helping and spontaneous helping demand that we take different perspectives and approaches to the study of each.

Researchers have rarely noticed that people's prosocial commitments in the real world are no longer clear-cut (therefore the membership of volunteers is actually not a good measure). The situational backgrounds of helpers are totally out of the researcher's control (therefore in similar kinds of self-reporting of situational variables there may exist large differences, and there is no way to isolate and observe the effects of a solely situational variable). People's perception of motivations, meanings, and values are also socially constructed rather than pre-existing; therefore, it is epistemologically more important to first discuss those meaning construction processes than to discuss specific motivations and values influencing each individual's helping. Aware of the possible misleading difficulties in studies of nonspontaneous helping in natural settings, we must raise a particularly difficult question: "So then, what kind of approach and perspective can we and should we use to study nonspontaneous helping in natural settings? Does such an approach really exist?"

The current study attempts to find an answer to this question by exploring a new means of studying nonspontaneous helping. By studying of a setting with particularly intensive social interactions and high salience of a normative climate

with various data gathering strategies--participant observation, intensive interviews, and written document collection, in addition to scale-measurement of motivation. The current study hopes to show that by this sort of in-depth study of a "strategic research site" (Merton, 1959, see our later discussion in this chapter), we can reconstruct the picture of people's nonspontaneous prosocial commitment in a specific cultural and social background. In turn, this will lead to a more systematic understanding of the general patterns of people's nonspontaneous helping behavior in natural settings.

While focused on similar concerns as other studies on nonspontaneous helping, namely, how and why people engage in nonspontaneous helping in natural situations, the current study may differ in its emphasis on situational variables in nonspontaneous situations and the individual's interaction with those situational factors. The study also differs in its multiple methodological strategies for realizing these goals.

Some researchers have begun to seriously criticize past experimental paradigms on spontaneous helping. Nevertheless, their ways of formulating questions, methods for resolving problems, and levels of analysis (as described above), were still highly limited by the traditional paradigm of studies on spontaneous helping. The following brief introduction of my research interests and focus generates a more detailed discussion of the limitations and problems of past studies on helping behavior in general, and suggests how I might more

seriously consider these problems and compensate for them in my current study.

SHORTCOMINGS OF PAST STUDIES ON HELPING BEHAVIOR AND THE FUTURE AGENDA OF RESEARCH

More than two decades ago, two pioneer social psychologists on helping behavior--Latane and Darley--called to our attention the importance of experimental research in studying helping behavior. They stated that: "The results of our actual experiments, then, seem counter-intuitive...It demonstrates the importance of doing actual experiments--armchair speculation or "as if" role playing would lead to different and wrong conclusions" (Latane & Darley, 1970:125). Their imaginative experiments were later influential in stimulating further research on helping behavior. The two decades following Latane and Darley represent the "golden age" of research on helping behavior (see Dovido, 1984; Smithson, Amato, & Pearce, 1983).

While experimental approaches have certainly proven helpful in understanding emergency intervention and other transitory helping relationships (i.e., Callero, Howard, & Piliavin, 1987:247), recently, this approach also begins to cause much serious criticism (Amato, 1985; Bar-Tal, 1984; Callero, Howard, & Piliavin, 1987; Clary and Snyder, 1991; Foss, 1985; Montada & Bierhofff, 1991; Simmons, 1991; Smithson, Amato, & Pearce, 1983). Generally speaking, the experimental approach studies of helping behavior continue to rely on operational definitions of

altruism that consist of single, brief, relatively isolated, and spontaneous episodes of help. This predominant approach to studying helping behavior has limited the scope of investigated problems and has often restricted the examination of social reality.

Analytically, the limitations and restrictions of experimental studies on helping behavior involve three issues, each highly related to the others.

THE PROBLEM OF ECOLOGICAL VALIDITY

In the experimental paradigm of research, respondents are usually in an unexpected situation and need to make a decision whether to help stranger for a very short time. However, in everyday life: 1) with regard to the relationship between helpers and recipients, the field results usually come from situations in which people are seeking help from relatives, friends, and other people with whom they have close relationship (Clark and Mills, 1993); 2) people's decisions to help usually involve a longer process, and some times even a sophisticated plan (Amato, 1990); and 3) as most subjects of research are young college students, they usually possess stronger humanitarian concerns and weaker personal networks, unlike those common volunteers in daily life, who are embedded more deeply in their social backgrounds and social networks.

Therefore, as Clary and Mills (1993)'s conclusion has revealed, the major limitation is a difference between the

nature of interpersonal relationships that are studying in laboratory experiments and those in the field. As a result, studies in the laboratory may actually have serious problems with their external validity.

Past experimental studies of helping behavior did indeed help us explore the various mechanisms involved in people's decisions to help in emergency situation. However, when these findings are applied to natural settings where many important dimensions, such as social roles (Callero, 1985/86), the social construction of altruistic relationships (Gergen & Gergen, 1983), and social networks and sustained relations (Amato, 1990) are involved, we must recognize the hazards of over-generalization between conceptually different types of helping behaviors (McGuire, 1994:54; Smithson, Amato, & Pearce, 1983:144).

Indeed, ecological validity would present a very difficult problem if aspects of social systems, such as norms, social roles, and networks, were to be investigated experimentally. Nevertheless, as all helping behavior happens in social contexts, people's helping behavior must be understood against the backgrounds that may indeed stimulate such behavior.

This is not to say that the experimental method is useless in studying helping behavior, rather, it is to caution researchers to be aware of the significance of factors inherent in the settings. Therefore, variables such as values, norms, social roles, social network, and reciprocal obligations should

be seriously considered, as these variables are highly related to helping behavior in real life settings.

More important, it must be mentioned that the experimental method alone cannot be relied on as the only research technique for studying helping behavior. Rather, as has been argued by Bar-Tal (1984), "a variety of research techniques should be used. Studying helping behavior through observations, interviews, surveys, or content analysis can provide an opportunity to examine aspects that are difficult to investigate in experiments, enable a naturalistic and realistic investigation of helping behavior, and validate experimental results" (p.19). Moreover, we should interview individuals "regarding their expectations, feelings of obligation, or perceptions of helping behavior an interpersonal and group situations..." (Pp.19-20). A more in-depth study of individuals' perceptions and activities about helping behavior in their real life world then may improve the external validity of our findings.

TOO INDIVIDUALIST IN FOCUS

As has been argued by Foss (1985), the large majority of social psychological studies on helping only deal with situations in which a single person can provide all the help needed. As a result, in many studies, individual helpers are studied in isolation from other potential helpers. However, in natural settings, particularly for those settings such as

charitable organizations, participants' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward helping do not consist of isolated, fairly random instances of response. Instead, they are highly influenced by social interaction processes.

Roughly 50% of American adults volunteer their time to nonprofit organizations, with increasing amounts of that time spent in social services activities (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991). Volunteer workers generate services worth more than $150 billion annually (Independent Sector, 1990). Many helpers in everyday life are member of a group and conduct their helping in collective settings.

Although the frequency of people's helping in collective settings is known, there is little literature characterizing and shedding light on the helping behaviors under these settings. There is no firm basis from which to predict how participants of these organizations will behave in these institutions. Only recently have scholars begun to take notice of the importance of group influences on an individual's helping behavior (e.g., Foss [1983]: donor's perceived community norm; Clary & Miller [1984], trainers' rated level of group cohesiveness; Omoto & Snyder [1995]: volunteers' perceptions on organizational integration). However, by tapping only a single dimension of the group influences (which are usually based upon relevant theories on organization and group processes) through a self-rated or trainer-rated scale, researchers have neither treated group influences or collective settings in any systematic way nor

explored how group influences may actual affect people's prosocial commitment in naturally settings.

An exception is Wineburg's (1991) study of the giving patterns of adolescents in a Jewish school in the United States. By ethnographic methods, he found that in the context of his field study, "teachers and students jointly produced a climate of expectations and actions in which minimal giving in the upper grades was seen as in ineluctable--and hence, acceptable--outcome of growing up" (p.352). In this case, giving to charity was inversely related to age, with the oldest students in the school giving the least.

The interesting thing is that this result fails to provide support for a robust laboratory finding about children's charitable behavior that indicated that helping increases steadily with age (Peterson, Hartmann, & Gelfand, 1977; Rushton & Wheelwright, 1980). Comparing to the discrepancy in findings between his own field observations and those experimental studies, Wineburg thus believed that laboratory research control for a powerful determinant of social behavior accounted for this discrepancy: "the expectations of others for what constitutes appropriate and acceptable behavior" (p.351).

I would add that Wineburg's findings reveal that under natural settings, social processes play a very important role--sometimes even more important than one's internal state--in determining one's attitude, perception, and behavior toward prosocial commitment. Moreover, Wineburg's study perfectly

supported the view of social constructionism (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1985) that the process of life is "not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is a result of an active cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship" (Gergen, 1985:267).

Helping behavior in collective settings is a specific category of activity that may involve special social processes--such as social construction of non-tangible rewards, chances of playing the role of helper, mutual encouraging or discouraging, and collective justifying of motivation--which may foster or hinder the occurrence of helping behavior. Without really exploring what kinds of social mechanisms are actually involved in people's maintenance of prosocial commitment in collective settings, it will be difficult for us to take those general group processes--such as organizational integration or organizational cohesiveness--for granted in explaining collective helping.

To summarize, as the frequency of helping behavior in everyday life in collective settings is high, and as these helping behaviors are significantly influenced by the settings in which they occur, the complexities and processes of collective and organized helping behaviors thus must be understood in an more serious and systematic way. We cannot restrict ourselves to the individual level of analysis of those helping behaviors that are based upon helpers' group identities and that happen in collective settings.

NEGLECTING THE CULTURAL FACTORS IN STUDYING HELPING BEHAVIOR

The third drawback of past studies on helping behavior is that almost all past studies have ignored the cultural factors inherent in the helping processes.

Past findings about helping behaviors are mainly based upon experiments on American subjects. Since most samples in these studies were people from the same culture, the cultural factors thus become much less salient for mainstream studies on helping behavior. Nevertheless, the ethnographic evidence shows that prosocial behavior is universal and altruism is regarded as a cardinal virtue almost all over the world (Bohannan, 1963; Fiske, 1991). Yet without exploring the cultural contexts in which such behavior takes place in everyday life, we may quite possibly misinterpret our findings in both the field and laboratory settings.

For example, when Darley and Latane's bystander intervention paradigm was tested in the Philippines (de Guzman, 1979, qtd. by Yablo, 1990:7), for whatever reasons, the opposite effect was found. Specifically, there was a higher quality of intervention as well as an equal likelihood of assistance being offered as the number of bystanders increased. Therefore, as the social inhibition of helping according to increasing group size has been found to be a robust phenomenon in U.S., this pattern may actually alter differ in another culture. Without exploring the culture factors involved in people's helping behavior, the understanding of specific social behavior thus may be taken out

of contexts.

To date, through cross-cultural comparison, some studies have begun to take seriously the cultural influences on helping behavior (for example, Feldman, 1968; Gergen, Ellsworth, Maslach, and Seipel, 1975; Leung and Bond, 1984; L'Armand & Pepitone, 1975; Mussen, 1977. However, Sinha's (1984) criticisms of most cross-cultural studies of prosocial behavior is still very true:

> The cultural, philosophical, and historical matrix in which the individual benefactor or recipient operates has been only generally taken into account. When different cultural groups have been compared with regard to different aspects of helping behavior, cultural factors have been considered more or less in a blanket fashion without analysis of discrete aspects a given culture that are directly related to altruistic behavior. In comparison of different samples drawn from diverse cultures, only certain similarities and differences have been highlighted with very little effort to interrelate them with the cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions of these societies" (448-449).

Sinha then further argued that a good strategy for studying helping behavior in cultural contexts would be:

> to analyze a particular culture in terms of prescribed norms, values, and socialization processes and then

> draw out specific hypotheses regarding prosocial behavior in that culture as against other cultures with different norms and practice...it would be advisable to analyze cultures with regard to the relative emphasis placed on aiding, helping, and sacrificing one's own good for the sake of others or of the community, and then identify the pattern of prosocial behavior in that culture and compare it with patterns from cultures with different or somewhat contrasting norms. Since cultures may vary in the extent to which they emphasize interrelatedness and mutuality among human beings and thereby foster concern and obligation toward others, it is essential to ascertain that factor in designing one's studies. " (p.449).

Since every culture has its specific way of eliciting prosocial commitment and enhancing its social solidarity understanding the cultural contexts underlying a specific helping behavior may lead us closer to understanding the phenomenon under study. Past studies on helping behavior mainly focused on prosocial behavior in American cultural contexts. A thorough examination of helping behavior in other cultural contexts may substantially improve our understanding of human altruism in general and people's prosocial behavior in specific contexts in particular.

For example, when Ma (1985a) investigated the willingness to help others (by evaluating subjects' written responses to

hypothetical situations) in both Hong Kong Chinese and British subjects, he found that British have a higher tendency than Chinese to help those "strangers" without specific definition. However, Chinese subjects were more willing than the British subjects to help intimates and strangers who were either weak, young, or elite in the society. It thus shows that the social affiliation of the person in need in Chinese culture may play a more important role in eliciting helping behavior than it does in the British culture. Thus, if we lack any acknowledgment of the possible influences of cultural factors, we may very possibly misunderstand the prosocial events we are studying.

Further studies on helping behavior should not only acknowledge the importance of cultural factors in affect patterns of helping but also should trance the patterns of how particular elements of culture are involved in giving and receiving help.

RESEARCHERS SHOULD LEAVE THE LABORATORY FOR NATURAL SETTINGS

More than two decades ago, Latane and Darley were on the right track in calling for researchers on altruism to leave their armchairs and speculations and go to the laboratory to do actual experiments. This also pushed social psychological research on helping behavior to its "golden age". However, after intensive experimental research on helping behavior by social psychologists over the last several decades, many limitations and shortcomings of the experimental approach have also begun to

emerge.

As research on helping behavior has been confined to a narrow range of helping behaviors, under the circumstances of being without the problems on the internal validity of the operationalizations of helping, however, it does raise questions about the external validity of these studies.

Indeed, past empirical findings of the experimental approach are rich (yet even the non-cumulative nature of that research has caused serious criticisms [see Smithson, Amato, Pearce, 1985:5]). However, as helping behaviors in the real world are highly enmeshed in the social systems (defined below) and cultural contexts, we are not confident that these findings from the laboratory can be applied to helping behavior in everyday life.

I would argue then, **that it is the time for researchers to leave the laboratory and enter the natural world.** More specifically, past studies using the experimental approach gave us many valuable lessons. Now, based upon these findings, we not only need to enlarge our focus to helping behavior on a broader scale (such as studying those more nonspontaneous, planned kinds of helping in natural settings), but we also need to put those behavior under study into their contexts. Only through such efforts can we understand how people's actions actually occur and continue in their rich social and cultural contexts.

However, the studying of helping behavior in its social contexts is not an easy thing. A good strategy would be to

choose a "strategic research site" (Merton, 1959) with regard to our interests, in which prosocial commitment is strongly emphasized, social interaction is intense, and cultural factors about helping behavior are salient. This observed site then may give us a vantage point from which to study helping behavior in its real contexts. By intensively studying various relevant events happening in this site, we can not only explore this specific site, but also reveal the general patterns of helping behavior in natural settings.

THE SPECIFIC OBSERVED SITE FOR THIS STUDY--THE TZU-CHI ASSOCIATION IN TAIWAN

The Buddhist Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan is a particularly valuable research site for exploring the various issues that have been neglected by past studies on helping behavior. Here I will briefly introduced the Tzu-Chi Association and then describe why this research site can help me to explore many neglected issues about helping behavior in the natural settings and cultural contexts.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE TZU-CHI ASSOCIATION IN TAIWAN

Tzu-Chi kuang-tang hui, or transleted in English by its agencies as the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation (later it will simply be called the Tzu-Chi Association or Tzu-Chi). *Tzu-Chi kuang-tang hui*, literally, corresponding to each Chinese character, means Compassion (*Tzu*), Relief (*Chi*), Merit

(*kuang-tang*), Association (*hui*).

The Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan is a volunteer, charitable organization which has been expanding rapidly in recent years. It was founded by Buddhist nun, Cheng Yen (see picture 1.1), in 1966. A comparison of several figures shows how rapidly the Tzu-Chi Association has been expanding in the last 10 years: in 1985, Tzu-Chi had only 433 commissioners and 60,000 members; in 1990, it had 1853 commissioners and 1,050,000 members; in 1995, it had more than 5,000 commissioners, and more than 3.8 million members (Shiao, 1993, p.30; K'ang & Chien, 1995, Pp. 87-99).

Begun in the early days as an organization predominantly composed of middle-age women, today Tzu-Chi recruits participants from all walks of Taiwanese society. Now, the Tzu-Chi Association is the foremost non-profit charity organization in Taiwan. It has constructed a general hospital with modern medical equipment on the relatively undeveloped east coast of Taiwan. Also, Tzu-Chi established a nurse' college in 1988, and a medical college in 1993. In the near future, they plan to establish the Tzu-Chi university. Tzu-Chi has helped more than 1.23 million people over 330 months, with an accumulative amount of NT 1.7 billion (68 million US dollars). By the end of 1991, there were 11,926 families under their long-term assistance, with a total monthly relief of over NT$44 million (1.76 million US dollars). (Tzu-Chi Foundation, 1995).

Moreover, now, Tzu-Chi is also an international enterprise

that has branches across five continents. The so-called "One footstep with six footprints of Tzu-Chi": Charity, Medicine, Education, Culture, Bone Marrow donation, and International Relief, represents the various programs that the Tzu-Chi Association has tried to implement in society.

Tzu-Chi's origin is a breakaway from traditional Taiwanese Buddhist groups, in the sense that it has engaged in social practice more actively than other Buddhist groups. Tzu-Chi was the personal ideal and dream of Buddhist nun, Cheng Yen. As she characterized the image of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Kuan-yin, who were said to have one thousand eyes and one thousand hands that can help others: "one eye observing as one thousand eyes, and one hand functioning as one thousand hands," Cheng Yen thus called people to cooperate to help the needy. "If 500 people commit to help together, therefore, we can offer help to needy with great efficiency. It is just like the thousand hands and thousand eyes of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva" (see Tzu-Chi Year Book, 1992:3-4).

According to the often circulated story: One day early in 1966, Cheng-Yen, along with her nun disciples, walked a long way to Fenglin (a small town in Taiwan) to visit a follower who was hospitalized in a private hospital. When she came out of the hospital, she saw a pool of blood on the ground. When she asked about this, people told her that it was from an aboriginal woman who had miscarried simply because of being too poor to pay an advance deposit to get admitted to a private hospital. This news

deeply saddened Cheng-Yen, and she made up her mind to devote herself to the job of helping the poor. As she described:

> Where are the eyes of Bodhisattva[1] Kuan-yin[2]? If this pool of blood can be seen by others who have Bodhisattva heart, then this tragedy would not happen? Thus I think that why do not we transfer the power of Bodhisattva Kuan-yin into this world? I hope I can transform everybody in this world to be a Kuan-yin, and then has Kuan-yin eyes and Kuan-yin hands,...if I can organize 500 people, I will have a one-thousand-hand-one-thousand-eye Kuan-Yin Bodhisattva. (Tzu-Chi Monthly 314, 1993, p.80)

some time later, three Catholic nuns came to visit her in her cottage. Through discussion and debates, the Catholic nuns agreed that the mercy of Buddha was not much different from the love of God. However, the Catholic nuns pointed out that Buddhists seemed only to pay attention to self-cultivation and did not do anything concrete for society. The Catholic nuns argued that unlike the Christians who built hospitals and schools, the Buddhists did not take actions to benefit the

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[1] Bodhisattva, a term used in Buddhism, usually refers to the universal savior, who not only gets enlightenment for himself/herself, but also tries to save others in this world. It is the ideal image of the human being in Mahayana (greater vehicle) Buddhism.

[2] Bodhisattva Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. According to traditional belief, she always expresses her mercy in saving people. She is one of the most popular Buddhist deities in Taiwan.

society in any concrete ways. Cheng-Yen did not argue with them on this point. She had to agree with what the Catholic nuns said (see Chen, 1990, p.66). Thus, she began to reflect that "the Buddha vowed that as long as the hells were not empty, he would not accomplish Buddhahood. But with only one person acting in benevolence, what is the use?" (see Cheng Yen, 1989:338)

Cheng-Yen began to take action. She and her disciples then founded a non-profit charity organization. To relate helping behavior to people's everyday life in the beginning, Cheng-Yen proposed that every nun should produce one more pair of shoes everyday for the charity, and every lay disciple should put fifty cents (NT dollars) into a bamboo jar (which was given by Cheng-Yen) everyday. Although people argued why not donate money each month or each year, Cheng-Yen said that, "it's not the same. If you save once a month, then you only bring forth kindness once a month. Even though the fifty cents you save daily is not of great value you accumulate the heart of helping and loving others everyday" (Cheng Yen, 1989:339). Therefore, in the very beginning, by Cheng-Yen's conscious design, Tzu-Chi's social action postulated that one's motive for helping is much more important than the results of helping, and that this motive should be enacted in everyday-life.

The first person who received the assistance of the Tzu-Chi was a lone, elderly lady from mainland China. Tzu-Chi's members sent her food and organized housing. When the old woman became sick, Tzu-Chi members took her to the doctor and cared for her.

When she passed away, they recited sutras for her and made all her funeral arrangements. This kind of helping work then developed on a broad scale in Tzu-Chi.

In the beginning, the Tzu-Chi association focused mainly on poverty relief, such as providing relief funds and visiting and consoling recipients. The area of helping was only limited to Hualien, a small city of Taiwan. After gaining more experience helping impoverished families, Cheng-Yen felt that "illness is the source of suffering and poverty, the poverty of most people is due to their illness " (see Tzu-Chi Association, 1992, p.3), and decided to build the hospital in Hualien. The preparation phase of hospital building started in 1979 and ended in 1986. The operation of this Buddhist hospital thus signifies several things: 1) it marks Tzu-Chi's dramatic growth from a local voluntary group to a nation-wide charitable organization; 2) it shows that a secular model of modern Buddhism has been successfully implemented in Taiwanese modern society; 3) moreover, that under a weak Buddhist nun's leadership, those mainly middle age Tzu-Chi's women can build a modern hospital, the symbolic meanings and its social influence of which is more far-reaching than its psychical scale, especially for a society of rapid social change and disintegrating traditional morality.

After the operation of the hospital, two other social projects soon emerged in the working plan of Tzu-Chi--education and culture. The "education" mission emerged because of the

necessity of Tzu-Chi to train its own doctors and nurses. The "cultural mission" thus signifies the Tzu-Chi leader's awareness of the power of mass media in the dissemination of its organizational purpose on one hand, and how desperately society needed some spiritual guideline on the other hand.

As Taiwan's gradually grew economically and politically opened, more and more Taiwanese immigrated aboard. Taiwanese economic prosperity has also pushed Taiwan into the worldly arena. As the biggest charitable organization in Taiwan after 1991, the Tzu-Chi Association thus started to play a very active role in international aid, such as international relief work in Bangladesh, Mainland China, Mongolia, Nepal, Cambodia, etc.

On July 16, 1991, Cheng Yen was awarded the Community Leadership Award of the Magsaysay Award of the Philippines (the so-called Asian Nobel Peace Price), for "awakening Taiwan's modern people to the ancient Buddhist teachings of compassion and charity". In 1993, Cheng Yen was nominated for the Nobel peace prize by the Taiwanese government for her contribution in rescuing people and awakening people to help those in need. In 1994, Cheng Yen was awarded the Eisenhower Medallion, for "Tzu-Chi's far-reaching charity work has improve world peace" (Tzu-Chi Dharma-Friend Semi-monthly 211, 1994). After Mother Teresa, she is the second Asian to gain this award. In 1995, Cheng Yen was elected "outstanding Women of Asia" (one of twenty) by Asia-week since her work and influence have become a driving force in Taiwanese society (Tzu-Chi World Journal 53, 1995).

Although Tzu-Chi's organizational ideology will be further discussed in chapter 6, here is a brief review of the basic ideas of Tzu-Chi's charity work. The Tzu-Chi Association's charity work is based upon Buddhist philosophy and ethics. Tzu-Chi's formal organizational purpose, according to Tzu-Chi's training manual, can be translated as follows:

1) Kindness, compassion, joy and giving are the total substance of Buddhism, and are also the purposes for the foundation of the Tzu-Chi association.

2) Kindness is the "great kindness for those with whom we do not have affinities," is pure love without contamination of self-interest, loving everybody equally, as the mercy of a mother toward her child.

3) Compassion is the "great compassion for those of the same substance." Others' suffering is our suffering, and others' pain is our pain, as Bodhisattva treats everybody, who help others to get rid of suffering without reservation.

4) Joy is the joyful mind that comes from practicing right dharma, right thought, right mindfulness, and right path.

5) Giving is the mind of giving that comes from wisdom, is the unconditioned giving, un-regrettable services, as the good teacher toward students and the strict father toward children without reservation.

6) Then our ideals are: To save those suffering and

those going through difficulties with compassion and joyful giving; to extinguish suffering with happiness and to create a clear, pure world of Compassionate Relief Tzu-Chi.

7) Our methods are: To try our best and enable all the good people under heaven to sow their field of blessings with the wisdom that comes from harmonizing principles and activities; to plant lotuses in a thousand hearts and create a loving society together.

8) Our four great missions are charity, medical treatment, education, and culture.

9) Our Spirit is sincerity, integrity, honesty, and truth.

10) We deeply believe in the equality of all living beings. Everyone has Buddha-nature. One only needs to be able to enter the gate of compassion to peep in the Buddha's door and see the adorned and beautiful Buddha-hall. The first priority is to walk into the door of charity. Then after entering, when the wealthy give, they will attain blessings and happiness. When the poor receive, they will have salvation and peace (Tzu-Chi Manual 1994: 22-23).

With this brief description of Tzu-Chi's formal organizational purpose, we thus have some basic ideas about the ethical standpoints of Tzu-Chi's collective actions.

In addition to the Buddhist nun, Master Cheng-Yen, and her

30 or so nun disciples, there are also several important categories of memberships which currently exist in Tzu-Chi. Participants thus are associated with different kinds of voluntary social services in Tzu-Chi. Chapter 4 will describe those categories and their participants' daily lives in a more dynamic sense. Here, for the convenience of later discussion, we will temporarily provide a preliminary introduction to these different categories of memberships.

1. **The "Tzu-Chi Member"**: These members make monthly donations, ranging from one hundred NT dollars (about US $4) to several thousand NT dollars, and are visited once every month or two by a Tzu-Chi commissioner who collects their donations and tells them what is happening in Tzu-Chi. The great majority of these members are not involved in Tzu-Chi activities in an active sense. Currently, there are more than 3.8 million "Members" in Tzu-Chi.

2. **Formal Commissioners**: These are the key persons for the operation of the Tzu-chi Association. Currently there are around 5,000 formal commissioners. Although recently more men have become commissioners, most are still female.

Commissioners are the people who offer most direct services to recipients. Their tasks include collecting money from members, eliciting contributions at charity fairs and bazaars, visiting poor families, finding neighborhoods who need to be

helped, attending group meetings, attending regional commissioners' monthly conferences, etc. The commissioners are organized into groups: for example, in Taichung city, there were 9 groups. The size of a group varies from about 50 to 100 people, and each group has a group leader and one or two deputy group leaders.

3. **The Apprentice Commissioner**, or the so-called "Behind-the-scenes commissioners": These are not formal commissioners, but they help commissioners collect donations and organize local activities. For a person to become a behind-the-scenes commissioner, he/she needs only the recommendation of a formal Commissioner. If he/she serves as an Apprentice Commissioner for more than half a year, and has been recommended and endorsed by enough of the formal Commissioners, he/she can become a formal commissioner if he/she so desires.

4. **The "Faith Corps"**: are male volunteers who volunteer to provide various kinds of Tzu-Chi social services. This category of membership was originally formed in 1989 as volunteer security for the Tzu-Chi nurses' college, but the function of this category of membership has since spread into much broader areas, such as maintaining traffic, offering labor service for Tzu-Chi's various kinds of activities, and helping to elicit contributions at charity fairs and bazaars. Currently in Taiwan there are 2025 members in this category of membership (Tzu-Chi

Yearbook, 1995:461).

5. **The Honored Patrons**: These are members who have donated one million NT dollars or more for the construction of the hospital, the nurses' college, the medical school, or the memorial hall. Currently there are around 5,500 honored patrons in the Tzu-Chi Association (see chapter 4's discussion). Honored patrons were organized into a voluntary category of membership after 1987, and they hold their own meetings irregularly (usually once in three months). Most of the honored patrons are people with high socioeconomic status. Their names have been engraved and are kept on display in the Tzu-Chi hospital and the Tzu-Chi memorial hall.

Here it seems that different categories of Tzu-Chi participants have their own function and organized groups, thus they do not often interact with other groups. However, in our later exploration (in chapter 5), we find that on a daily basis, Tzu-Chi participants in different categories of membership actually relate to and interact with each other intensively.

WHY TZU-CHI IS A GOOD STRATEGIC SITE FOR STUDY

Indeed, to some extent the current study of the Tzu-Chi Association is undertaken because of my intrinsic interest in this organization, since Tzu-Chi is currently the most dramatic local social force in Taiwan. Its rapid growth, special organizational structure and ideology, charismatic leader, and

amazing abilities of resources mobilization, have made the Tzu-Chi Association a must-be-studied historical target. My personal backgrounds and training also make me believe that in taking this case as my object of study, there might be some potential for learning for both readers and myself.

However, there are more theoretical reasons which make Tzu-Chi a valuable case for study:

1) Prosocial commitment is Tzu-Chi's first and most preliminary request of all Tzu-Chi participants (see previous parts of this chapter and discussion in chapter 6). All social interactions and cultural norms prevalent in Tzu-Chi's settings are oriented to helping behavior. Thus, this organization may be particularly relevant to our interest.

2) The Tzu-Chi organization represents the first time that Taiwanese people at the grassroots level have had such large scale social participation, whether in regard to the intensity or the numbers of participants (see chapter 3's discussion). As civil participation in Taiwan was not very popular in past, most Tzu-Chi participants lack pre-existing experience of civil participation in general; thus, many newly-emerging patterns of social interaction and dynamic processes of meaning construction are involved in Tzu-Chi's group processes. As most of these group processes in Tzu-Chi are not yet be routine or are still progressing toward institutionalization, and as almost all of these group processes are geared toward eliciting participants' prosocial commitment, we thus have much chances of observing how

social interaction and meaning construction processes are actually undertaken in this intensive collective setting. In addition, we may expect that participants may have more to say about these issues.

3) Cultural factors are particularly salient in Tzu-Chi's organizational ideology and various collective settings. In chapter 3 and chapter 6 we will see that Tzu-Chi's norms of helping are primarily based upon two sources: Confucianism's ideas of harmonious social order, and the Buddhist ethical requirement of charity. How cultural norms are articulated and affect people is a main theme in Tzu-Chi's collective settings. Moreover, a latent culture ideology about helping--ideas and practices about merit-accumulations--is also been highly related to the patterns of Tzu-Chi's helping activities in Tzu-Chi's settings. Tzu-Chi's settings thus provide us with a good opportunity for studying how people interact with cultural norms and how cultural norms are transmitted to people in their everyday lives.

4) Participants in the Tzu-Chi Association are divided into different categories of membership according to different kinds of prosocial commitments. The specific structural arrangement of the Tzu-Chi Association makes Tzu-Chi like a real-world laboratory. This may give us a valuable chance to compare people's helping activities among different kinds of prosocial commitments. With such a between-group comparison, some important generalizations may possibly come out in our study.

To conclude, in regard to the criteria of other-oriented collective action, intensive social interaction, salience of normative influences, and attributes of interest (i.e., helping behavior) among different categories of membership, the features of Tzu-Chi promise us more in-depth information about helping behavior in collective settings.

DEFINING THE GOAL AND PURPOSE OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The current study is a case study of a charitable Organization--the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan. The main focus of this study is the individual charitable giving in Taiwanese socio-cultural and Tzu-Chi's organizational contexts. With this current **case study**, at the **micro- and meso-levels of analysis**, I want to explore how, under a specific set of **cultural norms** and **social systems**, **collective helping begins, develops, and is maintained.**

To clarify the purpose of the current study, I will define and explain those items that have been highlighted in the above statement.

1. COLLECTIVE HELPING

Collective helping" is defined as "Helping conducted by individuals or groups that are based upon givers' membership of the group." We have shown above that helping behavior in everyday life is found in a wide variety of organizational

settings. However, due to the past studies' too-narrow focus, the collective characteristics that may underlie people's prosocial commitments have rarely been explored (the only exceptions: Foss, 1983; and Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio, & Piliavin, 1995).

For example, participation in volunteer work is a prototypic instance of collective helping, in which people offer voluntary service through voluntary organizations. For example, a member of the international Red Cross may give food and clothing to the victims of a flood. Although this interaction may take place between two individuals, the underlying cause for the behavior is the actor's membership in the group (see Worchel, 1984, pp.386-387).

Formally defining the current focus of the study as collective helping not only admits the importance of collective settings' influences on people's helping behavior in naturally settings, but also treats helping behavior in collective settings as a specific category that needs to be treated systematically.

2. CULTURAL NORMS

"Cultural norms" is a rather broad term. More specifically, as borrowed from Smith and Fisher (1971;1), it is defined as "all of the socially transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other meaningful symbolic system elements that are associated with membership in a given society,

ethnic group, or very widespread social roles within such system." Specifically, for example, accumulation of merits for people living in Taiwanese and Chinese cultural contexts may actually play a very conducive role in eliciting charitable behavior in daily life and further supports the social structure (see chapter 3). On the other hand, the norm of reciprocity may play a very important role in eliciting people's helping toward others in American society, and also further maintain the function of this social system (Gouldner, 1960).

For collective helping to be conducted in naturally settings in a particular time and place, continuing for rather long period, its format must accord with existing cultural norms (Fisher, 1984). However, as we discussed above, since past findings about helping behaviors were mainly based upon American subjects, the salience of cultural variables thus have usually been ignored.

If we can clearly examine those cultural norms that are influenced in people's prosocial commitment, we thus may get a more clear picture of why in natural settings, some collective helping happens in a specific way. Moreover, we may also observe how cultural norms can affect people's attitudes and perceptions toward prosocial commitments in specific historical contexts.

3. SOCIAL SYSTEM

Borrowing from Parson's definition (1951), a social system is defined as "two or more social actors engaged in more or less

stable interaction within a bounded environment." Particularly, as any helping behavior always happens in a specific setting, many things inherent in the settings--such as the actors' social roles, social network, social pressure, the collective definition of the situation, etc.-- may also influence the patterns of helping behavior. As these influences are patterned and repeated, in terms of face-to-face interaction, and in a bounded environment, we then refer to these patterned interaction as a social system.

Most nonspontaneous helping behavior (Clary & Snyder, 1991), or planned helping behavior (Amato, 1985) is highly enmeshed in social contexts, with social actors' engaged in long-term relationships with other social actors in the same social system. Without exploring how patterned social interaction can actually affect people's perceptions and behaviors of prosocial commitment, we can know very little of the innate characteristic of helping behavior (see Montada & Bierhoff, 1991; Montada, Schmitt, & Dalbert, 1991).

The current study thus will intensively investigate how people's prosocial commitment is enmeshed in their social systems, whether in regards to their motives for involvement, their perceptions about their own behavior, or the maintenance and continuity of their prosocial commitment.

4. MICRO- AND MESO-LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

This refers to a research strategy that seeks to account

for the fact that causes operate both at a micro-level of immediate face-to-face encounters and at a meso-level of social milieux, networks, and arrangements of settings. These two levels of analyses can be contrasted to the macro-level of analysis, in which governments, social-economic change, and massive movements are the main causes (See Lofland, 1996: 177-200).

Certainly, the macro-level world provides possible stimuli to action and possible opportunities for action. Such possibilities have not yet, however, "been translated into a shared belief that collective action should be taken, can be taken, and will be taken, by themselves, macro variables do not describe and account for the development of the active capacity to act or the decision to act..." (Lofland, 1996:192). For example, Lofland has pointed out that at the micro-meso level of analysis, six variables in immediate contexts of collective settings can be examined: leadership availability, communication networks and similar resources, network integration among potential formers, situational availability among potential formers, frame alignment and aligning skill, and belief in the necessity and effectiveness of forming.

For the current study, some macro- historical and social facts may provide a the background for our analysis. However, the main efforts will deal with social actors's micro-interactional settings. Our main focus will be how social actors enmeshed in their social network may actually come together, in

face-to-face interaction, to conduct helping behavior. Instead of taking collective helping as a whole, people's affective and cognitive state at the individual level will be analyzed intensively. The specific topics we will cover will be mentioned later.

5. HOW IT IS POSSIBLE FOR COLLECTIVE HELPING TO BEGIN, DEVELOP, AND BE MAINTAINED.

Most past studies of collective helping have focused solely on one's entry behavior--i.e., on the act of becoming newly-affiliated with a certain volunteer organization (see Rubin & Thorelli's [1984] review). However, at the micro- and meso-level of analysis, at different stages of ones's prosocial commitment, the same factor may exert different degrees of influence. For example, one's pre-existing social network may draw one into prosocial commitment at some stage. A different stage, however, these networks may become the structural limitations for one's further prosocial commitment.

By observing how collective helping may actually begin, develop, and be maintained at each individual level, we not only get a dynamic picture of social action in its real settings, but also get a deeper understanding of how the continuity of prosocial commitment, whether for each individual or for a specific collectivity, are sustained over rather long time period.

Of course, the specific interest on "how collective helping

may actually begin, develop, and be maintained" may also lead our study of Tzu-Chi to become more focus-oriented. Specifically, being interested in the origins of collective helping behavior, we may particularly notice the process of how new volunteers are recruited into Tzu-Chi and how Tzu-Chi's ideational systems may influence people's prosocial commitment. Our interest in the maintenance of collective helping behavior, may allow us to notice Tzu-Chi participants' self-perceived motivations for prosocial commitments, and various organizational mechanisms and cultural repertories that may sustain Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitments. The interest in the development of collective helping, may lead to the notice of the social interaction processes that may elicit people's further prosocial commitment. The issues we will cover in the current study will be clarified and outlined later in this study.

6. **CASE STUDY**

A "case study" is defined as "giving special attention to totalizing in the observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under study" (Zonabend, 1992:52). The current study is an in-depth study of the Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan. As our focus is entirely on this particular case, the more general interest, however, is the patterns of helping behavior under organizational boundaries and cultural contexts. With this focus, issues that may be relevant to helping behavior are thus

central matters of concern for current case study. Moreover, the goal of the current study is not only to get a preliminary understanding of a particular case, but also to try to highlight the causal processes of helping behavior in collective settings. The specific issues I will discuss in the current case study will be provided in the next section. Since "case study" is still a very general term with regard to a means of conducting research, the more detailed discussion about epistemological bases and methodological procedures for conducting the current case study will be provided in chapter 2.

Indeed, all cases are enmeshed in their own systems, thus each has its own specific features. However, as some general pattern and social forces take shape and produce results in any setting, the current case study on Tzu-Chi, may provide an opportunity to reveal both the differences and similarities between collective helping in American cases and that of Tzu-Chi. As such, some comparisons between Tzu-Chi Associations and other American charitable or religious organizations will be made throughout our discussion.

To summarize, people's prosocial commitments in their everyday lives are highly bound by the specific sets of cultural norms and social systems. People's prosocial commitment cannot be understood without exploring the background cultural norms and social systems, and without examining how these norms and systems may actually affect people's perception and behavior toward prosocial commitment. The findings of such a study would

be quite restrictive. As past paradigms on helping behavior have generally ignored these issues, the current in-depth study of a "strategic research site"--the Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan--thus may address these issues and may also provide a possible first step to fill gapes in past research on helping behavior.

SUMMARY AND THE PLAN OF CURRENT STUDY

Past experimental approaches on helping behavior have typically focused on an operational definition of altruism that consists of single, brief, relatively isolated, and spontaneous episodes of help. This paradigm has called our attention to the scientific study of helping behavior. However, it has also limited the scope of the investigated problems and restricted the examination of social reality.

The current study can thus act as a first step toward a new agenda for systematically studying helping behavior in natural settings. The Tzu-Chi Association in Taiwan was chosen to be the subject for this case study. In regards to the criteria of other-oriented collective action, intensity of social interaction, and salience of normative influences, the features of Tzu-Chi may promise to give more in-depth information about helping behavior under collective settings.

We may wonder what can be learned from a single case. I would argue that by the causal explanation of various phenomena occurring in a specific case, the general properties and patterns of collective helping in natural settings thus can

become further clarified. To this extent, a single case can teach us lot.

The current study can be defined as: "a case study, at the micro- and meso-level of analysis, to explore how, under a specific set of cultural norms and social systems, collective helping is begun, developed, and maintained. By the examination of various dynamic realities in Tzu-Chi, I hope to show that there is no helping behavior which can be understood outside of its cultural contexts and social systems, nor can helping behavior possibly occur and continue outside of its cultural contexts and social systems. Specifically:

1) In chapter 1 I attempt to identify some key criticisms of social psychological research on helping behavior, and then call our attention to a new agenda of research;

2) Chapter 2 will deal with the specific plan of how I conducted my case study, the shortcoming and limitations of this plan, and how I played both a researcher role and a participant role in the field;

3) Chapter 3 will lay out the cultural and social backgrounds of Tzu-Chi's recent development, thereby, locating people's helping behaviors in the appropriate realistic social contexts;

4) Chapter 4 will describe Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial

commitments among different categories of membership in a more dynamic sense;

5) Chapter 5 will examine how Tzu-Chi's recruitment is highly enmeshed in and based upon Taiwanese social networks. In turn, Tzu-Chi's organization of collective helping behavior may also influence the way it recruits people;

6) Following the "framing perspective" in social movements literature, chapter 6 will explore Tzu-Chi's ideational system, or "collective action frame," and its various formats and influences. We will show that the "relevancy" of each participants' personal world view, in Tzu-chi, is the most extraordinary characteristic of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. On the other side of this "relevancy," is the fact that Tzu-Chi participants do not passively take for granted the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, but rather, by linking the contents of the collective action frame to their own life framework, they actively engage in meaning making of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame.

7) In chapter 7, based upon the interactionist approach and focusing on micro-interaction processes, I will elaborate a three-phase and nine-stage model of processes of prosocial commitment. This will show that prosocial commitments, particularly when the collective settings underlying these

commitments is salient, are socially fostered and constructed in a rather long interactive process.

8) Moreover, even people's accounts of their motivation are highly socially constructed. Chapter 8 will examine how Tzu-Chi participants talk about their motivations for giving and what kind of patterns this may involve. The results show that people's motive talk is highly based upon cultural repertories and organizational norms. Moreover, we will also find out that only through such motive talk can people continue their prosocial commitment in any substantial sense.

9) The results in chapter 8 further draw our attention to a meso-level of questioning: how can helping be maintained over a period, whether for each individual or for the collectivity? We will find out that as people's helping behavior can be sustained by specific cultural repertoires and collective settings. However, there are also some inherent tensions involved that may decrease people's altruism. In different historical and culture contexts, the solution to resolving these tensions may differ. The discussion in this chapter implies that as cultural norms and social systems may help to elicit and sustain people's prosocial commitments, in turn, they also maintain the system. However, as these issues begin to move beyond our level of analysis, our examination of Tzu-Chi will stop there.

10) Finally, Chapter 10 will summarize our findings and further discuss the implication of these findings

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

> ***It is disappointing that psychologists, for example, with few exceptions, have not observed helping behavior in groups in such naturalistic settings as schools, factories, or an army; have not interviewed individuals regarding their expectations, feelings of obligation, or perceptions of helping behavior in interpersonal and group situations; nor have they utilized archives relating to philanthropy, volunteering for public services...(Bar-Tal, 1984:19-20)***

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The current study is a case study on the Tzu-Chi Association. The focal point is how, under natural settings, participants' prosocial commitment can possibly occur and be sustained. To get in-depth information about participants and contexts, two primary data-gathering strategies--participant observations and intensive semi-structured interviews--are used. In addition to these two strategies, the present study also employs written documents, such as Tzu-Chi's various publications and training manuals, as additional data sources.

The use of multiple lines of methods, frequently called triangulation (Borman, LeCompte & Goetz, 1986; Denzin, 1978; Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Webb et

al, 1981), is where "every method is a different line of sight directed toward the same point, observing social and symbolic reality" (Berg, 1989, p.5). By combining several lines of sight, I thus can obtain a more substantive picture of reality in addition to a means of verifying my findings over the course of the research. For example, in chapter 8, by systematic examination and comparison of data from observations, interviews, and responses to a motivation scale, I shed light on the patterns of Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk. This way of using data is quite prevalent in current case study.

Below I will introduce the specific research strategies for how I collected my data.

DATA COLLECTION

1. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

By participant observation, I can get deeply involve in the Tzu-Chi's world. Immersion in the settings thus allows me to hear, see, and begin to experience what Tzu-Chi participants do in their daily lives. Therefore, I can explore the dynamic processes of helping behavior more deeply under the everyday life contexts. With regard to interviews, participant observation can also allow me to interview Tzu-Chi participants in their own language. Moreover, as chance arises, through observation, I can thus examine whether in interview there are any systematic distortions presented by the participants.

With its original Still Thought Abodes, four main branches,

and many small liaison offices, the Tzu-Chi Association, is currently a nation-wide organization in Taiwan. To get more profound information about each Tzu-Chi participant and their settings, my research strategy is to intensively participate and observe a main branch Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch, and in time, to observe its original location, the Tzu Chi Still Thought Abode. I introduce them as follows:

1. As the original location and the symbolic center of the Tzu-Chi Association, the Tzu-Chi Still Though Abode (see Pictures 2.1. and 2.2.) has been the location of many activities that have been full of symbolic meaning. Tzu-Chi participants in all cities may take turns volunteering in the Tzu-Chi Hospital (near the Still Thought Abode, see Picture 2.3) for about 3 to 10 days. During this period, these participants live at the Still Thought Abode. Tzu-Chi participants often describe their time at the Still Thought Abode as being "back home."

Nevertheless, with the exception of Tzu-Chi's leader, Master Cheng Yen, and about 50 other Buddhist nuns, there are no lay people as at the Still Thought Abode. Many Tzu-Chi participants just visit the Still Thought Abode for several days as a pilgrimage. Most Tzu-Chi participants do not spend any great length of time in the Still Thought Abode.

As my primary interest is people's helping behavior under daily life and within their personal social networks, the Still Thought Abode thus is not a good settings for my long term observation. I thus only spent a total of about 20 days at the

Still Thought Abode. I stayed there once as a volunteer at the Tzu-Chi hospital for 15 days. Following that, I took the 3 day pilgrimage--the so-called "Tzu-Chi Train" (see chapter 7's discussion)--with about 500 other participants, to the Still Thought Abode. These experiences of participant observation thus helped me to understand the symbolic meanings which underlie Tzu-Chi participants' talk about the Still Thought Abode and the Tzu-Chi hospital. However, in addition to the Still Thought Abode and the Tzu-Chi hospital, most of my field work was done in Tzu-Chi's Taichung Branch.

2. The Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch, after the Tzu-Chi Taipei Branch, is the second biggest Branch in Taiwan (see Pictures 2.4). I conducted my participant observation and in-depth interviews in the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch for about one year from April 1995 to March 1996. I only chose one Tzu-Chi Branch for my current study so that I could get more in-depth information about people's long-term prosocial commitment in their daily lives. Thus by participant observation in the same place for about one year, I could obtain more substantial knowledge (from both my own experience and from observation of others) about long term prosocial commitments. In addition, I obtained a more thorough understanding of volunteers' everyday lives and learned more from Tzu-Chi participants by having a deeper relationship with them.

The reasons I choose Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch as my focal site for research are as follows:

1) Since Taichung city is my home town, I have many more accessible resources, in regard to the convenience and the cost, to support myself and my research.

2) The Tzu-Chi leader, Cheng Yen's, home town--Ching Shui Town, is a mid-sized town near Taichung city; and Cheng Yen's mother, now a senior Commissioner, still lives in a place very near Taichung and participates in the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch. Symbolically, Tzu-Chi participants in Taichung believe that they have some kind of special linear-relationship with Cheng Yen (e.g., see Tzu-Chi Monthly 289 and 312's special issues on Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch). Due to this tradition, I have often heard Tzu-Chi participants (not only Taichung's participants) say that members of the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch have strongest loving bonds between each other. In Tzu-Chi it is well known that people in the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch are like members of the same family (see Tzu-Chi Monthly, 312:76). In this organizational structure, I assume that I can observe more intensively the climate that fosters people's prosocial commitments.

3) As Tzu-Chi's second biggest branch (after the Tzu-Chi Taipei Branch) with its large amount of participants (see description in chapter 4), Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch can fully represent Tzu-Chi's general socio-demographic composition. Moreover, as the Tzu-Chi Taipei branch has already been studied by two

researchers (Chung, 1991; Chen, 1991), Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch remains intact for researchers, with researchers remaining unobtrusive to participants in the Taichung branch.

Here a brief introduction of Taichung city and Tzu-Chi's Taichung Branch is necessary.

A 3-hour drive south of Taipei (see Picture 2.5 for map of Taiwan), the city of Taichung sits on a western plain surrounded by mountains. It is a major cultural and educational center and a fast-growing business city in Taiwan. Located in between the two biggest cities of Taipei and Kaoshiung, the position of Taichung thus makes it today the most rapidly developing city in Taiwan today. With over 800,000 inhabitants, Taichung is the third biggest city in Taiwan. The Taiwan Provincial Government also is located about 14 miles southeast of Taichung.

Since 1970, in the name of the Tzu-Chi Association, there have been people in Taichung conducting various helping programs, such as aiding poor families, holding charity bazaars, and giving winter salvation goods. Since that time, active commissioners in Taichung began to spread the ideal of Tzu-Chi all over middle Taiwan. In 1976, the Tzu-Chi Association created a formal office for the Taichung branch. The fast growing number of participants in Taichung soon made the old branch office not unaffordable.

In 1992, Tzu-Chi built a more magnificent Taichung Tzu-Chi center. After the Tzu-Chi Taipei center, this center is the second biggest branch for Tzu-Chi. In the Taichung area, there

is also the second largest number of Tzu-Chi participants. The socio-demographic backgrounds of Tzu-Chi's Taichung participants are varied. All the types of helping programs and social activities held in other Tzu-Chi branches can also be found in Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch. Tzu-Chi's leader, Master nun Cheng-Yen, has called Taichung: "the heart of the Tzu-Chi Association" (Tzu-Chi Yearbook, 1992, p. 15).

Occupying around one third of an acre, the external look of the building of Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch is spectacular (see Picture 2.4). It is a four-story concrete canyon of tall buildings. The first floor contains the main office, visitor's room, accounting room, counselling room, computer room, eating room, and kitchen. Between the first and second floor are some receptions rooms. In the center of the 2rd, 3rd, and 4th floors is an immense hall (which may accommodate more than 2,000 people) for collective gatherings (see Picture 2.6 and 2.7 for collective gathering). Around this hall, there are recording rooms and small meeting rooms (see Tzu-Chi Monthly 312:69). All of the floors are wooden. As one steps in, one must take off his/her shoes, an action which makes one feel that the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch has the intimacy of a home.

With a very spacious physical setting in addition to the formal office (with more than 20 paid employees of accountants and social workers), the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch serves multiple functions for participants, such as being the location for regular gatherings, collective practice, formal and informal

meetings, training sessions, public exhibitions, etc. Moreover, as a Buddhist organization, Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch totally belongs to lay participants. Female Volunteers take turns clean the environment of this whole building. Members of Faith Corps take turn on duty at night to maintain security. As participants staying at Tzu-Chi Branch, there are always free vegetarian meals provided by committed volunteers at mealtimes.

As an apprentice member of the Faith Corps, my observations of Tzu-Chi were basically of those activities I participated in, such as collective practice, training sessions, group meetings, formal and informal gatherings, recycling, emergency intervention, chanting the name of Buddha (see chapter 3), charity sales, Tzu-Chi public speeches, etc. However, due to my research role, after arranging for the Tzu-Chi agencies' permission, I also had the chance to join many other kinds of activities usually reserved for the Commissioner, such as visiting impoverished families, following the Commissioner to ask for donations, and volunteering in the Tzu-Chi hospital. After asking several times, I even had the chance to join the Tzu-Chi's inner staff and cadre meetings.

On many occasions, with no distinction between categories of membership, Tzu-Chi participants gather all together to have their collective meetings or to accomplish some specific charitable work (such as a large-scale charity sale). Since as a apprentice member of the Faith Corps, I wore a uniform similar to those of formal members of the Faith Corps and the male

Commissioner (except with a name card in a different color), my participation in Tzu-Chi's various activities thus did not have any specific restriction. Later I will talk more about how I began my participant role and the variety of this role throughout the duration of my research.

2. INFORMAL INTERVIEW AND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTENSIVE INTERVIEW

The purpose of interviewing is to obtain depth and detail of qualitative data about Tzu-Chi participants' reasons for being involved in and committed to prosocial work, and their motivations, feelings, and perceptions toward prosocial commitment.

During my fieldwork, as opportunities arose, I conducted many informal interviews. These interviews allow me to understand the meaning of each behavior as it occurs in the contexts.

The main data set for this current study is information based upon semi-structured intensive interviews with Tzu-Chi participants. Before I began fieldwork, while still in my proposal stage, I constructed a temporary interview questionnaire. Based upon this questionnaire, during the first two months in the field I conducted some explorative interviews, both formally and informally, with some Tzu-Chi participants (a total of about 10). According to their responses and my experience with participant observation, I then modified, rephrased, and even added some new questions to my interview

questionnaire, relating it more firmly to the frame of reference of the persons being interviewed.

Based upon my later version of the interview questionnaire, I conducted 82 in-depth formal interviews with Tzu-Chi participants of different categories. The sample purposefully sought a broad spectrum of participants' attributes of sex, age, and categories of membership. One of the difficulties of sampling in this case was that I could not access the personal information of participants of the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch from Tzu-Chi agencies. Instead, I had to take the snowballing sampling strategy to access participants for interviewing.

My field experience makes me believe that, among Tzu-chi participants, sex and age are the most important attributes that cause different attitudes and behaviors. Thus, I basically sampled participants by attributes of sex, age, and categories of membership at equal percentages. Therefore, I can maximize the possibility of looking intensively at a wide spectrum of Tzu-Chi participants' experience.

I noticed that many Members' and Honored Patrons' member status is due solely to their household head's contributions (see chapter 4's discussion), such as very young (for example, a 5 year-old boy) and very old (for example, an 80 year-old parent). My sampling thus did not include such members, since they are not self-identified and voluntary Members and Honored Patrons. However, I did include the spouses of those household head in the sampling base, since I found that once they are

Members or Honored Patrons, they clearly self-identify their Tzu-Chi status.

The sampling mainly began with those participants I knew and those who were introduced by people I knew. Some of participants I interviewed are just sampled from Tzu-Chi's settings by chance. For example, once at Tzu-Chi training sessions for new Commissioners (with about 400 people), I made appointments to interview 3 Apprentice Commissioners who were being considered for the status of Commissioner in the short future; and once at Tzu-Chi's monthly conference (with about 800 people), I made appointments with 2 Members. Among the total of 82 respondents that I interviewed, 24 were directly from my own personal network, 35 were introduced by people I knew, and 23 were randomly sampled (according to those attributes I considered important) from Tzu-Chi's settings. Those respondents sampled from my own personal network in Tzu-Chi have more male than female since I joined the all-male group. The crosstable showing the way I reached the respondents and the respondents' sex can be shown in table 2.1:

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Table 2.1. about here

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Since I sampled either from the extension of my own network or from participants appearing in Tzu-Chi's collective settings, my sample may perhaps too homogeneous. Specifically, there may be two problems:

1) as a high proportion of respondents are included in the range of my personal network, those whose network has a higher overlap between participants in different Tzu-Chi categories of membership were more likely to be sampled by me. For example, a female Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner who is active only in her subgroup may have been difficult for me to reach, since she may either rarely be at the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch or not be known by any member of the Faith Corps. Nevertheless, these kind of Commissioners are not common, since most Commissioners like to be at the Tzu-Chi Branch, particularly on important occasions, such as Cheng Yen's visiting. In Tzu-Chi's large-scale activities, such as a big charity sale, all participants are intensively interactive across categories of membership. However, here it should be noted that my sampling strategy indeed may have chosen those participants who have a more sociable character and those participants who are more interested in Tzu-Chi's large-scale activities.

2) Regarding those less committed participants, such as Members and Honored Patrons, my way of sampling may cause a more serious problem. For example, it is not uncommon that some Tzu-Chi Members have never been to Tzu-Chi's Branch; and some Honored Patrons just donate their money once and are never known by other Tzu-Chi participants. All of these kinds of participants were difficult for me to reach. Thus, my sampling of Members and Honored Patrons may be highly skewed in choosing those rather committed (in the sense of being of Tzu-Chi's

Branch more often and being known by other Tzu-Chi participants). However, later in my analysis, I found that those less committed Members and Honored Patrons do differ from other more committed participants, such as Commissioners and Apprentice Commissioners. We may assume that these differences may actually larger, since my skewed sampling of those rather active Members and Honored Patrons may reduce the salience of differences between them and other more committed participants.

With my practical limitations in accessing the whole population of Tzu-Chi, I had no choice but to accept the above problems that may exist in my sampling. However, in my later analysis of the data, I try to be conscious as much as possible of these problems and try to avoid any kind of argument that may be due to my non-random sampling. Moreover, my multiple sources of data may also help me to notice the limitations and problems of my interview data, thus helping me avoid any kind of over-argument.

The specific distribution of sex and age group in my sampling schedule is shown in table 2.2:

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Table 2.2. about here

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Before I interviewed, I explained the purpose and nature of the research to my interviewees face-to-face. All respondents

orally agreed[3] to be interviewed and to be recorded.

Among my 82 respondents, 70 agreed to be interviewed at my first asking, while 12 refused to be interviewed at my first asking, but when I followed up, finally agreed to be interviewed. In other words, as I could reach them by phone or by face-to-face interaction, respondents who refused at first to be interviewed, would be followed up once again within one month. Actually, most Tzu-Chi participants who were in my own personal network or had been introduced by my network were quite willing to accept my interview. For those who were directly asked by myself, a total of four did not accept my interview. Three of these continually stated that: "I am too busy now, could we set up another time later?" One was a very committed Commissioner who has even recorded one of the Tzu-Chi published audiotapes of testimony. However, twice over the phone she both anxiously and angrily refused my interview, saying: "I do not want to accept interview right now. Now I am not very clear. I just do not to be interviewed now..."

For those participants who were asked to be interviewed by

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[3] In Taiwanese cultural contexts, a formal form may make people feel that they are under some kind of legal obligation, or make them feel that the research is being conducted by a government-related institution. These situations may make the respondents give rather conservative responses when answering the questions. Moreover, as I developed good relationships with those respondents, a formal oral consent form could make them feel very uncomfortable about my research role. Therefore, prior to the interview, I had only asked for the respondents' oral consent to being interviewed, rather than use a formal consent form. The script of the oral consent is shown in Appendix A (also originally asked in Chinese, see Appendix B).

participants I knew, it was difficult for me to document how many who had actually reject my interview. The only thing I knew is that five participants who agreed to introduce some other Tzu-Chi participants to me, later told me that their friends or relatives (also Tzu-Chi participants) were just too busy to accept my interview.

Of the subjects I randomly chose in Tzu-Chi's settings (notice that I wore the Tzu-Chi's uniform), 6 refused to be interviewed. The reason was most often (for five of them): "I have not done well in Tzu-Chi, others' experience must be better than me. I am still not doing enough..." However, one male committed Commissioner replied to me in a blunt way: "No Need!".

Among the 82 semi-structured interviews I conducted, 6 of them were college students belonging to their Tzu-Chi student Association in their own college. As participants of a type of student clubs, these young students could not be labeled as participants with prosocial commitment. In most of my discussions, I thus will not include them. However, later in my discussion (chapter 8) about Tzu-Chi participants' sensibilities toward cultural norms, for the purpose of comparison, some information based upon these six interviews will be used.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, flexible manner, and whenever it would improve my ability to communicate with respondents, questions were rephrased and reordered. The main purpose of the interview was to ask respondents to review their pathways, considering any

restrictions or turning point in joining Tzu-Chi, to reflect on their past and present experience with prosocial commitment, and to explain the meaning of these helping activities for them. A reference interview questionnaire is included in Appendix C (Originally asked in Chinese, see Appendix D).

The interview were held in a place mutually agreeable to the participants and myself. A total of 34 were interviewed in the Tzu-Chi Taichung branch (most often in the visitor's room [see picture in Picture 2.8], sometimes in an empty office or in the empty eating room); 41 were interviewed in their home; and 7 were interviewed in their work place. As half of the interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes, I was able to gather first-hand data on the lifestyles and socioeconomic backgrounds of these respondents. Most of the interviews took from one and a half hours to two hours. Some interviews (3 of them) took longer than 5 hours, since they were conducted at the respondents' home over the course of multiple visits. Several respondents were later followed up for data clarification and elaboration over the phone or face-to-face.

To get a more specific understanding of participants' motivations for participating in the Tzu-Chi Association, near the end of the interview, I had every respondent fill out a revised Omoto and Snyder's (1995) "motivations for volunteerism" form. Here I need to speak about this form.

In Likert-type scale (where 1, is not at all important and 7 is extremely important), and in terms of five dimensions of

participants' motivation for volunteering (values, understanding, personal development, community concern, and esteem enhancement), Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale includes 25 question items to measure a volunteer's motivation for prosocial commitment. Tested on American Volunteers, the original inventory by Omoto and Snyder was found to be highly reliable in both internal consistency reliability (α=.88) and test-retest reliability (r=.72). Their examination of AIDS volunteers also found that respondents most strongly endorsed values, followed by community concern, understanding, personal development and esteem enhancement as their motivation for volunteering.

Before I brought this scale to the field, I translated it into Chinese and modified it a bit to make it more suitable for Tzu-Chi's volunteers. Also, in addition to asking respondents' current motivations, I also asked respondent to recall their initial motivations. A pre-test was done on four respondents who came from Taiwan and were the bi-lingual in both English and Chinese. They filled out both the Chinese version (translated by me) and the English version of the revised Omoto and Snyder motivation scale, and then expressed their feelings and disagreement about the wording of the Chinese version of this scale. Referring to these respondents' comments, I then made a revised Chinese version of Omoto and Snyder motivation scale for volunteers.

My original interest was that, by borrowing the Omoto and

Snyder motivational scale, I could not only explore the general patterns of Tzu-Chi participants' motivation, but I could also compare the pattern to an American sample. Moreover, I could compare Tzu-Chi participants' current motivation to their recalled initial motivation for prosocial commitment. Therefore, the results would show the tendency of how helping experiences can change one's structural patterns of prosocial motivation.

However, my application of Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale for measuring Tzu-Chi participants' motivation later lead to a much more complicated result (see discussion in chapter 8). Although keeping the original 25 items, after 2 months in the field, I added 21 questions to the scale (The whole revised motivation scale can be seen in Appendix E [originally asked in Chinese, see Appendix F]). These additional items were found to correspond more closely to Tzu-Chi participants' schema of motive talk. It took a total of about 10 to 20 minutes for respondents to fill out this scale. Some respondents (a total of 13, usually of the older age group) preferred that I read the questions on this measurement tool to them and fill out their response for them, so I followed their request.

Since one respondent was only willing to fill out part of this scale, I coded these response to items he did not fill out as missing. One respondent had already been interviewed for all open-ended questions, but when I tried to reach her to fill out this motivation scale, she refused, thus her lack of responses have also been coded as "missing". One respondent filled out all

46 items in this scale as 7--very important. As this was an extremely case, I coded all responses of this respondent as missing.

Rather than only using the face value of respondents' responses to the Omoto and Snyder motivation scale, this scale later became an important tool for me to examine the difference between one's formal articulation of motivation and one's informal talk about motivations for prosocial commitment. The whole of chapter 8 attempts to trace the patterns of people's motive talk and the problems of measuring people's motivations for prosocial commitment.

3. WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

Although my understanding of the prosocial commitments within the Tzu-Chi Association were based largely on participant observations and in-depth interviews of the participants, this understanding was supplemented and complemented by the information obtained from the examination of selected publications from the Tzu-Chi Association--Tzu-Chi's voluminous body of literature (see chapter 5's examination of these publications). While the secondary sources have some weaknesses, such as error recording and the bias of social desirability at the organizational level, these materials can still offer much valuable information:

1. They offer a very rich description of Tzu-Chi's history of

development, formal organizational structure and leadership, formal doctrines and ideology, and recruitment channels and practices. Chapter 6's discussion on Tzu-Chi's ideational system will thus rely heavily on Tzu-Chi's published written documents.

2. Almost every edition of the Tzu-Chi Companion Semimonthly newspaper and the Tzu-Chi Monthly Magazine contains several members' experiences (testimonies). These stories give us an array of data regarding the demographic characteristics of the membership over time, the manner of recruitment, members' retrospective accounts of past life situations, motivational accounts for helping, feelings of social interaction, the perceived benefits of helping, and so on. Although I haven't analyzed this information in any systematic sense, the information is rich raw data for me to gain further insight into Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment. As the chance arose, during our discussions, I actually made use of this data quite often, with the meanings of these materials had been re-interpreted by me.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS

All in-depth interviews have been recorded and transcribed verbatim. This became the richest data set that facilitated my analysis. All of the interviews are arranged by case number and page number.

Other written data mainly include: a working log, a dairy,

observation fieldnotes and analytical notes, and various Tzu-Chi relevant documents and publications. Observation notes all are arranged by dates (with page numbers). Analytical notes (more than 100 of them) are my own reflective thinking on various issues, such as theoretical construction, ethical dilemmas and conflicts, methodological problems, specific points of clarification, etc. These later proved to be very helpful in building my framework of analysis.

Due to the demanding tasks of fieldwork and participation, I could not finished all my written notes in the short time schedule. I thus also have another set of fieldnotes saved in the oral format. These include both oral observation notes and analytical notes. As these are saved in more than 15 audio-tapes (90 minutes each) and with a detailed catalog, I can retrieve this data set anytime I want.

In addition to this data, there are more than 100 audiotapes on which I recorded all formal or informal gatherings--such as Cheng Yen's public speeches, the cadres' speeches in training session, group meetings, etc., since I have joined the Tzu-Chi. Arranged by date and a detailed catalog, this audiotaped information has also constituted a valuable and easily retrievable data set for my later analysis.

To manage and retrieve the volume of written information, transcripts and fieldnotes had to be coded in different categories and subcategories (which were developed in the later stages of my fieldwork). For transcripts, a detailed catalog

indexes the frequencies and positions of all these categories. This also later proved to be a very helpful aid in retrieving my data and in building my framework of analysis.

Moreover, keeping all collected data in a well-organized, retrievable form, makes them available easily if my findings are challenged or if another researcher wants to reanalyze the data. In this sense, the procedures of data management I present here are thus quite helpful in enhancing the reliability of the current study (e.g., see Kirk and Miller, 1986).

FIELDWORK AND MEMBERSHIP

As Tzu-Chi is a charismatic movement with members' vigorously active in "converting" new participants, how to situate my research role in Tzu-Chi's collective settings was a continual process of negotiation and exploration. Carrying both the roles of participant and researcher into the field was like being torn between two worlds. Moreover, how I presented myself within the Tzu-Chi settings always affected my relationships with other Tzu-Chi participants and further, the quality of my collected data. There is thus a need to trace back my struggle between the research role and the participant role throughout the process of field work, and what the issues that emerged in these struggles. For the convenience of the current discussion, I will discuss my dual role as researcher and participant and my field relations with other Tzu-Chi participants in different stages as follows:

1. BEFORE BEING INVOLVED IN THE FIELD: A PURELY RESEARCH ROLE

Although Tzu-Chi is a grassroots organization in Taiwanese society, for a Taiwanese like myself, however, it is also a totally new cultural experience.

First of all, I have a very different socio-demographic background from most of the Tzu-Chi participants. My parents emigrated from Mainland China after Communists occupied the mainland in 1949; thus my personal background is different from those people whose parents came from Mainland China before 1949. While people who came from Mainland China after 1949 generally are high-ranking officers, low-ranking officers, teachers, and military troops, other Taiwanese (except the original inhabitants) are mainly business men, local political elites, workers, and farmers. Culturally, these two groups may not have great differences, but different identifications and political attitudes (particularly with regard to the issue of independence) do exist between these two groups. While the former group (the so-called "Mainlanders") is accustomed to speaking Mandarin (Chinese, the official language of the government of Taiwan), the latter group (the so-called "Native province people") prefer to speak in Taiwanese local languages.

However, after 40 years of intermarriage and assimilation and popular education, these differences have become very vague, especially for the people of the second generation like myself. Yet since mid-aged people constitute the main bulk of Tzu-Chi participants (see table 2.2. and the discussion in chapter 4),

these differences may become much more salient. For one thing, although almost all Tzu-Chi participants can understand Mandarin, at all private and public gatherings, Tzu-Chi participants always speak in local Taiwanese. Young Tzu-Chi participants who cannot speak Taiwanese fluently must learn to do so in Tzu-Chi. One senior female Commissioner (a "Native province person") told me that she had many good "Mainlander" friends who wanted to join Tzu-Chi, but mainly due to the problem of language, they would just not "fit" in Tzu-Chi. That is, based upon local and grassroots experiences, Tzu-Chi is mainly a charitable organization constituted by "Native province people", at least in my experience with the Taichung Branch.

For whatever reasons (see chapter 3's review of past Taiwanese political history), my past experience and my personal background actually are quite removed from most local "Native province people's" life experiences (without saying that my Taiwanese language is not very fluent). Thus, studying Tzu-Chi was also like a new cultural experience for me.

In addition to this main difference between me and most Tzu-Chi participants, many other features of Tzu-Chi also make a new experience to me: the charismatic sources of social influence, the religious climate, the way of social interaction among people at the grassroots level, etc. Therefore, my Taiwanese background may help me to fit in Tzu-Chi's settings better than people of other nationalities. However, as Tzu-Chi is still quite a new cultural experience to me, I actually do

not have very salient pre-assumed ethical standards and subjective orientation. This is not to say that my research is purely untarnished by my own interests or values. At least, before going into the field, I had a relatively objective and non-involved position for conducting the research. To some extent, with regard to most Tzu-Chi participants' social backgrounds, I am quite an outsider, in the process of exploring the shared meanings of a collectivity that is quite different from myself.

When entirely in my research role, my initial contact with Tzu-Chi was quite positive. Agencies in the Tzu-Chi main office welcomed my interests about Tzu-Chi. Many valuable documents and published books were given to me freely. Although they informed me that I could not access their member list, they were willing to sample for me according to the attributes my research was purposefully concerned with (Thus I could sample without seeing their member list). My entry was gained much more easily than I had expected. Tzu-Chi agencies expressed their kind cooperation as I contacted them with my research intentions, particularly as they notice that the report of this research would be written in English, and as I informed them that this work could be helpful in introducing more foreigners to Tzu-Chi.

2. BEGINNING AS A PARTICIPANT: EARLY FIELD RELATIONS WITH TZU-CHI PARTICIPANTS

The early field relations with Tzu-Chi participants can be

referred to as the "honeymoon stage", particularly as my research role was still salient, and as other participants perceived my willingness to study Tzu-Chi as an encouraging sign of Tzu-Chi's success.

After gaining permission from the Tzu-Chi Main office in Hualien, and after being introduced to a cadre--Mr. Wang (pseudonym) from Taichung branch--to help me, I began to conduct my field work in the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch. I had not yet decided in what way to join Tzu-Chi; however, in my first contact with Mr. Wang, he suggested that becoming a member of the Faith Corps and doing volunteer work with them would be the best way to learn about Tzu-Chi (this is actually highly related to Tzu-Chi's preliminary life philosophy--"go ahead and do it" [see chapter 6]). Corresponding to my original research plan, I thus began as an apprentice member of the Faith Corps.

In the first week of my field work, I had not yet worn the Tzu-Chi uniform. I appeared in many Tzu-Chi settings with my camera and recording machine, and Tzu-Chi participants soon were aware of my presence. When chances arose, I asked other participants about anything about Tzu-Chi and their history of joining Tzu-Chi. Tzu-Chi participants all answered me patiently and nicely, although the answers were quite similar: "We are touched by our Master"; "We are without any external expectation"; "Tzu-Chi is such a good organization full of love".

Probably compared to most Tzu-Chi participants, I looked

very young. From Tzu-Chi participants' responses, I noticed that my presence had a double meaning for Tzu-Chi participants: 1) if Tzu-Chi had begun to attract the young elite to participate, it would be a great sign that Tzu-Chi's development could continue without any difficulties; 2) if a young elite could possibly know how good Tzu-Chi people are, Tzu-Chi's social influence may also increased. Tzu-Chi participants thus treated me both as a young researcher with a good conscience and as a potential convert that might make a great contribution to Tzu-Chi.

For example, I heard more than five participants say these similar kinds of words to me: "You are so blessed. In such a young age, you can join and study Tzu-Chi. You must have such good fortune to have studied so many books. Now you have this chance to learn about Tzu-Chi. The Tzu-Chi world is so beautiful. You must spread the beauty of our Tzu-Chi to all the world."

Soon I begin to wear the Tzu-Chi uniform, thus playing both the participant role and researcher role. However, most Tzu-Chi participants still seemed to remember clearly that I was a young researcher with a positive interest (of course I had to act as such) about Tzu-Chi, and to continually treat me patiently and warmly.

At this stage, every person in the observed site was a "native professional master" (in the sense that they are very skillful in dealing with a special set of social actions through their specific symbolic systems and cultural knowledge). I, on

the other hand, was a novice in the observed site. My manner of asking questions was thus quite polite, and my questions were quite non-personal (generally regarding their knowledge about Tzu-Chi). Tzu-Chi participants actually respected my interest about Tzu-Chi and were willing to have a positive interpersonal tie with me (also see the discussion in chapter 7 on affectionate bonds).

As my research role was still salient (I remained as unobtrusive as possible), and as my participant role had not yet been played out intensively, I had quite a good relationship with people in the field. Some kind of distance kept me and Tzu-Chi participants in a harmonious relationship, although it also enabled me to get only positive and rather general information about Tzu-Chi.

3. MIXED UP BETWEEN THE RESEARCH ROLE AND PARTICIPANT ROLE--TENSION IN THE FIELD

After about one month in the field, Tzu-Chi participants began to forget the presence of my researcher role in Tzu-Chi. Wearing the same uniform and speaking a similar kind of language, I was just like an active new participant. This result actually came about due to my personal efforts in following Tzu-Chi's various rituals regarding expression and interaction.

It may be questionable whether a researcher should participate in the everyday lives of those under study (Adler & Adler, 1987; Douglas, 1976; Rochford, 1985). Tzu-Chi actually

has quite reputation in Taiwanese society, with its charismatic source of social influence, but we cannot label it as a stigmatized group. In this sense, I did not personally feel any difficulties in following Tzu-Chi's rituals of expression. These expressions are the signs that one has begun to be a serious Tzu-Chi participant. These signs may include:

1) Most importantly: Thanking, greeting, or saying goodbye to each other by saying "*Amitaba*" (the name of a Bodhisattva, which literally means "immeasurable light" or "immeasurable life". It is the Buddhist way to greet each other, also see chapter 3's description);

2) Appearing and participating each Wednesday night in collective practice (see Picture 2.9). This lasts about one and a half hours. In the ritual participants do chanting and continual religious kneels (more than 50 times long kneels, the so-called: "a word a kneels". That is, chant a paragraph of the Lotus Sutra with long kneels for each word) which express one's strong devotion to both Buddhism and Tzu-Chi;

3) Any time you step into the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch, after taking off your shoes, doing three long kneels toward the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva in the front of the hall. This means that you accept her--the symbol of a compassionate mind--as a respectable goddess;

4) Talking in typical Tzu-Chi terminology, such as saying "immeasurable merits" after voluntary work done; say "blessing" (*kan-en*) instead of saying "thank you" to each other (senior Tzu-Chi participants almost never say thank you to each other); calling each other Brother and Sister (more examples are shown in chapter 6); and

5) As chances arose, participating in the ritual of chanting the name of Buddha as much as possible. Chapter 3 and chapter 4 further discuss this specific ritual.

Although in the beginning I still had some struggles about how active my participant role should be, I soon understood that I probably did not have much choice. Once I began as a Tzu-Chi participant, I was involved in a long interactive process of how to properly play the Tzu-Chi role. There certainly was a kind of collective climate to make me behave in a specific way. If I wanted to stay at the settings, I had better behave just so; or I should just leave the settings (for me, this meant quit my observation; for others, it meant withdraw from Tzu-Chi). It is awkward, or, frankly, impossible, to stay in Tzu-Chi's settings for a long time without behaving in the "Tzu-Chi way". In chapter 7 I explore these issues more intensively. Here I want to point out that once I decided to do fieldwork in Tzu-Chi's settings for such a long time, I also became involved in the commitment process that most Tzu-Chi participants have

experienced. As long as I stayed in the field, whether I was willing or not, strong social expectations led me a step further toward Tzu-Chi's way of behaving, even though I may have originally thought that I was protected by my research role. As the boundary between my participant role and my research role begin to blur, I begin to become more empathetic to what the world looks like from other participants' points of view (that is, the method of *Verstehen* [Weber, 1947]). However, unexpectedly, I felt that my relationships with other participants changed to a disadvantageous state for conducting my research.

I felt that as I began to be a real participant in Tzu-Chi, Tzu-Chi participants, particularly cadres or agencies, seemed to see me as some kind of intruder. I seemed to be not the kind of person they had thought I was ("a consciousness researcher concerned about reporting how great the Tzu-Chi is"). They particularly began to notice that sometimes I asked more questions than they expected.

For example, in the earlier two months in the field, to pre-test whether Omoto and Snyder's motivational scale was appropriate, I asked some informants to help me fill out this measurement tool and to offer their opinions. For Tzu-Chi participants, these questions concerning the motivation for their prosocial commitment seemed to be particularly offensive. Even though I emphasized to those respondents that this motivational scale was just a neutral measurement tool, some

responded to me strongly in saying that their motivation was rather simple and pure (see more discussion in chapter 8). One even told me that since I had already participated Tzu-Chi long enough, I should know their motivation of prosocial commitment clearly. Some of the Tzu-Chi participants even reported to Tzu-Chi Cadre and asked whether they should accept my interview (A Tzu-Chi Cadre later told me about this story).

As Tzu-Chi is a charitable organization with quite a positive social reputation, my questions relating to participants' motivation and emotional state of prosocial commitment seemed to be not welcomed at all. Though my active role as participant brought me some credit to make other Tzu-Chi participants believe that I was the kind of researcher who would appreciate Tzu-Chi's way, my specific research agenda (in-depth interviews) soon ruined these credits. Even worse, cadres began to doubt my previous acts of showing positive interest about Tzu-Chi. The warm cooperation from Tzu-Chi agencies stopped (since the Tzu-Chi Taichung branch is led by those cadres).

Soon, the Tzu-Chi main office in Hualien also told me that they had difficulties in giving me a list of names for my interviews. Indeed, if cadres in the Taichung Branch were not willing to do so, agencies in the Tzu-Chi main office certainly could not change anything. I was astonished by the Tzu-Chi agencies' (both at the local and national levels) attitude toward my research. As one Tzu-Chi cadre in Taichung told me: "I try to help you. But I feel your questionnaire is very

bad...Your questions are irrelevant to Tzu-Chi people...I try to help you. So I let you participate our various programs. I hope you can continue to do that instead of asking these irrelevant questions. Our Tzu-Chi's people are simple and pure. You have participated such a long time, you should understand that." A Tzu-Chi agent in the main office told me by phone: "We never agree to help you to sampling from Tzu-Chi's name list. I can understand that you researcher has your standpoint. However, your interview is last too long. People in Tzu-Chi Branch is not feel good about your interview. Your questions are not suitable for our Tzu-Chi people." When I asked who told her so, she replied, "They just feel so."

I believe that this kind of tension was inevitable. However, it came earlier and stronger than I had expected. In general, during the process of my research, as my participant role began to emerge and my research role also became active, Tzu-Chi agencies began to want to control the path of my research, thus causing the tension. Moreover, as I began to gain entry to some settings originally off-limits for outsiders, my research intentions became the focus of both Tzu-Chi agencies and active Tzu-Chi participants (a Cadre later told me that they had some discussions about this issue [my loyalty toward Tzu-Chi] in their inner meetings).

Several things also made the tension more serious: 1) Since Tzu-Chi already had a very positive social image, my in-depth participant research probably could not make Tzu-Chi's image any

better, only worse; 2) Once I began to bring up those questions about motivation (the study of helping behavior was of most concern) in the field, Tzu-Chi participants and agencies became overly-sensitive; 3) For whatever reasons (see chapter 3 and chapter 6); 4), in some anti-intellectual sense, Tzu-Chi's ideational system puts particular emphasis on a philosophy of "social engineering" and "just go ahead and do it". My intellectual and critical thinking about Tzu-Chi, according to Tzu-Chi's ideational system, thus is neither relevant nor constructive for this society. As the Master Cheng Yen said to me during our short meeting: "Now there are many people interested in studying our Tzu-Chi. However, it is not just a research. It's not just a written work. You should learn our Tzu-Chi spirit, and bring it with you beyond those only written works."

4. DEEP INVOLVEMENT IN BOTH MY PARTICIPANT ROLE AND MY RESEARCH ROLE--LATER STAGES IN THE FIELD

After the third month in the field I became involved in both my research role and my participant role more deeply. However, the conflict between these two roles was not yet very serious. After becoming more familiar with Tzu-Chi's various settings, whether technically or psychologically, I then knew more clearly of how to situate myself in the settings. Moreover, I also began to have my own social network in the Tzu-Chi settings, relationships which helped me to learn much more about

Tzu-Chi.

At the previous stage, I had some tension with Tzu-Chi's cadres, thus any further substantial cooperation from them was almost impossible. At that point, however, if the agencies allowed me to stay in the field, it would be good enough for me to continue my study. As I was an apprentice member of my own group of the Faith Corps, most of my participating activities--such as informal gatherings, small group meetings, division of labor in charity sales, joining the ritual of chanting the name of Buddha for near and recently deceased people, etc., actually kept me in my own micro-interaction contexts. I felt that even though most participants in my group knew about my research purposes, unlike the agencies and cadres, they were not particularly sensitive about my presence, especially after I had been in the field more than 3 months. Even my group leader expressed his good will in support of my research (however, later I found that he was terribly busy in dealing with Tzu-Chi's "more meaningful" charity and recruitment work, thus he could not possibly give me any kind of substantial help).

Here I want to emphasize that the Tzu-Chi agencies and cadres certainly had quite different concerns from other Tzu-Chi participants. In most cases, a researcher must get permission from the organizational agencies and cadres to conduct his/her research. As one gets the permission from agencies and cadres, one maybe also be told by them what and when to observe. However, if one has been allowed to do the research freely (a

charitable organization like Tzu-Chi actually has no reason to refuse a researcher's request) and one has stayed into the field long enough, one's participant role may fit in a specific local setting. As such, one's research role may be more highly affected by these settings than by those earlier tensions between the researcher and the organizational agencies or cadres.

Engaging in my participant role and getting cooperation from my personal network with regard to my research work, at this stage, my research actually went smoothly. By snowballing sampling strategies, it was also not very difficult for me to access other Tzu-Chi participants.

However, some problems soon arose. As participants in my group became accustomed to my presence, they also began to ask me to contribute more to Tzu-Chi (since they believed that I was a highly educated person, I certainly could contribute to Tzu-Chi a lot). Particularly, some participants in our group seemed to believe that since I was collecting data about Tzu-Chi, I certainly could help our group to file all historical documents (autobiographies of participants and photos of activities).

For example, I once got a emergency call saying: "Brother Ting, Brother Liang's mother is in hospital, several our members are visiting her. Can you come there quickly and both take some pictures and make files about this event for us?" Once during our group meeting, our group leader ask me publicly to be our group's file collector. Since in Tzu-chi, only when you are

doing something can people really trust you, the best policy is never to show your hesitation in public meetings. I had no choice but to agree to do so, although in the end I only wrote two stories about active participants in our group. Furthermore, a costly thing was that every time I took some pictures of our group's activities, a group leader and some other participants would often ask me for extra copies of these photos. To keep my good relationship with other participants, I had to spend a good deal of time handling these kinds of things.

With regard to interviews, while a more penetrating personal network might help me more easily access more participants to interview, becoming too familiar with participants might also cause occasional problems. Tzu-Chi's norm postulates that a good Tzu-Chi participant should do more things instead of only saying things (see the discussion in chapter 6). Therefore, as the respondents and myself got to know each other well, these respondents actually often wondered why, since I was already a long-term participant, I continued to ask those "irrelevant" questions, such as "Do you ever want to withdraw from Tzu-Chi?" "Do you feel tired when you join Tzu-Chi's so many various helping programs?" "Do you think that your involvement in Tzu-Chi is due to that you want to have more friends? stable life? or growth of self?" Although nobody explicitly expressed disliking being be interviewed, I felt that many participants I interviewed were somewhat reluctant to answer some of my questions. The frequent response I heard from

them was: "You know. You are also a Tzu-Chi people. You do not need to ask me." "You know..mm..that we Tzu-Chi people are so moved by our Master." "We should do more, you know..say much is not meaningful..."

Moreover, as the rather formal refined Omoto and Snyder volunteer's motive scale was presented at the end of each interview, I felt that I had some difficulties asking my "good friends" to help me fill out this kind of scale. First, they already assumed that if I was a Tzu-Chi man, I should understand why they wanted to join Tzu-Chi. Second, bringing out this formal instrument may have made them feel that my relationship with them was just a way to take advantage of them. I remember upon finishing one interview, I actually was struck in hearing the Tzu-Chi Brother I had known for more than 6 months say, thoughtlessly, "now you get your purpose."

That is, when I was not very familiar with my subjects, they often doubted my loyalty about this organization, and thus were reluctant to speak frankly with me. On the other hand, when I participated enough to be known by other participants and had chance to ask questions of those I was familiar with, organizational norms still prohibit me from asking many questions. In the symbolic interactional process of the interview, there is a complex relationship among researcher's playing of the participant role, organizational norms, and the subjects' personal relationship with researcher. A good researcher should consider how these factors will affect the

reliability of each single interview. A conscientious researcher should also consider how these factors might affect his/her later relationship with the subjects, if he/she wants to live with them in the field for a while. That is, there is always some complicated influence on one's research that may stem from one's change of relationships with other participants.

5. LEAVING THE FIELD: THE RESEARCH ROLE WITHOUT THE INCUMBENT ON PARTICIPANT ROLE

When I left the field, on the surface it seemed that my participation had been a temporary pose. However, Tzu-Chi's influences on me were far-reaching and complicated. Whether for my relationships with other Tzu-Chi participants, my relations with outside society, and my own further work of data analysis, I am continually struggling to find a proper standpoint between my researcher role and participant role.

I would remember forever how those Tzu-Chi participants committed fully, often more than 10 hours a day under the hot sun, to various charitable works. Many miserable people who have been ignored by society, have been taken good care of by Tzu-Chi volunteers.

Before I left the field, after I finished my testimony (following our group leader's request) in group meeting, our group leader said to me and all other Brothers (about 40 of them) in public: "Brother Ting, do not forget that you are already forever our 'Tzu-Chi people'. We Taichung Branch are

waiting for your back to contribute here. You then will be our first Ph.D. in our Taichung Branch. We wait for your being back..."

Now by what standards and from what stances can I analyze them? They are my old friends. They are engaging in great social enterprise without any expected external rewards. And I, join them just to finish my degree? How can I now turn those compassionate Tzu-Chi participants into objects of analysis? While sociology is always critically perceiving social reality, social psychology is also quite cynical in examining the motivation for people's prosocial commitment. Any thing I write certainly will be too cruel and too critical to those fully committed Tzu-Chi participants, and also to my own attachments and feelings toward Tzu-Chi.

It is quite luxurious and advantageous for me that I can leave the field and conduct my writing from a distance. Nevertheless, as I was began my analytic work back in the U.S., the struggle deep in my heart continued. Indeed, without seeing and hearing about my old friends (I think probably I was intentionally avoiding hearing about them), I could gradually sharpen my thoughts, even though it was true that the first several months after I left the field, I was so depressed about writing things critical of the Tzu-Chi. Later my writing became more focused on the enterprise of sociology instead of the enterprise of Tzu-Chi. However, there is still anxiety and struggle in every argument I make about Tzu-Chi.

My connection with Tzu-Chi, however, continued even after I returned to the U.S. Once I joined the Tzu-Chi Chicago Branch's 5 year anniversary celebration. I got the chance to know an important volunteer in the Tzu-Chi Chicago Branch (since her mother in Taiwan has been interviewed by me). After learning that I had been a Tzu-Chi participant for one year, and that I was "so good willing" of having studied Tzu-Chi, she soon discovered that I was the appropriate person to "spread our Tzu-Chi spirit" to Wisconsin. I replied that probably I was too busy writing my dissertations and that I would not be staying too long in Madison.

However, later I was contacted several times by different Tzu-Chi participants asking me about the possibilities of establishing a Tzu-Chi Branch in Madison (whether by me or do I have any suggestions?). Since I indeed did not have enough resource to do this kind of thing for Tzu-Chi, at this point it was not difficult for me to refuse this quest. (However it can also be argued by my Tzu-Chi friends, that since they had already committed so much, why did I still have an excuse to escape?). I expect that I might later have more anxiety about facing this kind of request. As a researcher and a participant of Tzu-Chi, I really had difficulties finding a comfortable stance between them, particularly when facing other Tzu-Chi participants.

Tzu-Chi now is the most powerful grassroots organization in Taiwan. Its charismatic leadership, fully committed volunteers,

and great ability for mobilizing social resources, have all caused outsiders's curiosity, and sometimes even criticism. My link with Tzu-Chi, incumbent with both the role of researcher and of participant, has many times been a burden to me. Near the end of my field work, I have the opportunity to join a conference (in Taiwan) to present some of my research results about Tzu-Chi (The issues of institutionalization). At the end of my presentation, however, most questions were not about my research results. Most of the audiences was more concerned with things they did not know about Tzu-Chi, such as: "Do you think these volunteers are professional enough to do social work?" "Do you think Tzu-Chi has mobilized too much social resources that had made other voluntary organizations difficult to survive in our society?" I then replied that "at the grassroots level, Tzu-Chi did contribute a lot to our society. Indeed according to their own life experiences, these commissioners certainly took good care of miserable people on a very long term basis. That Tzu-Chi has explored and mobilized so many social resources is just a very recent phenomenon. To some extent, Tzu-Chi has stimulated so many people who had never donated before to become a substantial contribution to our society. We cannot say that Tzu-Chi has a monopoly of social resources, since many resources are explored and mobilized by them."

I was not sure whether my answer was right, but I feel that when facing outsiders who are curious about Tzu-Chi, people relied heavily on my information. This link with me and Tzu-Chi,

when I was ready to accept this link, was really a big burden. To avoid this burden, I had better not let others know that I have studied Tzu-Chi. However, sometimes that is impossible.

The burden actually became more serious, since many outsiders just want to listen to those answers they want to hear. Their asking you about Tzu-Chi is just a way to get insiders information to confirm their own cynical thinking about Tzu-Chi. After I finished my field work, I was asked so many times by my friends the same kinds of questions: "Why are these Tzu-Chi Commissioners so crazy committed?" "Why can Cheng Yen attract so many people?" "Are these Tzu-Chi Commissioners really compassionate people?" Sometimes I answered that: "at the collective level, at first, merit-accumulation indeed is an important hidden reason to make so many people conduct helping behavior, but in their motive talk, they have various vocabularies to interpret their motivation, thus they can continually engage in prosocial commitment. So we may say that people's motivation changes across time" But soon I noticed that this was a very bad answer. I noticed that quite often my audience seemed to be relieved as they first heard me say that: "merit-accumulation is an important reason for Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment." Probably nobody noticed what I said after that.

As I was repeatedly asked about Tzu-Chi by outsiders, I really began to worry about the influence of my words about Tzu-Chi. I cannot shut my mouth and not talk about Tzu-Chi, since

people are so curious about it and ask me continually. But on most occasions, people do not expect complicated answers, and people only remember those things they want to hear. Personally, I do not have a very strong moral attachment to defending Tzu-Chi, yet I have experienced many things other outsiders want to know. My relationships with Tzu-Chi actually has been reinforced as I faced the suspicions and judgements of persons outside the Tzu-Chi. My link with Tzu-Chi as both a researcher and participant certainly may lead me to some kind of moral battle again and again.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

To explore helping behavior in Tzu-Chi's settings, two main methods of data collection--participant observations and intensive semi-structured interviews--were exploited in the current study. Some written documents were used as additional data sources.

Clearly presenting the procedure of how I collected my data can thus enhance the reliability of my data, such that: 1) By stating my social background and interests, the sources that may influence the interpretation and collection of data can be identified; 2) The semi-structured checklist of questions may enhance the standerized procedure of interviewing without losing its flexibility; 3) The standardized procedure of writing and coding my fieldnotes and transcripts also enhances the reliability of my data. Therefore; 4) I kept all collected data

in a well-organized, retrievable form. This procedure thus may help to enhance the trustworthiness of my data. If my findings are challenged, other researchers may retrieve my data for further analysis.

Gathered data from different sources, may avoid the risks that stem from a reliance on a single kind of data. My analysis of data has involved a long process of both confirmation and unconfirmation of different sources of data. Indeed the exact objectivity is difficult to assure. Nevertheless, by being as self consciousness and self reflexive as possible about my own assumptions and possibility of distorting the data, these different sources of data can help me produce a more complete picture of my research subject.

With regard to my field work and relations with other Tzu-Chi participants, the balance between my research role and participant role, was continually a struggle. My relations with other Tzu-Chi participants also changed across time.

While at first my researcher role may have been an advantage for me to obtain a lot of general data about Tzu-Chi, as it began to mix with my participant role, it also begin to cause agencies and cadres's anxieties about my path of research. However, once I had been in field long enough, the tensions between me and other cadres did not disappear, but I actually become more skillful in situating myself in the settings. With more resources to engage my own path of study, further inherent tensions with Tzu-Chi agencies and cadres could be avoided.

Because of my deep involvement in my participant role, I could easily access more Tzu-Chi participants. However, under Tzu-Chi's organizational climate (participants believe that "social practice is extremely important") and local settings, in which I was participating (inescapable intensive interaction with a small group of people), I also begin to be overwhelmed by my participant role. Moreover, my familiarity with interviewees sometimes caused various kinds of problems.

Since my interests and concerns were basically different from those Tzu-Chi participants who are committed to Tzu-Chi voluntarily, in the depth of my heart, I can only possibly become a marginal member of Tzu-Chi. However, my substantial link with Tzu-Chi, has always implied special meanings and expectations for both Tzu-Chi participants and outsiders. My experience of living with highly committed helpers also makes me continually struggle with both my researcher role and my participant role. Furthermore, studying a publicly acknowledged and controversial group like Tzu-Chi, I also begin to face the constant dilemma of how to show my own feelings and evaluation about Tzu-Chi publicly.

CHAPTER 3. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF TZU-CHI'S ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH

> ***The building of Tzu-Chi hospital had so many local people's support, and it also had officers' agreement... Once those landlords knew that it might be possible to give their land to Tzu-Chi to build the hospital, they were very quick to sign their agreements, and agreed to contribute their land and houses that they had worked hard for their whole life. They even agreed to accept the least compensation. That day, as they received the compensation and Letter of Thanks, their eyes were full of tears [of happiness]...(Cheng Yen, 1993:170)***

Why does the Tzu-Chi Association succeed in the current historical contexts of Taiwan? What kinds of socio-cultural backgrounds underlie Tzu-Chi's establishment and development? Having briefly reviewed Tzu-Chi's historical development in chapter 1, we may go further to investigate the historical and cultural backgrounds of Tzu-Chi. Since various social and cultural factors may crucially affect people's collective helping under specific historical contexts, further exploration of these backgrounds is needed to avoid sounding superficial in our further treatment of Tzu-Chi. Several dimensions relevant to Tzu-Chi's development will be examined in this chapter.

POLITICAL DIMENSION

Politically, the Taiwanese have been governed by several totally different political regimes. From the mid-1660s to 1895, Taiwan was administered by the Imperial Chinese government, after which, until 1945, the island was ruled by the Japanese as a colony. In 1945 Taiwan reverted to China, and in 1949 it became the last territory controlled by the Nationalist government, or so-called KMT.

Nationalist President Chiang Kai-Shek established a new and "provisional" capital in Taipei. Just before retreating to Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek had secured a revision of the constitution granting him broad powers under a system of martial law, including the ability to restrict freedom of assembly, free expression, and political activities. President Chiang remained in office until his death in 1975, and the power was effectively transferred to his son, Chiang Ching-Kuo. The transition from Chiang Kai-shek to Chiang Ching-Kuo as president was accompanied by a gradual shift from a more autocratic to a more populist style of authoritarianism. Chiang Ching-Kuo's political associates recruited more Taiwanese into higher positions in the KMT and the military.

Until 1986 no opposition parties were permitted, and the island was perpetually under martial law. In 1987 martial law was lifted, and a major opposition party, the Democratic Progress Party--whose members had previously functioned politically as "independents"--was legalized. Currently,

effective leadership has passed to a new generation, including an ever-increasing number of native-born Taiwanese (see Sutter, 1988: xi-xx). In 1988 Lee Teng-Hui, born in Taiwan in 1923, succeeded to the presidency of the country and was elected chairman of the KMT. Further, a majority of Taiwan-born members was elected to the KMT's highest party organ, its standing committee. In 1995, for the first time, Taiwan held a general election for President and Lee Teng-Hui was elected. However, Taiwan's claim to be the legitimate government of China and the establishment of a formally separate status for the island have always provoked Mainland China's harsh intervention.

In short, regarding the influence of Taiwanese political development, we can say that as the Taiwanese have been governed by several different political regimes, there has been almost no opportunity for the Taiwanese people to develop a real civil society. This situation has only changed in very recent days.

ECONOMIC DIMENSION

On the other side of this story is Taiwanese success in economic development. Over the past decades, Taiwan's economy has been transformed from agricultural to industrial. The island's postwar economic development has been one of the most spectacular of any developing country. In constant prices, the gross national product increased more than 40 times between the mid-1950s and mid-1990s (Quarterly National Economic Trends,

Taiwan, 1996). The major reason for this was vigorous export promotion in an expanding global economy. Per capita product and personal income increased more than ten times, while a relatively equal distribution of income became more equitable (Quarterly National Economic Trends Taiwan, 1996). The major reasons for this were the initially broad distribution of ownership of land and capital and the high returns to labor, first in agriculture and later in the export industries. The obligation to increase and repay family resources has motivated the individual Chinese and has produced much of the rapid growth of Taiwan's economy (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.28:378).

Following this industrial boom have been the striking changes in Taiwan's economic structure. Between 1960 and 1980, industry's share of the gross domestic product doubled, from 26% to 52%, while agriculture's share declined from 32% to 8%. The rate for services--including government, transportation, commerce, and banking--remained nearly constant, at just over 40%. Similar changes occurred in the composition of the work force. Taiwan has consistently had a low unemployment rate compared with most industrial countries (L. Unger, 1991:235).

RECENT TZU-CHI'S GROWTH

Although I will not try here to offer an overall explanation for Tzu-Chi's fast growth, several factors from the above historical backgrounds should be emphasized to provide a clearer picture of the Tzu-Chi Association.

1. Tzu-Chi's abrupt growth must be understood through recent Taiwanese political openness and economic prosperity. We notice that in 1987, Taiwan lifted its martial law. In 1988 Lee Teng-Hui, born in Taiwan in 1923, succeeded to the presidency of Taiwan. Economically, in 1987, GNP per head topped $ 5,000 for the first time (Quarterly National Economic Trends Taiwan, 1996: 46). The economic growth rate averaged about 10 % for most of the period from 1961 to 1981, and has averaged about 6 % from 1981 to the present. Ten major infrastructure projects, including highways, railways, and steel factories, were completed by the end of 1978, and from 1979 to 1984 another twelve new projects were completed, all aiming to bring Taiwan into the ranks of developed economies. Moreover, in 1964, Taiwan for the first time had an export surplus in its international trade, and since 1987, Taiwan has continued the export surplus every year (for the above statistics see Quarterly National Economic Trends Taiwan, 1996).

For the Tzu-Chi Association in particular, corresponding to this Taiwanese development, we notice that from 1966 to 1987 Tzu-Chi recruited 100,000 members, while after 1987 (the year of lifting martial law), Tzu-Chi's growth increased dramatically. From 1987 to 1991, the number of Tzu-Chi's members has increased about two times each year, from 100,000 members in 1987 to 1,780,000 members in 1991, and currently to more than 4,000,000 members. The numbers of commissioners have increased as well. Tzu-chi had 190 commissioners until 1986; however, in the single

year 1987, it recruited about 700 commissioners, and their numbers have grown steadily to a present 5946 commissioners (see Liu, 1994:20-21; Chang, 1993:78-87). Since Tzu-Chi's growth has corresponded to recent Taiwanese economic and political development, we cannot ignore the material base, including freedom of assembly, economic surplus, and a nation-wide transportation system, that underlies Tzu-Chi's recent rapid growth.

2. As the material base I mentioned above has been an important non-cultural factor underlying Tzu-Chi's rising growth, at the same time we should notice that this material base is also a kind infrastructure for Tzu-Chi's ideational system. That is, as Tzu-Chi's ideology has been accepted by so many Taiwanese people, this "Tzu-Chi's vision" certainly has satisfied many Taiwanese people's deep psychological needs (we will discuss this point further in chapter 6). For example, Tzu-Chi's organizational purpose stating that participants should not intervene in political affairs reflects Taiwanese distrust of and alienated from the political authority and procedures. Also, as Taiwan's economic success and the psychological need to maintain this success, have pushed the Taiwanese people into the international arena and global order, they have needed to find a way to establish their national identity. While an active international political role has always been obstructed by mainland China, charity work certainly is a constructive and

safe way to build both the national and personal identities.

Another example, following Taiwanese economic growth are the results of market extension, rapid urbanization, and the rise of the middle class. I would argue that people's metaphysical vision may run parallel to these new developments, including a more egalitarian view and a more rational and logical way of thinking. The egalitarian nature and the more universal claims of Buddhism (see Darian, 1977), as compared to the traditional Taiwanese folk religion which is a mixture of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, may also correspond more closely to current Taiwanese social situations.[4] This may explain why Buddhist religious groups in Taiwan have had such prosperous growth in recent years. Because of the limitations of data, however, this point can be discussed here briefly only in a hypothetical way.

3. At the same time, Taiwanese rapid economic, social, and cultural change, has fostered religious and charitable groups' growth. Particularly, the rapid monetization of the economy, the increasing commercialization, the expansion of the market systems, the growth of urbanization, and the subsequent higher

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[4] For example, Darian's (1977) treatment of early Buddhism has shown that Buddhism in India was more conducive than Hinduism to the economic affairs of the rising merchant class. Moreover, the egalitarian nature of Buddhism--far more than the compartmentalized caste system--paralleled the market-type relations necessary for expanded commercial enterprise. Therefore, compared to Hinduism, in 7th century B.C. India, Buddhism better satisfied the political and economic needs of the rulers and the economic and status needs of the merchants.

social mobility rates and breakdown of the traditional community and values, constitute a climate of moral indeterminacy and value ambiguity. Scholars have emphasized the potential effectiveness of charitable associations in the assimilation and acculturalization of traditional values (Berg, 1978:146) and highlighted the importance of religious movements' construction of moral ideologies in a morally uncertain atmosphere (Tipton, 1982); thus Tzu-Chi's fast rise in Taiwan, at least to some extent, may be understood as a response to the current unstable social situations of Taiwan. In this context we should especially notice the great emphasis of Tzu-Chi's organizational purpose on filial piety, harmonious social relationships, and social responsibility (we will discuss these issues on chapter 6).

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL BASE OF TZU-CHI'S COLLECTIVE SOCIAL ACTION

In addition to the social and economic backgrounds of Taiwan, we need also to understand the religious and cultural bases for Tzu-chi's collective social action. Fisher's (1984) term "narrative fidelity" postulates that the format of the social actions of an organizational must accord with existing cultural narrations. With regard to Tzu-Chi's collective helping behavior, several aspects inherent in the Taiwanese and Chinese cultural complex must be discussed.

1. The ethical values of Confucianism

As C.K.Yang (1961:280) has pointed out, two facts stand out quite clearly, however inspiring have some of the moral values offered by religions in traditional China been. First, no major religion in Chinese history developed an ethical system comparable to Confucianism in comprehensiveness and in systematic adaption to the characteristics of the indigenous social structure. Second, the major religions in China adopted some of the most strategic Confucian ethical values or made compromise with them. Although some may doubt whether, in Taiwan's current time, this is still true, researchers have indeed found that many of the traditional values of Confucianism are still very prevalent in modern Taiwanese society (see Yang, K.S., 1988).

The heart of Confucius' (551-479 B.C.) system of values lies in his unique combination of loyalty and reciprocity which results in humanness or a sense of humanity. Loyalty, first of all, includes loyalty to one's family, to the ruler, and to the proper way of life, primarily the veneration of ancestors and filial piety. Reciprocity has to do with giving and receiving, so the Chinese "*shu*" corresponds to the concept of altruism (Bush, 1977:15). These two values of loyalty and reciprocity come together, according to Confucius, in one supreme value that has the meaning of humanity, humanness, or being human or humane. To set one's mind on humanity is to be free from evil. This is the summit of virtue in the Confucian value system.

Mencius (371-289? B.C.) affirmed the same values as Confucius but highlighted especially following four: humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. Mencius asserted that these four virtues result from natural feelings which all human beings possess from birth, especially those who are in pain or trouble, and from these feelings arises humanness or humanity (see Bush, 1977:17-19). In modern terms, we may say that Mencius believed that empathy and sympathy are innate, and that it is thus our natural capacity to be righteous and to do good.

Although Confucianism was an ancient teaching, as the dominant moral-political philosophy of China and Taiwan its influences, even today, are far-reaching. One influence, due to Confucianism's emphasis on social order, is that it has fostered the collectivist orientations (see Kim, 1994) of the Chinese and Taiwanese people. Confucianism promotes the collective welfare and harmony as its ultimate goal. Individuals are conceived of as embedded and situated in particular roles and statuses. Individuals are encouraged to put other people's and the group's interests before their own. Duties and obligations are prescribed by their roles, and they lose "face" if they fail to fulfill their obligations as prescribed. Social order is maintained when everyone fulfills his or her roles and duties. Further, as Confucianism has been used as a legitimate tool by the dominant political order, "institutions are seen as an extension of the family, and paternalism and legal moralism reign supreme. A ruler is considered to be a father figure who

is paternalistic, moralistic, and welfaristic" (Kim, 1994:27).

Another influence of the fundamental values and human virtue that Confucianism affirms is that it constitutes the main tradition for doing good in both Chinese and Taiwanese society. As everyone has the potential to be perfectly good, one should proceed with his (her) moral duties regardless of success or failure in his (her) own lifetime (see C.K. Yang, 1961:287). Nakamura (1984:Vol.2) has reported that in Chinese folk society the tradition of exhortations of goodness is very popular. For example, in the I-Ching (Classic of Changes), one famous sentence states: "The family that accumulates good will have abundant good fortune. the family that accumulates evil will have abundant bad fortune" (see Nakamura, 1984:597). Later we will discuss the issues of "accumulation of goodness and merits" in more detail. However, here we should understand that under Chinese tradition people believed deeply that doing goodness may bring luck and happiness, and doing badness may bring troubles. In traditional Chinese society there are many well-known popular books about the exhortation of goodness, the so-called "morality books" (*shan-shu*)."[5] Quite often on the first page of the

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[5] Among the most famous of these books are: *Liaofan sixun* (The four lessons by Liaofan); *Taishang ganying pian* (Book of rewards and punishments); and *Inshitsu* (Unostentatious benevolence) (see Brokaw, 1987, 1991; Chu, 1992, 1993). Although they are mainly popular in the traditional rural areas of Chinese society, even today, in many public places of Taiwan such as train stations and parks, we still can easily find these "morality books" piled up for free giving. These books, mainly through the format of story and proverb, document how good deeds can get good results and bad deeds get bad results. Because of limitations of space, I cannot go into the details of these books. However, it should be pointed out that,

preface of these books are printed the words: "Never do those bad deeds, and all good deeds should be done" (see Nakamura, 1984:597). Although a lack of participation in community or organizational charity has been quite a significant characteristic in Chinese society[6] (C.K. Yang, 1961:335), the popular ideas of "doing good" and "accumulation of goodness" are certainly some of the one most important folk ideas that have supported the social structure of Chinese society (see Nakamura, 1984:597).

2. Buddhist ideal of helping and charity

With regard to the cultural norm of giving, the stress on charity by Buddhist precept and practice is essential. Especially, the concept of *dana* (almsgiving, charity) has an important ethical significance in Buddhism, occupying the first place in several ethical categories: it is the first of the three ways of acquiring merit (*danamayapunna*); it is the first of the six perfections (*paramita*) of a Buddha-aspirant; and it is the first of the ten meritorious actions. In the graduated teaching method in Buddhism (*anupubbikatha*), talks on generosity (*danakatha*) are the first step (see Malalasekerasee, 1961:308).

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for people under the Chinese cultural context, with regard to the ideas and practice of charity, these books are highly influential (see Brokaw, 1991; Chu, 1992; 1993; Nakamura Hajime, 1984, Vol.2).

[6] This is certainly another large issue that we cannot explore here; see Hsu's classical treatment of this issue (Hsu, 1981:394-399) and C.K. Yang (1961:329-339).

Many extreme instances of charity have also been extolled in *Jatakas* (the stories of Buddha's past lives). Moreover, historically, the *bhikkhus* (Buddhist monks) did not themselves engage in any form of production, and therefore it was a necessity for the Buddhist monastic order, the *Sangha*, to subsist on the alms and the charity of lay followers.

The principal teachings of the Buddha rest on the three characteristics of the world: impermanent, unsatisfactory, and without self. These three characteristics of the world were realized and fully comprehended by the Buddha, which in turn prompted him to the immediate commitment of turning the wheel of dharma to proclaim the Path leading to salvation. Thus the Buddha showed the Four Noble Truths, the right understanding and practice of which anyone could attain the yonder shore of suffering, i.e, *Nirvana*. The often-cited stanzas 277 to 279 in *Dharmapada* (see Radhakrishan, 1950: 115) clearly give the idea that if a man realizes through wisdom three characteristics of the world, he becomes indifferent to suffering. The aims of a Buddhist thus are to put an end to suffering. And the destruction of suffering is nothing but the goal, i.e., *Nirvana* in life, where *Nirvana* signifies the absence of the three basic Samsaric evils--greed or liking, hatred or disliking, and ignorance. Therefore the principle for Buddhist morality is: whatever is of help to the attainment of Nirvana is good, and whatever is detrimental to the attainment of *Nirvana* is bad.

A Buddhist ethical proposition thus can be divided into two

parts: a factual component and a value component. The value component should be based on the factual component. The meaning and validity of the value component depend on the truth of the factual component. The path to attain the permanent kind of happiness consists of two aspects: morality and wisdom. It is wisdom concerning ultimate reality or Nirvana that frees one from *Samsara* because it is ignorance that binds one to it. But this practice of wisdom must necessarily be coupled with the practice of morality, because the nature of *Nirvana*, or ultimate reality, is moral. Therefore, the practice of morality is a cultivation of *Nirvanic* features which will take one towards Nirvana. In other words, the practice of morality leads to enlightening results (Dharmasiri, 1989, p.11).

These ideas thus bring into focus the close association between the central Buddhist insight into selflessness (anatman) or emptiness on the one hand, and authentic moral activity on the other. These two are considered to be complementary and reciprocal, since insight into selflessness or emptiness informs moral activity, while moral activity supports the cultivation of insight. Charity is thus one such moral activity. As hymns 356 to 359 in the *Dharmapada* state:

> Weeds are the bane of fields and passion is the bane of this mankind; therefore offerings made to those freed from passion bring great reward (356)
>
> Weeds are the bane of fields and hatred is the bane of

this mankind; therefore offerings made to those freed from hatred bring great reward (357)

Weeds are the bane of fields and folly is the bane of this mankind; therefore offerings made to those freed from folly bring great reward (358)

Weeds are the bane of fields; desire is the bane of this mankind; therefore offerings made to those freed from desire bring great reward (359) (see Radhakrishnan, 1950, p.170)

However, why does the doctrine of selflessness not lead to the denial of social action? This can be understood from the Buddhist notion of the dependent co-arising, which emphasizes that everything originates dependent on everything else. Therefore, everything owes its existence to everything else. The doctrine of interdependence rules out the possibility of a separate soul, because nothing can be independent in a world where everything is interrelated. One cannot think of oneself as separate from the rest of the universe. Since one's existence is dependent on the rest of the universe, one naturally owes a debt and an obligation to the rest of the universe. Therefore, one's attitude toward others and other objects should be one of respect and gratitude. Thus, Buddhism advocates a sense of awe and respect toward living beings and nature. The relationship between the part and the whole is organic: in the way that the whole creates the part, the part also creates the whole.

Therefore, being aware of the principle of interrelatedness leads to one's identification of oneself with others. This thus constitutes a philosophical foundation to treat and to serve others with love and sympathy.

Another rationale to justify the norm of giving originates from the Buddhist theory of rebirth. According to this theory, we have been cycling in samsara for an immeasurable period, and during this period we have been relating ourselves to an infinite number of beings. Therefore, most of the beings that live in this cosmos have been, at one time or another, our close relatives, fathers or mothers, or close friends. For example, from one paragraph, thus Buddha said that "it is not easy to find out any being who has not been mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter to us during the course of long cycle of rebirths. When we are told that all beings in this world, whether they be humans or otherwise, or whether they be friends or enemies, may have been our parents or children, how will it be possible to ignore others and seek after our happiness and benefit alone" (Samyutta Nikaya, II. pp. 189-190; see Endo 1987, xxvii[7]). Thus, this hypothesis or belief should be always in the back of our minds and prompt us to practice social virtues because this belief imposes a kind of moral obligation to reach out and help others (see Dharmasiri, 1989, p.23).

Another structural base of Buddhist ethics, which is often

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[7] The Buddhist texts cited in this chapter are cited from Endo (1989). His textual references are from Buddhist Pali works in the London PTS editions of Pali Buddhist texts.

linked to the Buddhist concept of *dana*, is the Buddhist ideal of monastic community--*Sangha*. Historically, as Buddhism started as a missionary religion whose aim was to promote the welfare and happiness of the masses, and as the *Sangha* could not exist on its own without receiving adequate support from the laity, it follows that giving gifts to *Sangha* is a way to express the laity's devotion and loyalty toward Buddhism. Accepting the offerings of the laity is a way to confirm the laity's religious status and merit-making.

Economically speaking, *dana* or charity is a specific moral standard which can support the whole religious system of Buddhism. This ethic substantialises the reciprocal relationship between the laity and the monks within the Buddhist world order. On the one hand, the emphasis on the virtue of *dana* is a historical necessity for the *Shangha*'s survival under economic and social crisis. On the other hand, since the laymen, yoked by social obligations and duties, are too busy to engage in full-time religious practice, the practice of *dana* offers the laity a special path to obtain salvation. However, this prototype of dana has substantially changed in Chinese environments, since "the Chinese tend to look on beggars simply as men who are not being supported by their relations, presumably for some good reasons, and who, therefore, deserve only the most cursory support form the rest of the community"[8] (Welch, 1967:207-208).

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[8] Thus according to Welch's observations: "Most of my informants, in and out of the sangha, said that they had never seen or heard of Chinese monks begging for their food in any form"

To be sure, in Taiwan, *dana* has not been institutionalized in the way it has in India. Rather, without much emphasis on the interdependent relationships between the laity and monks, dana has been thought of as a form of renunciation of self-centeredness, open to all, laymen as well as monks. In Taiwan, however, the material form of *dana* is still the most important form for the laity to engage in for their own salvation, since most of them are quite structurally limited for engaging in any other kind of religious practice.

3. Traditional Chinese and Taiwanese ideas of merit-accumulation

In addition to Confucianism's ideals of "good deeds" and the Buddhist ideational dimension of dana, on the practical level, for people under the Chinese and Taiwanese cultural context, the idea of "accumulation of merits" may actually play a very conducive role in eliciting people's charitable behavior in everyday life. The act of merit-accumulation certainly is psychologically more satisfying (in terms of measurability and forms of positive act [rather than abstention]) and the soteriological fruits of it are also more explicit and clear than those ideal moral actions. (See Spiro's [1982:92-113] observation on the practical dimensions of merits-accumulation in Burmese society). Thus we need to treat these Chinese and Taiwanese traditional ideas of merits-accumulation in a more

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(Welch, 1967:208).

systematic way.

Briefly speaking, goodness and evil traditionally have been seen as qualities subject to enumerating and measurement; every act of good or evil, no matter how small, adds to the individual's total. Moreover, people under Chinese cultural contexts know quite well that merit-earning activities must be done in secret, for if the individual receives public praise or remuneration for a deed, he can no longer expect any rewards from the gods--one is never recompensed twice (see Borkaw, 1987; Brokaw, 1991:32-36; Jordan & Overmyer, 1986:277-280; Pye, 1987; Smith, 1987).

One important source of Chinese merit-making comes from the basic Buddhist assumption of the Karma and Karmic cycle. Karma can be either bad or good. One who does good receives good, and one who does evil receives evil, not only in this life but in the existence of the future. Thus there is room for improvement through religious practice or moral effort. Karmic cause and effect are in principle self-regulating, not subject to divine decision, arbitration, or satisfaction (Pye, 1987:380).

This ideas further combined with the Chinese traditional deities, a vast bureaucracy of gods and spirits who oversee all human behavior, and count, measure, and record each individual's deeds in heavenly registers in detail, and then total up one's final score and distribute the appropriate rewards and punishments. Further, since these spirits are everywhere, no one can escape their observation. In other words, therefore,

"retribution was not a spontaneous process unmediated by external agents; rather, rewards and punishments were consciously engineered by an extensive network of interfering gods and spirits"(Borkaw, 1991:33).

While this relatively sophisticated administration was needed to keep track of all the various factors that entered into the calculation of each man's just recompense, in the Chinese cultural context the retribution was not based on the individual's behavior alone. Although this contradicts classical ideas of karma, according to which merit making is an entirely individual process where one reaps only what one has sown oneself, as karma operates within the context of the Chinese family system, family becomes the basic unit of generating and sharing merits. The "classic of changes" set this principle forth quite clearly: "The family that accumulates good will have abundant good fortune. The family that accumulates evil will have abundant bad fortune". Thus individuals carry with them the burden of their ancestor's accumulated merit; and individuals also want to accumulate as much extra merit as possible to pass on to their descendants, to ensure the continuation and prosperity of the family line.

Moreover, by the beginning of the common era in India, some Buddhists had adopted a different conception of merit. They believed that merit could be shared or transferred, and that it was a factor in the attainment of liberation--so much so that they were offering their own merit for the salvation of their

dead relatives (see Kitagawa & Cummings, 1989:73; also see Spiro's 1982:124-128 observation on the practical dimensions of merit transfer in Burmese society). The merit maker may wish to share his or her merit with others. By clearly indicating whom the merit maker intends to benefit by a good deed, an individual can transfer the merit accrued to that other person. However, this does not mean that one thereby loses some of one's own merit; on the contrary, one makes even more, since the transfer of merit is in itself a meritorious act (Strong, 1987:384). These ideas of merits-transferable have also been accepted and further developed by the Chinese under the Chinese contexts of family systems.

Finally, in the Chinese cultural atmosphere, people's merit-making may combine with various ideal forms of final human goals. These include the goals of 1) moving toward self-discipline and cultivation, in Confucian form oriented socially and pragmatically (Pye, 1987:381); 2) in Taoist form, being linked to the achievement of supernormal powers, longevity, and even immortality (Pye, 1987:381); 3) moving toward ultimate salvation or a rebirth on a higher plane of existence, in Buddhist form; or 4) in everyday life, a more syncretist form, mixed with the above three forms.

In addition to the conceptual clarification giving above, one special form of merit-accumulation--"recitation of the name of Buddha", the so-called "*nien-fo*"--should be mentioned here. Later we will find that this religious practice is an important

service offered by Tzu-Chi's participants for both ingroup and outgroup members. It is also one very strong social and religious support that Tzu-Chi's participants can offer to each other (see picture 3.1 for illustration).

It is believed that by reciting a specific Bodhisattva's name, the Bodhisattvas will bless and protect the reciter and his or her family. Moreover, as the merits are transferable, and the recitation itself has some kind of purgatory function, collective recitation may have a specific religious function, according to its specific context. Different Bodhisattva's names may have different functions. Reciting the name of Kua-in, the Goddess of mercy, basically means asking for her pity and compassion. Reciting the name of Ksitigarbha, the Bodhisattva of savior in hell, basically means asking for release from terrible situations. However, the most often to be recited in Taiwan is the name of "*Amitabha*," a Buddha of the Pure Land Sect. *Amitabha* literally refers to both the immeasurable light and immeasurable life. Legendarily, as *Amitabha* vowed to save all sentient beings, anyone reciting "His" name may possibly be saved and further receive the immeasurable light and immeasurable life. As reciting the name of *Amitabha* has become a popular way of religious practice for Pure Land Sect believers (and, in Chinese Buddhist contexts, for almost all Buddhists), recitation of the name of *Amitabha* has also become routinized into a special kind of folk ritual: as one is passing away (or at one's funeral), the people then surrounding the dying one chant the name of

Amitabha for him or her. On the one hand, this is something like the performing of masses for a specific soul, by which the blessed one's soul can go to the Western (mysterious one, not the geographical one) Paradise; on the other hand, however, and more importantly, as more people recite the name of *Amitabha* together, the greater number of merits created thereby may serve to speed the deceased to the Western Paradise.

A brief introduction to this procedure is necessary, although it is actually quite simple. As you join the practice, you just recite the name of Buddha: *A-Mi-Ta-Bha*, in four Chinese characters, at a slow and unvarying pace. Among all the reciters, one will hold a hand-chime, beat regularly to mark the pace. Near the end, the pace may speed up and the melody also change a little bit, the chant becoming an urgent "*Amitabha! Amitabha! Amitabha*..." In all, according to my experience in Tzu-Chi, this procedure may take from 2 to 5 hours, although, under special circumstances, it may last more than 5 hours. One can join and leave these recitations at any moment. According to tradition, it is believed that when one has died, reciting the name of buddha should continue for three days without interruption. At the end of the recitation, one important feature of this practice is the transfer of merits (*hui-hsiang*). A brief formula is recited so that the merit generated thereby is credited to three accounts. First, it is transferred to the benefit of others, so that they too might go to the Western Paradise. Second, it is transferred to four kinds of people;

some say these refer to parents, teachers, the country leader, and three jewels (Buddha, Dharma [truth], and Sangha [order of monks]). Third, it is transferred to the miserable in hell (three kinds of punishment in hell). And the last sentence of this formula can be translated as "may this meritorious work of mine in the phenomenal world accrue to be in the noumenal world of *nirvana*," since other people may reciprocate these kinds of services sometime after (see also see Welch's observation and translation [1967:99]; Spiro's [1982:124-128] study on Burmese Buddhism has also offered a similar observation).

According to folk ideas, the more people that gather together to practice the ritual of chanting the name of buddha, the more merits may be created. Since one has the latent anticipated need for social and religious support for his (her) self and his (her) family members in the future, he (she) believes that his (her) joining this kind of social service is meaningful and, perhaps, more safe for the future.

Although I haven't collected enough data to show how popularly this practice is performed for those who have died in Taiwan, indeed, for all Buddhists in Taiwan,[9] it has been

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[9] Statistics show that in 1993 Taiwan, among 10,988,681 people who had religious faith, there were 4,856,000 people (44.29%) who were self-reported Buddhists (Statistics Abstract of Interior of the Republic of China, 1994:148). However, as Chiu has argued, since in Taiwan most people who believe in folk religions may also claim that they are Buddhists, the above number certainly is overestimated. Chiu further estimated that in Taiwan there should be no more than 15% of religious believers who are Buddhists (see Chiu, 1988:241).

accepted as one necessary ritual for those dead and near-dead. Later (in chapter 4) I will show that, in Tzu-Chi, based upon the ritual of the "recitation of the name of buddha," this social and religious support for the deceased and his or her family members is extremely important for binding Tzu-Chi's participants together in their everyday life.

To summarize, then, Tzu-chi clearly postulates that conducting helping behavior and improving harmonious social relationships are its manifest purpose, and the backgrounds of Confucianism's ethical values, the Buddhist precept of *dana*, and the ideas of merit-making are the basic cultural knowledge about helping behavior in Chinese, or say, Taiwanese cultural contexts. Thus, we cannot avoid the hypothesis that Tzu-Chi's collective activities about helping certainly are a way of implementing these Chinese cultural elements into a plausible and perceivable form in the modern society of Taiwan. (In chapter 6, we will further expand on these points.)

RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF TAIWAN

In addition to the three cultural factors described above that underlie Tzu-chi's collective social action, we need a brief explanation of Taiwanese religious history, particularly in regard to Buddhism, since Tzu-chi's development must be understood through these social and historical contexts.

As Taiwan is an immigrant society, numerous religions have been introduced into Taiwan, following the different trends of

immigrants. Historically, many Chinese following Cheng Ch'eng-Kung in 1661-62 left the mainland to take refuge in Taiwan, bringing with them their traditional religions, which, of course, included Buddhism. To be sure, popular Buddhism, containing then even as it does now a significant admixture of Taoism and Confucianism, also was brought into Taiwan society at this time. The most popular religion that immigrants brought into Taiwan in these early days is still the Chinese folk religion--the one that is a mixture of Buddhism, Taoism, and the Confucian tradition. Since the early immigrants were afraid of crossing the straits from mainland China to Taiwan, many brought along with them the more famous gods of their native places. When they settled on the island, they built temples to thank the gods for their protection. For example, the Goddess *Ma-Tsu*, as goddess of ocean navigation and protection, is one of this kind of deity from folk religion (see Wu, 1991).

Indeed, temples and monasteries where a purer form of Buddhism was practiced did exist (see Raguin, 1976:179). For Buddhism also, because of the dangers of immigration, over time the devotional aspect and pragmatic aspects of the religion had most to be emphasized. One example of this can be seen in the popular veneration of the Bodhisattva *Kuan-yin*, the Goddess of Mercy, who always expresses her mercy in saving people. This thus reflects a particular image of deity for an immigrant society. And a more representative aspect of this phenomenon is the popularity of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism, which is

represented in people's devotion to *Amitabha* Buddha, who was believed to be able to bring his devotees to the Western paradise.

After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan. As part of this attempt to establish cultural domination over the region, the Japanese introduced State Shinto into Taiwan. At the same time, various Japanese Buddhist schools-- such as Tendai, Shingon, Jodo, Zen, Shin, and Nichiren--were also introduced into Taiwan (Chiu, 1987:254), although these sects did not have much following among the Taiwanese people. While under Japanese imperial rule, the leaders of traditional Chinese religions suffered oppression; however, even after Japan returned Taiwan to China, the influences of Japanese Buddhism remained very visible in Taiwan. For one thing, for whatever historical reasons, Buddhist organizations in modern Japan are very actively engaged in projects of education, social work, and missionary activities (see Noriyoshi, 1987:171-172). In other words, Buddhist leaders in Japan have taken both philosophical and organizational reform for its adaption in modern society. Although there has not been much empirical evidence gathered, this new trend of Japanese Buddhism has probably had far-reaching effects on Taiwanese Buddhism, especially for a grassroots Buddhist group like Tzu-Chi.[10]

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[10] For example, before Tzu-Chi's leader Cheng Yen's conversion to Buddhism, she was touched deeply by a Buddhist Master who had studied Buddhism in Japan. Learning from that Master, Cheng Yen

After 1949, as communists took over the mainland and began religious persecutions, many religious leaders were among those who took refuge in Taiwan. Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, and Taoists came to Taiwan, turning Taiwan into a rich showcase of world religions. Following the foreign aid and extensive missionary activities from the U.S., Christians now also constitute a small but significant percentage of the population.[11] Christians' inner-worldly[12] social concern and practice, in Taiwan, have thus also implemented a new model of the relationship between religions and society. The more traditional religions, such as Buddhism, that are to some extent in competition with Christianity (see Jochim, 1986:57), have thus sought to further develop their latent tendencies toward social philanthropy, in which the dimension of "benefit to society" has been particularly stressed.[13]

On the mainland, before 1949, the Chinese monk T'ai-Hsu (1890-1947), under the title of "Buddhism for human life

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found that Buddhism, unlike the local temples she had ever seen, should be more active, rather than only passive and superstitious (see Huang, 1996:11-14).

[11] In 1994 Taiwan, among 10,988,681 people who had religious faith, 295,742 people were self-reported Catholic, and 421,648 people were self-reported Protestants, for a total of about 7% of those people who have religious faith (Statistical abstract of the interior of the Republic of China, 1994:148).

[12] Following Weber (1968:542), inner-worldly concern here refers to the obligation to participate within the world and to transform the world according to one's ideals.

[13] For example, see the story in chapter one, which shows how Cheng Yen discussed with three Catholic nuns what religions can do for this society.

(*jensheng* Buddhism)," wanted to transform traditional Chinese Buddhism into a more active and secular style of Buddhism, in order to adapt Buddhists themselves to the recent Chinese society in which they faced rapid social change and serious threats from imperialism (see Raguin, 1976:179-185). Through explicit stress on social ethics and lay practice, modern education, charitable behavior, and visible social involvement became thought of as crucial commitments for a modern Buddhist. T'ai-Hsu's student Yin Shun (also see picture 1.1), although not in total agreement with T'ai-Hsu's ideas, under the title of "Buddhism for the human realm (*jenchien* Buddhism)," thus brought the above new Chinese tradition to Taiwan. As Cheng Yen (leader of Tzu-Chi), in a nominal sense,[14] was Yin Shun's student, this model of "Buddhism for the human realm or human life" thus also has been integrated into the purpose of Tzu-Chi's establishment.

To summarize briefly then for the Tzu-Chi Association, several crucial backgrounds from Taiwanese religious history must be noted. First, as an immigrant society, the devotional and pragmatic dimensions of traditional religions have been crucial; thus, the Goddess Ma-Tsu in folk religion, and the Goddess Kuan-yin Bodhisattva and the Amitabha Buddha, both

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[14] Cheng Yen converted to Yin Shun in a very coincidental chance. And later, Cheng Yen also does not have much chance to learn from Yin Shun. However, as Cheng Yen admit that Yin Shun is the most influential person in her life, and her Tzu-Chi social enterprise, according to her own words, is basically following Yin Shun's ideal.

deities in the Buddhist Pure Land Sect, are the most important religious figures in the tradition. Second, Tzu-Chi's basic model of modern Buddhism comes directly from three different sources: 1) Japanese Buddhist groups' tendency toward active social reform; 2) Christian inner-worldly social concern; and 3) Mainland China's monks'--T'ai-Hsu and Yin Shun's--ideas of modern Buddhism. This brief presentation should help us more clearly link Tzu-Chi's development with its past religious traditions.

SUMMARY

In order explore various facts about Tzu-chi, this chapter first of all has tried to place the Tzu-Chi Association in its existing social and cultural system. By reviewing Taiwan's recent political and economic developments, we gain an understanding of why Tzu-Chi would succeed at this specific historical moment, and how these backgrounds have affected the characteristics of Tzu-Chi's moral and social concerns.

In a very general sense, culturally, Tzu-Chi's norms of helping are based upon three sources: Confucianism's ideas of human virtue and the harmonious social order; the Buddhist ideal and practical dimensions of *dana* (almsgiving, charity); and the ideas and practices of merit-accumulation that have been so popular in those areas of the Taiwanese-Chinese cultural complex.

More specifically, with regard to Taiwanese religious

history, the format of Tzu-Chi's social action has actually combined several different traditions: 1) the devotional and pragmatic dimensions of traditional religions in Taiwan, such as folk religions and the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism; 2) the influences from Japanese Buddhism; 3) Christian influences in modern Taiwan; and 4) the more secular tendency of modern Buddhism that was introduced from Mainland China to Taiwan after 1949.

CHAPTER 4. PROFILE OF TZU-CHI'S DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

> ***We Tzu-Chi people have multiple functions. Some people are busying in cooking, some are visiting impoverished families, some are cleaning...You need to consider your own time. Master said that we should first take good care of our family, then we can have the merits to go out to do Tzu-Chi. (A male commissioner, Interview note, 44:1)***

As we have described in chapter 1, there are several different categories of membership in the Tzu-Chi Association. Participants are recruited from all walks of Taiwanese society and are associated with different kinds of charitable work done in the Tzu-Chi. However, in a more dynamic sense, in daily life, how are participants of Tzu-Chi involved in prosocial commitment? What are the differences among Tzu-Chi's different organizational roles? And how do participants of different categories of membership perceive themselves? Without a concrete understanding of the various dimensions of the member's prosocial commitment, our understanding of Tzu-Chi as a whole remains vague, and any further discussion of Tzu-Chi becomes difficult. Thus, before we begin to analyze the underlying mechanisms of people's prosocial commitment to Tzu-Chi, in this chapter I will offer a profile of its various categories of

membership and focus particularly on the daily life of its participants. The discussion following this chapter will rely heavily upon the explorations of Tzu-Chi participants' life worlds and ways of prosocial commitment presented in this chapter.

Based on the different levels of commitment, several categories of membership of Tzu-Chi can be identified: Member, Honored Patron, Faith Corps, and Commissioner. Each categories of membership will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

MEMBER

The Members of Tzu-Chi make regular donations, usual monthly or bi-monthly, ranging from one hundred NT dollars (about US $4) to several thousand NT dollars. About 5%[15] of them make contributions to Tzu-Chi by paying into a special Tzu-Chi account, with no direct interaction with other Tzu-Chi participants. However, most Members are visited about once every one or two months by a Tzu-Chi Commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner. The great majority of these Members are not actively involved in Tzu-Chi activities. Usually people join Tzu-Chi in the name of a whole family, and as one person donates money in the name of each family member, all of these family

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[15]. According to Tzu-Chi's newspaper, Dharma-Friend Semi-monthly 152 (1992, May), at that time, among 2,094,318 Members, there were about 110,000 (5%) Members who donated through bank account; thus about 95% of Members donate through Tzu-Chi's person-to-person recruiting network.

members thus become Tzu-Chi members. Quite often, due to the idea of merit-accumulation in Taiwanese-Chinese cultural contexts which postulates that the family is the basic unit for generating and sharing merits (see chapter 3), some people already dead or just born are also Members, since their children or parents have made contributions under their names. (Further observations and discussion of this point will be offered later.) When some of Tzu-Chi's social activities or events happen, such as Public Speeches by Cheng Yen or senior participants, charity bazaars, and public promotions for giving blood samples for marrow donation, interested members may join these activities.

Currently, there are more than 3.8 million "Members" in Tzu-Chi. In the Taichung area, as of April 1995, there were about 400,000 members.[16] However, there are no figures that show the current sex and age composition of Tzu-Chi's membership[17]. Several factors make it difficult to determine the real number of Tzu-Chi's Members: 1) many names have been counted repeatedly in Tzu-Chi's data base of Members[18]; 2) once one has donated money to Tzu-Chi, one is a Tzu-Chi Member forever, even when he (she) is dead; 3) as we have described, people often donate in

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[16] According to a staff report at a Tzu-Chi working meeting in April 1995, there are 398,296 members in the Taichung area.

[17] As a staff representative in Tzu-Chi's main office told me so.

[18] Two theses in computer science have reported this difficulty of counting the real numbers of Tzu-Chi Members (see Hwang, 1993; Chen, 1994).

the name of a dead relative or new born baby; 4) moreover, since a family usually has only one or two members (usually the head of the family or parents) who are responsible for making the contributions, the self-perceived Members are probably also much fewer. Especially in this sense, there are probably only about one third of the total number of Members--about 1.3 million--who are actually self-perceived Members of Tzu-Chi. (However, this estimate is still highly hypothetical and needs further data to clarify) The following quotation shows how a Member may perceive himself or herself as a Tzu-Chi Member:

> I..every month, donate 400 NT dollars. My family has four members. So all of them are also members. I haven't spent much time in Tzu-Chi. When chatting with my co-workers, I'll tell them something about Tzu-Chi's merit-accumulation, etc. Tzu-Chi sent their newspapers to me regularly, but I was afraid that may waste too many resources, so I asked them to stop sending these things to me. And I can go to my brother-in-law's home to see these Tzu-Chi newspapers. This can save paper. I look at these newspapers and magazines often. It's right and ought to be propagated popularly for Tzu-Chi...Tzu-Chi is different from other temples. Other temples get donations for building their own building, for enjoying themselves...Tzu-Chi is different, it is to help people, to save people. The range of its tasks is

> broad. And Tzu-Chi is not for their own enjoyment and comfort. This is the Master's [Cheng Yen] compassion... (Interview note, 24:1)

Thus, although a Member may feel strongly about belonging to Tzu-Chi, at the same time Tzu-Chi is an objective fact that they can freely talk about. Also, Tzu-Chi's newspapers and magazines are important sources for linking Members into Tzu-Chi's various activities.

HONORED PATRON

Honored Patrons are members who have donated one million NT dollars or more for the construction of the hospital, the nurses' college, the medical school, the memorial hall, or other charitable projects. Currently, there are around 5,500 Honored Patrons in the Tzu-Chi Association.[19] Most of the Honored Patrons are people with high socioeconomic status. Some of their names have been engraved and are kept on display in the Tzu-Chi hospital and the Tzu-Chi memorial hall.

In Tzu-Chi's Taipei branch, among 2544 Honored Patrons, 65% are male and 94% are more than 40 years old (K'ang and Chien, 1996:90). In the Taichung area, there are now about 450 Honored

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[19] According to K'ang and Chien (1996:88), in 1993 there were 3,780 honored patrons. Tzu-Chi's yearbooks for 1994 and 1995 list 941 and 949 new honored patrons, making a current total of 5670 honored patrons.

Patrons[20]; however, there are no direct figures to show the sex and age composition for Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch. Some rich families can become Honored Patrons in the name of all family members; thus even a baby four months old can be an Honored Patron (see Tzu-Chi monthly 312:59). One male Honored Patron told me that from him and his wife to his sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, and grandsons, all are Honored Patrons. A grandson even still in his mother's womb was an Honored Patron already. One reporter mentioned that even some pets, such as cats or dogs, can be Honored Patrons (Huang, 1996:146). One woman told me that she has "accomplished" two Honored Patrons, in the names of her parents, but she is afraid of her parents knowing this, since they would not like her to do this kind of thing. These facts suggest that the actual number of Honored Patrons is also inflated. The number of self-perceived Honored Patrons is probably about half of the number that Tzu-Chi has announced.

Although Honored Patrons are usually people of high socio-economic status, sometimes, through a loan from somewhere else, a person of low income status can also become an Honored Patron. For example, I once heard a story about a poor couple who, when the husband got a severe illness, the wife tried very hard to borrow 1 million NT dollars, in the name of her husband, to

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[20] According to the invitation cards sent by the Taichung branch for the end celebration party in 1996, there were 321 old honored patrons and 123 new Honored Patrons, making a total of about 450 Honored Patrons in 1996.

donate to Tzu-Chi. By doing this, according to traditional ideas, she believed that her husband might recover based on the merits accumulated through this good deed.

According to the business structure in Taiwan (small and middle-sized businesses led by a male household head), usually only a male has the possibility to become very rich with independent economic means. Therefore, when female, young, or aged people become honored patrons, it is usually due to contributions donated for them by a male household head.

After 1987, Honored patrons were organized into a voluntary categories of membership that holds their own meetings irregularly (usually once in three months). Only a few honored patrons engage in Tzu-Chi's voluntary services in an active sense. In Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch, for example, honored patrons gather together once a month in the social service of cleaning the public streets and environment. Although many participants join this activity, among them there are fewer than 20 Honored Patrons. On some special occasions, such as a disaster or emergency happening at either the domestic or international level, Honored Patrons will quite often be asked for further contributions by Commissioners or Apprentice Commissioners to support specific helping projects. The following remarks of an Honored Patron illustrate how Honored Patrons may perceive Tzu-Chi and themselves:

> I feel that Tzu-Chi's money, every penny, every dollar, is used for those who have practical needs.

> There is no waste. It's very important... The most important thing is that Tzu-Chi's volunteers, in volunteering, all of them, wish to bring their own money, own time...That is to say, all fees for transportation, meals, etc., in Tzu-Chi, all are paid by the volunteers themselves. Even in the international relief programs, volunteers pay their own fees to go abroad...This point is so lovely...I know this system [Tzu-Chi], I really appreciate this institution, so I come here to participate. Of course, I am very busy in my own business, so I cannot go to the front stage, such as a commissioner. I do not have so much time...as I see some of my familiar friends, I'll also suggest they participate in Tzu-Chi..." (Interview note, 47:1)

The credibility of Tzu-Chi's management of money certainly is the main focal point for this Honored Patron's appreciation of Tzu-Chi. However, as he states, the structural limitation of lacking time also prevents him from further commitment to Tzu-Chi.

FAITH CORPS

In 1989, as male volunteers played the role of providing for the new college--Tzu-Chi's nurses' college--this category of membership was founded. Since then, the function of this category of membership has spread into a much broader scale,

including maintaining traffic and offering labor services for Tzu-Chi's various kinds of activities, and helping to elicit contributions at charity fairs and bazaars. All members of this category of membership are men.

These men have been called "perfect husbands and fathers," in the sense that all of them must observe the ten commandments of Tzu-Chi unwaveringly. These ten commandments are:

1. Abstention not only from killing but from harming in any way.
2. Abstention from taking the not-given.
3. Abstention from sexual misconduct.
4. Abstention from false speech.
5. Abstention from drink and drugs, the taking of which results in loss of awareness.
6. Abstention from smoking and chewing betel nut.
7. Abstention from gambling.
8. Keeping in good temper and expressing filial piety towards parents.
9. Abstention from transgression, obeying the traffic laws and wearing a helmet when driving a motorcycle.
10. Concern about politics but not involvement.

Later we will discuss the social meanings and implications of these ten commandments, but here it is important to note that these ten commandments were originally designed specifically for the participants in the Faith Corps. According to Cheng Yen's

ideas, by recruiting these "husbands and fathers" into Tzu-Chi, most female participants can reduce the obstacles to their own participation, and get further support from their role partners. At the same time, cultivating these central figures in Taiwanese society--male, and playing an important social role in Taiwanese public places--can bring Tzu-Chi's influence on society to a larger scale (Cheng Yen, 1990a).

One first becomes an apprentice member of the Faith Corps. After one year of training, during which one joins various Tzu-Chi activities, attends several training sessions, and satisfies some further criteria, one can become a formal member of the Faith Corps (with a formal Tzu-Chi Name Card). The further criteria include: 1) must be recommended by two other formal members of the Faith Corps; 2) must receive qualified grading by subgroup and branch leaders in the items of observing the ten commandments, attending various Tzu-Chi sessions, and forming relationships with other Tzu-Chi participants; 3) must be endorsed by a subgroup leader and the branch's Faith Corps's leader, and further be approved by Tzu-Chi headquarters. Both apprentices and formal members of the Faith Corps wear uniforms.

Routinely, members of the Faith Corps offer various labor services: moving and driving; security maintenance work in the Tzu-Chi branch and for other Tzu-Chi activities; helping commissioners accomplish their various tasks. Some Faith Corps members attend the community recycling project enthusiastically

(since government will not do this regularly), in the sense that every week they must drive their own business truck to collect and classify people's recycling materials at several specific sites weekly (see pictures 4.1 and 4.2). Once in every week, this task may take 5 strong men working 8 hours exhaustively. (As I know well from joining in this task several times).

Another quite frequent task for Faith Corps members is a special kind of religious service, the "recitation of buddha's name", or so-called "*nien-fo*" (see chapter 3). Although it has not been formally postulated in Tzu-Chi's role requirements, this service is an important task for Tzu-Chi's Faith Corps, Commissioners, and Apprentice Commissioners to perform.

I have not collected enough data to show when this function (social and religious supports for the deceased and his or her family members) was integrated as one of the important Tzu-Chi inner social services. However, when I joined the Tzu-Chi Faith Corps, this service toward in-group members seemed to have become a very important task and to serve important functions. For one thing, through informal conversation, participants chat about who gets how much people's "chanting the name of buddha" for their parents, and who does not, based on whether they have or haven't often done this kind of service for other participants before.

Since people may die at any moment, a member of the Faith Corps may be called by other participants at any time to do the recitation of the name of buddha. It is not uncommon that in one

week one may participate in this activity 2 or 3 times. It may be difficult to classify this kind of service, in a strict sense, as helping behavior, since people help in-group members and, to some extent, they can expect positive returns for their good deeds. Yet, according to the cultural repertoire, this kind of deed is certainly defined as altruistic, for several reasons. First, there is no tangible reward involved. Second, the moment of death is the most important and emergent moment for the concerned one. In folk Buddhism, it is thought to be a greatly compassionate act to help a near-dead person to the Western Paradise, particularly if this person is not your relative. Third, the merits one accumulates through the chanting of the name of buddha are not only for oneself but also for the recipients, for significant others, and for the miserable in hell (as we have described in chapter 3). Thus one's engaging in this kind of service is perceived by others as one's sincere willingness to help others.

In one example from my experience, on the second day of my joining Tzu-Chi, I was asked to do the voluntary service of "chanting the name of buddha" for a deceased Tzu-Chi recipient. The senior participants encouraged me greatly and mentioned that this service has immeasurable merits. At the same time, they also appreciated my sincerity and compassionate mind in doing this good deed without any expected tangible reward. At that time, I really felt that I had begun to get other Tzu-Chi participants' trust and establish rapport with them. Some

further examples may illustrate why people want to do this kind of service and why it is so important to offer this kind of service for other Tzu-Chi participants. In one case, a female Apprentice commissioner told me:

> As others call me [to chant the name of buddha], I will soon go there, even if I am sick. It is because several years ago, as my mother neared the end of her life...we moved her from the hospital to home. In about one hour, many Brothers and Sisters were already gathering in my home, ready to chant the name of buddha for her. I'm so touched by them...For this reason and cause, I began to join the chanting of the name of buddha later, at any chance I could...That day of my mother's death, I was too full of sorrow to notice actually how many Tzu-Chi people had come to chant the name of buddha for my mother. The only thing I knew was that I must hurry to recite the name of buddha for my mother. I was very sad, and then fell into a coma that day...Later my brother told me, there were about 70 Brothers and Sisters who were chanting the name of buddha for us. I feel..mm..so warm..Tzu-Chi is so loving, so cooperative, so compassionate... You know, they came from so far away, some even did not have cars, and then rented taxis, two people shared with 1200 NT dollars to get there [her old home]. It has touched me so much. I think: "If I

> haven't done Tzu-Chi well, I have really let down the Tzu-Chi"..Now, if others call me to chant the name of buddha, I always go with them. If in the morning I cannot, I'll go in the afternoon. If it's too far away, and I cannot get back to my work on time, I'll ask somebody else to replace me at work for a while. (Interview note, 46:6,7).

I heard this kind of story quite often during my participation in Tzu-Chi.

As we have described, according to folk ideas, the more people that can gather together to practice the ritual of chanting the name of buddha, the more merits are created that serve to speed the deceased one to the Western Paradise. As one has the latent anticipated need for social and religious support for oneself and one's family members in the future, one believes that joining this kind of social service is meaningful and, perhaps, precautionary for the future. This observation is illustrated by the following account of how one was aware of being helped by other in-group members, with regard to the ritual of recitation of the name of buddha. As a male participant recalled:

> His [his father] going was so sudden. I went out to do recycling. Just before my going out, I got a call that said that he had already passed away in a car accident, and that he was in the funeral parlor. At that time, I actually was very calm, because

> ordinarily, by helping others and chanting the name of buddha for others, I had seen these scenes often. I was ready enough in my mind...I then informed Min-Cho [another Sister in Tzu-Chi] to gather people. Every day, four to five hundred people came to chant the name of buddha for him. It's because I had helped others often to chant the name of buddha in ordinary days. So I could have these good relationships. Then, when I was in an emergency situation, others would give in return to me, even double the amount or more. (Interview note, 6:18)

As Tzu-Chi has increased the number of public speeches and social services, so the services offered by the Faith Corps also have increased. For example, a big charity bazaar and environmental protection program was held about 50 miles away from the Taichung Branch in November, 1996. In the appeal to about 10,000 people to join, about 100 Faith Corps's members were needed to work for the whole day to move materials, set up tents, build temporary towers and show-boards, etc. And on the day of the activities about 300 Faith Corps members were needed to maintain security and help others in selling activities. Also, after the Tzu-Chi hospital opened, some members of the Faith Corps became regular volunteers in the Tzu-chi hospital (about once or twice a year for five to seven days), even though the Tzu-Chi hospital is about 7 hours by train from Taichung.

Currently there are a total of 2025 formal members of the

Faith Corps in Taiwan (Tzu-Chi YearBook, 1995:461). In the Taichung area, there are 314 formal members of the Faith Corps, organized into 4 subgroups. As there is no strong limitation against one becoming an apprentice member of the Faith Corps, the actual number of apprentices in the Faith Corps is quite uncertain; they may number a few more than number of the formal Faith Corps members. For example, in the subgroup I participated in from May 1995 to March 1996, there were about 150 participants. Of these, about 50 were formal members, 50 were apprentice Faith Corps who participated often, and the other 50 were probably seen only once or twice a year (and did not have much intention of becoming formal members of the Faith Corps in the near future). According to the figures shown by K'ang and Chien (1996:90), in the Taipei area, more than half of the formal Faith Corps members are between the ages of 41 and 50 (i.e., below 40: 22%; 41-50: 52%; 51-60: 25%; above 60: 1%). The following account illustrates how one formal member of the Faith Corps perceives Tzu-Chi, other Tzu-Chi's participant, and himself:

> I think that if I can observe the ten commandments well, particularly the one about keeping in good temper, maybe I should re-confirm my formal status. I always feel that if I were without this formal status of the Faith Corps, the pressure and restraint would not be so strong. I then would do Tzu-Chi very happily. After I got the formal ID..mm...actually, I

> think it does not matter whether one gets formal ID or not. Sometimes, I thought, if you work hard for the Tzu-Chi [even without the formal status], it is o.k. There are so many other Brothers who have come into here for so long, but they have not wanted to get formal status till now...However, if you get the formal ID, you'll always warn yourself...and with some consideration of your status in Tzu-Chi, thus become more mindful. It is the responsibility of your having a formal status. You become the role model for other participants. However, I am still afraid to become a commissioner. I am working in the government. Not like my aunt and uncle, they are their own boss. They can join many Tzu-chi activities, such as visiting impoverished families, volunteering in the branch, and without affecting their business. Sometimes they even get more good relationships. But I cannot do Tzu-Chi like them.." (Interview note, 15:7,8)

This Faith Corps member seems anxious about several things: 1) Can he observe the ten commandments well? 2) Can he can play well his Tzu-Chi role, especially in front of other new participants? and 3) Can he possibly commit to more, like being a Commissioner? The intermediate level of his commitment in Tzu-Chi may mark the differences between him and participants in other categories of membership.

COMMISSIONER (FORMAL AND APPRENTICE COMMISSIONERS)

Commissioners are the key persons for the operation of the Tzu-chi Association. They offer the most direct services to recipients. Their tasks including collecting money from members, eliciting contributions at charity fairs and bazaars, visiting poor families, finding neighborhoods that need to be helped, attending group meetings, attending regional commissioners' monthly conferences, etc. As the chances arise, like the Faith Corps, they also need to conduct the ritual of chanting the name of buddha for other in-group members or those members' relatives.

Apprentice commissioners, or as they are formally called, "Behind-the-scene commissioners," carry out the same kinds of voluntary services as commissioners. Although they do not have formal status, they help commissioners to collect donations and to organize local activities on various occasions. They are apprentices to the formal commissioners, and usually they were family members and good friends of the formal commissioners before they joined Tzu-Chi. For a person to become an Apprentice commissioner, he/she needs only the recommendation of a formal commissioner. If he/she serves as an Apprentice commissioner for more than half a year, and has been recommended and endorsed by enough of the formal commissioners, he/she can become a formal commissioner if he/she wants to.

In Tzu-Chi, because the most central charity work is carried out by Commissioners and Apprentice commissioners, the

characteristics of their behavior provide the model for extremely committed helpers. One story may help us to get a more vivid picture of a commissioner. The paragraphs below are extracted from an article in the "Tzu-Chi Monthly" which was written by a Tzu-Chi reporter. Although written with a certain rhetorical intent, this article well illustrates the path of a Commissioner's commitment to the Tzu-Chi across time:

> When Ching-wei was seven years old, her father passed away. She grew up with her grandma and aunt. At the age of 17, her home caught fire, and everything was destroyed. Fortunately, her neighbors lent helping hands...These hard times formed her, yet she did not forget the warmth and kindness surrounding her world.
>
> As her children have grew up, for her the feeling of being willing to return something to society never faded away. In 1966, once when her son and his friend were out too late, the friend's mother came to her home looking for them. Ching-wei then had the chance to get to know a Tzu-Chi Commissioner [the friend's mother]. After this, she donated 30 NT dollars every month, and began to realize her dream of helping others.
>
> After being a member for three years, she had never been to the Still Thought Abode and her understanding of Tzu-Chi was still very limited. Once, coincidentally, Master and other Buddhist nuns were

visiting an impoverished family near her home. She was invited to join, and she saw that "her neighbor, an old woman, is so lonely and helpless, nevertheless, Tzu-Chi could take care of her so well." Ching-wei began to have strong trust in Tzu-Chi's charity work, and it was also her first time to see the Master Cheng Yen.

In February 1969, Ching-wei first came to the Still Thought Abode. From the moment she listened to Master's speech, it was just like a flow of purified running water touching her mind. Suddenly she felt so comforted and clean. In March, then, she converted to Master Cheng Yen, and Cheng Yen then gave her a Buddhist title: "Ching-wei."

At that time, many Sisters suggested that she become a Commissioner. She always smiled to the other Sisters: "I can come out to recruit new members, and let you recruit the money [meaning she did not want to be a formal Commissioner]." However, another Commissioner gave her a recruiting booklet and said: "You have your own personal network. I have my own personal network. One should collect money from those members one has recruited. Thus one can carry out what she would do on her own responsibility." Actually, Chien-wei was worried about what she would do if she could not recruit any members. The Commissioners

encouraged her: "Making a Bodhisattva wish, believe in yourself that you can do it."

In the first month that she was a commissioner, she recruited 300 NT dollars. At that time, her husband worked in the railroad station, with a salary of only several hundred NT dollars...She was so happy to have such results. After that, she gradually increased the amount of contributions she got...

Ching-wei ran back and forth on foot everyday. Her husband felt very sorry for her, so he volunteered to become her driver. Whether rain or shine, on the day of asking for contributions, this couple then rode a motorcycle, passing through the neighborhood. For a long time, as other people saw them, they all knew: "Chumpy Uncle is carrying Chumpy Aunt to collect donations for Tzu-Chi."

...Then she began to wear an apron and serve as a voluntary cook in Tzu-Chi. On the day of free giving [to recipients] or conferences, she would prepare thousands of lunch packages, very carefully. Thus she was tied with other Tzu-Chi as well. She commented: "I can always do this well. It's not because I am very good at it, rather, it is that I am willing to do. This 'Bodhisattva will' blesses us with wisdom. Because we are healthy, so we can do something." "One has only two hands to wash, pick, and cut vegetables.

If we do not all cooperate together, how can we get the strength of 'one hand works as one thousand hands' [Cheng Yen's words, meaning that the strength is immeasurable if people cooperate together]. And how can we connect with others by these predestined relationships...."

One thing impressed her very much. Once her husband got a serious disease, with difficulty breathing and eating. At that time she was not comfortable with going to Tzu-Chi to help. She recalled: "My husband, however, still said to me he is o.k. [thus encouraging her to go to Tzu-Chi]. I then said to him, "There are sons and daughters-in-law here. The collective's things are more important [than personal ones]. As soon as I have finished these things, I'll be back to take care of you." What was so strange was that, after she was back home, her husband began to recover gradually from his illness.

Before knowing Buddhism, Ching-wei's temper was not very good...After getting lessons from Master, she began to know how to cultivate herself with tolerance. She said: "Master teach us how to become a good person. The most fundamental thing is to play well our social role--be a good daughter-in-law, good wife, and good mother. Now children show filial devotion and obedience to us. And grand-children are so loving and

well-behaved. My family is so harmonious. It's all due to Master's teaching.

"You young people should know. Master's every word is a treasure. You must listen carefully without missing any words. They are the guidelines for us to behave ourselves or to engage in anything." She summed up her story with this comment...(Hsieh, 1993:70-71)

This story shows several characteristics of the process of becoming a Commissioner and the activities performed by a Commissioner: 1) By some kind of personal network, one becomes a member. 2) Through the process, one has the chance to gain further understanding of Tzu-Chi. 3) Through the process, one has the chance to know Master Cheng Yen, and then become further committed. 4) After all, through in-group participants' influences, one becomes more involved, and then further becomes a commissioner. 5) One's spouse also comes out to help one do Tzu-Chi jobs. 6) Typical activities include recruiting, asking for donations, and volunteering in Tzu-Chi's office. 7) The family's social support for one's commitment in Tzu-Chi grows. 8) By participating in Tzu-Chi, one gets valuable lessons from Buddhism and from the Master, and further makes the family become more harmonious. Later we will focus more closely on all these points. However, as the above story has helped us to highlight the history of a commissioner's whole career, the text below, extracts from a chapter of Chen's (1990) dissertation entitled "Typical Activities of a Tzu-Chi Commissioner," vividly

depict a typical day of a highly committed Tzu-Chi commissioner. Since Chen's observations are very similar to my own, and I cannot do a better job of describing than he has. This abridgement of his chapter provides a closeup look at a Tzu-Chi Commissioner's typical activities on a day to day basis.

> Ching-Ling is a housewife who is in her early forties...She has two children who are attending junior high and elementary school respectively. Her husband is a businessman, and their family belongs to the middle class. She has been a Tzu-chi commissioner for seven years...Although she has no job per se, her schedule is as busy as those who are employed. As a Tzu-Chi commissioner, she spends at least five days a week working for the Association. She works as a volunteer, and she does not receive any financial or material rewards from the Tzu-Chi Association.
>
> Every morning, not long after she gets up at 6:00, she receives telephone calls from her members. They may ask her some religious question such as how to arrange a Buddhist sanctuary, or how to prepare funeral affairs for dying relatives, or they may simply share with her their suffering and worries, such as conflicts between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law...She has about six hundred members, and since they respect and trust her, she receives numerous calls from her members every morning. Some

conversations last only ten to twenty minutes; other might take one or even two hours to finish...Whenever the member wants to talk and does not wish to hang up, she must listen patiently. For those who are suffering from great difficulties in their lives, she particularly has to make special efforts to comfort them. Thus, more often than not, Ching-Ling's whole morning is spent in telephone conversations with her members.

Once she finishes her lunch, she rushes out to collect her members' monthly donations...Even for as little as one hundred NT dollars, Ching-Ling is willing to go out to collect the money each month...For her, the amount of money is not important, rather, what really matters is that by visiting her members and collecting the money monthly, she helps them bring up their "kind hearts" every month instead of only irregularly once in a while.

Among the six hundred members, she has to collect the donations of about two hundred members in person, while her Apprentice Commissioners collect from the other four hundred members. In order to visit these two hundred members every month, she visits about ten members every weekday. To make sure she can finish collecting money from these families, she has to plan her route of travelling and to call her members in

advance to inform them she is coming. She then takes buses, changing from one line to another, to get to her various destinations...

In collecting donations from members, there are several other things Ching-Ling has to do at the same time. She has to pass on some of the recent messages to her members, such as: the number of new students that the Nurses' college will enroll this year; the moving stories which recently happened in Tzu-Chi. She also has to listen to her members complain about the things they are unhappy about--mostly their domestic affairs...

Sometimes the conversation with a member lasts longer than she expects, so she then has to rush on to her next visit by taking a taxi, at her own cost, and she rushes to get home before six to prepare dinner for her family...

In addition to these routine activities, there are many other activities and events which most commissioners regularly participate in. They attend group meetings and Regional Commissioners' Conferences every month, and "go back" to Hualien to participate in Provincial Commissioners' Monthly Conferences several times a year. They frequently hold "Tzu-Chi Tea Social" or "Tzu-Chi Luncheon/Dinner" in their homes. In these gatherings the Tzu-Chi commissioners

prepare vegetarian desserts or meals for the guests and their group members and then use these opportunities to talk about Tzu-Chi's missions and their positive experiences in Tzu-Chi. In addition, they frequently visit the poor families. Also, those who join the "Mutual Service Committee," from time to time have to recite at the commencement of death, attend funerals or visit the ill...(From Chen, 1990:91-96).

To 1996, there were 5684 Tzu-Chi commissioners in Taiwan. In the Taichung area, there were 1063 commissioners. While there are no statistics on the sex and age composition for commissioners in the Taichung area, we know that in the Taipei area, in 1994, 75% of commissioners were female (K'ang and Chien, 1996:90), and those aged from 41 to 50 constituted the largest proportion (i.e., below 40: 5%; 41-50: 60%; 51-60: 25%; above 60: 10%, see K'ang and Chien, 1996:90). With regard to Apprentice Commissioners, there are currently no statistics on their total number or sex and age composition. Nevertheless, according to a staff report at a Tzu-Chi working meeting in April 1995, there are approximately 1700 apprentice commissioners in the Taichung area.

The commissioners and Apprentice Commissioners are organized into groups; for example, in Taichung city, there are 9 groups. The size of a group varies from about 50 to 200 people. Each group has a group leader and one or two deputy

group leaders. In the early days of Tzu-chi, the Taichung area, group leaders were assigned by Master Cheng Yen. Others drew lots to decide which group one would belong to. As the base for this system has broadened, for a later commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner, the group to which one belongs depends on which senior Commissioner he or she has been recruited by. There is a strong bond of affection between an Apprentice and his (her) specific senior Commissioner, as shown in the intimacy names new and senior Commissioners call each other; senior Commissioners call new Commissioners "baby chicks" and a new Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner will call his/her specific senior commissioner "mother hen." This is quite different from the organized principle of the Faith Corps. As the Faith Corps was founded in the later days of Tzu-Chi, it is organized into different subgroups based upon geographical districts. There is also no direct corresponding relationship between a senior member and an apprentice member of the Faith Corps.

Later, by exploring Tzu-Chi's system of recruitment and maintenance, we will gain further understanding of how commissioners play the central roles in Tzu-Chi's operations. Here, from our brief profile of Tzu-Chi's different categories of membership, we may temporarily conclude that in Tzu-Chi, according to the roles played by participants in different categories of membership, we can identify three basic kinds of participants:

1. Those who basically only donate money to Tzu-Chi: Honored Patrons and Members. Honored patrons are those who donate more than a million NT dollars; Members are those who make regular or irregular donations to Tzu-Chi. However, the quite different amount one has donated may mark the differences between these two positions.

2. Those who basically offer labor services to Tzu-Chi: formal and apprentice members of the Faith Corps. Male volunteers who offer various labor services, usually part-time; formal status may cause some differences between the formal and apprentice participants of the Faith Corps.

3. Highest committed participants: Commissioners and Apprentice Commissioners. These are basically full-time volunteers for Tzu-Chi's various activities. Again, formal status may cause differences between them.

Some participants can play multiple roles in Tzu-Chi. For example, one can be a Member, Honored Patron, Faith Corps member, and Commissioner at the same time. Certainly, such individuals are highly identified with Tzu-Chi, and in the sense that they play the role in Tzu-Chi's central position--commissioner--of course they are also the most highly committed participants, and may be committed even more strongly than most other participants. Later we'll have a further look at these people who play multiple roles in Tzu-Chi.

SUMMARY

Profiles of several Tzu-Chi categories of membership--Member, Honored Patron, Faith Corps, Apprentice and Formal Commissioners--have been offered in this chapter. Particularly, in a rather dynamic sense, their daily life as it might be related to Tzu-Chi's prosocial commitment has been depicted. Each category of membership has its specific characteristics with regard to prosocial commitment. Our later discussion will trace and compare the reasons, motivations, and paths that underlie these people's different kinds of prosocial commitment.

CHAPTER 5. THE PROCESSES OF RECRUITMENT FOR TZU-CHI'S DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

> ***That time, my good friend, Wu Mama [intimate way to call a middle age women], became a Commissioner and I was pushed by her to become an Apprentice Commissioner. She said that there is a Buddhist nun who is building a hospital...Wu Mama asked me to go to Hualien with her [to see the Buddhist nun], and I also asked my neighbors to go with us...Afterwards, I really wanted to talk about Tzu-Chi with others. As I get others' contributions, I am so happy...(A female Commissioner, Interview note, 22:2)***

In the previous chapter, we examined the different kinds of prosocial commitment among different Tzu-Chi categories of membership: Members, Honored Patrons, formal and apprentices members of the Faith Corps and Commissioners. In this chapter, in a more dynamic way, we will further explore the links between these Tzu-Chi categories of members and the ways their participants are recruited. Specifically, we will begin with an examination of Tzu-Chi's system of recruitment and maintenance.

TZU-CHI'S SYSTEM OF RECRUITMENT

Everyone can be a member, if he or she donates and gets a

receipt from Tzu-Chi. One might just send a money order to Tzu-Chi, or might ask some apprentice commissioners or formal commissioners to come to his or her home regularly to collect the contribution. And as we have already shown (in chapter 4), about 95% of the total members who donate money do so through Tzu-Chi's face-to-face network rather than through post-offices or banks.

The Tzu-Chi system of asking for contributions is basically constituted by three structural positions: Member, Apprentice Commissioner, and Formal Commissioner. Usually every month or two months, a Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner goes to a Member's home or office to collect donations. Most of the time, in the name of each family member, a Member will donate for his or her whole family. That is, in most cases each "Tzu-Chi family" has one Member who is responsible for giving donations for all of his or her family. For example, if one's family has 6 people, when the Commissioners or Apprentice Commissioners come to one's home, the family member may donate a total of 600 NT dollars, with each hundred dollar amount under the name of a different family member. As described in chapter 4, one may donate for family members that are already dead or just born, since by doing this, one can accumulate merits for them and also for one's entire family unit.

An Apprentice Commissioner is responsible to his/her Commissioner, and a Commissioner usually leads several Apprentice Commissioners (from about one to ten). An Apprentice

Commissioner usually collects 5 to 30 families' Members' donations regularly, while a Commissioner is usually totally responsible for at least 30 families' Members' donations (some of them will be helped by his or her Apprentice Commissioners). In fact, as I know, most Commissioners are responsible for more than 100 families, totally more than 400 Members.

For a person to become an Apprentice Commissioner, he/she needs only the recommendation of a Formal Commissioner. Most often, Apprentice Commissioners are already current Commissioners' relatives or good friends. To become a Formal Commissioner, one must meet the following requirements: (a) must have served as an Apprentice Commissioner for at least a half year; (b) must have attended a "Tzu-Chi spirit Seminar" (i.e., a new member training session) at least once; (c) must have been recommended by two Formal Commissioners; (d) must have been endorsed by over half of the group members; (e) must have been approved and recommended by the leader of the group, and (f) must have been approved and conferred a Formal Commissioner's certificate by the headquarters (Chen, 1990: 75-77; Tzu-Chi Manual, 1994:124-128).

Every month, an Apprentice Commissioner or a Formal Commissioner brings a booklet to his (her) Members' homes to collect contributions This booklet is a kind of symbol of a Commissioner's status and records all the details of the donations of a Commissioner's or an Apprentice Commissioner's Members. While an Apprentice Commissioner only has a paperback

contribution booklet, a Commissioner has a hardcover contribution booklet. The results of one's asking for contributions are documented clearly in this booklet; thus no matter how small the amount, it can be added to a Commissioner's or an Apprentice Commissioner's total credits about his or her efforts in asking for contributions.

This system of asking for contributions, at the same time, is also a very effective way of holding onto old participants and recruiting new participants. Particularly, when a Commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner collects contributions from her or his members every month, as the chance arises, she or he will also introduce the main organizational purpose and recent events of Tzu-Chi to these members. Many published booklets, books, magazines, audiotapes, and videotapes published by Tzu-Chi (to be discussed later), help a Commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner to spread information about Tzu-Chi to his (her) Members.

A Commissioner plays multiple roles in members' daily lives. In addition to mobilizing donations for and spreading information about Tzu-Chi, she or he also shares with Members their sufferings and pains, and offers opinions to Members regarding various family matters, such as an inharmonious relationship between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law, children's troublesome behavior, couples' quarrels, etc. In this sense, this Tzu-Chi network penetrates deeply into Tzu-Chi participants' everyday life. One male Commissioner told me how

he takes on this demanding "Tzu-Chi task":

> I spend very much time in Tzu-Chi. As I open my eyes everyday, it's Tzu-Chi. As I close my eyes, my thinking is also full of Tzu-Chi. Everyday, I sleep no more than 6 hours...I have more than 50 families' Members. Most Members hope that I can go directly to their home to collect contributions. They eagerly want to know more about Tzu-Chi's recent information. They are very much concerned about what has been happening in Tzu-chi recently. As I go directly to their home, they also can rely on me in dealing with their family troubles. They want me to share with them about their attainment and achievement...For example, yesterday, a Sister [Tzu-Chi's way of calling other female participants] called me in a hurry, and told me that her husband was drunk. I then went to their home immediately, even though I was still busy in my own work..These kinds of things happen very often to me. Sometimes, they [these Members] cannot wait; I need to be there as soon as possible. As a Tzu-Chi Commissioner, I have a lot of this kind of thing to do (Interview note, 1:1-2).

A Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner is certainly involved deeply in his (her) Members' daily life, and Members usually have some kind of special feelings toward their Commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner. As one Male Member said: "Although I have not been involved in Tzu-Chi much, yet I

have found more than a little change. As I have talked to those Brothers and Sisters [the Commissioners that come to his home], I feel that I receive much instruction from them. When you have some worry and anxiety, once you talk to those Brothers and Sisters, you'll feel that it is o.k. then...As they talk about Tzu-Chi, they talk about something that makes us happy. You feel that your mind also becomes clear (Interview note, 14:3-4)."

As this "Tzu-Chi network" penetrates deeply into Members' daily world, it also becomes an important network for exploring and recruiting new participants. As a Commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner collects donations through this network, she or he gains further understanding about which of his or her Members could possibly become a more committed participant. At the same time a Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner may get many chances to get to know Members' relatives or acquaintances who might be potential participants in Tzu-Chi. A Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner then can take further action to recruit a specific participant. Indeed, we found that most of the Commissioners, Apprentice Commissioners, Faith Corps, and Honored Patrons were recruited through this network (I will later discuss this issue empirically). Through this recruiting system, therefore, as some one is found by a Commissioner or an Apprentice Commissioner to be a prospective Tzu-Chi participant, that person will soon be interviewed by a Commissioner or Apprentice Commissioner.

I had several opportunities to be with Commissioners doing

this kind of interview. On the road toward a prospective participant's home, for example, I still remember clearly how a Commissioner characterized a prospective participant: "I saw her once in my Member's home, and found she felt interested in volunteering. She is a very compassionate woman, with only one 7-year-old daughter...She currently is not working, and has some interest in charity and community service. Her husband is in a professional job, and will not interfere with her business too much..."

In combination with this face-to-face recruitment system, Tzu-Chi's various publications and mass media system, in both their formats and contents, also take a highly penetrating style in regards to most participants' daily life. These include:

1. Tzu-Chi's introductory materials, such as several pamphlets and booklets, which are printed in a very readable format. One especially popular booklet, written by Chen Hui-Chien (1988) is, "Master Cheng-Yen and her Tzu-Chi World," which clearly characterizes Cheng-Yen's ideals and goals, and dramatizes Cheng-Yen's compassion and benevolent acts. This booklet has touched many people and raised people's sympathy toward both Cheng-Yen and the Tzu-Chi Association.

2. Books published by the Tzu-chi Association, especially the more than 40 written by Master Cheng Yen. The most notable one is entitled, "Still Thoughts;" in it, Cheng Yen's speeches have

been edited into a proverb format. The first version of this book was published in 1989, and is now in more than 200 printing. In its about 300 page size, this book offers people of a modern time clear guidelines. Cheng Yen here not only talks about compassion and loving, but also talks about human relationships, family matters, students' anxiety about exams, and ways of self-cultivation in modern society. Especially in its short and memorable format, this book has provided people in modern Taiwanese society catchable meanings and many words that can be applied to one's personal problems.

3. The organizational regular newspapers and magazines: 1) "Tzu-Chi Dharma-Friend Semi-monthly," beginning in September 1986, and now a four-page newspaper with a circulation of more than 600,000 issues (Tzu-Chi Brochure, 1995); and 2) "Tzu-Chi Monthly", the monthly magazine, about 100 pages, first published in 1967, and now with a circulation of more than 100,000 issues. Both of the publications cover news of charity, medicine, education, culture, members' stories, and reports from branch offices. Speeches and illuminations by Cheng Yen are also regular features of both publications. These notify most of the Tzu-Chi participants about Tzu-Chi's recent touching stories and various new helping programs.

4. Audiotapes and videotapes: Many lectures and speeches by Master Cheng Yen have been recorded and published in audiotape

and videotape format. Some commissioners' public testimonies have also been recorded and published in audiotape format. These public testimonies show how an ordinary person, or sometime even a gang, can change his or her life style and social relationships, and further commit to positive social behavior. As these stories are ordinary people's stories, and the settings for these stories are everyday life in current Taiwan, these stories resonate for many people in different walks of Taiwanese life.

5. Moreover, there is a multi-media form of Tzu-Chi's various programs, including radio programs (beginning from 1987), TV programs in cable (beginning from 1995), and even the World-Wide-Web internet address of Tzu-Chi (beginning from 1996). At almost anytime, if you want to know something about Tzu-Chi, you can reach it through these multi-media. Thus, if you want, you can let Tzu-Chi live around you on a daily basis.

However, here we must emphasize several points. First, the popularity of the above media has occurred only recently. For example, the first version of Cheng Yen's most influential book, "Still Thoughts", was published in 1989; the enlarged version of Tzu-Chi Monthly only began in 1991; and the multi-media form of Tzu-Chi is very recent. Thus the far-reaching influence of the Tzu-Chi's media is a very recent phenomenon. Secondly, in order for these media to work, they must be accompanied by Tzu-Chi's

specific personal network to reach into every participant's life world. For example, near the end of every month, in the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch, we can see tons of the newly published Tzu-Chi Monthly pile up along the sides of the hall. Every Commissioner then will carry about 100 to 300 of these magazines back to disseminate to his or her Members. As the many Commissioners move back and forth, in a hurry to move all these magazines at the same time, the scene actually is very impressive. Usually at this time Commissioners also buy many audiotapes and books from the Branch to be ready to disseminate these materials freely to his or her new Members and potential commissioners.

PAST FINDINGS ABOUT RECRUITMENT

Since Tzu-Chi's recruitment network is actually organized from and based upon people's pre-existing social networks, a high proportion of participants in Tzu-Chi may be classified as recruited by a pre-existing social network. Before we go to the empirical evidence, we will take a brief look at current theoretical and empirical discussions about patterns of recruitment.

First, previous research on American volunteers has found that volunteers are primarily recruited through friends, co-workers, and family members. For example, Sills's study (1957) found that only 10 percent of the volunteers in his sample volunteered on their own initiative; the rest were recruited by a friend (52%), another number of the community (20%), or by an

occupational colleague (18%). A Gallup Report found that 59 percent reported volunteering because they were "asked by someone in the organization," 22 percent because they were asked by a friend or neighbor, and 14 percent had been asked by a customer/employer, with only 4 percent reporting responding to mass media approaches (Gallup Organization, 1987). Pearce's study of seven volunteer-staffed organizations also showed that personal contact brought 64 percent of the volunteers into the organization, with 29 percent taking the initiative in response to an ad, and 11 percent through personal knowledge of the organization; the remaining 7 percent of the interviewees were founders of their organizations (1993:67). This evidence is strong and consistent: most volunteers are recruited by their friends, relatives, or associations. Thus, those with more extensive personal contacts are more likely to be recruited.

The importance of social networks in recruitment is also reflected in the empirical findings on social movements and collective action (Fernandex & McAdam, 1989; Freeman, 1973; Knoke and Wright-Isak, 1982; Leathy, 1975; McAdam & Paulsen, 1994; Muller, 1994; Pinard, 1971; Snow, Zurcher, Ekland-Olson, 1980; Tygart and Holt, 1972; Von Eschen et al., 1971; Wilson and Orum, 1976; Woelfel et al., 1974; Zurcher and Kirpatric, 1976), and conversion in religious groups (Bibby and Brinkerhoff, 1974; Lofland, 1966; Rochford, 1985; Stark and Bainbridge, 1980). Particularly, in the early 1980s, as researchers in both areas (social movements and sociology of religion) consciously worked

against the past approach of studying recruitment at the psychological/motivational level, the importance of the structural dimension of the recruitment processes has been emphasized.

For example, Stark and Bainbridge (1980) argued that older sociological models of deprivation that focused on the ideological appeal of cults must be supplemented by theories that place more emphasis on interpersonal relations and contacts to explain the conversion process. Citing from their own data, and relevant studies (Hardyck and Braden, 1962; Nordquist, 1978), Stark and Bainbridge provided quantitative evidence of the critical importance of social and kinship bonds in spreading religious faith. And in their essay entitled "Network of Faith," they thus offered their empirically grounded "social network model," in which "faith constitutes conformity to the religious outlook of one's intimates--that membership spreads through social networks" (1377).

In the same sense and at almost the same time, arguing that differential recruitment is not merely a function of dispositional susceptibility and grounded on various sets of data, Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson's (1980) microstructural approach to social movements also showed that "differential recruitment, is strongly influenced by structural proximity, availability, and affective interaction with movement members" (p.787).

We may criticize the above theoretical consideration as

being too obvious, since no one is likely to join a group made up only of strangers. However, if we can identify the special processes and structural availability or limitations involved in the recruitment processes, as Snow et al.'s 1980's paper has demonstrated,[21] the exploration of the "micro-structural factors" (Snow et al., 1980:788) of organization recruitment may quite compensate for the "macrostructural" (Blumer, 1951) probing of new organizations' emergence and growth.

However, under such understanding, it still needs to be pointed out that variations do exist among different groups and social-demographic backgrounds. Particularly, for example, Rochford's (1982) study shows that local conditions may affect the pattern of recruitment. Judah's (1974) study of Hare Krishna documented a particularly high rate of participants being recruited through public places (66%). And studies have shown differences between males and females in the way of being recruited into an organization (Gallup Report, 1987; O'Connor & Johnson, 1989; Rochord, 1985); males have a higher probability of being recruited in public places. Later we will return to some of these issues.

FINDINGS ABOUT TZU-CHI'S RECRUITMENT

Since we now have an understanding of Tzu-Chi's recruitment

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[21] Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson (1980) have indicated that "the probability of being recruited into a particular movement is largely a function to two conditions: 1. links to one or more movement members through a preexisting or emergent interpersonal tie; and 2. the absence of countervailing networks" (799).

system and a review of past findings about network recruitment, we may further check the actual findings about Tzu-Chi's recruitment.

Following Snow, et al. (1980), recruitment processes can be classified based upon two dimensions: 1) the various socio-spatial settings in which movement and potential participants can come into contact, specifically, can be conceptualized in terms of a public or private places,[22] and 2) the variety of generally available modes of communication through which information can be imparted, specifically, can be conceptualized in terms of whether they are face-to-face or mediated. The cross-classification of these two dimensions thus suggests four general microstructural avenues of information dissemination and recruitment: in public places, including 1) recruitment via media, such as radio, television, and newspapers (mass media: public channels by mediated); and 2) face-to-face leafleting, petitioning, movement-sponsored conventions and festivals, etc. (public places: public channels by face-to-face); in private places, including 3) recruitment via mail and telephone (mail/telephone: private channels by mediated); and 4) door-to-door leafleting, information dissemination and recruitment among familiar others along the lines of promoter's extra-movement

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[22] "Public places" can be referred to as those regions or areas in a community or society that are freely and officially accessible to most members of that community or society. "Private places" can be referred to as those spatial domains that are off-limits to all but acknowledged members and guests, and in which outsiders are considered as actual or potential intruders (Goffman, 1963; Lyman and Scott, 1967).

interpersonal networks (social networks: private channels by face-to-face).

Accordingly, for Tzu-Chi's recruitment processes, the findings regarding recruitment to Tzu-Chi are shown in table 5.1:

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Table 5.1 about here

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As indicated in table 5.1, most of Tzu-Chi's participants are recruited into Tzu-Chi by one or more members with whom they have a preexisting, interpersonal tie. Although Tzu-Chi devotes a considerable amount of time and energy to recruiting people in public places, these information dissemination and recruiting forays, while they may be very informative, still are not very productive compared to the face-to-face network's influence.

However, as we mentioned above, studies have shown differences between males and females in the way of being recruited into an organization. Particularly, according to the Gallup Report (1987), men are 10 percent more likely than women to have been recruited through an organization to which they already belong and about 10 percent more likely to have been asked at their work place (Gallup Report, 1987, see O'Connor & Johnson, 1989:409). Regarding the Hare Krishna movement, Rochford's study (1985) shows that men and women are recruited into religious movements thorough different influence structures: men are more likely recruited into the movement

after they have initiated contact with other participants in public places (18% more than women), while women are more apt to be recruited through social network linkages with other members or movement sympathizers (see Rochford, 1985:125). Rochford's findings are shown in table 5.2:

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Table 5.2 about here

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This pattern reveals the structure of private-public places for American. As Bell, investigating the perspective worlds of men and women, concludes:

> The evidence clearly indicates that the friendships of women are more frequent, more significant, and more interpersonally involved than those commonly found among men. The friendships of women are more often based on trust and involved more revealing of the self to the other...Women more typically come from within themselves in their friendships with other women, while men typically function outside themselves. The woman reveals her feelings, emotions, and insecurities. Often the man guards against letting out anything that reveals his feelings, especially if he sees them as threatening to his sense of masculinity. (Bell, 1981:60-61, qtd. in Rochford, 1985:126)

The difference between men's and women's participation in social networks thus to a large degree reflects fundamental differences

in the everyday social worlds experienced by each sex in the U.S.

Nevertheless, if we consider the relevant figures in Taiwan, at least in Tzu-Chi's recruitment patterns, there are no such differences existing between men's and women's recruitment processes. This is shown as table 5.3:

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Table 5.3. about here

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Comparing to different sexes, both male and female join Tzu-Chi predominately by some kind of network's introduction. Even the patterns of this network between male's and female's network seems, at first look, to be similar (see table 5.4):

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Table 5.4. about here

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Here I would not argue about whether in Taiwan women's and men's life worlds have similar patterns and thus can be contrasted to the findings in the U.S. This argument needs more data to be proved, and I have not collected enough data to do so. However, there are several things we can say about the different patterns of recruitment between Tzu-Chi and American voluntary and religious organizations, particularly with regard to gender issues.

Particularly, I would like to argue that, as I observed in Tzu-Chi participants' private places, people have a very strong

relationship bond. This bond is strong enough for people to affect those in their private places, usually family members or other relatives, to consider joining a grassroots charitable organization like Tzu-Chi. In other words, we may say that in the U.S., a male's choosing to join a voluntary organization is basically a personal choice, while in Taiwan, at least for these Tzu-Chi participants, a male's choice of joining a grassroots charitable organization, at its first moment, is due to his family's, especially his spouse's, strong influence. More important, in people's family relationships, it is legitimate for one to ask for one's family members to do something that is supposed to be meaningful and prosocial. This picture certainly is different from that in an individualist society such as the U.S.

I would like to argue further that Tzu-Chi's patterns of recruitment, particularly in reference to the male's similarity with the female's pathway of being recruited, reflect the special characteristics of collectivism of Taiwanese society, or more accurately, a cohort of Taiwanese society. In rather theoretical terms, individualism/collectivism refers to the form of the relationship between the individual and the collectivity in a given society. It has been defined by Hofstede (1991) that:

> Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to

> societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (p.51).

Without involving too much the debate over the appropriateness of this domain of analysis (Kagitcibasi, 1994; Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clark, 1985; Triandis, 1990; Yang, 1988), it is however important to note that there is evidence supporting the view that these concepts do not necessarily form opposite poles and may coexist in an individual or ingroups in different situations or with different target groups (Kagitcibase, 1987; Triandis, 1990; Triandis et al., 1988; Yang, 1988; Sinha & Tripathi, 1994; Ho & Chiu, 1994). Thus, we should treat these concept in probabilistic terms, as, for example, the likelihood of a person or a group of people behaving in individualist or collectivist ways in various situations (Triandis, 1994).

Taiwanese society, at least the older generation in Taiwanese society, tends to be more collectivist than American society. For example, Hofstede's (1980) classical study showed that, among 40 countries, Taiwan occupied the first place in the dimension of collectivism,[23] while the United States received the highest score on individualism. Indeed, in modern Taiwan,

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[23] Usually it has been thought that countries under Chinese cultural contexts have a higher tendency toward the collectivist orientation. For example, one study shows that, comparing 19 countries, Singapore, Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan occupied positions 10, 7, 4, and 1 on the dimension of collectivism (see Bond, 1991, p.39).

higher levels of education and urban residence would reduce collectivist orientations and enhance individualist orientations, particularly for the younger generation.[24] However, in a recent study (Chan, 1994), a comparison of the measure of individualism/collectivism between college students in Hong Kong (the most modernized Chinese society) and America, supported previous findings that Americans are more individualist and Hong Kong Chinese are more collectivist. Moreover, although we do not have the figures of age-composition for the total number of Tzu-Chi's participants, some figures about the age composition of several Tzu-Chi categories of membership (without the figures on members' and apprentice commissioners' age-composition) in Tzu-Chi's Taipei branch for 1994, do show that in these categories of membership, participants' age is predominately above 40, and they thus were born before 1954. This can be shown in table 5.5:

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[24] There is no direct empirical evidence about the change of individualist/collectivist orientation for Taiwanese people across time. However, findings regarding other places are not without conflict. For example, a study on Indian society (Mishra, 1994) does show that younger generation, higher education, and urban residence have higher individualist orientation. This may imply that modernization will change people's collectivist orientations. On the other hand, a Chan's (1994) study of Hong Kong, as we will discuss below, shows different kind of result. Nevertheless, we should always notice that people's change in collectivist/individualist orientation, in different domains of culture, may have a different tendency. For example, as one changes his or her value orientation with regard to the collectivist/individualist dimension, one may become individualist in the sense of caring about fulfillment of individual needs and interests, yet still greatly value such traditional collectivist value--as filial piety (see Yang, 1988).

Table 5.5. about here

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As the industrial boon in Taiwan begins from about the late 1960s (see chapter 3), for those now above 40 years old, the modernization's influence on them in their days of growing up is certainly much weaker than on those now less than 40 years old. In this sense, we would expect that, in Taiwan, the collectivist orientation for people in the older generation, say, older than 40 years old, is still prevalent. Furthermore, as Tzu-Chi's ideational system has clearly been articulated in a sense of collectivist orientation[25] (we'll have further discussion of Tzu-chi's ideational system in chapter 6), we may assume that Tzu-Chi's participants actually have an attitude that is highly compatible with collectivism, even for the younger participants.

One consequence of a collectivist society--or speaking more accurately, a society with more people having a stronger collectivist orientation--is that, as Bochner & Hesketh (1994) have described: "the person is less inner-directed, more controlled by the need to maintain face.[26] Face is lost when

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[25] For example, in Cheng Yen's words: "Our society is composed by a large group of people. You cannot make society be good by only your good character. You cannot make society be virtuous by only your good virtue. If we want to establish a good family and good society, we must respect and be grateful to each other" (Cheng Yen, 1992:32).

[26] "Face" in Chinese society, is a culture-embedded concept that may be hard for Westerners to understand. It is highly related to our current discussion on individualism/collectivism. Ho (1976) has criticized Goffman's (1955) definition of face: "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an

individuals fail to meet the obligations placed on them by virtue of their social position" (p.237). We will soon discover how the needs of "maintaining face" in Taiwanese society have made the Tzu-Chi recruitment network's influence very far-reaching and powerful.

As we have described, with regard to degree of commitment, the central figure in Tzu-Chi is the Commissioner (both Formal and Apprentice ones). I have already reported that these participants are predominantly female. Even nowadays, as Tzu-Chi has increased its rate in recruiting males, these newly recruited male participants still mostly keep to the rather marginal subgroups, such as Members, Honored Patrons, and the Faith Corps. A 1996 list of the Tzu-Chi Taichung branch's new participants confirms this tendency (see Table 5.6):

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image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes (213)", as having treated this concept as merely situationally defined and as being found in all societies. In contrast, Ho defined face as: "face is the respectability and/or deference which a person can claim for himself from others, by virtue of the relative position he occupies in his social network and the degree to which he is judged to have functioned adequately in that position as well as acceptably in his general conduct; the face extended to a person by others is a function of the degree of congruence between judgement of his total condition in life, including his actions as well as those of people closely associated with him, and the social expecting that others have place upon him. In terms of two interacting parties, face is the reciprocated compliance, respect, and/or deference that each party expects from, and extends to, the other party"(883). Ho's articulation of face catches more accurately the distinctive face behavior of Chinese/Taiwanese society. Following Ho, we should thus be aware that, in Chinese/Taiwanese society, underlying the practical function of face, there is a long term reciprocal relationship between the two interacting parties with their social roles embedded.

Table 5.6. about here

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Although the numbers of females and males are about the same in this new cohort of participants, in the most central positions--Commissioners--they are still disproportionally female.

That is to say, many males are recruited to Tzu-Chi because of the driving force from their private places. Nevertheless, most often, this driving force can be effective only in the range of driving people into a marginal Tzu-Chi position rather than into the central one. Many of my male informants told me about how they were drawn into Tzu-Chi by their wives. A well known story of a male Tzu-Chi participant (Tzu-Chi Audiotape, Cultivation [*du*], no.10) relates how his first contact with Tzu-Chi was actually induced by his wife. As his wife deceived him that all Commissioners' families could have a free trip to Hualien, he then, even though he was unhappy and reluctant, was willing to bring the children together to the Tzu-chi's "Still Thought Abode." One of my informants, who is a member of the Faith Corps, said:

> I go to this organization, is .. mmm..because mmm..that it will be more harmonious for our family. Because my wife will be very happy, thus my family will be more happy. Otherwise, she will be very unhappy. So if I go to Tzu-Chi, my wife will be happy, why shouldn't I go there. It can make my family more happy, more harmonious. So I go. It does not matter

> what the organization really is doing. As I know that it is doing something for charity, it is Ok. It's no harm for me. My wife goes, I go, and then she is happy. Moreover, it is a charitable organization, I have no reason to refuse it. As people say, Cheng Yen is very great. I do not understand very well how great she is. The only thing I know is that, if I go there, my wife can be changed. Since this a organization doing charity...As I go there: first, my wife will be happy; second, my family will be harmonious; third, there is no harm, and maybe it can educate me. So I go there (Interview note 39:3).

This is not to say that a male's joining Tzu-Chi is absolutely due to the family tie; rather, it is to say that his contact with Tzu-Chi, often, is due to the network's influence in his private places.

Especially since Tzu-Chi is a charitable organization without too much political stance, it is based upon the Taiwanese cultural repertoire of social action. In the first place, for merit-accumulation, conducting charitable behavior is quite important (see chapter 3). Secondly, due to the practical needs of an immigrant society, it also has been documented elsewhere that, across Taiwan's history, there has been a long tradition of social support and mutual help among those

consanguinity- and geographic-region-based relationships[27] (see Chou, 1983). Further, as the private affection ties are so important in a collectivist society, a male may find that it is more difficult to reject his wife's asking him to join Tzu-Chi. Moreover, according to Tzu-Chi's structural arrangement, by one's own schedule and energy, he (she) may choose any kind of helping program to join, thus when some significant others in his (her) network invite him (her) to join Tzu-Chi, he (she) might find it more difficult to find a rationale for not joining.

As a female Commissioner told me how she asked her husband to participate in Tzu-Chi, her words show that she felt it perfectly legitimate to ask for her husband to join Tzu-Chi:

> Indeed, he supports me [in Tzu-Chi]. He is busy in his company. He is not against my doing Tzu-Chi. I then said to him: "Let's both be Honored Patrons." He had no response, not saying yes, not saying no. I then explained to him, I said: "money, no matter how much it is, will run out. Our parents haven't left us any money, so we know that we must struggle for ourselves. Too much money for children is not useful. We should

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[27] Actually, it is not difficult to understand that for an immigrant society, even under the generally hierarchical assumptions of the early time, for those new settlers, they may have particular strong tendency and pragmatic needs to associate together for common purposes. For example, although in different focus, Tocqueville's much quoted comments on American voluntary associations (Vol.2:106) indeed has also shown that for an immigrant society like Americans, habit of creating associations for a wide variety of purposes is quite inherent.

> not leave too much money to them. If we haven't left any debt to the children, they then should be grateful to us. Not to mention that we have already left them a house to live in. As we keep a little bit for a pension for our aged life, what is left [money], however, should be given out. Master [Cheng Yen] is not asking you to donate all of your money, rather just part of it. This is good for our society."...My husband, he did not object to me. He is not a no-thinking person. He just has a lack of clear concept...(Interview note, 70:6)

Another statement, by a 70-year-old male Commissioner, illustrates how one has to take advantage of the function of "face" in Taiwanese society to recruit relatives' and friends' resources into Tzu-Chi.

> For raising funds, I take a booklet with a happy mood. I work very hard. Talking to my relatives and friends: "please, please, please let me gain face [without losing face]. Good friends, we should have good affinity [predestined relationship] with each other. Please, please donate to Tzu-Chi for me. It will not affect your life...100 dollars? Good enough..." As Master says that, if you can make good affinity with others, you will have good effects, and it will be accumulated into strength. So a good relationship is important. Cherishing and creating a good relationship

is very important...(Interview note, 58:9).

So far, then, we have found that indeed, personal networks are very important for organizations, whether for American voluntary organizations or for Tzu-Chi, for recruiting new members. However, while in the U.S., males have a higher rate than females of being recruited into a voluntary organization through public places or media, the evidence in Tzu-Chi shows different results. Males have the same rate as females of being recruited into Tzu-Chi by the personal networks. Moreover, while the social network has been found to be important for recruiting new members to voluntary organizations or social movements in the U.S., and the preliminary source of the network usually comes from a friend or neighbor, in Tzu-Chi, however, the sources mainly come from one's relatives. All of these reflect some specific characteristics of the life places of a collectivist society like Taiwan. Briefly speaking, in contrast to what has been found in an individualist society like America, in Tzu-Chi participants' public and private places, first, relatives play a more predominant role in one's private places than other kinds of network (recall table 5.4); second, private places have same degree of importance, for both males and females, in recruiting people to join a voluntary organization (recall table 5.3); third, it is seem as perfectly legitimate to ask relatives (although not all kinds of relatives, as we will discuss below) in your private places to join a charitable

organization.

THE DIFFERENT PATTERNS BETWEEN MALES' AND FEMALES' PRIVATE PLACES FOR TZU-CHI'S PARTICIPANTS

While relatives play such a predominant role in affecting people's decision to join Tzu-Chi, however, for males and females, the patterns of relatives in one's private place that can recruit one into Tzu-Chi are different. This can be shown in table 5.7:

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Table 5.7 about here

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Among those people who are recruited to Tzu-Chi by relatives, for males, most of them are recruited by their spouse or parents; for females, they are recruited at about the same rate from parents, parents-in-law, siblings, and relatives-in-law (not including parents-in-law). At first glance we see that from Tzu-Chi's early days and even today, the more committed participants are disproportionately female. No wonder, then, that of those males who have joined later a large proportion of them have been recruited by their female spouse. Indeed, this reflects the very truth of the Tzu-Chi Association. However, why this phenomenon exists and what its influences are on the recruitment network for both males and females still remain quite unknown.

To put our discussion into a specific historical contexts,

I would argue that "women as a status group in Taiwan", as they are in the U.S. (Hacker, 1951; Swerdlow and Iessinger, 1983; Sapiro, 1983), are largely marginal. Although there is a lack of direct evidence, some case studies (Gallin, 1984; Kung, 1976; Wolf, 1972) have shown that women in the political economy of contemporary Taiwan, even though they have the opportunity to enter the labor force, have still been socialized in norms of responsibility and compliance. In Taiwan, women thus are "subordinated to the interests of the patriliny" (Gallin, 1984: 397). Modern Taiwanese social structure is not simply "a legacy of traditional culture"; "it derives from a system of patriarchal capitalism that reproduces women's subordination" (Gallin, 1984:398). These studies thus imply that women's status in Taiwanese society is also marginal. Following Rochford's defining argument about women's marginality in the U.S. (1985):

> While women are part of the dominant culture, their relationship to it is ultimately paradoxical: they both live in a social world structured by the values and objectives embodied in patriarchy and capitalism (i.e., values associated with the structures and functions of a man's world) and, at the same time, they are strongly influenced by a separate cultural system with distinctive and different values and objectives, which are associated with their gender. (p.127)

Facing this marginality as a status group, Sapiro (1983) argues

that women thus have two relatively unattractive alternatives to choose from: women may join the public (masculine) realm only at the cost of being considered unfeminine; or, if they choose to confine their activities to the private feminine world of household and family, they lose both power and status.

In Taiwan's past, under the rather closed political system, most women would have chosen the latter alternative. That is, they would have defined the traditionally female realm as necessarily carrying the appropriate status for them, recognizing that their status and power did not compare with those of men. In terms of that solution, then, "their experience of social life by necessity has been characterized by those social and personal qualities associated with being feminine: altruism, interpersonal support, nurturing, and depth of feelings. Moreover, the loss of social power and prestige associated with these personality characteristics has been buffered by the recognition of, and the virtual glorification of, the importance of these feminine qualities for serving crucial societal needs (as in stabilizing the family)" (Rochford, 1985:128).

It has been further argued by Rochford (1985) that, following this kind of solution to women's marginality in social life, female social networks will play a particularly critical role in their lives. Social networks provide the structures by means of which private roles within society are enacted (Bensman and Lilienfeld, 1979). The basic structure of women's worlds

rests on a myriad of network ties that link women to one another. The prominence of female social networks, therefore, "should be understood as a result of the marginal status of women in modern society instead of as a simple or direct reflection of personality characteristics peculiar to women. Social support systems need not be inherently the cultural work of women, but they are the work of a status group within society that continues to be largely relegated to the private realm to the exclusion of full participation in the public realm" (Rochford, 1985:128-9).

To be sure, the establishment of Tzu-Chi has built upon Taiwanese women's social networks in private places. Although these women were confined into the feminine world, for whatever reasons, it has been just by these women's networks and these women's interpersonal support, nurturing, and altruism that the grassroots organization, Tzu-Chi, has reached its success. Women, by joining Tzu-Chi, thus gain recognition and the glorification of the feminine qualities for serving crucial societal needs. In Taiwan, as women's world mainly rests on the myriad networks in private places, compared to men, they thus have a relatively broader involvement in private places.

Males in Taiwan, however, are quite different from males in the U.S.; for the latter males have no limitation on involvement in public places, such as joining voluntary associations, civic organizations, and political participation. Particularly in the past, however, before the lifting of martial law (1987),

Taiwanese had no freedom of assembly or free expression (see chapter 3). Under the authoritative political structure in those days, participation in public places in Taiwan, for men, was actually perceived as very dangerous. Therefore, for Taiwanese males, since their main social activities have been engaged in the economic area, without much relevance to political and civil participation, their involvement in public places thus was only partial.

On the other hand, for a male in a collectivist society, the drawing force of his private network is much stronger than for a male in an individualistic society. In Taiwan, the combination of limitations on participation in public places and stronger social ties in private places for males, have meant that, for both males and females, personal networks have played the same important role in recruiting people into Tzu-Chi.

However, males' private places are still quite different in quality from those of females, for two reasons. First, since males are still dominant in Taiwanese patriarchal and capitalist social structure, they do not face the dilemma of marginality as do Taiwanese women. They thus also do not have strong psychological needs for obtaining recognition through intensive activities in private places. Secondly, although they are partially limited in public places, they can still spend their energy in those less politically related social activities.

To summarize, then, the historical background in Taiwan has resulted in the following situation. Although for both males and

females the personal network, particularly one's relatives, is an important influence on people's joining Tzu-Chi (and this is quite different from findings in the U.S.), in regard to the scope and intensity of private places, males' private places are still more limited than females', even though on the surface they may look similar. This is reflected in Tzu-Chi in two ways. First, most males recruited into Tzu-Chi are still being recruited into rather marginal positions in the organization, while females, oppositely, are recruited into central positions.[28] Secondly, with regard to the relatives by whom one has been recruited, for males, it is quite limited to one's spouse and parents, while for females the range is quite broad, including one's parents, parents in law, siblings, and relative affinities.

COHORT DIFFERENCES IN THE PATTERNS OF RECRUITMENT AMONG TZU-CHI'S PARTICIPANTS

Another factor that may pertain to differential recruitment is age. We find that among Tzu-chi's participants, the older cohort has a higher tendency to be recruited into Tzu-Chi by

[28] However, we can argue that, since those positions in Tzu-Chi that need higher commitment are highly demanding in time and energy, for males, those busy in making money, these structural limitations prevent them from further commitment to these positions in Tzu-Chi. However, in accepting this argument, I would also like to argue that, because Tzu-Chi's very grassroots-organized principles are based upon people's interpersonal interactions in private places, more females than males would still be recruited into those Tzu-Chi positions that demand highly personal commitment.

personal network, particularly for those whose age is above 50 (i.e., born before 1945). We may see this in table 5.8:

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Table 5.8. about here

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As I argued above, the older cohort in Taiwanese society may have a higher collectivist orientation, thus be predominantly recruited through personal network rather than media. There is also shown a shift in the social network's influence in the Taiwanese younger cohort.

THE INFLUENCES AND SIDE-EFFECTS OF TZU-CHI'S RECRUITMENT NETWORKS

For a collectivist society like Taiwan, at least for those in the older cohort (above 50 years old), people's personal relations are extremely important for influencing someone to join a voluntary organization. As Tzu-Chi's person-to-person recruiting system is built upon these networks, any participant's private place thus is an extension of Tzu-Chi's person-to-person recruiting system. Tzu-Chi's recruitment system thus results in a highly penetrable system, in a sense like a reticulated and web-like system. If you are situated somewhere inside this system, you will have a much higher potential of being recruited into Tzu-Chi. However, these interpersonal networks in a collectivist society should not be understood in terms of social pressure, but rather in terms of interpersonal

long-term relationships confined by social roles. This is a reciprocated compliance, respect, and deference that each party expects from, and extends to, the other party.

On the other hand, if one's position is not inside this reticulated system, we can say that, even though the mass media's influence in today's Taiwan is highly pervasive, people are hesitant to join a charitable organization like Tzu-Chi. This can be illustrated by the following account of an Apprentice Commissioner:

> I really want to give back to our society, but I do not have the chance to do it...I know the "Center of Family Support" [the name of a famous charitable organization in Taiwan] that time, however we [she and her husband] just do not have the chance to do something. We [her old family] were helped by the "Center of Family Support Center" a long time ago. We wanted to offer something back. We really wanted to get the chance to help those who have helped us before. However, we are only saying it without doing anything. We never had some real network that could let us do something. We just did not have the chance to do it...Until my mother's neighbor raised funds from her. My mother then asked that neighbor to see us...So he came to us and I knew that he was raising funds for Tzu-Chi. We thought: 'O.K. we'll do it.' (Interview note, 37:14).

As one's personal ties of being linked to Tzu-Chi are different, his or her intensity of being situated in this Tzu-Chi reticulated network also could be different. One informant told me that "when his aunt introduced him to join Tzu-Chi, he had indeed, great enthusiasm. However, since his aunt had not asked someone in his subgroup (a subgroup of the Faith Corps) to take care of him, his joining Tzu-Chi remained directionless. He was almost forgotten there for about half a year, until his aunt asked one senior member in his subgroup to take care of him. Then he got many things to do in Tzu-Chi's various projects, and made very profound progress in learning everything about Tzu-Chi" (Interview note, 70). Indeed, a strong personal motive to do something for Tzu-Chi is the most important factor determining one's involvement in Tzu-Chi. However, until you are linked to this reticulated personal network, the beginning of your high commitment will probably be delayed. In our later discussion of the processes of prosocial commitment for Tzu-Chi's participants (chapter 7), these issues will become much more clear.

As Tzu-Chi's various resources are also recruited through these personal networks, this organization actually also becomes much more credible, because participants are clearly aware of who is handling these resources. As one informant said: "it's my female cousin who is asking me to do Tzu-Chi. I trust her. She said to me that 'there is a Buddhist Master, a nun, who is building a hospital to save people. Do you want to take some

money out, a little bit?'..I trust my cousin. From that time, I began to give money to my female cousin without any further asking. Soon ten years have already passed..." (Interview note, 67:1).

This credibility is extremely important, as the traditional ideas of merit-accumulation, whether consciously or unconsciously, underlie people's charitable social actions. In a sense, this visible personal network of resource mobilization may serve several functions:

First, as all meritorious acts are subject to enumeration and measurement, a confidential personal network of resource mobilization thus guarantees these acts' merits. Second, as the resources are mobilized through this visible personal network, everyone in this network thus shares some part of the merits that have been produced following the meritorious act. Therefore, taking each unit of the network as a whole, merits follow all meritorious acts in this unit and will come to their maximum amount for everyone in this network. Moreover, since a relatively high proportion of people are recruited into Tzu-Chi by close relatives, and taking the whole family system as a unit of merit-accumulations, this also increases the extra positive outcomes that may follow each social actor's meritorious acts, since members in the same family system can share in the others' accumulated merits. Although this analogy may sound too secular, to some extent it really is something like the multilevel selling in which everyone shares the interests produced by the

whole unit. Actually it is quite difficult to get direct evidence on this point, since culturally, in Taiwan, people believe that merit-earning activities must be done in secret, for if the individual admits that his or her action is due to asking for merits, the merits will be gone (see chapter 3). However, indirectly, observations I made in the field may help to illustrate this point.

Example 1: At a Commissioners' group meeting, I heard the group leader urge every commissioner: "Once one has got the contributions from his (her) members, he (she) should bring these donations as soon as possible to the office in the Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch. If not, a Commissioner thus is very irresponsible, in the sense of delaying Members' merit-accumulations. For a Commissioner himself (herself), this also will reduce his (her) own merits." As these words are articulated in the negative form--merits-loss, it seems clear that a commissioner and his (or her) Members do act in terms of the same unit to accumulate their good merits. This is why, under many private circumstances, I have often heard Commissioners mention how their efforts in asking for contributions have made their group get far more donations than other groups.

Example 2: Once a participant told me how a senior Commissioner felt a little angry toward her daughter, since her daughter donated money to Tzu-Chi without passing it through the senior commissioner's network. As this participant told me:

> My daughter sent a money order to Hualien, in the amount of 100 thousand NT dollars. I then told my senior commissioner my daughter had done so. She felt very angry: "Why did your daughter not bring the money here to donate, rather than by herself to Hualien?" I told my daughter that, Liu [the senior commissioner] was very angry. My daughter said: "What's the difference? Donating by mail or donating through my senior commissioner?" (Interview note, 22:5-6).

As I tried to clarify from her the reasons for Liu's (the senior commissioner) anger toward her daughter, particularly asking about whether this was something related to merit-accumulation, her answer was immediate: "No, no, no,.mm..Liu's idea is that as she is my senior Commissioner, my daughter should also donate money through her. And thus she [her daughter] can get a chance to be really involved in Tzu-Chi, face-to-face" (Interview note, 22:6). The real meaning underlying these words is still ambiguous. According to my own observation, however, these words reveal how a commissioner believes that she and her members should work together in the whole unit to accumulate their good merits. However, it must be pointed out that this kind of idea basically exists only for the older generation in Tzu-Chi. For most younger participants, I rarely heard them give such accounts. That is, I would argue that the older generation in Tzu-Chi is actually more consciously aware of the function of merit-accumulation in charity than are those in the younger

generation. And Tzu-Chi's face-to-face recruitment network, for the older generation, is thus quite an important factor holding their strong prosocial commitment to Tzu-Chi. However, the different perceptions of merit-accumulation between older generations and younger generations in Tzu-Chi is another important issue that we will explore later (in chapter 8), both empirically and theoretically.

To summarize, thus from our above discussion, we can see clearly how Tzu-Chi's personal recruitment network may also affect the path and perception of a participant's prosocial commitment. Under the recruitment processes that we have discussed in this chapter, as one becomes a Tzu-Chi participant, he or she actually may not have much of a pre-existing idea about charity and prosocial commitment. How and what kind of interaction between organization and participant may lead him (her) to become a more committed helper? Are there any patterned influences from the organization? If so, how do individual participants perceive these influences? We will discuss these issues in chapter 6 and chapter 7.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have tried to explore the recruitment processes and their influences in the Tzu-Chi Association. By examining the dynamic linkages among different categories of members of Tzu-Chi, we have found that Tzu-Chi's penetrating recruitment system can both maintain links among old

participants and recruit new participants effectively.

By exploring Tzu-Chi's face-to-face recruitment network, we have found that this system is largely based upon participants' pre-existing social networks. On further examination we then found that, under the fact of high overlapping between Tzu-Chi's recruitment network and participants' own social network, there are thus a high proportion of participants in Tzu-Chi who have been recruited into Tzu-Chi through a pre-existing social network.

Although this characteristic (the importance of social network in recruitment) is also found in social movements and voluntary organizations in the U.S., the underlying mechanisms and cultural foundation between these organizations and Tzu-Chi are basically different. In Tzu-Chi, within the contexts of the collective society of Taiwan, people in private places, particularly relatives, are the most important recruiters for bringing both males and females into Tzu-Chi. In the U.S., however, it is usually the influence of friends that is the most important, and also, for males, it is more possible than for females to be recruited through public places. However, further examination of the private places of both males and females in Taiwan revealed qualitative differences between them, with males' private places being still more limited than females'. Another factor--age--also matters under Taiwanese social contexts, with the older generation having a higher tendency to be recruited into Tzu-Chi by personal networks.

The influences of Tzu-Chi's recruitment system have also been discussed. First, one's position inside or outside this reticulated system may determine his or her path of commitment. Second, as merit-accumulation is culturally crucial in Taiwanese society for eliciting people's charity, the high confidentiality of this recruitment system thus can guarantee participants' merits, and further help to mobilize participants' resources more efficiently. In addition, some side-effects of this recruitment system have also been discussed.

CHAPTER 6. THE COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES OF THE TZU-CHI ASSOCIATION

> ***I really did not have many ideas about charity at the time I began as a Tzu-Chi member. Master Cheng Yen said that we should have a heart like a mother to love our society, and should have Bodhisattva's wisdom to educate our children. At the time I joined, I did not understand the meanings of these words (Interview note 45:1)...Until I had contact with Tzu-chi...learned from our Master's dharma (truth)...learning from those senior commissioners ...I learned more and more and began to really understand the hardship that underlies Master's efforts in establishing Tzu-Chi (Interview note 45:2-3). (Words of A female Commissioner)***

As I described in the last chapter, most of the new Tzu-Chi participants, since they are introduced by friends and relatives to Tzu-Chi, actually do not have a very clear sense of what they will do for Tzu-Chi or what is their moral concern for these social actions at the time they first join. The above quotation shows this point well.

From the above quotation, however, in addition to the new participant's naivete regarding charitable actions, we also see that once one begins to be involved in Tzu-Chi, one's attitudes

toward, and perceptions of, prosocial commitment thus begin to be affected by Tzu-Chi's various organizational influences, such as the various forms of social interaction and the organizational ideational system, or ideology[29] (in Tzu-Chi, this is mainly articulated by its leader--Cheng Yen).

In this current chapter and the next chapter, we will begin to investigate these Tzu-Chi organizational influences in a rather systematic way. Particularly since Tzu-Chi participants are mostly recruited by personal networks, without many pre-existing ideas about prosocial commitment, we find that Tzu-Chi's organizational influences actually play a very important role in fostering Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment. First of all, let us begin with an examination of Tzu-Chi's ideational system.

THE FRAMING PERSPECTIVE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAME

Examining the ideational system of a newly-emerging charitable organization is very preliminary for understanding collective helping behavior. For a charitable organization to get so many people involved, of course, its recruiting strategy and organizing principle may play important roles. However, in a more fundamental sense, at the collective level, there must

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[29] Following Wilson (1973), ideology, or ideational system, is defined as "a set of beliefs about the social world and how it operates, containing statements about the rightness of certain social arrangements and what action should be undertaken in the light of those statements. It is both a cognitive map of sets of expectations and a scale of values in which standards and imperatives are proclaimed" (Pp.91-92).

exist a solid ideological base which can stimulate a large number of participants' values, feelings, and interests to be oriented to prosocial commitment.

In other words, for a charitable organization to mobilize so many social resources in specific social contexts, its organizational ideational system must have a very strong resonance for its social audience. By understanding the generic vocabularies of motivation in the ideational system that has been articulated in a rapid-growth charitable organization, we may obtain further insight into how so many people can commit to help together under the same "sacred canopy" (Berger, 1967), and into what kinds of sacred canopy can stimulate such a collectivity to help.

In chapter 1 we briefly reviewed Tzu-Chi's formal organizational purpose. This formal purpose postulates that "under the family metaphor of human relationships, and the Buddhist rhetoric of compassionate social action, people should cooperate together to help others who are of the same substance as us. By charitable actions with wisdom and compassion, we thus can create a loving society." Although the review in chapter 1 provides the ethical standpoint of Tzu-Chi's collective actions, under this static description we still do not have much idea of how this purpose gains strong resonance in a specific historical contexts, or through what processes the organizational purpose can mobilize participants' various resources.

Most past studies of movement or organization ideology have

only described that which has been taken as given. Indeed, for such routinized and stabilized social organizations as the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Association, or United Way, this kind of description might be sufficient. However, for a rapidly growing organization in modern Taiwan such as Tzu-Chi, this kind of treatment certainly is not enough.

Moreover, there are not only pragmatic reasons for choosing a different approach to understanding the organizational ideology of a specific organization. Rather, through different approaches, we may gain more insights into the substantial base (not only the value orientation that has been spoken out) of an organization and how it has been linked to participants' meaning systems and everyday life. Only through this understanding will we really know how collective helping behavior can become possible in a specific historical context. The following discussion will make these points more clear.

The perspective I'll take here, then, is an approach that is gradually reaching consensus among scholars of social movements (McAdam, McCarthy, Zald, 1996; also Johnston and Klandermans, 1995): the framing perspective. Although many scholars have asserted the importance of the cognitive dimensions of collective action (Gamson, 1992a; McAdam, 1982; Melucci, 1098; 1985; 1988, 1985; Touraine, 1981), Snow and his colleagues (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988; 1992) have provided this valuable tool--the language of framing--to examine the dynamic processes of the

construction of ideology and the way it gains resonances.

"Collective action frames" are defined as "emergent action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns" (Snow and Benford, 1992, p.136). Although "movements function as carriers and transmitters of mobilizing beliefs and ideas, to be sure," (Snow and Benford, 1992, p.198) more important from the framing perspective, they are also "actively engaged in the production of meaning for participants, antagonists, and observers" (Snow and Benford, 1992, p.198).

In the framing perspective, it is believed that meanings are produced in the course of interaction with other individuals and objects of attention, and that movements thus can be construed as functioning in part as signifying agents and, as such, are deeply embroiled, along with the media and the state (Snow and Benford, 1988). Basically, the framing perspective presumes that there are micromobilization processes involved in the movements or organizations. In these processes, agents and constituents construct or assign meaning to, and interpret, relevant events. Social actors will actively engage in these meaning construction processes, and, further, the meaning construction processes may crucially, although not totally, affect the developmental path of an organization. I will later discuss the more specific analytic and conceptual tools that are offered by the framing perspective.

Certainly for a charitable organization like Tzu-Chi, since

it has grown so quickly in Taiwanese society, we can say that no matter how robust the organized techniques and strategies the organization may have, these still cannot account for such dramatically fast growth like Tzu-Chi's. Rather, the point to be emphasized is that Tzu-Chi's collective action frame strongly corresponds to Taiwanese people's deep needs, whether mentally or physically, in a specific historical context. Yet, what is Tzu-Chi's collective action frame? To what extent is this frame robust, complete, and thorough? What does this frame mean to each individual participant? How can this frame be effective in stimulating social action? By taking the vantage point of the framing perspective for examining Tzu-Chi's ideational system, we may get a step further into the symbolic dimensions of collective helping.

TZU-CHI'S COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAME

The Contents of a collective action frame may be thought of as various interrelated conceptual elements regarding current social situations and the rationale for urgent social actions. From this approach, I take the Tzu-Chi Association to be a kind of movements organization, whose concern is mostly with current social situations, rather than only with philanthropic values or humanistic ideals. As a sociologist, I am more concerned with the immediate structural and historical background of Tzu-Chi's establishment and growth than only with the humanistic values underlying it. Moreover, since in chapter 3 I explored the

rather static cultural and religious dimensions underlying Tzu-Chi, in this chapter I will put Tzu-Chi in a more specific social context, and treat Tzu-Chi's collective action frame in terms of the way it reflects the problems of current Taiwan society and their solutions.

Analytically from the framing perspective, following Wilson (1970, PP.95-134), and Snow and Benford's (1988: 199-204) further application, there are three core framing tasks found in an organizational ideational system:

1. Diagnosis of some event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need of alteration;
2. a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem that specifies what needs to be done; and
3. a call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action.

While the diagnostic and prognostic framing tasks are directed toward achieving consensus mobilization, the motivational framing, which concerns action mobilization (according to Klandermans, 1984's terms), provides the motivational impetus for participation.

1. DIAGNOSIS FRAMING

Diagnosis framing involves identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality (Snow and Benford, 1988,

p.200). According to Tzu-Chi's earlier history, as described by founder Cheng Yen herself, Tzu-Chi began from two purposes: 1) to help those impoverished people who cannot afford the fees for medicine and living expenses; and 2) to prove that not only believers in other religions believers but also Buddhists, can make substantial contributions to our society (see chapter 1).

Nevertheless, following the growth of Tzu-Chi and Taiwan's rapid social change, Tzu-Chi's scope of concern was soon enlarged. Particularly as Tzu-Chi's charity work deeply penetrated into this society, and the agent and the earlier participants in Tzu-Chi experienced deeply the social problems that emerged because of rapid social and economic change, such as the breakdown of the traditional community and values, the diagnostic dimension of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame was clearly articulated. For example, Cheng Yen presented the current Taiwanese social situation:

> Our society needs Tzu-Chi people's help. Thus we can re-adjust the social order of this society...In the recent several decades, our life and culture have been changed a lot by Western culture. Western culture disturbs the traditional Eastern spiritual culture. Now this generation has a big gap with the last generation. Family relationships have been alienated. Family has become dis-organized. Society is in disorganization. Social rules have lost control. This

> time, this society needs Tzu-Chi's participants. In order to change this society, this society needs us to spread the purified love...." (Cheng Yen, 1995b:15)

And, in another paragraph, she described that:

> Times are changing. China has become modernized. Taiwan is Westernized in almost every way, and the old family ties are weakening. During the time of Confucius, when there were four generations living under the same roof, this family was the envy of its neighborhood. But now many of the old are nothing more than burdens to the young, and are unwelcome in young couples' homes." (qtd. by Yu-ing, 1995:109)

Briefly said, thus "Taiwanese society has got diseases" (Cheng Yen, 1992:24). Especially as traditional family ties have been broken down by modern Western material culture, Taiwanese society has thus lost its order. A more fundamental attribution of current social problems, however, is that the social chaos is basically due to people's greed and selfishness. As Cheng Yen has said:

> Why is current society so in chaos? It is because we are selfish. Personal self is too selfish and thus makes human minds develop illness. (Cheng Yen, 1991:33)

Also she has said:

> Modern society, no matter how bad the social order is, and how degenerated the social morality is, all these

> problems are coming from our inner heart. All problems come from our minds. (Cheng Yen 1991:39)

Since Cheng Yen perceives society as constituted by each individual's minds, she said that:

> Human beings cannot live out of the society...The justice or injustice of a society results from all people's attitude. An individual's attitude can change his or her own life, and can build a happy family. If we have many harmonious families, we will have a harmonious society. On the other hand, if one's thought is biased, his or her family will become disordered, and the society will also become chaos. Society is the great entity that is constituted by many single individuals. The emphasis on the importance of each individual could not be more if we want to have a good society. (Cheng Yen, 1996b:173)

As each individual has been polluted by modern material culture, sincere human relationships and stable social order thus have also become corrupted. For example:

> The essence of the relationship between teachers and students is honesty and sincerity. Everyone thus should do his (her) part. In the traditional Chinese society with the ethical code, it was so. In the modern utilitarian society, it should be also. However, in modern times, the relationship between teachers and students has been changed. This is

> because most people cannot do their own duties, and they consider other things too much. (Cheng Yen, 1989:249)

To summarize, then, Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, particularly as articulated by Cheng Yen, postulates that Taiwanese society is getting into chaos, in which the stable social order and the ethical relationships between each other become lost; the contemporary reasons for this chaos are modernization and Westernization; the more fundamental sources of this chaos, however, are that human beings are greedy and selfish.

Here we should emphasize that, as Snow and his colleagues hold, the movement's interpretative schemata both draw from and modify elements of the dominant culture, through the frame alignment processes.[30] Thus collective action frames may incorporate various pre-existing beliefs and symbols (Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford, 1986; Taylor and Whittier, 1995). Here, too, we find that as Tzu-Chi's collective action frame postulates that the source of chaos in the human world is mainly

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[30] Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford's ideas of frame alignment, that is, "the linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary" (1986:464), analytically can be applied at either the organizational level or the individual level. However, in their own research (1986), they only focus on the individual level. Nevertheless, this idea of "frame alignment" has also been emphasized by Taylor and Whittier (1995), mainly on its analytic use at the organizational level. Thus, here, we mainly follow Taylor and Whittier.

human beings' greed and selfishness, it clearly shows the link between Tzu-Chi's collective action frame and the traditional wisdom of Buddhism (see chapter 3). Certainly then, at the organizational level, some kind of frame alignment process is occurring. Later we will see more examples of this.

Concerned about the process of frame development, we may wonder how a local voluntary organization, which began with local charity work, could later become a nation-wide charitable organization with a collective action frame primarily concerned about the current Taiwanese social and cultural crisis. If we notice Tzu-chi's grassroots base and long history along with recent Taiwanese development, however, we can easily understand the underlying reasons for the frame enlargement of Tzu-Chi. The early goal of Tzu-Chi was to help impoverished people. The main target people for Tzu-Chi's resource mobilization, however, are the rather well-off, who have the extra resources to help. Through the micro-mobilization contexts, by interaction with both the rich and the poor, the historical records show that Cheng Yen soon discovered that Tzu-Chi's main tasks were two-folds: "saving the poor and educating the rich" (Cheng Yen, 1993:196). Speaking of these ideas in a more rhetorical and touching way, Cheng Yen has said:

> I must look after even more people. On the one hand, I must pray for hundreds of thousands of kind people, wishing their families good luck. I must assume the responsibility of educating the rich to the importance

> of planting the seeds of mercy and kindness in society. They can reap good fortune for themselves by performing kind and virtuous deeds for others. On the other hand, I also need to perform many charitable activities, such as the program for the monthly relief for the poor and raising special financial aid in the case of sudden emergencies. I, too, face many difficulties in dealing with so many people and projects. But I'm willing to do my work without complaint, despite the hardships and criticisms, so long as I can help all living beings. (Cheng Yen, 1995a:153)

In other words, it is through the micro-interaction processes and grassroots base that Tzu-Chi's collective action frame has evolved into being more broadly rhetorically related to current Taiwanese society, including both the rich and the poor.

2. PROGNOSTIC FRAMING

The above diagnostic framing tasks then lead directly to Tzu-Chi's prognostic framing. In Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, two main kinds of prognoses are offered to treat the current social disorder in Taiwan. One, based upon traditional Confucian ethics, is concerned about external social order in normal human relationships. As Cheng Yen has said:

> Before saving the world, we must first save our own heart. A sincere heart is the basis of proper

> behavior. As Confucius once said, in order to unify the world in peace, we must first cultivate ourselves, have a good family, and govern our country well. If we want to have a harmonious family, we must improve our own morality. Then our harmonious family can be an example for others. When each family becomes harmonious, we can have a peaceful and happy society. (Cheng Yen, 1995a:26)

The second prognosis is based upon Buddhist moral principles. It is concerned about each one's self-cultivation in the inner mind. It is believed that through Buddha and Bodhisattva's role models we should learn how to control and cultivate ourself, particularly in this complex society. As Cheng Yen has said:

> Man often harms others for the sake of self-love. Buddha, therefore, teaches us that rule number one for reaching the goal of morality cultivation is to "never harm others." (Cheng Yen, 1995a:28)

> It is not difficult to make a pure and clean society...If we long for the fulfilling world of a Bodhisattva, then we should start to behave like a Bodhisattva. (Cheng Yen, 1995a:25)

Specifically, then, at the individual level and broadening the

scope of the Buddhist traditional five precepts,[31] Tzu-Chi has its own ten precepts to regularize participants' behavior, as we have documented in chapter 4.

While the first five items of this "Ten Commandments" are the same as the traditional Buddhist 5 sila, the latter five items are particular to the current moral disorder in Taiwanese society. In Tzu-Chi, every formal converted participant (formal Commissioners, formal members of the Faith Corps) should observe these ten precepts. (We may also note that most of these ten precepts are transmitted in negative form.)

In order to abstain from various material desires that may destroy the current social order and one's future happiness, it is necessary to appreciate and be satisfied with one's current life situations. In Cheng Yen's words:

> all material objects are for our everyday convenience, therefore we should cherish things and feel grateful and satisfied. This way, we will feel peace and satisfaction no matter where we live in this world. Every moment will be full of happiness and joy....(Cheng Yen, 1993:99)

At the social level, then:

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[31] The five Precepts, or five "*sila*." These were intended to be observed by all Buddhists in the Buddha's time. Until recently, these have still been observed by most Buddhists all over the world (see Sangharakshita, 1990:142-143; also see Spiro's [1982:98-103] observations on the practical dimensions of these five "*sila*" in Burmese society). The contents of these five precepts correspond to the first five commandments of Tzu-Chi's Ten Commandments, as mentioned in chapter 4.

> Our society is composed of a large group of people. You cannot make society be good by only your good character. You cannot make society be virtuous by only your good virtue. If we want to establish a good family and good society, we must respect and be grateful to each other (Cheng Yen, 1992:32)

And so:

> Everyone's freedom should be guided by morality. In our society, we have laws to guide us. Otherwise everything will be too wild, a violent wildness that contains no logic. When those with great strength, imperiousness, much greed, and plenty of power act without restraint, the mind has no floodgate. Freedom, then, conceals itself and has difficulty appearing again. (Cheng Yen, 1989:158)

To summarize, then, by re-establishing the ethical relationship, this society can become a good society. However, the tasks are in everybody's minds. By restraining unlimited freedom, by cultivating our inner minds, and by appreciating others, we then can reach for a good family or society with both peaceful and happy relationships among each other. Here again we notice that Tzu-Chi's collective action frame both draws from and modifies elements of the dominant culture, such as Confucian ethics and Buddhist precepts.

3. MOTIVATIONAL FRAMING

The third element in the domain of collective action frame is "motivational frame". Snow and Benford (1988) have argued that consensus mobilization does not necessarily yield to mobilization. Participation is thus "contingent upon the development of motivational frames that function as prods to action" (p.202). Particularly in the case of the Tzu-Chi Association, with its goal of seeking public good (i.e., individual, nonexcludable benefits), participants must join without any expected material benefits. This free rider problem then makes the task of motivational framing become more crucial in Tzu-Chi's mobilization efforts.

In Benford's (1993) study of nuclear disarmament movements, he identified four sets of generic vocabularies of motives in the mobilization processes: 1) severity of the problem; 2) sense of urgency; 3) efficacy of taking action; and 4) propriety of taking action. He suggested that the extent to which a movement is able to overcome the free rider dilemma can depend on how successful its SMOs are in fostering a sense of severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety.

Schwartz and Howard (1984) have also pointed out that, during one's process of making a decision to help, four types of denial can reduce feelings of moral obligation. These four kinds of denial, which correspond directly to Benford's findings, are: 1) denial of need (in Benford's terms, "denial of the perceived severity and urgency"); 2) denial of effectiveness of action (same as Benford's term); 3) denial of personality ability (in

Benford's terms, "denial of considering the actions as appropriate"); 4) denial of responsibility (in Benford's terms, "denial of considering oneself as the appropriate actor"). In other words, in one's individual decision-making process, in order to reach the decision to help, one must go beyond several obstacles, since at any step a defense may be elicited against one's feelings of moral obligation to perform an action. Based upon our understanding of this nuanced psychological process for each individual's decision making in altruism, we can then further consider how to resolve "free-rider" problems at the collective level, since the task of movements' actors is to foster sense of severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety in the collective action frame in order to reduce the defensive feelings against action that are in each individual's cognitive system.

My observation of the Tzu-Chi Association reveals similar patterns of motivational framing to Schwartz and Howard's (1984) decision-making model and Benford's (1993) findings of four generic vocabularies of motive of collective action frames. The vocabularies of "severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety" have appeared repeatedly in Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. For example, a paragraph from one of Cheng Yen's speeches shows all four of these sets of generic vocabularies of motive:

> Our society needs Tzu-Chi people's help. Thus we can re-adjust the social order of this society...In the recent several decades, our life and culture have been

changed a lot by Western culture. Western culture disturbs the traditional Eastern spiritual culture. Now this generation has a big gap with the last generation. ***Family relationships have been alienated. Family has become dis-organized. Society is in disorganization. Social rules have lost control*** [severity]. ***This time, this society needs Tzu-Chi's participants*** [urgency]. In order to change this society, ***this society needs us to spread purified love*** [urgency]. ***So we now have adolescence counseling, Tzu-Chi college association, the Teachers Association, and prison visiting..., all of these are extremely needed in Taiwanese society*** [propriety]. ***Also, nursing homes for the elderly people are in urgent need of the look of Tzu-chi people*** [urgency].

...We are a big organization. Nevertheless, we have too many things to do. Every item is extremely important. But we have a lack of hands. However, we have our main spiritual base. ***I always feel that we should cultivate ourselves well by this spiritual base*** [propriety]. As I have often said recently: "We should make efforts to

purify the human mind and to harmonize society..."

and continually she has said:

"What are the causes for the adolescence problems? Family education? and bad social customs? What reasons make

> these young people become so deviant and make mistakes once and once again? ***Tzu-Chi's spirit is not only ready to help those who lack materials. The more important things we need to do are to purify human minds. If human minds can be purified, our society thus can possibly become harmonious*** [efficacy]. If everybody's good consciousness can be enlightened, we then can have the good cycle for meticulous acts. Then ***our society can become more prosperous and without any disasters*** [efficacy]. ***Today's society, it really needs us to purify human minds*** [urgency]. (Cheng Yen, 1995b:15-17)

The above paragraph clearly shows the seriousness of current social problems, the guiding line for social action, the necessity to act through Tzu-Chi, and the efficacy of Tzu-Chi's social actions for this society.

Although Benford is right in pointing out the generic vocabularies of motivational framing, he fails to point out that since all these generic vocabularies have been articulated in a sense of moral and social concern, these elements of the collective action frame must be re-articulated in a more personally related form. For example, as the above words have been articulated in terms of moral and social concern, they provide only a partial picture of Tzu-Chi's motivational framing. To stimulate each individual's interest in social action, these words must sometimes be re-framed in terms of each individual's more direct focus and concern. Although they are

still compatible with the articulation in terms of moral and social concern, they should also be targeted to each participant's own life framework more directly.

Tzu-Chi's agents, particularly Cheng Yen herself, know the power of "relevance" very well. Once a visitor asked her why her words are so appealing and convincing. She replied: "The importance of Buddha's philosophy is not its profundity; it simply teaches us how to live a significant and meaningful life. It is closely connected to our lives. This is truly Buddha's religious concept" (Cheng Yen, 1995a:251). By putting in each participant's life framework, the generic vocabularies of motivations are articulated in a slightly different tone.

Speaking about the "severity of the problems," in more personally relevant terms, in addition to mentioning the severity of social disorder, public security becomes the focal point. For example, Cheng Yen has articulated it rhetorically:

> Mass media always report that social customs in Taiwan are extremely bad now. We worry a lot about public security. Many people are in deep anxiety about this situation and want to emigrate. Those negative sides [of current society] are shown in the newspapers and magazines...However, we can still possibly find out the brighter side. As I know, in the recent several decades, uncountable good people have joined Tzu-chi...I hope everybody can know more about Tzu-Chi...Thus this dark society can be cleaned....now

> that there are 400,000 members in Taipei, I deeply hope that everybody can disseminate Tzu-Chi's seeds eagerly. The good minds can spread one by one. Taipei then will have more than 1,000,000 members. Taipei then will become a purified land, no more evil and crime, and become a place Bodhisattva and the living Buddha lived. (Cheng Yen, 1990b:25-26)

That is, by emphasizing the insecurity of current social situations and by pointing out in contrast the security that Tzu-Chi may offer for this society, one may feel that only by joining Tzu-Chi can he or she be released from those personal anxieties of social disorder.

In order to speak of the "sense of urgency" in terms of personal relevance, the focus point becomes the good chance of accumulating merits and the value for our life of doing meaningful things. As Cheng Yen has argued, "all our behaviors throughout life, whether good or evil, are accumulated gradually" (Cheng Yen, 1995a:17). Thus: "Opportunity knocks only once. We should grasp every chance to do something good, since our lives fluctuate rapidly. When all the good little things you have performed accumulate, they collectively stand as a great meritorious deed. Do not delay making donations until you become rich. You should do whatever you can today" (Cheng Yen, 1995a:59). Thus not only is the social chaos in urgent need of Tzu-Chi, each person is in urgent need of taking advantage of the chance to accumulate good deeds through the valuable

opportunity offered by Tzu-Chi.

Placing the "efficacy of taking action" in more personally relevant terms, joining Tzu-Chi becomes the best way to benefit one's own life. A vivid metaphor offered by Cheng Yen has depicted this point well. She mentions often that "everyone has an account in the merits-bank. Philanthropic acts are deposits in the bank. If you do not do this kind of acts, you withdraw from this account. So we should do more good things, in order to have more merit-deposit. Otherwise, our good fortune will be run out" (Cheng Yen, 1996b: 98-100). Therefore, "The Tzu-Chi Association is like a fertile rice paddy. You plant in it the seeds of good fortune, and you reap from it a fine harvest at the time of your reincarnation" (Cheng Yen, 1995a:124). Again, the focus is on the personal benefits of doing good deeds.

For the personal relevance of the "propriety of taking action," Tzu-Chi's collective action frame has postulated that the "action" is the most personal benefit, while talking too much, for oneself, is useless. Cheng Yen speaks of it in the manners of morality cultivation: "To practice in the Bodhisattva path is to do something that benefits others. Only by "doing" can our goal be accomplished" (Cheng Yen, 1994: 296-297). On one specific occasion, she said:

> ...So the things I told you are those you can understand and do. This is like from the beginning point to the end point on the other shore. This is the method for Tzu-Chi's practice. If some others ask too

> many questions, I will ask them: "Can you do it, or not?" If you cannot, please do not ask me too much. I'll teach you those things you can do, because one's time is limited.
>
> In brief, just go ahead and do it. To do more, to get more. If you do not do, you cannot get any. Only when you can give, can you get. To give what? To give your self. You should give your self, and put down your status. It is like being an apprentice. If you cannot put down your gesture and do it by yourself, how can you accomplish? Only by teacher's oral teaching is not enough. For the same reason, you must do as what you say. (Cheng Yen, 1996a:5)

In relating taking action to each one's self-framework, it is not only the society that needs to take action but also the target is in each individual himself (herself), since it is believed that only by doing action is the cultivation of oneself possible.

To summarize, we notice that the purely moral concern in the motivational framing is not enough for this frame to have strong frame resonance. Rather, rhetorical vocabularies articulated by the organizational agent in a more personally relevant sense are necessary for successful mobilization. This issue of the "relevancy" to participants' life of the collective action frame of Tzu-Chi deserves a closer look, since it is one of the most extraordinary characteristics of Tzu-Chi's

collective action frame.

RELEVANCE OF TZU-CHI'S COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAME TO TZU-CHI PARTICIPANTS' EVERYDAY LIFE

For a grassroots charitable organization like Tzu-Chi, the collective action frame's "relevancy"[32] with regard to each participant's life world is a necessary condition for its success. Moral concern can be transmitted to the "grassroots" people who join Tzu-Chi only when the meaning of this concern is built upon their subjective life experience. That is, the codification of these moral concerns must be non-abstract, not-far-away-from life experience, and easily caught, whether in regard to the contents of the collective action frame or the formats of communication.

Although the above discussion has already shown how the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame are linked to each

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[32] Although both are concerned about the empirical relevancy of an organizational frame, my current analysis is different from Snow and Benford's (1988) discussion on the phenomenological constraints of framing tasks. They suggested that the mobilizing potency of movement framing efforts is partly contingent upon the extent to which they have empirical credibility, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity, and that at least one of these relevancy variables is a necessary condition for consensus mobilization and therefore to enhance the probability of action mobilization. Their main concern is how an organizational frame must be constrained to the historical situation, past traditions, and external social contexts. I am instead concerned more specifically with how elements of an organizational frame must be related to each participant's subjective life world. (To some extent, this is about the issue of how big traditions can be linked to the little traditions). Since an organization must get each individual participant's resonance to obtain its basic maintenance and further growth, this relevancy therefore is the necessary condition for action mobilization.

individual's life framework (for example, as we has shown, most moral concern in Tzu-Chi's collective action frame has been articulated in personally related terms), some further words should be said about the formats of this communication.

First of all, in Tzu-Chi, most moral appeals have been transmitted into concrete metaphors by various analogies. In participants' minds, these analogies effectively strengthen and support each other, the moral appeals become much more understandable, and these metaphors become much more emotionally touching in the current social context. For example, the uniform for the Tzu-Chi commissioners has been called "the dress of Humbleness and patience" ("Humbleness and patience" is a term borrowed from classical Buddhist texts). Smiling to others is thought of as putting "Tzu-Chi's face cream" on one's face; thus Tzu-Chi participants often say that they need to order plenty of boxes of "Tzu-Chi face cream" for further use. One's being tolerant and grateful to others, in Tzu-Chi, is termed the "four Sauce Soup": "Gratitude, satisfaction, understudying,and magnanimity"; it is believed that every Tzu-Chi participants should drink many bowls of this every day.

Moreover, many charitable activities have been embedded with special symbolic meanings. For example, joining Tzu-Chi has been termed as "studying in Tzu-Chi university." Doing charity is thought of as "planting the field of fortune." Commissioners' visiting impoverished families has been equalled to "Goddess Kua-yin's saving people in pain." Bathing for some old or

paralytic patients has been entitled as "Buddha showering" (since the day of Buddha's birth has been called the Buddha showering day). Collective helping behavior is understood as the icons of the "ten thousand hands and eyes's of the goddess Kua-yin." Since a hospital is a place full of pain, Tzu-Chi volunteers sometimes are termed the Bodhisattva Kua-yin or Ksitigarbha, both of whom are legendary gods who can help people in miserable situations. Also, parents have been called "Living Buddha," so that having filial piety toward them is called "worshiping living Buddha" in the shrine. Through these various metaphors and symbolizations, participants thus get very concrete images, feelings, and senses of meanings of their own contribution toward Tzu-Chi and this society, and the complicated system of symbols and icons in Buddhist story and legend is an infinite treasure for using the above metaphors.

Secondly, Tzu-Chi's collective action frame has been chopped piece by piece into meaning-catchable terms. It has been shaped as the applicable tools for one to hand his (her) personal problems. As mentioned in chapter 5, the most popular book in Taiwan, "Still Thought" (by Cheng Yen), has the proverb format, and its range covers from family matters to entry exams. Some of these proverbs have often been re-printed on pieces of paper or bookmarks. These papers are piled up in the Tzu-Chi Taichung branch office and are offered freely to any visitors. The following quotation from commissioner may show how this easy-to-handle form of communication has penetrated into a

participant's life:

> Everyday from 10:00 pm to 11:00 pm, I listen to Tzu-Chi's radio programs attentively. I always prepare a notebook and a pen. As I hear any good sentences, I write them down in my notebook. That's still not enough, so I'll further write it down on a small piece of note paper, and then put it under the glass plate of my table. I'll put Master's good words on my table. For example, one time, some sentences touched me a lot, as she said that we should "be brave like a lion, patient like a camel, and be pure like a baby." So I always listen to the radio programs on time, write down and put down on my table Master's great words. Look it everyday, listen it everyday, and follows it everyday...Master's words are great. But I cannot remember all of them...So I write them down, sentence by sentence. As I notice some great sentences, you know, sentences usually are short, and the words usually are few. I then use the note paper to write it down piece by piece, and put it under the glass plate. Everyday I memorize one piece. In this way thus I learn a lot of things about Tzu-chi. (Interview note, 3:21)

To summarize then, we notice that both the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame and the format for codification of this frame are highly "personally relevant," in the sense that the

contents of this collective action frame resonate highly, and the format of this collective action frame deeply penetrates participants' world of everyday life.

FRAME ALIGNMENT PROCESSES AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

As the Tzu-Chi Association is a Charismatic organization that is mainly based upon Cheng Yen's charismatic leadership, its collective action frame is also highly based upon Cheng Yen's personal articulation. If we could collect more detailed data on the early stage of Tzu-Chi's development, we would get more rich information on how Tzu-Chi's collective action frame actually obtained its founding characteristics and formats. However, due to the limitations of the current data, I cannot say much about how Tzu-Chi's collective action frame was actually constructed and modified.

Nevertheless, I would emphasize here that, although Tzu-Chi's collective action frame is mainly articulated by its leader Cheng Yen, Tzu-Chi participants do not merely passively accept this collective action frame, but instead actively transform the elements of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame into rather perceivable forms in their own life contexts. That is, at the individual level, frame alignment--including frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986)--is the necessary process in which each individual Tzu-Chi participant must actively engage. Since "relevancy to each Tzu-Chi participant's

life world" is one important characteristic of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, for each individual participant we find that frame alignment processes happen intensively.

In the next chapter I will discuss how Tzu-Chi's social climate and structural arrangement have fostered Tzu-Chi participants' frame alignment toward Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, and how under Tzu-Chi's collective settings one has various chances to articulate his (her) self in terms of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. Here, due to limitations of space, I will cite only one example to show how Tzu-Chi participants are actually actively engaging in adjusting their cognitive elements to be aligned with to Tzu-Chi's collective action frame.

Below is a statement from a male Commissioner (37 years old) on how he gradually identified with Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. For the convenience of our discussion, we will follow the analytic strategies generally used in discourse analysis (Labov and Fanshel, 1977; Grimshaw, 1982; Jefferson, 1985; Johnston, 1991; 1995), that is, we will highlight the episode by organizing the verbatim transcription of the interview line by line. However, for our current interests, I will not be stressing the linguistic processes with which researchers in discourse analysis are concerned. Instead, I am concerned with reconstructing the mental processes that lie behind the respondent's account in order to ascertain meanings that may not be superficially apparent.

Here, cited from my interview note 1, pages 3-5, the following quotation demonstrates how a respondent went from being a common Buddhist to being a committed Tzu-Chi participant, and how he has been involved deeply in the frame amplification process (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986), that is, in the process of "the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events" (469) Early in this interview, this male Commissioner just talked about his current experiences engaging in Tzu-Chi's activities; I then began to ask more specifically about his own personal change through these experiences:

I: In your experience of doing Tzu-Chi, have you had any changes in your life?
R: Before I joined Tzu-Chi, I was a person filled with greed, hatred, ignorance, and selfishness. All of these are common, since we are ordinary people. After I began to be involved in Tzu-Chi, I began to know the wonder of the Dharma [truth]. Thereafter, I then began to grasp every current moment of life immediately.
I: Did you know Buddhism before you learned about Tzu-Chi?
R: Since elementary school, I have been a Buddhist...I grew up in a Buddhist family. My grandpa has been a vegetarian from his early childhood, and he worships Buddha often. So I would say that from my early childhood I began to have many chances to know Buddhism..mm..I grew up in a Buddhist family, from my early age, so..I would like to say,..mm..that I was a virtuous person.

Let me pause momentarily for comment. This respondent is describing his past life history. He is now a committed Tzu-Chi participant, and he is clearly aware of both discontinuity and continuity between his past history and his current joining of

Tzu-Chi. On the one hand, he is emphasizing that before he joined Tzu-Chi, he was a person filled with hatred, ignorance, and greed [lines 3-5]. However, he also emphasizes that he was a Buddhist from a Buddhist family and, particularly, that he used to be a virtuous person [lines 10-17]. These are some clues that he is trying to link Tzu-Chi's collective action frame into his own life's framework. Although Tzu-Chi's collective action frame is a new thing for him, his own life--even before knowing of Tzu-Chi--already had those seeds of virtuousness. Returning to the dialogue:

18 I: So you still live there with your relatives together?
19 R: No, my home town is there [a city very near Taichung],
20 my mother also still lives there. I live in Taichung.
21 After I joined Tzu-Chi, there was a period of
22 transition. I..uh..that really was the Bodhisattva
23 testing me. That is, in 1989 or 1990, that period of
24 time. Because..mm..before my joining Tzu-Chi, I was
25 that kind of person who was very good at earning
26 money. Every month I earned more than 400,000 NT
27 dollars [About 15,000 US dollars]...For me, it
28 [joining Tzu-Chi] is really the good karma of my life.
29 This good karma has been the turning point of my life.
30 I: At that time, what were you doing?
31 R: At that time, my businesses were doing well. I earned a
32 lot of money. I invested in stocks, and put money in
33 Hung-Yuan[33] [see note]. Also I lent money to my brother
34 to invest. At that time, I was already a devoted Tzu-Chi
35 Member. Once..mm..in one month, all my money was lost
36 due to those companies' bankruptcy.
37 I: You mean the time that Hung-Yuan was caught?
38 R: Hung-Yua was bankrupt. [My] many millions were lost. The
39 stock market crashed...in one month, almost all my money
40 was gone...That time, I did read Master's words..Still

[33] A famous investment company in Taiwan at that time. Although its status was illegal, it had become the biggest investment company in Taiwan around 1990. People could just put money in this company and earn high interest (monthly rate about 40%) from this company every month. In 1991, as the Taiwan Government began to control those companies in the underground economic market, Hung-Yuan Company soon became bankrupt.

41 Thoughts..often. I read it often. One night, I looked at
42 it [Master's words in the book] deeply..saw some words
43 by her, you know, Master said: "Those who are smart do
44 not necessarily have wisdom, but those who have wisdom
45 must also be smart. Those who are smart only know about
46 interests and costs, while those who have wisdom know
47 how to give." Then what am I? I am a smart person, but
48 even..mm..almost all my assets were gone. So at that
49 moment, I wondered what kind of choice I should make?
50 To be a smart man? or a man with wisdom? So at that
51 moment, I said to myself: "That's all right, even if
52 all the world is bankrupt, it is still o.k. to me, if
53 I have a healthy mind," I mean mind..mm..not the body..
54 So from that day, I told my wife, we should not be
55 greedy anymore...
56 I: So then you became involved [in Tzu-Chi] more?
57 R: Yes, but at that time, at the beginning, I was very
58 imbalanced in my mind. I thought that I must earn that
59 money back. No matter what happens, I must get those
60 money back. Even to hire some people to get that money
61 back for me. Until I saw this one sentence of Master's
62 [as he said above], I began to..mm..

From lines 18-62, we see how he began to take Tzu-Chi's collective action frame as one part of the meaning system of his life. In lines 23-36, he described how he was crazy in being involved in those "games of money." However, he does not forget the continuity between his past life history (as a Buddhist) and his later state of life, and thus he still emphasizes that it is really the Bodhisattva testing him [line 22], and it is also due to his good karma, that he can change to join Tzu-Chi [lines 28-29].

As he had the chance to have access to Tzu-Chi's collective action frame [lines 40-53], we see that he does not just passively accept those ideas. Instead, we see him cognitively actively engaging in linking his own life state to Cheng Yen's words: 1) as he repeatedly asks himself: "Then what am I? I am

a smart person, but..." [line 47] and 2) as he continually asks himself what choice he should make--to be a smart man? or a man with wisdom? [lines 50], he also illustrates that the process of accepting a new frame is not easy for him; 3) as he gets to the decision: "That's all right, even if all the world is bankrupt, it is still o.k. to me, if I have a healthy mind...I mean mind..mm..not the body [changing of mind is what Cheng Yen is always emphasizing].." [lines 51-53], he is actually engaging in the meaning construction processes of the collective action frame (that is, the collective action frame has its more specific meaning related to his own life world); 4) he also needs to consult with his significant others (his wife) in the process of adjusting his frame [lines 54]. Frame amplification thus is not just an abrupt personal change. One's significant others, in one way or another, also play an important role in one's process of frame change. All of the above clues show that this respondent has been actively engaging in his frame amplification process.

Nevertheless, even under his active engagement, frame alignment is still not an easy thing. From lines 57-61, we see that he was still struggling with the old cognitive frame: "I must get that money back...." We see then, that the frame alignment process at the level of the individual is not necessarily an easy achievement.

63 I: So what changed you?
64 R: As Master said, **Buddhism should be applied in life**.
65 We can apply her words in our lives. It really is..mm..
66 **impermanent**..[like her words are saying]! Until the

67 moment you are dead, it really is all impermanent! There
68 is nothing you can take away [in this world]. All Karma
69 follows you when you are dead. Even if you earn a lot of
70 money, earn all the world, when you pass away, then what
71 can you get? If you earn money without doing it in the
72 right way, you actually make more bad karma. So we
73 should take every chance at the current moment [to make
74 good karma]. There is not much time left to us **to plant**
75 **our good fortune**, so how can you still waste time making
76 bad karma? As my wife was ready to give birth to my
77 second child, at that time, one month I needed to
78 deposit so much money for returning those loans I
79 made..mm..for 270,000 NT dollar...And at that time, I
80 still needed to give the Tzu-Chi Member fee every month
81 of 2,000 NT dollars, those merits fee..I still made a
82 pledge to donate a ward of the Tzu-chi hospital in one
83 year [totaling 300,000 NT dollars], every month then I
84 needed to give 25,000 NT dollars...At that time, I only
85 thought that to **do virtuous things one must be in a**
86 **hurry**. So you see, in a month I must earn so much money,
87 but I still could pass it [the test] smoothly. It was
88 really the Bodhisattva that was testing me...Every time
89 at the important [moment], Bodhisattva would always
90 come out to protect me. So I here can prove one point,
91 that **"how great your wish, then how much your strength**
92 **may be." "A virtuous idea may destroy one thousand**
93 **disasters."**

From lines 63-93, we see that this respondent began to take Tzu-Chi's collective action frame as his main meaning system, and the words highlighted in the text show the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. However, we should notice that all the elements from Tzu-Chi's collective action frame have been re-articulated by him into those rather life-related terms.

In lines 68-75, he discusses back and forth the truth of the importance of making good karma. The meaning of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame thus is not pre-existant; participants need to make efforts to understand the underlying logic of the meanings of the frame, and then relate that logic to their own lives.

Moreover, people need to perceive the contents of the collective action frame in personally-related and non-abstract form, as we see [lines 86-93] that this respondent emphasizes repeatedly how Tzu-Chi's frame is effective in his own life framework. He also emphasizes that his own story to a certain extent has embodied Tzu-Chi's collective action frame [lines 89-93]. To this extent, thus, we can say that the preliminary process of frame alignment for him is generally complete. In turn, in chapter 7, we will find that, thereafter, one's life experiences and Tzu-Chi's collective action frame mutually strengthen each other, in the sense that one's life becomes more structuralized and meaningful, and Tzu-Chi's collective action frame becomes more plausible and penetrable.

For the convenience of our discussion, I have only cited a rather short conversation as an example illustrating Tzu-Chi participants' frame amplification processes. Although the above conversation only took about 15 minutes, most of the respondents I interviewed, in their talking about their own process of frame alignment, took much longer, some (11 respondents out of the 76) even taking more than 1 hour. Most of the respondents mentioned how they began to accept some specific words of Master Cheng Yen as the important guiding words of their own life, and how these words were actually effective in their own life world. Thus, for most Tzu-Chi participants, the frame alinement processes is a rather long process. Tzu-Chi participants have many things to talk about regarding this issue. These participants do not

passively take for granted the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame; rather, by linking the contents of the collective action frame to their own life framework, they actively engage in making meaning of the collective action frame. From the vantage point and analytic strategies offered by the framing perspective, our discussion thus shows this point clearly.

SUMMARY

Following Snow et al.'s "framing perspective," this chapter explores Tzu-Chi's ideational system, or "collective action frame", and its various formats and influences. To put Tzu-Chi in a specific historical context, Tzu-Chi's collective action frame is mainly concerned with current Taiwan's social disorder and solutions to alleviate it. To mobilize people to social action, however, in addition to articulating this frame with a sense of urgency and of the seriousness of the problematic situations of current society, Tzu-Chi's collective action frame must be re-articulated by its agencies into more personally related forms, whether in regard to the contents or the formats of this collective action frame.

We found that the "relevancy" of each participants' personal life world, in Tzu-chi, is the most extraordinary characteristic of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. This finding also leads us to examine the frame alignment processes that occur in Tzu-Chi at the level of the individual. By documenting verbatim a short episode from a male Commissioner's

tracing of his own development as a Tzu-Chi participant, we thus show that Tzu-Chi participants do not passively take for granted the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, but rather, by linking the contents of the collective action frame to their own life framework, they actively engage in making meaning of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame.

CHAPTER 7. SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMITMENT PROCESSES IN THE TZU-CHI ASSOCIATION

I feel that I identified with Tzu-Chi that time well. If there were some activities, then I would participate. Sometimes I also wonder why I have not doubted Tzu-Chi much. I actually have not considered why I committed myself to Tzu-Chi. I didn't join [Tzu-Chi] on purpose...It's just so natural...I also wonder why I do these works. I think probably that it is because of some kind of mission. Since we have converted ourselves to Master in front of the Buddha, maybe it is like some kinds of tonsure. Since Master is our teacher, we should share her duty and responsibility. We should do these works as if they were in the range of our ability...(A female Commissioner, Interview note, 10:10-11)

TWO MODELS FOR EXPLAINING PEOPLE'S COMMITMENT

Deep personal commitment is one of the most widely noted aspects of research into various fields, such as social movements, religious conversion, deviant behavior, and helping behavior. Qualities such as "devotion," "dedication,, "intensity," or "fanaticism," usually are used to described those highly committed people. Since one must commit to something, the problem of commitment lies at the interface

between the personality and society. As Kanter (1968:499) has defined it "Commitment...refers to the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relations which are seen as self-expressive." The phenomenon of commitment thus reflects how social actors can be linked to the various social systems.

As "consistent lines of activity" (Becker, 1960:33), the phenomenon of commitment has received many different kinds of explanation. In the psychoanalytic approach, for example. Freud (1927/1964) described the process of religious conversion as a defensive reaction to an upsurge of Oedipal hatred, in which aggressive impulses toward the actual father are defended against by submission to an omnipotent father-figure in the form of God. Thus religious conversion is an attempt to control a variety of sexual or aggressive impulses. Viewing commitment as some kind of internal characteristic, the "motivation model" (Zygmunt, 1972) assumes a three-stage sequence: 1) predisposing conditions, such as the needs and motives of the individuals; 2) an exposure to new beliefs which appeal to those predisposing needs or motives; and 3) resulting behavior as a committed member of the group (see Bromley and Shupe, 1979:161). Under this paradigm, then, deviant behavior is caused by maladjustments and pathologies (e.g., Cohen, 1966), religious conversion is due to some psycho-dysfunction (e.g., Conway and Siegelman, 1978; Singer, 1979), movement activists are motivated

by some kind of emotional inadequency or social marginality (e.g., Davis, 1962; Hoffer, 1951), and community volunteers are those with an inherently altruistic personality (e.g., Allen and Rushton, 1983). Hine (1974) summarized this motivational concern as leading to a preoccupation with "psychological analyses of maladjustments, pathologies, emotional inadequacies, or specific personalty attributes which predispose an individual to seek collective solutions to private problems" (p.464).

An alternative general orientation to the affiliative process and the development of commitment was termed by Bromley and Shupe (1979, 1986) "the Role Theory Model." Based on a sociological understanding of roles and role interaction, this perspective conceptualizes such factors as entry, involvement, and commitment-maintenance not in terms of individuals' experiences and personal feelings but rather as socially structured events arising out of role relationships. As Bromley and Shupe (1979) have articulated,

> The logic of role theory argues that to construct simply a "psycho-functional" linkage between the religious movements' appeals and (often speculatively derived) motives of its members ignores members' behavior in the interactive context of group norms, values, and daily problem solving...The role-theory model departs from these tendencies in that it concentrates more on the how question and recognizes the problematic nature of affiliation from the group's

> perspectives as well. Thus in the role-theory perspective, affiliation is conceptualized as a social process through which an individual's needs are not merely met by a group but also one through which those needs may be shaped to the group's own purposes." (Pp.161-162)

Under this approach, one of the most influential sociological models of conversion-commitment processes in religious movements is the Lofland-Stark (1965) "process model." Arising from studies of early American followers of Sun Myung Moon (Lofland, 1977; Lofland and Stark, 1965), the Lofland-Stark "value-added" model identifies seven sequential stages through which converts proceed en route to full commitment. Conversion is accomplished when a person (1) experiences acute and persistent tensions, (2) within a religious problem-solving perspective, (3) which leads the individual to define himself as a religious seeker, (4) after which he encounters the movement at a crucial turning point in his life, (5) forms an affective bond with one or more converts, (6) after which extra-cult attachments become attenuated, and (7) the convert is exposed to intensive interaction within the group and ultimately becomes the group's deployable agent (Lofland and Stark, 1965: 874). The commitment process thus involves both identity transformation and role searching, and, to facilitate commitment, intensive interaction and involvement with the group are necessary.

According to the sociology of deviance, in this role-theory

model, whether one is caught and publicly labelled deviant, that is, linked to the role of deviant, is crucial for people to become socially deviant. The acquiring of a deviant identity thus is both interactional and cognitive (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1968; Lemert, 1951; Matza, 1969). For example, in Becker's (1963) study on becoming a marijuana user, he made the statement that: "deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied, deviant behavior is behavior that people so label" (p.9).

Although Becker's research on the process of becoming a marijuana user has never been presented in a systematic way, his perspective on the deviant has been refined by Piliavin and Callero (1991) into the "model of commitment" to explain the phenomenon of blood donations, since both deviant behavior and blood donation are relatively unusual and have some negative aspects (p.64). In Piliavin and Callero's refined model, in order to become a continual blood donors, like becoming a deviant, both self-labelling--labeling oneself as a blood donor--and social labelling--recognition by others as a member of blood donation--are crucial. Moreover, once one begins to identify with the role of blood donor, the development of "side bets"--that is, "giving up the central activity would cause psychological or social losses in other areas" (Piliavin and Callero, 1991:73)--and donor friendships may follow and further

determine one's later blood donations. Piliavin and Callero's analysis of the data on mid-career blood donors[34] also provides strong support for Becker's model, that is, that self-labeling, social-labeling, side bets, and being enmeshed in a private group culture are important for determining one's giving blood.

To summarize, we found that under the "role theory model" researchers usually believe that the change in one's attitude and behavior usually accompanies the change of one's group status and role change; thus, one's commitment is a long interactive process between individual and group.

MY OBSERVATIONS OF TZU-CHI

Corresponding to the two perspectives on commitment outlined above, before fieldwork, I proposed two alternative hypotheses for Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment. That is:

Hypothesis 1: Tzu-Chi participants have a higher tendency toward humanitarian concerns than other people, so they come to Tzu-Chi to realize the goal and purpose of helping others, since charity and helping others are the main purpose of the Tzu-Chi Association.

Hypothesis 2: Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment is a

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[34] That is, the telephone interview and mailed questionnaire that followed-up on first-time donors (see Piliavin and Callero, 1991:72).

long interactive process between an individual and the organization. People's prosocial commitment under Tzu-Chi collective settings is shaped by various social processes.

My own observations of Tzu-Chi show that the statement in hypothesis 2 more closely corresponds to the observed facts of what happens in Tzu-Chi. However, what has never been identified and explored by past studies of helping behaviors is that, in collective settings, the social interaction processes are so intense and influential that even some personal factors of prosocial commitment, such as the ability to help, altruistic concern, the personality of caring, and the perception of motivation, are mediated and induced through the social processes. Without Tzu-Chi's collective settings, any Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment almost cannot continue and develop.

Moreover, as I described in the last two chapters, since a high proportion of people are recruited into Tzu-Chi by social networks, at the early stage of joining most participants do not have a clear sense of how they will do or what the moral concerns underlying their "doing Tzu-Chi" are. It almost seems that Tzu-Chi shapes all participants' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward helping behaviors. Thus, under Tzu-Chi's settings we must ask: What kinds of process are involved in participants' paths toward prosocial commitment?

Piliavin and Callero's (1991) model for blood donors explores some social dimensions that may be involved in people's prosocial commitment. However, due to the characteristics of their data, the highly institutionalized organizations of blood donation, and the relative low rates of interaction among blood donors, there is little exploration of the dynamic social processes that may underlie people's collective helping behavior. The rich symbolic contexts of Tzu-Chi, the high interaction rate between Tzu-Chi participants, the lack of pre-existing value patterns of humanistic concern among Tzu-Chi's new participants (since they are recruited mostly through personal networks), and the grassroots base of Tzu-Chi's social action, all offer students of helping behavior a spectacular chance to explore the dynamic picture of collective helping behavior. This current treatment should have a specific prominent status in the research on helping behavior since the social dimensions and the dynamic processes of prosocial commitment that this study tries to explore have never been fully explored in past studies.

In this chapter, I shall try to observe the commitment processes of Tzu-Chi participants, particularly exploring the social dimensions underlying each participant's commitment, that is, for Tzu-Chi's settings, what kinds of social interaction may influence one's attitude and behavior toward helping. Since Tzu-Chi's formal organizational purpose clearly postulates that "altruistic giving" is the most important task for Tzu-Chi

participants,[35] in this chapter, we will treat the commitment to Tzu-Chi and the commitment to prosocial giving as interchangeable, particularly regarding the current contexts of our discussion.

Specifically, I have observed 9 identifiable steps in the commitment processes in the Tzu-Chi Association:

1. **Initial contact with a participant**
2. **Frame alignment processes**
3. **Affection bonds**
4. **The commitment event**
5. **Role playing**
6. **Perceived rewards, benefits, and satisfactions**
7. **Breaking away from the structural limitations**
8. **Testifying to the experience**
9. **Group support for changed cognitive and behavioral patterns**

Of course, this is not to suggest that all participants in Tzu-Chi must go through the same process at the same speed, or to have the same process of change in cognitive and behavioral patterns. This point is further illustrated in table 7.1:

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Table 7.1 about here

[35] The first principle of the formal organizational purpose postulates that "Kindness, compassion, joy and giving are the total substance of Buddhism, and also are the purposes for the foundation of the Tzu-Chi Association." (see the discussion in Chapter 1).

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Table 7.1 shown how members of different categories of Tzu-Chi have reached different stages of the commitment process. While we found that higher committed participants, such as Commissioners and those who play multiple Tzu-Chi roles, certainly have reached the later stages (stages 7, 8, or 9) of this commitment process. However, it also shows that few participants (5 cases), even under the circumstances of having already reached the last 2 stages of this commitment process, still keep in rather marginal positions of Tzu-Chi, such as, Honored Patron and the Faith Corps. Thus I would argue that this model of commitment processes is only ideal-typical and analytic, although indeed it is induced from empirical facts. This model tries to explain, under Tzu-Chi's collective settings, what kinds of mechanism have been found most important for determining how a person who has little concern with helping others can be transformed into a person who is highly concerned with and fully committed to helping others. For most participants in Tzu-Chi, although with minor differences in the sequence of steps toward prosocial commitment, and at different speeds toward this commitment, the basic mechanisms and sequence underlying their processes of commitment are similar. Briefly speaking, according to my observations, these fundamental mechanisms may include structural availability, patterns of cognitive change, role playing, role-person merger, and collective support. Analytically, we may view this commitment

process as a "filtering" of people, with each step involving a filtering out of some people and a filtering or even funneling in of others.

1. INITIAL CONTACT WITH A PARTICIPANT

While logically the beginning of one's Tzu-Chi prosocial commitment can be traced to one's first hearing about Tzu-Chi, for most participants this "mere exposure" to Tzu-Chi has no structured pattern of influences and is not very effective in establishing people's commitment to Tzu-Chi. For example, as one member of Faith Corps recalled:

> Before, my image of those in Tzu-Chi was that they must be rather well off people, that it's their patronage [to join Tzu-Chi]...They must be those who have extra time...Then, one time, I came to Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch by chance, and I asked some questions of the Brothers there...I began to understand that if you are willing to join Tzu-Chi, you'll be welcomed..." (Interview note, 68:1)

These words illustrate that one's mere exposure to information about Tzu-Chi information may be neither very specific nor necessarily increase one's positive orientation toward Tzu-Chi, and thus mere exposure is weak in eliciting one's initial commitment toward Tzu-Chi. Although the research on "mere exposure" (Harrison, 1977; Vanbeselaere, 1983; Zajonc, 1968) has shown, in some circumstances "mere repeated exposure of the

individual to a stimulus is sufficient condition for the enhancement of his attitude towards it" (Zajonc, 1968:1), in natural settings the positive or negative nature of the context in which people are exposed to Tzu-Chi's information is highly undetermined. Moreover, as discussed in chapter 3, we have found that in Taiwan the amount of information about Tzu-Chi has gone from very little, to suddenly very much. For most people in Taiwan, then, exposure to Tzu-Chi's information has been either non-exposure (in Tzu-chi's earlier days) or is over-exposure (in Tzu-Chi nowadays) It is thus very difficult to constitute information about Tzu-Chi as a novel stimulus for people in Taiwan, and the effect of mere exposure on changing one's attitude toward the object thus also is weak (Berlyne, 1954; Harrison, 1977). Thus, rather than viewing "mere exposure" to Tzu-Chi information as an effective way to elicit initial commitment to Tzu-Chi, according to my observation I would argue that, at the micro-interactional level, the initial contact with other Tzu-Chi participants constitutes the first important step toward "Tzu-Chi's prosocial commitment."

As described in chapter 5, in our sample most participants (86.6%) have been recruited into Tzu-Chi through personal networks, although some are recruited through media influence. For both kinds of recruits, however, initial contact with a participant is necessary for any further involvement in Tzu-Chi's helping programs. This initial contact may intensify one's receptive attitude toward Tzu-Chi, and at the same time offer

one a chance to be linked with Tzu-Chi's reticulated system.

One's initial joining of Tzu-Chi, is not merely a function of dispositional susceptibility, rather, but, more importantly, it is strongly influenced by one's structural proximity to Tzu-Chi. That is, the more Tzu-Chi participants you know in your private place, more likely you'll become a Tzu-Chi participant. Although Tzu-Chi's reticulated network has greatly penetrated Taiwanese society, for most people the initial contact with Tzu-Chi is still not randomly distributed. The data show that most of the Tzu-Chi participants are located in several big cities and their surrounding suburbs; in most rural areas in Taiwan, Tzu-Chi's reticulated network is still less connected.[36] This can be illustrated by the words of an Apprentice Commissioner quoted in our chapter 5: "I really want to give back to our society, but do not have the chance...We really want to get a chance to help back. However, we are only saying it. We never have a real network for doing something. We just do not have the chance to do it..." (Interview note, 37:14). That is, even if one really wanted to do something for this society, if she (he)

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[36] For example, in Dec. 1995, the four most urbanized cities in Taiwan--Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung, Tainan--had more than 72 percent of the Commissioners of Tzu-Chi (in Taiwan) (4076/5684) (Tzu-Chi Yearbook, 1995:460). At the same time, the population of these four cities is only 26.17% (5,588,930/21,357,431) of the total population of Taiwan. Even if we add the population of counties around these four metropolitan cities, the population of these urbanized areas is about 58.88% (12,574,987/21,357,431) of the total population in Taiwan (see Taiwan-Fukien Demography Quarterly, 1995, Winter:6:22-23). Although the population of Taiwan has been unevenly distributed in those urbanized areas, the concentration of Tzu-Chi participants is even more skewed toward those most urbanized areas.

is not in Tzu-Chi's reticulated network, it is be very hard for her (him) to start her (his) commitment toward Tzu-Chi.

The initial contact gives one a chance to try out Tzu-Chi's various activities. In the beginning, one's motive for initial contact may combine various interests. For example, as a member of the Faith Corps recalled:

> A Brother came to my home. He asked me to install air conditioning for his home. The interesting things then happened. He saw that my house has a little Buddhist altar. He asked me: "Mr. Boss, are you a Buddhist?...Do you know, in Taichung, there is a Tzu-Chi branch, do you want to join our collective practice? Every Wednesday there is a collective practice in the Branch." I said: "Of course, o.k., since Tzu-Chi is about Buddhism, and I am a Buddhist." I actually thought that if I agreed with him and went with him, it could deepen our relationship; then later, if he wanted to buy more air-conditioning again, he would always come to my store. So for selling more things to him, I was happy to go with him. I then had the chance to go to Tzu-chi. Just like that, I went to Tzu-Chi with him. (Interview note, 51:1-2).

This first trial, although not always motivated by altruistic concerns, is definitely crucial. Since, under Tzu-Chi's role, the presentation by senior participants' usually involves

impression management (Goffman, 1959), one's first contact with other Tzu-Chi participants usually creates very positive feelings. The influence of this initial contact may have very far-reaching effects. As a current female Commissioner said to me:

> My mother-in-law has been a Buddhist for thirty years. I often followed her to some Buddhist temples. But I did not have much understanding of Buddhism. All I saw of Buddhism was just "chanting the name of buddha"...Then I went with her [mother in law] to Hualien, On the Tzu-Chi's train, the first time I had seen our senior Sisters. I really could not believe how different they were from others. They were not like the ordinary people. They always smiled, were so humble, so...I was a volunteer in another elementary school. I was the "caring mother" of that school for a while. However, I felt that Tzu-Chi is different from those places. In Tzu-Chi, the feeling is so real. As I saw Tzu-Chi people, I had the feeling that this place is really the place I could learn something...(Interview note, 45:2).

Thus, at the micro-interactional level, the initial contact with other participants is the necessary step for one's further commitment to Tzu-Chi, especially as this first contact usually brings out one's positive feelings toward Tzu-Chi. However, this initial contact is not randomly distributed. One's structural

proximity and degree of intensity of being situated in Tzu-Chi's reticulated network may determine the one's possibility of initial contact with other Tzu-Chi participants.

2. FRAME ALIGNMENT PROCESSES

I have already introduced Snow et al.'s framing perspective in chapter 6, noting that this perspective particularly emphasizes the cognitive dimensions of collective mobilization. In this approach, the concept of "frame alignment" (Snow et al., 1986), as we have discussed in chapter 6, can explain how movement participation becomes possible. Following Snow et al.'s concept, I here use the term "frame alignment processes" to describe the specific step in one's commitment process toward Tzu-Chi in which one's cognitive state begins to be aligned with Tzu-Chi's organizational frame.

Snow et al. (1986) identified four types of alignment processes--"frame bridging," "frame amplification," "frame expansion," and "frame transformation"--and viewed them as different strategies for linking a movement's message to its prospective supporters. Rather then go into detail discussing which kinds of frame alignment processes happen for Tzu-Chi participants (another research project in itself), I would like to emphasize several aspects of one's micro-interactional contexts that may affect one's frame alignment processes toward Tzu-Chi:

1. The initial face-to-face contact with other Tzu-Chi participants changes one's knowledge of Tzu-Chi to more intimate feeling, the actual distance between oneself and Tzu-chi being reduced and Tzu-Chi becoming a much more familiar thing. Later, when exposed to Tzu-Chi information in the media, that information becomes quite meaningful and understandable for him (her), and the contents of Tzu-Chi's organizational frame thus become more easily transmitted to a new participant.

2. To the extent that a well-developed organizational frame is robust, complete, and thorough, it will be extremely important to new participants for gaining greater interest in the organization's various activities. This kind of frame is very effective at providing patterned answers for people's questions in both organizational and daily life. In this sense, Tzu-Chi's well-developed organizational frame (as described in chapter 6) thus guarantees that even without Tzu-Chi's agencies of socialization beside, new participants still will channel to Tzu-Chi's way of thinking voluntarily.

3. Moreover, once a new participant begins to see the world through Tzu-Chi's organizational frame, whether or not he (she) comes into the physical setting of Tzu-Chi, his (her) personal world is integrated into Tzu-Chi's interpretative schema. One's life experience and Tzu-Chi's organizational frame can mutually strengthen each other, and as one's life becomes more structured

and meaningful, Tzu-Chi's organizational frame becomes more plausible and penetrable. Once one has accepted the frame, even seemingly contradictory life events still may strengthen participants' confidence in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame. Moreover, through the organizational frame's interpretation, one's life also can become less vulnerable.

One example is that of a male Commissioner who joined Tzu-Chi more than 20 years. During these 20 years two tragedies occurred: his house was burned to the ground and his little son was killed by a car. Yet even with these great tragedies, he did not feel any regret or frustration in his having joined Tzu-Chi. As he recalled these events, he said:

> By participating in Tzu-Chi, I can understand the real dharma [Buddhist truth]. Our life is really impermanent. I have been educated by our Master, so I know that impermanent means that there is nothing in this world that can be constant. Since I have been in Tzu-Chi, I have taken every chance to do good things. As Master said, "life, we only have the right to use it, not the right to own it." Do good things should be hurry. So after I joined Tzu-Chi, these two things [fire and son's death] told me that life is impermanent. I joined Tzu-Chi so I can know this. Death is not the right for an old man, rather, it's the right for those who are presumed to be at the end of the relationship with us...Can you understand what

I mean?...Because we have religious belief, we know that if you do good, you will get good results, this truth never changes. Your this life is determined by your previous lives. If you do good in this life, in the next life you will get good results. That's why everybody's fortune is different. Because this truth [do good get good results] never changes, many people come to Tzu-Chi..." (Interview note, 4:6,7)

From this case, we can see how the organizational frame can give participants meanings and strength, even under circumstances in social reality that seem to contradict that frame. Following one's initial involvement in Tzu-Chi, the well-developed, systematic, and high-certitude organizational frame of Tzu-Chi can structure and codify one's further experience and thought, and in turn, may integrate one a further step into Tzu-Chi.

3. AFFECTION BONDS

As soon as one has the chance to join various Tzu-Chi activities, he (she) experiences Tzu-Chi's warm welcome and strong affective tie. Other Tzu-Chi participants, especially cadres or senior participants, will give a new participant very warm caring. The affective ties and intense interaction between old members and new members of religious groups have been found by many researchers to be the necessary condition for new

participants to become further committed (Barker, 1984; Heirich, 1977; Lofland & Stark, 1965). Since a positive, interpersonal tie to one or more group members can function as "an information bridge, increase the credibility of appeals, and intensify the pressure to accept those appeals and corresponding practices" (Snow, 1984:183), it is not surprising to find that it is unlikely for participant to further commit toward a specific organization in the absence of affection bonds. As I described in chapter 2, my early stage of participant observation also experienced Tzu-Chi's "love bombing" very intensively.

However, past studies have failed to point out that, rather than being a common characteristic for all groups, affection bonds among participants are highly based upon an organization's ideational system and its specific organizational structure. Also, these studies have especially lacked a more refined understanding of exactly how affective ties function. Although the usual inherent presupposition of charitable organizations that we should care for and love each other may quite easily foster strong affective tie among their participants, for Tzu-Chi, participants' affection bonds have several more solid bases:

1. Tzu-Chi's organizational frame employs the family metaphor of human relationships (Chen, 1990). People are seen as interdependent and related (as we see in the chapter 6), and participants consistently use kinship terms to refer to each

other. This family metaphor has substantially influences participants' in-group interaction. According to Buddhist philosophy (see chapter 3), and further particularly emphasized in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame, other participants are supposed to be our near relatives or friends in our past life. "Brother" and "Sister" thus describe each other in Tzu-Chi. As one female Commissioner said:

> In Tzu-chi, I feel there are so many parents, brothers, and sisters. To these "parents, brothers, and sisters" you can say anything without scruples. There are no conflicts in our personal interests. This relationship is more intimate than with any of our own brothers and sisters. Sometimes I visit my group leader's home. If I haven't eaten anything, and they still have dishes there, I can pick up a bowl to eat without hesitation. In comparison, if I go to my brother's home, it is impossible for me to behave in that way...Other Tzu-Chi participants, for me, are more intimate than my own relatives." (Interview note, 11:7)

As this family metaphor actually comes from the Buddhist world-view, however, we must emphasize that, compared to other Buddhist groups, Tzu-Chi has structurally implemented this idea more intensively. That is, with its semi-family ties, salient collective boundary, frequent informal meetings, family style of team work, highly supportive pre-existed network, and a female

mother-kind of charismatic figure as the core leader, Tzu-Chi, bears a strong family-kind of tie among participants. One of my informants compared his experience in Tzu-Chi with that in other Buddhist groups:

> I have the feeling that Tzu-Chi's Brother is particularly kind and gentle. It's different from other people in temples. Here we have a stronger affection bond. In other temples, you come there today, and won't come there tomorrow. They are not very organized. Today you may have religious practice for a while, but you'll soon interrupt it tomorrow...These other groups are easily broken up...There is not much feeling left there. In Tzu-Chi, I feel it is different. We like family members...It's like a tradition. As our Master said: "We Tzu-Chi people, we are a family." Tzu-chi has this kind of cohesiveness. Every time we see each other in Tzu-chi, we are kind to each other. It's very different from other temples. In Tzu-chi, we all wear uniforms. As we go out and see other Brothers and Sisters who wear Tzu-Chi's uniform, we can happily say Hi to them. The feelings are so warm. In other places you cannot find anything like this. (Interview note, 61:3)

Empirically, thus, it is very true that under the fostering of Tzu-Chi's structural arrangement, new participants easily find the feelings of family and affective ties.

2. Tzu-chi is a charitable organization philosophically based upon the Buddhist ideal of compassionate love. When participants come to Tzu-Chi, they subjectively expect a highly supportive and positive in-group relationship, and they behave accordingly. Psychologically, participants have a deep need to hope that something might exist in Tzu-Chi that is different from the outside utilitarian world. Most participants, therefore, are ready to interpret all social interaction in Tzu-chi as basically positive-oriented, especially in their early stage of joining Tzu-Chi.

3. Indeed, a new participant in Tzu-chi will be taken care of more intensively by other senior participants, in part because senior participants are presumed to do this, and in part because, by doing so, older participants obtain further confirmation of their own change in cognitive and behavioral patterns through the commitment processes.[37] One example of this affection bond between Tzu-Chi's new and senior participants, as also described in chapter 6, is seen in Tzu-Chi's intimacy names

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[37] According to my observation, the psychological tendencies of senior participants' showing welcome to new participants in Tzu-Chi are quite common and general. Similarly, according to Festinger, Richen, & Schachter's cognitive dissonance theory and empirical findings (1956), as participants receive stronger disconfirming evidence in regard to the belief they are committed to, they may have a stronger tendency to welcome and proselytize new participants. In examination of the later stage of one's prosocial commitment toward Tzu-Chi, we will further discuss this issue.

for new and senior Commissioners to call each other: new Commissioners are "baby chicks" and a new or Apprentice Commissioner will call her specific senior commissioner "mother hen."

Many kinds of settings and meetings of Tzu-Chi--including informal tea social occasions, working team gatherings, subgroup informal and formal meetings, training sessions, etc--offer chances for social interaction and for expressing concern to each others. Under these occasions the affection bond can be fostered effectively and strongly felt by new participants.

According to my observation, these affection bonds have several functions with regard to one's commitment to Tzu-Chi's organized helping behavior: 1) They give new participants a strong identity with the organization: cognitively, participants are more willing to accept and follow Tzu-Chi's organizational frame; affectively, through this micro-interactional link, participants are more deeply embedded in a specific subgroup of Tzu-Chi. 2) As participants are more willing to be involved in the internal social interaction processes, other participants' influences, including those of the Charismatic leader, the subgroup-leader, senior patricians' and other possible role models, become much stronger and more direct. For example, one newly participating Apprentice Commissioner told me how she was affected by senior Commissioners' loving care:

> I had the chance to know Sister Chou...She began to come to our home. I felt that: "Tzu-Chi people are so

> kind. She is so kind, Tzu-Chi people are so good." She said to me: "You can get one more step, to join Tzu-chi, to be an Apprentice Commissioner." At that time, I envied Tzu-Chi's uniform very much...I was envious for those clothes. I asked her: "That uniform, how can I have it? where can I buy it?" She replied: "You must be a Commissioner, a formal Commissioner can wear that uniform." ...Chou is so kind to me. I think that I want to go further to be a Commissioner of Tzu-Chi. (Interview note, 37:4,5)

To summarize, the affection bond between a new participant and senior participants fosters feelings of belonging and further elicits a new participant's willingness to commit to Tzu-Chi. In Tzu-Chi, this affection bond is based upon Tzu-Chi's family metaphor, Buddhist philosophy, and specific psychological needs for senior participants to confirm their past social actions. Furthermore, various settings and meetings developed by Tzu-Chi's agencies and activists can structurally foster the affection bond between new participants and senior participants in the micro-interaction processes so that, in turn, new participants begin to be more willing to be involved in Tzu-Chi.

4. COMMITMENT EVENT

For Tzu-Chi, commitment events are events that happen in specific settings--they are often a touching scene or intimacy interaction--and elicit one's feelings or responsibility to help

others by being a more committed Tzu-Chi participant.

A person won't seriously consider being a more committed Tzu-Chi participant until the commitment event happens to him (her). Before this event, one may sympathize or even identify with Tzu-Chi's organizational frame, leader, and senior participants; however, without this event happening, one will still be a very marginal member of Tzu-Chi and be without any "Tzu-Chi's action." Only after the commitment event can a new participant transform his (her) positive attitude toward Tzu-Chi into actions. However, it should be emphasized here that the influence of the commitment event on the social actor in Tzu-Chi is more cognitive than behavioral. Although the effects of the commitment event on one's cognitive transformation may be very strong, it does not happens in a very dramatic sense. That is, following the process of frame alignment and the building of affective ties, commitment events merely bring one a further step into the funneling process toward prosocial commitment.

Moreover, Tzu-Chi's commitment events do not occur in an emotionally charged atmosphere like that found in studies of evangelical and pentecostal groups (Altheide & Johnson, 1977; Bruce, 1982; Lang & Lang, 1960). One reason for this may be inherent in the nature of the altruistic act, since under a rather intense normative pressure, people actually may have difficulty developing their intrinsic motivation (or say, self-perceived intrinsic motivation), and further that pressure may reduce one's helping behavior (the so-called "Boomerang Effects,

found by Schwartz and Howard [1981, 1982, 1984]). In chapter 9, we will discuss this issue more intensively. However, here, I want to point out that in Tzu-Chi, as I asked informants to recall the events that had made them become more committed, they rarely mentioned public collective events. Instead, according to their own accounts, participants' private interaction with other recipients or senior participants usually came out as much more salient and important in eliciting their further prosocial commitment. (Later [in chapter 8], we will discuss the patterns of participants' accounts of motivation and various Tzu-Chi events, since it is possible that people may just be unwilling to perceive that their prosocial commitment is induced by some kind of emotionally charged atmosphere.)

A second reason for the difference, as indeed my own observations found, is that Tzu-Chi's collective settings rarely have scenes of strongly emotional atmosphere as are found in evangelical crusades in the U.S. For example, a Western observer once described a Tzu-Chi collective conference (both the Master and more than 400 participants joined) as: "Impressive and amazing...Not only the Master, but also everyone else! We've been to churches before, but no place is like this! I can feel a strong sense of love and peace. And I've also noticed something extraordinary: the Master and her followers never voiced their requests to Buddha--'Grant us this, oh God!' 'Give us that, oh Lord!'--those are the most frequently used sentences in all church services that you and I have ever attended" (qtd.

in Yu-ing, 1995:6). Therefore, I tend to accept at face value Tzu-Chi participants' accounts of their commitment events as eliciting further prosocial commitment, and we thus should notice this "private characteristic" of commitment events for Tzu-Chi participants. That is, Tzu-Chi participants rarely stated that the collective atmosphere was the important reason for their change of orientation toward altruist acts. This is certainly different from those commitment events for participants in evangelical or pentecostal groups that have received much public and media notice in the U.S.

Several kinds of commitment event can be identified in Tzu-Chi's settings. First, the event most often mentioned by participants is personal experience with other recipients. Usually senior participants will arrange for a more serious new participant to visit an impoverished family, take care of patients in hospital, or visit aged people in a nursing home. This kinds of direct experience with recipients may open a new door to a new participant's life, since before joining Tzu-chi, most of them have not had direct experience with those who are desperately needy. Many do not even know that so many miserable things exist in this society. As one member of Faith Corps said:

> Before [before his visiting a poor family], I did not even know what perilous and poor people might look like. I was just a farmer before. I seldom went out and thus never saw these scenes before. After I joined Tzu-Chi, I had the chance to see these scenes. I began

> to know that there are so many people who need to be helped in our society. (Interview note, 19:10-11)

Some more tragic scenes even shock the new participants, as one Commissioner recalled:

> Before I saw this scene, I always browsed on the streets. Buying clothes to kill leisure time. I did not discover my real function in life. After I joined Tzu-Chi, I still remember clearly...that...mm..mm..as I saw in the scene...mm...life is impermanent...mm... as in the big fire at Taichung's "Welcome Restaurant" [a fire in 1994 that killed 58 people]. That time, I was in Tzu-Chi to help those people whose relatives were dead...Oh..it.. you know, life just disappears in one minute. Life is so impermanent. I saw a lot of this kind of thing in Tzu-Chi...it let me know that life is so impermanent. We really should do something more meaningful in this life. (Interview note, 3:10)

This kind of new vision--knowing that there are so many miserable scenes in our society--has several important functions in eliciting people's prosocial commitment:

1. It elicits participants' inner compassion and empathy for others. Especially as one compares his (her) own comfort with these recipients' peril, he (she) may then begin to feel highly the sorrows of these recipients. One new Apprentice Commissioner described how she changed her life style after visiting an

impoverished family: "Now when I see valuable stuff, I cannot pay money to buy it anymore. These pearls and jades now just look like stone to me. Now that I have seen these miserable families, it is impossible for me to waste money on something that only has beauty. Since I know that with only by 3,000 to 4,000 NT dollars, these miserable families can live for a month, I must save the money that I used to waste to help those poor families" (Interview note, 37:10-11). Without measuring the real psychological state of this woman, it is however fair to say that under Tzu-Chi's settings, viewing those recipients' pains has elicited concern for others and further positive social actions toward others.

2. However, according to my observations of Tzu-Chi participants, the stronger psychological effect of one's direct touch with recipients is to link other's peril to one's current situation of life and to remind one to take necessary social action to build up the new meaning of one's personal life. That is, under a specific cultural repertoire, direct association of recipients' miserable situation with one's own life state may push one to embrace positive social action a further step. Specifically, if one's current life is in rather comfortable circumstances, seeing others' peril may make one feel that his (her) own ease and comfort are just built upon a very unstable base that any accident or illness might soon destroy. On the other hand, if one's current life is in distress, seeing others'

worse peril may make one cherish his (her) current situation more. Tzu-Chi's organizational frame postulates that "only helping others can reduce the chance of being perilous"; whether for seeking a safer base for current life comfort or for changing one's current life's peril, the answer will always be: "to help others as much as possible." Based upon the cultural repertories of social action--merit-accumulation, Cheng Yen has often said: "You should know your fortunes, and cherish them, and then create further blessings." A new Commissioner mentioned in a published Tzu-Chi book how visiting an impoverished family has changed her view of life:

> By joining Tzu-chi, I learn and feel directly a lot of the truth of life. Visiting an impoverished family, we saw aged people who are without any social support. We saw that, due to a car accident, a young man in his golden age, must to lie down in a 7 foot bed for the rest of his life. Seeing these people and their perils, we have nothing to do but sign a long sigh. Life is so impermanent. So at any moment, we should know our fortune, cherish our fortune, and further create our fortune. To encourage ourselves to be good, to do good things in a hurry, and to use our limited life to bear the unlimited life of wisdom. (Jim-Yen, 1992:176)

That is, under the presupposition that charity can change one's life state, as one sees others's perils, one actually may be

stimulated to become more active in conducting helping behavior.

Another kind of commitment event, although less directly observed, may also have a strong influence on one's prosocial commitment: seeing senior participants helping others or seeing Master Cheng Yen's interaction with others. Numerous studies have shown that behavioral examples provide important influences upon helping behaviors (e.g., Bryan & Test, 1976; Piliavin & Callero, 1991; Rushton & Campbell, 1977). A number of reasons also been used to explain modeling effects, including vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1977); situation definition and norms articulation (Blake, Rosebaum and Duryea, 1955); social support to make action (Allen & Winlder, 1975); and eliciting feelings of guilt (Freedman, 1970). However, one dimension of modeling effects has never been reported widely--the influence of the model's extensivity. According to my observations in Tzu-Chi's collective settings, this kind of influence accounts for most of the explanation for observation of other models being effective in eliciting a person's helping behavior.

"Extensivity" is the personality trait that has been found by Oliner and Oliner (1988) in the rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. They define this concept as "the tendency to assume commitments and responsibilities toward diverse groups" (Oliner & Oliner, 1992:370). In their later conceptual elaboration, extensivity implies two dimensions: "the attachment dimension, which ranges from alienation or extreme detachment at one pole to love at the other; and the inclusiveness dimension, which

ranges from exclusion of all others except the self at one pole to the inclusion of the universe at the other" (Oliner & Oliner, 1992:373). As a two-dimensional trait, extensivity thus can explain why those who are highly attached people with great capability for altruistic behavior could shut their doors in the face of supplicant Jews; and why those who are intent on saving all humankind but are disconnected from real people may limit their options and become inured to the suffering of those around them (see examples in Oliner & Oliner, 1992:374).

Oliner & Oliner (1992) have pointed out that an extensive orientation is particularly related to altruistic behavior. They further propose eight social processes that can promote this orientation. However, they have not noticed that in richly symbolic interaction contexts, the model of extensivity itself can foster others' extensive orientation. Particularly in Tzu-Chi, as the chances arise, new participants may see--either personally or through TV or magazines--how senior participants interact with other participants and recipients, and how Master Cheng Yen interacts with other participants and recipients. These acts are fully representative of extensive orientations, both symbolically or substantially, because of the inclusion of others and the connection with real people. At the same time, Tzu-Chi's organizational frame clearly postulates that unconditional love and inclusive compassion are the underlying reasons for our altruistic action, and thus it further orients new participants' vision through these exemplary models. Since

these models of extensivity exist in the new participants' immediate social contexts, they have far-reaching effects on their altruistic tendencies. One Commissioner recalled how her seeing senior Commissioners' interaction with recipients touched her so much:

> That time, I followed senior commissioners to visit an impoverished family. In the mountain area, we saw an old single man. He even said dirty words to us. He distrusted anyone who wanted to help him. He had paralysis resulting from a stroke...We tried to make him happy. I saw how my group leader and deputy leader talked to him, so soft, so..mm..as they took care him, I almost did not feel that they treated him special...That time, I almost could not reach out to him [the old man]..ya..but the senior Sisters, their helping, was..mm..so natural. The neighbor of this old man wanted to cut his nails for him, but the old man would not accept that. Yet when the Senior Sisters wanted to cut his nails for him, he would allow them...How could these senior Sisters be so natural to do these kinds of things? They really behaved with total respect toward those recipients...How do they take care of others so much, so gently, this I really want to learn. (Interview note, 45:12)

Another commissioner recalled how Master's interaction with participants greatly touched her:

> She [Master Cheng Yen] is busy, going to many different places in Taiwan every month, to give a speech somewhere, to convert believers somewhere,..it really should exhaust her. She is so compassionate, so reaching out...When Master comes to Taichung, I feel so happy to see her, like a child. If she is in pain, I'll be in pain,...she is so mindful in everything,.in helping others. We also want to do so, but we are not mindful enough like her. (Interview note, 75:25)

The influence of observing models of extensivity may come from several reasons. Most generally speaking, it is the deep need for human beings to reach out. In rather Western terms (see Markus and Kitayama's criticism, 1992), we may say that people have the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1954, 1968; Rogers, 1961), self-enhancement (Markus and Kitayama, 1992), and ego-extension (Rosenberg and Kaplan, 1982). One important dimension of ourselves is to go beyond and extend our selves, and to connect and reach to others, but particularly for those people with few chances for civil participation or who have been restrained by their household activities, the need for self-extension is intensive. Observing those Tzu-Chi role models' unconditional giving may elicit new participants' feelings of unboundness, extensivity, and further, prosocial commitment. A female Apprentice Commissioner mentioned this in a very touching way:

> When I saw the picture of Cheng Yen the first time, I

> was so touched by her. I do not know why, I just cry and feel that she is like our relatives. I do not know why, but I am just happy to follow her...I feel Tzu-Chi is really the flow of purified love. Like now, I do the recycling job often, and I feel that Master's burden is so heavy, so I should carry some for her. The feeling is so good. This has also become one of my responsibilities. The feeling is so good...The greatness of her, I cannot describe...I learn a lot from this process...To hold meetings and activities, in the meetings, I always cry, and I feel those things I have done are very good for me. I am doing these things for Master. I feel I am doing these things voluntary...I am learning a lot, I feel I have gained a lot. (Interview note, 31:2-3)

Although from these words we can see many reasons that make this Commissioner feel touched by Cheng Yen, Cheng Yen's role model of extensivity certainly is the most important of them. Moreover, under the collective settings, one's identification with the role models of extensivity may further bind one and those role models together, and then elicit one's willingness to perform altruistic acts, since these role models have already effectively done those things that the new participants desire to do. The new participants' satisfaction in joining Tzu-Chi becomes particularly enhanced as one is aware that: 1) his or her joining Tzu-Chi is similar to those role models' joining

Tzu-Chi; 2) the collectivity of these roles--the compassionate and fully committed Tzu-Chi people, including Master Cheng Yen, devoted Buddhist nuns, and senior Commissioners--underlies his or her newly emerged extensive orientation. As one Commissioner mentioned:

> I feel I have just given a little bit of strength, and it has made our society become purified...We hadn't expected so much. As we do [charity], we can get so much strength. When we followed the "Tzu-Chi Train"[38] back to ualien, every time, we were touched by people there [Master and other Buddhist nuns] very much. Indeed, every month, we have a hard time in asking for contributions. However, if you go back [to Hualien] to see Tzu-Chi, you'll feel that you are so great. You'll feel that even one person can have the ability to join this great task. And then..you..mm.. you'll be very sure about your efforts in helping others. (Interview note, 45:9)

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[38] This is a kind of pilgrimage to Tzu-Chi's original place. In Tzu-Chi's Taichung Branch, almost every month there is a "Tzu-Chi Train." In about 10 carriages, the "Tzu-Chi Train" may take about 500 participants to Hualien, and visit Tzu-Chi's Still Thought Abode, hospital, nursing college, University, memorial hall, etc. Most of the time, participants also get the chance to listen to Master Cheng Yen's speech in the Still Thought Abode, the thing they most expect to do. In the two days' activities, participants ride the train about 14 hours (since it takes about 7 hours from Taichung to Hualien). During these 14 hours, senior participants (every carriage has about 5), will give a lot of speeches about Tzu-Chi's stories to the other about 50 members. The "Tzu-Chi Train" is a very important program for Tzu-Chi for socializing its new members. See several pictures (Picture 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3) that show scenes from the Tzu-Chi Train.

By identifying with these Tzu-Chi role models of helping behavior, one thus also gaining a stronger confidence in one's own prosocial commitment.

Across processes, observing others' models of extensivity thus becomes a very important event that may stimulate one's prosocial commitment. Here we should point out that this kind of role model is not randomly distributed in our daily life settings. It can only be intensively observed in the micro-interaction settings of charitable organizations, for: 1) these events of helping and extensive acts happen frequently in this setting; 2) organizational agents and activists may make these events much more salient and frequent and, sometimes, by various media, these events may be frequently replicated; and 3) the organizational frame may reframe or narrow participants' focus on these events so that the extensive orientations underlying these events may become much more conspicuous.

The several stages we have identified thus far show how a person moves from not knowing about Tzu-Chi, to being a less committed Tzu-chi participant who has taken Tzu-Chi's organizational frame as a reference for thinking, to being willing to attend some of Tzu-chi's activities, and occasionally, to being touched by some moving scenes that happen in Tzu-Chi. Specifically, in Tzu-chi, this is the process of how one moves from being a non-Member to a Member, to a Honored Patron, to an apprentice Faith Corps participant or a very new Apprentice Commissioner.

Table 7.1 showed the specific number in each of Tzu-Chi's category of members that had reached the specific stages of this commitment process. Among the 76 participants, we found that 30 could be identified as already having passed through these earlier stages of the commitment process, to about stage 3 or stage 4. Of these 30 participants, 13 reported having experienced a commitment event, yet they hadn't developed any further commitment toward Tzu-Chi, in the sense that they had stayed in rather marginal positions in Tzu-Chi. Why, then, didn't they develop further prosocial commitment?

After one's experience of a commitment event, the crucial step for fixing one's subjective feelings toward Tzu-Chi (indeed, these subjective feelings are also socially constructed, as our discussion has shown) into reality and thus further enhancing one's prosocial commitment is whether one has the chance to play Tzu-Chi's organizational role. (We will discuss this in the next section.) While the above four stages of commitment can be labelled as the phase of structural proximity and availability of being involved in Tzu-Chi, the later 3 stages of commitment can be labelled as the phase of role-playing.

5. ROLE PLAYING

Researchers have pointed out that commitment in many religious groups involves a social learning experience

culminating in the passages of role playing (Balch, 1980; Bromley and Shupe, 1979, 1986; Kilbourne and Richardson, 1985; Richardson, 1985; Wilson, 1984). Balch has argued that "the first step in conversion...is learning to act like a convert by outwardly conforming to a narrowly prescribed set of role expectations" (Balch, 1980:142). Since participants are ready to accept a "show me" or "try it out" attitude (Lofland and Skonovd, 1981:378) with a rather non-judgmental stance, the transformation of a person's consciousness may actually follow this trying out of certain organizational roles.

With regard to helping behavior, also, role playing may effectively transform people's perceptions about prosocial commitment. In Tzu-Chi, according to my observations, "role playing" may affect both kinds of determinants of helping behavior, the individual determinants (for example, the ability to help) and the interactive determinants (for example, the organizational identify that is relevant to the helper's role).

With regard to the individual determinants, Heider's (1958) model of effective personal force postulates that effective personal force is viewed as a multiplicative function of two factors--a motivation factor, which consists of intentions and exertion, and a power/ability factor, which refers to a person's skill at the task and the difficulty of performing the task. The implication for helping behavior was later elaborated by Clary and Orenstein (1991:59):

First, the two factors are necessary but alone are not

> sufficient, so that effective help depends on both. Potential helpers, then may have the motivation to help but not the ability to help, may have the ability but not the motivation, or may have neither; effective helpers, however, would be expected to have both motivation and ability. Second, ability must be considered vis-a-vis the specific helping task. For an easy task, even people of low ability can perform it; for a more difficult task, high ability is required. Further, a particular skill may enable a person to be effective in one helping situation but not others.

Clary and Orenstein's study of volunteers at a crisis-counseling agency further showed that volunteers' ability does relate to helping behavior, where early-terminating and completed-serves volunteers reported more perspective-taking ability than the screened volunteers.

In Tzu-chi, according to my observation, too, both motivation and ability are related to specific kinds of helping activities and are important for determining one's degree of commitment to this kind of activity. Particularly, as one begins to get involved in a specific helping activity, the factor of ability becomes much more salient. For example, for as the task of consoling people with serious illness, you must know how to sense their inner feelings, respond to their immediate distress, give them some further hope without concealing the real truth, and as chances arise, you may also need to know how to comfort

the recipients' whole family. Whether or not one has enough ability or enough confidence regarding these kinds of activity is thus very important for determining whether one will continue to be committed to this specific kind of activity.

However, ability to help, especially for helping those in desperate need, needs to be learned. Since for Tzu-chi most participants have been recruited through some kind of personal network, only a few participants have the pre-existing skills to play the helping role well. Among the 76 participants I interviewed, only 6 people (3 male and 3 female, about 8%) had prior experience of volunteering somewhere else before joining Tzu-chi. For most Tzu-Chi participants, therefore, as they become more committed to helping behavior, their ability to help must be actually learned from Tzu-Chi's experience of participating.

How can a new participant in Tzu-Chi learn skills for helping others? In Tzu-Chi's settings there are two sources:

1. One rather indirect way, under the processes of vicarious learning, is by observing senior members' interactions with recipients. A role model can define what is allowable or best to do in a specific situation. Since helping behavior is a particularly sensitive thing with regard to recipients' needs and responses, a good and experienced role model can show what action is proper and best for the situation. As one female Apprentice Commissioner said: "I did not know that there were so

many chances to learn in Tzu-Chi...I still remember the first time I came to visit an impoverished family with those senior Commissioners. I did not even know what impoverished family visiting was. The only thing I did was to follow those Sisters. We came to Yun-Lin County, it is far away....I watched those Sisters as they talked to those recipients, it was gentle, so soft, and so sensitive to them. After I returned, I had a lot of feelings...I felt we should visit them [impoverished family] regularly; it was not only the money stuff, but rather we needed to go to them to show our concern, to express our taking care of them.."(Interview note, 37:6-7). By following and learning from her senior Commissioner, this Apprentice Commissioner thus has begun to learn and to elicit interest in helping these impoverished families.

2. A more direct and effective way to learn the skills for helping others, and also that most often observed in Tzu-Chi, is direct role-playing. In Tzu-Chi, organizational roles have two formats. One is the formal structural roles, such as entitled cadres in various Tzu-Chi groups, entitled group leaders and deputy leaders, etc. However, the more common format is that, as one interacts with recipients physically under the name of Tzu-Chi, one is performing Tzu-Chi's organizational role. Particularly, as chances arise, in a specific settings, organizational agents or senior participants may assign new participants to some specific helper roles. For example, for a

new volunteer in Tzu-Chi hospital, the first day of duty is always a day for learning by watching senior participants, but after that, senior participants always encourage the less experienced participants to conduct their helper role more actively.

I still have very clear memories from the first two days of my volunteering at Tzu-Chi hospital, of one senior commissioner telling me a lot about how to talk with the relatives of patients, and of another commissioner, on my second day, asking me to bathe a paralyzed man and stressing that it was a good chance to learn and to show the "Tzu-Chi's Spirit." At first, when playing the assigned role of helping, a new participant may feel that it is unbelievably hard; however, as they actually play these roles in front of others, a feeling of efficacy soon take replaces one's feelings of naivete and incapability. That is, by practicing, by trial and error and receiving responses from other in-group bystanders, one obtains the needed skills for the helper's role. As one has more chances to play the helper role in front of others, one may further obtain feelings of self-efficacy about helping, in the sense that one begins to believe himself (herself) to be a capable and mature helper.

The ability to help specifically includes both the skills to help and, more importantly, the ability for perspective taking (Davis, 1983; Miller, Berg, and Archer, 1983) and extensivity (Oliner & Oliner, 1988, as we have discussed). Role playing in Tzu-Chi's settings can substantially foster these

kinds of ability. As one female Commissioner illustrated:

> It's really a lot of growth for myself. After I have had the chance to do these things, such as visiting an impoverished family, I begin to think a lot about these things, such as whether the words we say may hurt these recipients...You'll think a lot about what kind of language can express your real concern about them... After this, actually, you learn many things, you grow in your wisdom. Actually, you change in many aspects of yourself. (Interview note, 69:16)

Or, as another female Commissioner said:

> Before I knew Tzu-Chi, I always felt that...mm...my environment was not good, and I had a lot of complaints about it. As the chance arises that I can do something, I feel that I am very lucky in comparison to others. I can have the ability to help others...There are many people in the corners of this society that need us. I feel I can help them. They need our help. When I joined there [Tzu-chi] and began to do something, I felt that I had grown a lot. My mind, my mental ability..my wisdom, my thought, all have grown up...I have learned many things. (Interview note, 41:3)

That is, after one has actually played the role of helping, one may substantially improve her (his) ability to help, whether in regard to perspective taking, feelings of extentiousness, or

skills for giving help. That is, although "ability to help" seems to be an individual thing, "learning of ability" is not. Particularly as most participants come to Tzu-Chi without a pre-existing ability for voluntary helping, their playing of this organizational role in the Tzu-Chi's micro-interactional settings is thus quite effective in fostering their various abilities regarding helping. In turn, when combined with their motive to help that has been elicited at the early stages of their commitment, this may push participants' prosocial commitment one further step.

The second function that role playing may have, with regard to prosocial commitment, mediates through the role identity that may come out after one's role playing. This effect is actually much more far-reaching and lasting than the first function (ability learning) mentioned above.

Identities can be defined as a "coincidence of placements and announcements." When a person has identity, "he is situated, that is, cast in the shape of a social object by the acknowledgment of his participation or membership in social relations." Thus, "one's identity is established when others place him as a social object by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces" (Stone, 1970:399).

Identities are important because they organize and energize our conduct in the situation (Hewitt, 1991:127). As one interacts with others under the name of Tzu-Chi's role

(sometimes this role may even be labeled by the uniform[39]), one thus announces in front of others that he (she) is a "Tzu-Chi person."

One's playing of the organizational role thus links him (her) to the larger social contexts, and his (her) prosocial acts become much more meaningful and richer, since the collectivity underlying one's social action--senior participants' encouragement, new participants' respect, and recipients' appreciation--is the main source of the meanings of that action. Particularly since Tzu-Chi is a publicly known charitable organization with a basically positive social image and Tzu-Chi's organizational role has clearly been defined to exemplify Tzu-Chi's goals and nature, one's playing the Tzu-Chi role publicly thus both enhances the conspicuousness of one's prosocial commitment and increases one's favorable feelings toward prosocial commitment.

Moreover, playing an organizational role of helping for a charitable organization with a positive social image is itself a source of self-efficacy that can enhance one's tendency to engage in prosocial commitment. One's playing Tzu-Chi's

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[39] The uniform can announce one's situated role most effectively. In Tzu-Chi, several kinds of participants may wear Tzu-Chi's uniform: both Apprentice and Formal participants of the subunits of the Faith Corps and Commissioners, and male Honored patrons. Uniforms for men are all the same. At informal occasions, the uniform for Apprentice and Formal Commissioners are the same. However, at formal occasions, Commissioners wear a unique style of uniform that can distinguish them from those Apprentice Commissioners (see Picture 7.4 and 7.5's illustration for both males and females' uniforms).

organizational role leads to one's identity with Tzu-Chi as one represents this organization with a very positive social image of helping others. Furthermore, one's sense of efficacy may also be strengthened under his (her) new organizational identity as one can clearly perceive the effect of his (her) positive social action through being aware of the collective tasks that have been done by Tzu-chi. An accounts by a male Honored Patron reveals this point:

> Everyone comes to Tzu-Chi; it is for doing good things. Everybody here [at Tzu-Chi] feels the confidence of doing charity. Collectivity is power. If you really want to do something, more people are better. Money is needed. In this world, if you really want to do something, money and people are necessary, like we have in the Tzu-Chi. As you get the chance to know more people in Tzu-Chi, you feel that it is more convenient and powerful to do good things for people if we are in the Tzu-Chi. (Interview note, 76:6)

Along with the newly-emerging identity of Tzu-Chi, one may have a new perception of the costs/benefits of the prosocial commitment, which may lead to greater time and investment in playing that role, and may lead one to the next step in the process of prosocial commitment. We will discuss these issues in the next section.

6. PERCEIVED REWARDS, BENEFITS, AND SATISFACTION

It seems common sense to say that, if there are no positive results or anticipatory positive results perceived in regard to one's specific social action, one will quit that action (Deutsch & Lamberti, 1986; Reddy, 1980). In Tzu-Chi, if a participant does not have strong positive feelings toward his or her own organized helping, he or she will not have further commitment. Under an organizational boundary, these positive feelings may have various forms. Clark and Wilson (1965) have argued that three types of incentives--material, solidary, and purposive--can attract and reward people that participate in an organization. Corresponding to these incentives, we may observe three types of perceived positive rewards and satisfaction for a Tzu-Chi participant:

1. Tangible interests: a stronger inner network that is good for personal career development; a strong collective base for merit-accumulation; stronger ritual and religious support for traumatic experience; an education function for the next generations, etc.
2. Feelings of collective empowerment and a strong sense of social support.
3. Feelings of satisfaction from following a specific moral concern and moral model.

One female Apprentice commissioner mentioned her gains from joining Tzu-Chi:

Those senior sisters have really given us a lot. They

> give us their personal teaching in both their words and behaviors. Here are many people. We come here to learn how to get along with others. We learn many things gradually. My personal gains from this [getting along with others] have been huge. Honestly, I have learned a lot from the Tzu-Chi. (Interview note, 43:3)

Another female Apprentice Commissioner said:

> My gains have been a lot. Before, I had a bad temper. I easily lost my control. I was always in a hurry in my mind. My Brother [meaning her husband] is much more gentle. I always said I wanted to change my temper. I treated my children very harshly...Until I joined Tzu-Chi. Then I saw that most of the Sisters [other female participants] are gentle and kind, speaking softly. Master is also, so gentle....So the biggest change and gain in Tzu-chi, is that I have really changed my temper, I have changed a lot and have gained a lot..." (Interview note, 37:5)

These two accounts obviously articulate the benefits of learning new knowledge, receiving warm social support, receiving satisfaction from following the Master's cause, and self-growth. The perceived benefits of joining Tzu-Chi are thus certainly not uni-dimensional. More importantly, we should notice that although one subjectively perceives the benefits of joining Tzu-Chi, these benefits are also socially constructed. Although this may sound contradictory, some words from a female Apprentice

Commissioner may help to illustrate this point:

> I did not feel tired from it [joining Tzu-Chi's activities]. I feel that since I have the ability to do, I'm very happy..Actually I am so happy..mm..busy? ..mmm.m.. Such as when we went to help the person who was addicted to heroin. We were really exhausted..mm.. I drove the car..to the A or B town, like this, continually to see cases [impoverished families] for 3 or 4 days, very exhausted..however it made me sleep well during the night. Sometimes, I really was very tired. Then I would take a hot water shower. My husband did not feel that we had done some good things...but I just tried my best, "go ahead and do it". If I get the chance, I will talk to others about my experience as much as possible, talk to them about how I visit these cases [impoverished families]...I tell my husband. "You do more and you get more"...(Interview note, 49:7-8)

This Apprentice Commissioner repeatedly mentions that she is exhausted and tired, but she also stresses that she is very happy and has gained a lot. The two phrases she mentions--"Go ahead and do it" and "You do more and you get more"--have been repeatedly emphasized in Tzu-Chi's organizational frames. Although outsiders may see this woman as spending a lot of her time, money, and energy in doing Tzu-Chi, for herself she feels quite happy and actually gains a lot. Moreover, the feeling of

being happy and the perceived self-benefit are not only articulated in a pre-structured sense; rather, these are based upon collective experience and the collectively constructed organizational frame. Thus the feeling of self-benefit is both subjectively perceived and socially constructed. Our discussion in the next chapter of Tzu-Chi participants' accounts of motivations may show these points more clearly.

Nevertheless, if under the influence of the socially constructed organizational frame one's perceived benefit from joining Tzu-Chi, is still negative, one then may decrease his (her) further commitment toward Tzu-Chi and, sometimes, even withdraw from his (her) current commitment to Tzu-Chi. For example, one who withdrew from Tzu-Chi, although he had already had some chances to play the Tzu-Chi role, still perceived the cost/benefit differently from other participants. He recalled:

> I liked to talk a lot about Buddhist philosophy. Many others also liked to hear from me. However, Cadres in Tzu-Chi asked me to not talk too much, and they said that "to practice Bodhisattva path, don't talk too much. As Master said 'go ahead and do it', 'do more and get more', and 'say fewer and do more'. We haven't yet practiced enough, so we should say less." Indeed, Master said we should do more and say less. So what could I say then? (Interview note W1:1)

This withdrawer does not perceive the meanings of "do more and get more" as other Tzu-Chi participants have. His perception of

fewer benefits from Tzu-Chi is crucial to his social action of withdrawing from Tzu-Chi. However, the more important question is why do some people perceive the cost/benefit differently from others? Although we will go back this issue later, here, we must emphasize that in order to continue one's commitment toward Tzu-Chi, one must perceive his (her) committing to Tzu-Chi as self-beneficial, even though this perceived benefit is highly socially constructed.

7. BREAKING AWAY FROM STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS

All participants, from the less committed to the more fully committed, must face the challenge of structural limitations. For example, if one has a very weak structural proximity to Tzu-Chi's recruitment network, he (she) actually faces a very strong structural limitation to his (her) joining Tzu-Chi. However, these structural limitations may become much more salient as one begins to consider becoming a fully committed participant. The need to increase one's investment toward Tzu-Chi may conflict with one's current structural situations, such as the availability of time and money, personal social networks, etc. Analytically, this stage may appear only after one had the chance to play Tzu-Chi's organizational role.

The first kind of structural limitation is people's availability of extra time and energy for joining Tzu-Chi. Most men may be filtered out at this stage of commitment and, as we noted in chapter 5, this is one crucial reason that most men

still hold rather marginal positions in Tzu-Chi. However, another structural limitation, connoted with more sociological meaning, is one's family and social network. Since everyone is bounded in his (her) own network, one's committing to something outside this network must be somewhat in conflict with his (her) current network. Under the patriarchal social system in Taiwan (as we have discussed in chapter 5), this structural limitation of the family network is particular crucial for women who are "housewives". Of the 27 women I interviewed who were beginning to consider seriously becoming more committed participants, past the stage of playing Tzu-Chi's role (the fifth step of commitment), 13 women (48%) expressed that they had experienced some kind of structural limitation from their family networks. Among the 19 men at the same stage of prosocial commitment, only 2 (11%) expressed that they had experienced some kind of structural limitation from their family networks.

As I described in chapter 4, most people are recruited into Tzu-Chi through some kind of personal network. However, this is still only one side of the coin. On the other side, in a collectivist society, as relatives may legitimately draw one into a charitable organization, they may also legitimately object to one's joining a charitable organization, especially as one begins to commit to Tzu-Chi in a rather active sense.

An example may help to illustrate the double sides of this structural factor (the influences of social network) in affecting one's commitment toward Tzu-Chi. A female Apprentice

Commissioner was introduced into Tzu-Chi as a member by her mother-in-law, with her mother-in-law even donating the member fee for her for the first several months. However, as she later became more interested in Tzu-Chi, her mother-in-law began to regulate her participation so that she could come to Tzu-Chi's Taichung Branch only one night a week. The mother-in-law gave the reason that she "should help her husband's business at home, rather than go outside to show off." Moreover, when she wanted to donate more money to Tzu-Chi, her mother-in-law said: "I am happy to see others do charity work...but you have family, you should take good care about your family" (Interview note, 35:1-3). Across the different stages of commitment toward Tzu-Chi, then, the personal network has its own double-sided effects that may affect one's prosocial commitment. Another female Apprentice Commissioner mentioned about her structural limitations directly:

> To go on this way [joining Tzu-Chi] one needs the family's support. But my mother-in-law..mmm.. before..mm.. did not support me very much. Before, we lived with her. She could not agree with this...She thought: "you can just donate money, why would you still need to offer labor services?" Her feeling was that "you should work on your business and just to help your husband. Why do you spend so much time to visit those impoverished families." In such work as soliciting marrow donors, we need to go out to do a

> lot of propagating stuff. We need to go out on the streets and to the train station. She felt that, a women..mm..a housekeeper...She just did not like me to act that way. But my husband..mm..he does very much support me. And now we have moved to Taichung. This year in July we began to live here and without living with my mother-in-law. So I do not have this kind of worry. I can do Tzu-Chi's services more often, and can begin to have more involvement in Tzu-Chi. (Interview note, 37:3)

This clearly shows that women, under the patriarchal social system, are bound in their family networks, and once they consider prosocial commitment seriously, structural obstacles begin to emerge.

Here, I wish to comment further on the withdrawer from Tzu-Chi. Withdrawing may happen only in the later stages of one's commitment, particularly only after one has had the chance to play Tzu-Chi's organizational role, since, at the early stages of commitment, one's involvement in Tzu-Chi is so slight that it does not make sense to discuss the issue of withdrawing.

Of the two primary reasons for withdrawing from the continuity of prosocial commitment, one is the various structural limitations as described in this section. For example, I learned from some senior participants that some of their old friends quit Tzu-Chi's organizational role because of serious illness and the structural limitation of lack of energy

that prevented them from continuing in Tzu-Chi.

A second reason for withdrawal is the lack of perception of positive benefit in one's commitment toward Tzu-Chi, as in the case we had cited. However, the remaining unanswered question is still, why are one person's perceived benefits of doing Tzu-Chi different from another's? My interviews with withdrawers provide several clues: lack of a pre-existing network in Tzu-Chi (for example, one's joining Tzu-Chi may be based upon personal interest rather than the network's recruiting); having satisfying social circles outside Tzu-Chi (for example, one may also join some other social group at the same time); or having too highly anticipated the benefits of joining Tzu-Chi (for example, one may believe that Tzu-Chi should practice the real path for Buddhists, that is, virtual enlightenment, rather than only social charity), and in turn, on joining Tzu-Chi, perceiving relatively less positive feedback and rewards than others (Interview note, W1 and W2). However, on this point my data is highly restricted, since I only interviewed two withdrawers[40] from Tzu-Chi. Thus, this issue still needs further exploration in the future.

8. TESTIFYING TO THE EXPERIENCE

An essential part of the process of commitment for Tzu-Chi

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[40] Actually, I have access to only two cases of withdrawals from Tzu-Chi. While one clearly perceived a negative benefit from his joining Tzu-Chi, the other's attitude is rather ambiguous about this cost/reward issue.

participants is "testifying to the experience of joining Tzu-Chi." Specifically, this refers to one's publicly sharing his (her) positive experience of joining Tzu-Chi with other participants, either in the format of speaking or writing. This "testifying" objectifies a subjective experience and "fixes" it as a reality, both for the social actor himself (herself) and for the group. Without this testifying event, much of the transforming effect on participants would possibly be lost. While the above 3 stages of the commitment process can be labelled as the phase of "role-playing," this stage and the next stage of commitment can be labelled as the phase of "role-person-merger." Later we will make this point much more clearly.

Researchers of evangelical and pentecostal groups have noticed the effects on conversion that may follow such "demonstration events" as baptism, giving testimonies, and glossolalia (Gerlach and Hine, 1970; Hine, 1974; McGuire, 1977; Snow and Machalek, 1984) Since these activities may function as status confirmation rituals, in which public exposure may link one's subjective feelings to the new social identity more tightly, they may further enhance one's commitment toward the specific new social identity.

However, lacking those ecstatic uttering and states of trance in demonstration events such as baptisms and glossolia, in Tzu-Chi testifying to one's experience of prosocial commitment usually happens as a public demonstration, in one of two basic forms:

1. Spontaneous witnessing, in which participants share with others their experience and feelings about Tzu-Chi in informal collective settings. For example, at meetings of our monthly group (one group of the Faith Corps for Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch), near the end of the meeting there was always some time left for participants to share their experiences. Particularly the so-called "Joyful Bodhisattvas"[41], those who were just beginning to have strong commitment toward Tzu-Chi, would be the first targets invited by Cadres to testify to their feelings and experiences about Tzu-Chi. The audience for these occasions are usually the already known and familiar members of the same group.

2. Formal talks, at which new fully committed participants or senior participants share their experiences with others. These speeches or sharing of experience are formally called by Tzu-Chi's agencies: "Tzu-Chi Commissioners' witnessing," or literally, "Speaking of the Dharma truth by the Commissioners themselves." Under the titles: "Cultivation" (*du*) and "Enlightenment" (*wu*), about 40 typical cases of these

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[41] "*Pramudita*," the so-called "Joyful" Bodhisattva, is in Chinese called, "*hsin-fa-yi* Bodhisattva". Traditionally, there are ten stages of enlightenment of Bodhisattva, or, say, ten kinds of Boddhisattvas (*Dasakbhumika*), which a Boddhsattiva may pass through. The First of these, is the *Pramudita* ("joyful" Bodhisattva). This "joyful" Bodhisattva rejoices in *bodhi* (enlightenment or awakening) and in the fact that he (she) shall succor all beings. In religious practice, he (she) perfects himself in *dana* (giving) (see Swearer, 1989:369).

testimonies have been recorded and published in audiotape format. These tapes are very popularly disseminated everywhere in the Tzu-Chi reticulated personal network.

At the local level, in Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch, the rather formal talks by new fully committed participants imitated the mode of "Tzu-Chi Commissioners' witnessing." Arranged by Tzu-Chi agencies or cadres, these talks may last for 20 to 50 minutes, with their content covering one's pathway, feelings, and experience of doing Tzu-Chi.

These talks are given on several occasions: 1) Every Wednesday night there is a routined gathering (about 300 to 400 people may come) of collective cultivation at Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch and quite often there is time left for 2 new fully committed participants to give their witnessing. The audiences there are the more committed Tzu-Chi participants, many of whom the testifier has known before. 2) Every month, Tzu-Chi's leader Cheng Yen, will visit Taichung for 2 or 3 days, and thus there are regularly monthly conferences at Tzu-Chi's Taichung Branch, with usually 500 to 1000 people attending. Each time several new fully committed participants may witness at these conferences, in front of audiences that may include many Tzu-Chi marginal participants, such as Members, are usually unknown to the testifier. 3) At Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch, almost every week, Tzu-Chi's agencies and activists may arrange some public Tzu-Chi speeches in different communities, such as community centers, prisons, nursing homes, etc. Each time 3 or 4 participants will

give testimony about Tzu-Chi in front of the public. On these occasions the audience is usually composed of Tzu-Chi sympathizers who may include both Tzu-Chi Members and non-Members.

At these three kinds of formal occasion, since these collective settings are mostly under the control of Tzu-Chi's agencies, participants' witnessing is thus more bounded to the group norms. That is, witnessing on these occasions is usually articulated in a more patterned and positive form, and in a sense the witnessing on these occasions highly corresponds to Tzu-Chi's organizational frame or is strongly positive about Tzu-Chi's various activities.

In the commitment process as we have described, "role-playing" is to act out an organizational role, while "testifying" is to speak out one's subjective feelings toward Tzu-Chi and Tzu-Chi's organization and organizational role. This may further offer a solid link between one's organizational role and one's self, and is actually a step toward the role-person merger, that is, the carrying over of attitudes and behavior developed as an expression of one role into other situations, or that role becoming an essential part of the self (Turner, 1978).

Even before the step of testifying in Tzu-Chi, Tzu-Chi's settings already have a high tendency to cause the role-person merger. Generally speaking, since Tzu-Chi has been positively evaluated by the public, Tzu-Chi's organizational role may attract more attention than neutral roles. Because the

appearance of the role is more striking, inferences about the person are likely to be stronger (see the similar discussion in Turner, 1978:9). In turn, both the group and the person himself (herself) may exhibit a high tendency to cognitively link Tzu-Chi's roles to him/herself. Moreover, in the larger social contexts, since voluntary participation is not very popular in Taiwanese society,[42] one's playing the volunteer's role may lead to a higher connection, whether by others or by one's self because this kind of role is especially visible.

Furthermore, in Tzu-Chi's social circle, the intimate feelings among Tzu-Chi participants, may further make one drop customary defenses or abandon the usual boundaries against self-disclosure. People's interactions in this primary social setting are thus highly personal. One's role behavior under this setting will be seen as one having revealed one's true self by both himself (herself) and by other in-group members.

Under these conditions, testifying to one's subjective feelings toward Tzu-Chi may push one's state of the role-person merger a further step for several reasons. First, most straightforwardly with regard to one's role-identity, public announcing has the characteristic of ir-retrievableness. Secondly, according to Turner (1978:14), an individual will

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[42] For example, a U.S. survey showed that, in 1987, 52% of adults reported volunteering (Gallup Report 1987, see Pearce, 1993:5). In Taiwan, however, the rate is much lower. According to the Directorate-General of Budget's Report, Taiwan, (1992; see Lee, 1993:2), in 1992 there were only 8.5% males and 7% females who reported volunteering.

merge into the person those roles in which he/she has great investment. For the social actor himself (herself), going to the front stage itself is a quite an investment for a specific role, since one must expose his (her) own deep spiritual world in front of others. As an Apprentice Commissioner said, "Now I still cannot testify in front of others to my Tzu-Chi experience of doing Tzu-Chi, like those seniors have done. I feel that, oh..you can ask me to do something, but if you ask me to make a speech in front of others, I really cannot. Brother (another senior member) always asks me to share with others my experience of visiting the impoverished families..I am just afraid..mm.. When I take the microphone, I just cannot speak out, I still cannot" (Interview note, 37:7). It may be that this participant is just too shy to face the audiences, but this experience may also illustrate that for this participant to speak out about her experience of sharing with others, would be a very big step of investment for herself. We would assume that if she could make this investment of self-exposure, her testifying about her subjective experience would link Tzu-chi's role to herself a further step. 3. Finally, a more complicated cognitive process may be involved. According to Bem's self-perception theory (1972), people learn about themselves through observing their own behavior. One's testifying in front of others may enhance the salience of one's role behavior, and further may make one attribute his (her) role behavior of helping to his (her) true self. Our discussion above has also shown how the salience of

one's role identity may differ across different occasions of one's testifying.

The above functions of testifying can be illustrated by the following words of a new Commissioner, after I asked about her feelings of writing out her story for the "Tzu-chi Monthly":

> ..to write our my story is..mm..I feel it...to me is important...By this process, writing out my story, I get more understanding of my own personal meaning for doing Tzu-chi. It has straightened out my thinking. I can share my experience with others. It's good for me. I still have a long way to go in Tzu-Chi. Writing out my story is important for me. Through this process, I'm also encouraging others. Writing out..mm..is good for me." (Analytic note, 1/12/96)

Thus we can see that testifying to one's experience of Tzu-Chi's role playing is important for leading to the result of role-person merger, which in turn may lead one to employ a "Tzu-Chi" kind of attitude or behavior pattern in various situations.

However, since traditional ideas of merit-accumulation postulate that merit-earning activities must be done in secret and if the individual receives public praise or remuneration for a deed he can no longer expect any rewards from the gods (see chapter 3), then how can Tzu-Chi participants possibly testify to their good deeds in public, without hesitation? Indeed, there are some implicit tensions about this problem. I noticed that many informants told me that when speaking in public, it is now

o.k. (for reasons I will show later), but before they did not think of it as appropriate. Actually, when Tzu-Chi participants refused to be interviewed (each was asked at least three times), almost all of them used this same kind of reason: "Doing good things is nothing; it should not be known by others. I have nothing to say about it." One senior male Commissioner refused my interview even more bluntly: "it's nothing, no need to do that [interview], do not interview me!" While the reasons underlying one's rejection of being interviewed may be complicated--no time; one just does not want to be too conspicuous in a collectivist society; one does not like an intruding researcher--however, I would argue that a very important reason is this prohibition under the traditional idea of merit-accumulation.

The above point still needs some data to clarify it (and I have not collected enough data to do so); however, we do have a very clear picture of the steps Tzu-Chi's organizational agencies have taken to encourage participants to testify to their good feelings about charity and Tzu-Chi publicly. Why a Buddhist charitable organization would accept this modern form of missionary activity--public testimony--remains an unexplored question,[43] yet it is clear that Tzu-Chi's organizational

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[43] As I discussed in chapter 3, in competing with Christian influences in Taiwan, Tzu-Chi has learned many things from the Christian groups, and the form of public testimony in the Christian missionary activities may be a very important one that Tzu-Chi has learned. Moreover, we will later show that, under current Taiwan society's social disorder, for really conducting something to change current Taiwan social culture, Tzu-Chi participants may also

agencies have not only transformed the traditional ideas into a new formula but also successfully implemented this new formula into Tzu-Chi's organizational arrangement (we soon will discuss this).

Therefore, Tzu-Chi participants can begin to feel comfortable about talking publicly of their good deeds, without being afraid of losing their accumulated merits. As one Commissioner's statement implied: "Before, when others wanted to interview me, I always said: 'no.' Why? Before, I felt that like our Master, when others wanted to interview her, she also said no. Now, because she wants to bring Tzu-Chi into its full play, and Tzu-Chi needs funds to build the hospital, she begins to speak out. I am here just learning Master's spirits [so I can be interviewed now]..." (Interview note, 10:1). This clearly shows that through the influence of Tzu-Chi's organizational agencies. Tzu-Chi participants begin to feel comfortable about speaking out about their good deeds as a legitimate social activity. Thus the influences of testifying on one's role-person-merging, in Tzu-chi's collective settings, can reach their full scale of function. Indeed, most Tzu-Chi participants have begun to accept that public speech is not only appropriate but also ought to be done, for both Taiwanese society and Tzu-Chi.

How have Tzu-Chi's agencies "legitimated" and implemented the activity of testifying in Tzu-Chi's collective settings? First of all, testifying must be linked to and justified by the

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have a strong social need to "spread out" their good deeds.

Buddhist practice of "confession". Cheng Yen articulates "testifying" in the classical Buddhist tone of "Repentance":

> To repent is to dispose of the foremost evils. To regret is to reform and cultivate for the future. Everyone has Buddha-nature. If one is able to face reality courageously, to self-examine and repent, then one can be aware of the mistakes made. Sincerely and frankly confess, vow to reform, and do the utmost to walk on the proper path. Doing thus, one can enlighten the mind and realize the pure and perfect Buddha-nature immanent in all beings. (Cheng Yen, 1994:70)

Therefore, testifying, as interpreted in the new form of the old tradition of repentance and confession, is not only acceptable but also the best way to be religiously self-cultivated.

Secondly, testifying is believed to be the best strategy for the good of others--specifically for the good of the Tzu-Chi Association, and for the good of Taiwanese society in general. As Taiwanese social order has been threatened by rapid social change, both Tzu-Chi's agencies and Tzu-Chi participants have come to believe that only by spreading out those "loving stories" that happen in Tzu-Chi can Taiwanese society possibly become better. As Cheng Yen has said: "I hope everybody can know more about Tzu-Chi...Thus this dark society can be cleansed...I deeply hope that everybody can disseminate Tzu-Chi's seeds eagerly. The good minds can spread one by one..."(Cheng Yen, 1990:25-26; see my discussion in chapter 6). Thus, under the

strong "collective need" of spreading out loving stories of Tzu-Chi to Taiwan, the social action of testifying has also been justified in Tzu-Chi's collective settings. As a female Commissioner stated:

> I heard Brother Wu say that: "...we can do, but also we can speak out. We should talk to others [about Tzu-Chi] in a hurry. We should spread love to others. Let others know that there are so many good things in Tzu-Chi. We must talk about it to others. We must learn how to say something about it, no matter if we are good at saying something about it or not, we should learn to say it."...Because of his statement, I began to understand that, mmm, we should say, and we should do. It's okay to go up to the stage to speak out. Before, I was afraid to do so. But later, [Tzu-chi] gave me the feeling that we should talk to others about those things we know. Since we have really done many things, we should talk to others about our feelings. So now I can step out to do and to talk to others about Tzu-Chi. (Interview note, 69:9)

Clearly then, under Tzu-Chi's influences, even though testifying is not a traditional form of charity work, Tzu-Chi participants have begun to accept it as an obligatory activity. Particularly, the intention to do this, according to Tzu-Chi agencies' interpretation, is other-oriented, that is, for both Tzu-Chi's good and Taiwanese society's good, and thus Tzu-Chi participants

can feel quite comfortable about testifying to their experience publicly.

In Chapters 8 and 9 we will talk more about this issue, but here it is theoretically extremely important to point out that because of the transformation of some specific collective needs and meanings conducted by Tzu-Chi's agencies and active participants, some social actions can be embedded in new social meanings, resulting in very different directions. For example, we will later show that, according to the Chinese and Taiwanese cultural repertoire, while merit-accumulation cannot be talked about publicly, it is o.k. to talk about merit-transfers, because of the possibility of increasing accumulated merits. Thus, while publicly talking about one's good deeds may reduce one's accumulated merits, since it has been justified by Tzu-Chi agencies that under Taiwan's current social situations, speaking out one's good deeds is good for Tzu-Chi, for Buddhism, and particularly for Taiwanese society, this different social meaning embedded in the action of testifying reduces the anxiety about merits-lost for most Tzu-Chi participants. Therefore, lodged in Tzu-Chi's structural arrangements, as a participant has the tendency of becoming a fully committed participant, testifying in front of other participants may lead him (her) merging into Tzu-Chi's role a further step.

However, here it should be emphasized that for different participants, the role-person merger may come at different times. Moscovici's (1980) analysis of the differences between

compliance and conversion behavior has shown that it is possible that "one can visualize a purely public compliance without any private acceptance,...and a private acceptance without public manifestations,..."(201). In a similar sense, I have observed some highly committed Tzu-Chi participants who have never testified in front of others on a formal occasion, while other participants have witnessed to their positive feelings about Tzu-Chi publicly on those formal occasions but they still lack intense commitment.

For example, as shown in table 7.1, among the 76 people I interviewed, 3 were already highly committed (one is a female Commissioner, another two are males with Multiple roles), but had not yet testified publicly. Also, 6 participants (one female Honored Patron, 4 male members of the Faith Corps, and one female Apprentice Commissioner) who had testified in public had still not yet become fully committed participants. Further calculations from table 7.1. thus show that among the 27 highly committed Tzu-Chi participants, only 3 have not yet testified in public (11%), while of 49 less committed participants, 43 have not yet testified in public (88%). These figures are shown in table 7.2.

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Table 7.2 about here

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Thus, if one's full commitment to Tzu-Chi can be taken as an indicator of one's role-person merger, I would argue that

in general, since most Tzu-Chi participants become fully committed after their publicly testifying, in Tzu-Chi one's role-person merger thus usually comes after one's first-time of public testifying rather than before. The reasons for this are first, the development and popularity of Tzu-Chi's own media has made one's public exposure in Tzu-Chi occur much more easily, and second, as I have described above, Tzu-Chi's agencies greatly encourage new participants to witness publicly even under the circumstances that those new participants may not yet be well equipped. Thus it may be highly possible to testify to one's experience of doing Tzu-Chi in public but still not yet be fully into the stage of role-person merger.

However, we should also note that there are some cohort differences. Particularly for those rather senior participants, who, joined Tzu-Chi more than 10 years ago and for whom at that time in Tzu-Chi there were neither very organized agencies to encourage participants to testify in public, nor well-developed multiple forms of media to increase the possibility of participants' public statements (for example, the mode of "Tzu-Chi Commissioners' Witnessing" in Tzu-Chi is only become popular in the past 5 years), and who also had greater interaction with each other and with Cheng Yen (since the number of participants was fewer) that could foster their prosocial commitment more intensively, I would assume that their role-person merger usually came before their testifying in public. Although testifying in public may become an important mode for

publicizing one's Tzu-Chi's role, for those senior participants, however, testifying in public is less spontaneous, more normative, and usually serves a missionary function rather than as the confirmation of their Tzu-Chi role and status.

9. GROUP SUPPORT FOR CHANGED COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

As we have described, the Tzu-Chi Association has quite a good reputation in Taiwan society for their various charitable services. However, it is not difficult to understand that "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" (Gerlach & Hine, 1970:136). In other words, if you only commit partially to Tzu-Chi, outgroup members may perceive you as a good citizen of our society, but as you become a fully committed participant in Tzu-Chi, others may, to some extent, perceive you as a deviant person, such as Wuthnow's (1991:72-74) research on volunteering in America has shown. We thus would argue that at least some implicitly opposite reactions from outsiders toward Tzu-Chi's fully committed participants are unavoidable.

Particularly for Tzu-Chi, this kind of reaction may come from three sources: 1) in the micro-interaction contexts, breaking away from one's structural limitation to commit may conflict with one's network and affective ties in one's very private place; 2) as voluntary participating is still not popular in Taiwan, one highly committed to Tzu-Chi, in any

sense, may cause outsiders' curiosity[44]; and 3) based upon the above point, moreover, for whatever reasons,[45] as Tzu-Chi has particularly stressed the expressive dimensions of doing charity, these expressive dimensions of social behavior may also lead to some outsiders' reactions against Tzu-Chi. For example,

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[44] Even though about 50% of Americans engage in volunteering, caring is still in some ways the deviant exception rather than the rule, in the sense that caring may deviate from the mainline ideas of American culture, such as utilitarianism (see Wuthnow, 1991:72-74). In modern Taiwan, although I do not have direct data, the idea of utilitarianism seems already to have become very popular for the younger generation (see our discussion in chapter 3). Under this new cultural tendency, and under the case that voluntary participation is still at a low rate in Taiwan, outsiders' opposite reaction toward Tzu-Chi's people might actually exist. The cases I cited below may further prove so.

[45] According to my observation, several reasons may underlie this kind of behaviors in Tzu-Chi: 1. Without referring to the alleged inherent personality traits of women, as the capacity for sympathy, caring, love, and compassion are central to the female role in Taiwan (see chapter 5), the predominate proportion of women in Tzu-Chi may enhance the expressive dimensions of Tzu-Chi's various activities. 2. As we discussed above, participants are encouraged by other Tzu-Chi people to testify to their experience about Tzu-Chi. This may lead to the higher frequencies of expressive kinds of speech. 3. Under the influences of modern media, people's testifying can be easily recorded and disseminated, thus its influences can be dramatically enlarged. Under this kind of background, this expressive dimension thus has been particularly developed. 4. In competing with Christian influences in Taiwan, as a Buddhist Charitable organization, Tzu-Chi has begun to take a more secular step toward this society. Tzu-Chi thus has intentionally strengthened the social and missionary side of religion (as we described in chapter 3), that is, to do more social services and at the same time let more people know it. The tendency to speak out may also lead to more expressive kinds of behavior. 5. For most of the new religious groups, missionary activity usually is particularly vigorous (Stackhouse, 1987). This may also lead to more expressive kinds of behavior. 6. Under the circumstance of no further external rewards for conducting helping behavior in Tzu-chi, the expressive activity itself may afford some intrinsic cathartic satisfaction (Wilson, 1973:302). It is also not difficult to image why the expressive dimensions of behavior have been found very popular in various Tzu-Chi settings.

when I was in Hualien--Tzu-Chi's hometown--I had the chance to talk to some of Hualien's residents, and particularly asked them about their image of Tzu-Chi. Some of them expressed that: "Indeed, Tzu-chi has done a lot of good things for our society. However, I just feel that they propagandize too much. These people show off too much..." A member of the Faith Corps also expressed something about this point honestly: "My neighbors doubt my sincerity in doing Tzu-Chi. They do not believe that I can do such charitable things. They think I do not qualify to do charity work...They do not affirm me at all. They even doubt where Tzu-Chi's money has been used..." (Interview note, 21:4-5). That is, at some times, there does exist some kinds of opposite reaction between Tzu-Chi participants and outsiders, although most time it is in a very implicit way. Under these circumstances, group support from in-group members is thus a particularly important part of the commitment process.

Strong group supports may strengthen the plausibility structures[46] (see Berger, 1967, pp.127-153) of Tzu-Chi's organizational frame, in the sense that participants' changed cognitive and behavioral patterns become much more meaningful in Tzu-Chi's supportive collective settings. Specifically, in a

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[46] Plausibility structures can be defined as the specific social processes or interactions within a network of persons sharing a meaning system. As the term implies, the meaning system continues to be plausible within these social structures. Berger asserts that all religious traditions require specific communities of believers for their continuing plausibility. A sound plausibility structure allows the meaning system to be held as a common, taken-for-granted entity (see Berger, 1967, 127-153).

more nuanced sense, in terms of cognitive dissonance and the function of social validation that social support may offer, as Festinger, Ricken, and Schachter's (1965) case study has shown, under the circumstances that people have a deep conviction of their current belief, once their belief system has been disconfirmed or been challenged, without changing their belief (since their believing is so strong), yet, they may become more eager to look for social support and actually support each other more strongly. That is, although the belief system has been challenged by disconfirming facts, strong group support and most of the time, the enthusiastical act of proselyting can further strengthen and rationalize one's belief system, since "if more and more people can be persuaded that the system of belief is correct, then clearly it must, after all, be correct" (p.28). When people face any outsiders' reactions, a collectivity certainly is much less vulnerable than an isolated individual. Moreover, empirically, social support itself may provide social validation for the belief system.

Thus, for those Tzu-Chi participants who have already committed themselves fully to Tzu-Chi, as they face external reactions from outside society or from their personal network, the strong atmosphere of social support in Tzu-Chi may reassure their belief in Tzu-Chi. (Or, in other words, a strong atmosphere of social support certainly is stimulated by every fully committed participants' deep cognitive and affective needs.)

I observed that for those just beginning their higher commitment toward Tzu-Chi, their needs for social support seemed to be more intense, which may result from their new patterns of behavior getting more negative reactions from family, friends, and other outsiders. For example, as the above member of the Faith Corps expressed his neighbors' reaction toward him, he also emphasized that: "I am very happy. I am optimistic in going on Tzu-Chi's path. I must be firm about my responsibility..I feel so happy that I can get along with Brother Wu, Sisters.., and Brother Chang, these great Bodhisattvas. I am so happy. They are also the mirrors for me. I feel happy to get along with these Brothers. And I feel that I am down-to-earth in my life" (Interview note, 21:2). Moreover, one's subjective self-feeling also begins to gain, mainly from this micro-interactional context, as Cooley has expressed: "Each to each a looking-glass. Reflects the other that doth pass" (Cooley, 1964:184). As one is deeply situated in Tzu-Chi's contexts, the change of his (her) significant others thus more strongly support his (her) changed cognitive and behavioral patterns.

In Tzu-Chi, in addition to those informal settings I have described above that may offer participants strong social supports, any apprentice participants (Apprentice members of the Faith Corps and Apprentice Commissioners) who want to become Formal participants (Formal members of the Faith Corps and Formal Commissioners), must attend training sessions for one year. These training sessions include 10 to 15 sections. These

so-called "Joyful" Bodhisattvas (as we has described above), join together in the session with about 100 to 500 people to learn about Buddhist philosophy, Tzu-Chi's history and working plan, skills for social services, and more importantly, to know more people who have similar cognitive and behavioral patterns. After this training, it is possible for one to receive his (her) formal status, that is, become a fully committed participant who has been received a Buddhist name given by Master Cheng Yen.

As participants continually participate in various Tzu-Chi helping programs in the active sense, they support each others in their changed attitudes and behavioral patterns. Through senior participants' actively engaging in recruiting and socializing with new participants, senior and new participants also support each other in their changed behavioral patterns. The importance to commitment of such ongoing activities would suggest that the commitment process is best viewed as open-ended.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This chapter seeks to identify participants' commitment processes toward prosocial behavior in Tzu-Chi's collective settings. For participants in Tzu-Chi, committing to prosocial behavior is an interaction result, rather than from pre-existing patterns of prosocial commitment. That is, these behaviors arise from a process of ongoing interaction between individuals and various influences from the organization.

Like the interactionist approach to altruism (Callero, 1985/86; Callero, Howard, Piliavin, 1987; Gergen and Gergen, 1983a, 1983b; Gergen, 1984, 1985), which has proposed that "helping can be defined only within a specific social context" (Callero, Howard, Piliavin, 1987:247), it is a negotiated and socially relative product of interaction, and it is also highly embedded in the social structure in the sense that helping behavior must be based upon the pools of certain social roles. The current treatment of the prosocial commitment in Tzu-Chi thus reveals how one's prosocial commitment develops in a collective setting that is full of symbolic interaction and structural layout. The current model of the commitment process of helping behavior has characteristics of both the "role-theory model" and the interactionist approach, in that the organizational role is indeed conducive to one's prosocial commitment, while holding on to and continuing one's prosocial commitment, however, must be elicited from some kind of socially-constructed positive feelings toward the specific social roles, and further, that the socially constructed validation of prosocial commitment, such as a robust organizational frame, affective bonds, social support, etc., must underlie the collectivity that is committed to help.

To see my model in a more summarized way, there are 3 phases of the process that correspond to the 9 stages I have identified. Each phase has its main mechanisms for fostering participants' prosocial movements. These can be summarized as in

table 7.3:

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Table 7.3. about here

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Briefly speaking, in terms of its most explicit characteristics, that is, the state of interaction between person and collectivity, we may label these three phase as: 1) structural proximity and availability; 2) playing the organizational role; and 3) role-person merger. With regard to the prosocial commitment, each phase has its specific obstacles, path, and dynamic, as table 7.3. briefly shows.

In the first phase, the non-randomly distributed Tzu-Chi network, in regard to both intensity and reachability, may determine whether one can possibly become a partially committed Tzu-Chi participant. Once one begins contact with various Tzu-chi settings, the patterned influences from Tzu-Chi, in both the cognitive and affective dimensions, may foster participants tendencies toward helping others. Without new participants' actively participating, the commitment events may reach a peak so that Tzu-Chi can influence those new participants'.

In the second phase--role playing--through participants' willingness and the (organizational) structure's fostering, playing Tzu-Chi's organizational role may link participants to Tzu-Chi's type of prosocial commitment a further step. Associating with the Tzu-Chi role one has played, if one can perceive positive benefits, and if one can break away from his

(her) current structural limitations toward playing Tzu-Chi's role, may determine whether one can pass the early stage to become a fully committed helper.

The last phase--role-person-merger--testifying to one's subjective experience toward Tzu-Chi and Tzu-Chi's role fixes one's subjective positive experience about Tzu-Chi into a reality. One's role becomes the essential part of the self. Collective supports then further can maintain each individual's changed cognitive and behavioral patterns.

This model thus shows that prosocial commitments, particularly under the circumstance that the collective settings underlying these commitments are salient, are socially fostered and constructed in a rather longer interactive process. However, an immediate question may arise: if social actors' helping behavior are highly based upon the specific social contexts, what can they do without these contexts or without certain strong cognitive and social support? Will they still commit to help? Under our model of the commitment process of prosocial commitment, one's "consistency" and "self-motivating" toward prosocial commitment thus certainly become a big problem, both theoretically or empirically. We will explore this issue in chapter 9 in a more intensive sense.

Overall, in this model, we notice that some conditions might be helpful for eliciting people's prosocial commitment at one phase, at a different phase these conditions may become limitations to people's prosocial commitment. For example, the

social structure itself is a double-side social factor. In a collective society, at one's early stage of commitment, structural proximity is important to bring one to join Tzu-chi; however, as one begins to have a high commitment toward Tzu-Chi, some kinds of structural limitation actually may come to the actor. Also, the same social fact at different stages of one's commitment may have a different kind of influence, such as if you only have a partial commitment toward Tzu-Chi, the positive social image of Tzu-Chi may increase one's feelings of self-efficacy in conducting helping behavior, but as you become a fully committed helper, your link with Tzu-Chi may cause some opposite reactions from outgroup people. This is why we need to explore the dynamic processes of prosocial commitment in collective settings, instead of only finding one or two predictors without further understanding their ways of functioning.

The current model is greatly based upon past empirical findings on helping behavior. Many factors found important in the past also are important for current model, including modeling, costs/benefits, perspective taking, self-efficacy, and extensivity in personality. However, it must be emphasized that, as our discussions have shown, in collective settings all of these factors are highly social constructed. Unless we explore these socially constructed and symbolically interactional processes, our understanding of the collectivity's prosocial commitments will be quite limited. For example, Omoto

& Snyder (1995) found that volunteers motivated by more self-oriented concerns stayed longer in the volunteering programs. However, as human beings are plausible creatures (Wrong, 1961:193), it is not difficult to imagine that more highly committed helpers may perceive a higher self-interest in their behaviors. Thus the more fundamental questions for us to ask probably are: How is one's perception of self-interests constructed? Why at different stages of commitment, may one have different perceived self-interests toward prosocial commitment? and Why do people with different degrees of commitment perceive the self-interest of prosocial commitment differently? My model may offer a good starting point for understanding these issues.

To summarize, social factors, that is, the interactive determinants (such as social bond, social role, social construction, etc.), are extremely important in determining people's prosocial commitment. As any individual's determinants (such as ability to help) are also important at some point for affecting one's prosocial commitment, however, in the collective settings, they are also mediated through the social processes. The collective settings of the Tzu-Chi Association illustrate these dynamic pictures very clearly.

CHAPTER 8. TZU-CHI PARTICIPANTS' MOTIVATIONS FOR AND MOTIVE TALK ABOUT PROSOCIAL COMMITMENT

The motivation for Tzu-chi's people's participating is very simple and pure. It is motivated by Master Cheng Yen's great compassion...You should participate more and more, then you can get real understanding of the Tzu-Chi. The motivation of Tzu-Chi's people is pure,...our Tzu-chi's people are simple and pure (words of a male Commissioner of Tzu-Chi)

THE PROBLEMS OF ASKING ABOUT PEOPLE'S MOTIVATION

When I first embarked on this study, as most studies on helping behavior and volunteering have been concerned (e.g., Batson, 1987; Cnaan, & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Clary & Snyder, 1991; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; L.S. Unger, 1991), I was particularly interested in Tzu-Chi participants' motivation for prosocial commitment. Since theoretically, for most occasions of volunteering, there are no clear extrinsic rewards (Deci, 1975) inherent in the specific prosocial acts, the issue of "motivation" thus becomes much more intriguing. Moreover, pragmatically, recruitment and selection of volunteers is a costly process, particularly as people have the tendency to be "free riders." Thus one way to attract volunteers to join helping projects would be to appeal to their motivations, as long as such motives were known. Understanding what motives

people to offer assistance is important because agencies can use this knowledge to appeal more persuasively to potential volunteers.

Three sets of hypotheses may be held regarding Tzu-Chi participants' motivations for prosocial commitment. That is, Tzu-Chi participants may decide to freely give money, time, energy, and skills to help others for the reason of 1) personal interests (e.g., Fitsch, 1987; Odendhal, 1989; Stephan, 1991); or 2) altruistic concerns (Allen & Rushton, 1983; Anderson and Moore, 1978; Thomas, 1983; Unger, 1991); or, as recent researchers have begun to acknowledge, 3) multiple motivations for the same action of volunteering (Clary and Snyder, 1992; Fitch, 1987; Jansen and Chandler, 1990; Omoto and Snyder, 1995).

In order to examine these three alternative hypotheses practically, I presented the refined Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale (see chapter 2's discussion and Appendix E) to my Tzu-Chi informants to measure their motivation for prosocial commitment. I expected that across different sex, age group, and Tzu-Chi membership's categories there might exist differences in motivations for conducting altruistic acts. Yet, as I brought this measuring tool into the observed side, I soon discovered that, at least for my sample, there was no way to directly measure people's motivation for prosocial commitment using this tool (also see chapter 2).

As a basis for our further discussion, let me first show one general result with regard to the average score on different

dimensions of Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale for different categories of Tzu-Chi participants.

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Table 8.1 about here

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In table 8.1 we see that while Members have the weakest prosocial commitment in Tzu-Chi, yet, in regard to the dimensions of personal development, community concern, and esteem enhancement, they reported the highest average score on the motivational scale. On the other hand, while participants who play multiple roles have the strongest prosocial commitment in Tzu-Chi, for most dimensions in this scale they do not have a very high average score. Also, which we may intuitively expect that Tzu-Chi participants with multiple roles would have stronger value concern (see the specific items of the motivational scale in Appendix E) than those more weakly committed Members, we actually find that Members have a higher average score than those participants with multiple roles.

These results conflict with Omoto and Snyder's (1995:680-681) findings that all the different motivation constructs have direct and positive influences on the degree of prosocial commitment (length of volunteer services) and thus people with stronger prosocial commitment also have higher score response on each dimension of the motivation scale. The figures in table 8.1 thus show that there are some problems in applying Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale to Tzu-Chi participants.

During the process of my research, I began to find that in articulating their motivation for prosocial commitment, Tzu-Chi participants are highly bound by the organizational and cultural norms. How Tzu-Chi participants articulate their motivations for joining and doing Tzu-Chi seems to be highly dependent on how and what kind of norms have been enhanced in the specific situation.

For example, in my explorative stage of participant observation (my first two months in the field), as I asked my informants to help me to fill out Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale, I allowed them to express freely during the process their opinions about these questions. Many people were astonished at the wordings of such items as "I consider myself to be a loving and caring person." "Because of my convictions...." "To challenge myself...," etc. I needed often to give them many hints to help them fill out this questionnaire. For example, I might say: "you may think that loving and caring persons are those kinds of people with intentions of 'unconditional love' and 'compassion.'". With this kind of clarification, most Tzu-Chi participants then seemed to fill out this questionnaire more easily. I however, began to wonder what many of their responses in the questionnaire actually meant.

Sometimes, however, more serious problems occurred. Once a male Commissioner felt very uncomfortable about this questionnaire and decided to stop filling it out immediately. The statement that he made has been used as the epigraph for

this chapter. I noticed that in his articulation of motivation for prosocial commitment he repeatedly emphasized that Tzu-Chi participants' motivations are pure and simple. Particularly under Master Cheng Yen's influence, Tzu-Chi participants' giving is unconditional. I soon found that, among Tzu-Chi participants, this kind of articulation of motivation is very common. I thus began to try to discover what kinds of patterns or principles might underlie the content and format of Tzu-Chi participants' articulation of motivation for prosocial commitment.

However, in the early stages of my research, I thought that the difficulties in applying Omoto and Snyder's motivational scale to my informants resulted from Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale being developed from Westerners' life experiences and thus not appropriately measuring Tzu-Chi participants' real motivation for joining Tzu-Chi. As my knowledge about Tzu-Chi began to accumulate, I added many dimensions to the scale (although without too much concern about the validity and reliability, since here I am much more concerned about the patterns of people's articulation of motivation rather than only taking people's responses as the true reflections of their inner state) that might apply to Tzu-Chi participants' real motivations for joining Tzu-Chi, such as for educational purposes (for participants' children), for following leader Cheng Yen, for re-adjusting the breakdown of Taiwanese morality, for giving back to this society, for

rebuilding the social order of this society, for the Buddhism norms of dana, for merit-accumulation, etc. By framing these items in the generic vocabularies often heard in Tzu-Chi's collective settings (see chapter 6), my interviews that included these new items went much more smoothly than before.

Of course, participants still had problems answering those items in the questionnaire developed by Omoto and Snyder. However, as they began to fill out the extra items I had added to the questionnaire, they began to feel that, in some way, their real motivation could obtain a corresponding measure. Therefore, in general, I began to hear fewer complaints about this measuring tool, even though Omoto and Synder's original questions were still included. When I noticed that Tzu-Chi participants answered those items I had added to the questionnaire, very quickly and without much hesitation or further questions, I began to think that I might find very different patterns of motivation between Tzu-Chi participants and Omoto and Synder's American sample.

However, the results were more complicated and confused than I thought originally. Many new intriguing phenomena began to emerge and further draw my attention. Below are three examples of these phenomena that I find especially important and that may need further explanations.

1. Quite often, during my interviews or on other Tzu-Chi occasions, participants mentioned frequently that "we should do

good in order to get good results," particularly stating in terms of the generic vocabularies of Tzu-Chi's organizational frame--"we should know our fortune, and cherish them, and then create further blessings" (see chapter 6); or they mentioned the transfer of accumulated merits to significant others. Both of these kinds of talk are based upon implicitly acknowledging that merit-accumulation is important to stimulate them to help others. The actual figures for Tzu-Chi participants' talking about merit-related issues are shown in table 8.2.

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Table 8.2 about here

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Among the 76 participants I interviewed, 42 (55%) mentioned that these two kinds of motivation for prosocial commitment ("planting the seeds of good fortune" and merits transfer) were important for their prosocial commitment.

While participants in every membership category talked quite often about "planting the seeds of good fortune" and about "merit-transfers," in filling out the questionnaire, for the item of "whether your motivation for prosocial commitment is for merit-accumulation," the average scores across the different categories of membership were generally very low, with Members having the highest average score for this item (4.46), and Honored Patron having the lowest (2.20). Thus on the issue of merit-accumulation, Tzu-Chi participants' informal talk and their formal responses in answering a questionnaire are very

inconsistent. Furthermore, the sophisticated answers of the 6 participants from Tzu-Chi's college group that I interviewed (not included in the sample of 76 cases) show that most of them do not accept the ideas of merit-accumulation as actually working, yet their average score on this item is 4.83, higher than all other subgroups.

Therefore we must ask, why are there inconsistencies between participants' oral articulation and written articulation of the attribution of the merit-earning motivation for prosocial commitment? And why, for different categories of membership, do these patterns differ?

2. With regard to the 5 items of personal development in Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale, Members get the highest average score for all but one (see table 8.3).

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Table 8.3 about here

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Yet, Members' chances for personal development certainly are much lower than those for such highly committed participants as Apprentice Commissioners and Commissioners. Why, then, in comparison to others, do Members almost always articulate in writing that their motivation for prosocial commitment is highly due to the reason of self-development?

3. As participants recalled their original reasons for joining

Tzu-Chi, they also gave each item in the motivational scale a score. Comparing the "face value" of their current motivation and their recalled original motivation, in general, those dimensions (value, understanding, personal development, community concern, esteem enhancement) from Omoto and Snyder's motivational scale showed fewer differences than several of the items I added to the questionnaire--including because of leader's influences, because of chaos of this society, and for the moral rebuilding of this society--all of which are items that particularly correspond to the Tzu-Chi organizational frame's generic vocabularies of motive (see chapter 6).

This tendency exists across all of the Tzu-Chi categories of membership in my sample. In Table 8.4 I list the average score of the 74 Tzu-Chi participants' responses for those dimensions and items, and also the differences between their current motivation state and their recalled initial motivation state.

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Table 8.4 about here

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Then my question is: why, as Tzu-Chi participants articulate their recalled earlier and current motivations for prosocial commitment, do they show more dramatic differences between the earlier and the current motivations on most of the items that have been framed in the organizational generic vocabularies of motive than on those items that have not?

Because of limitations of space and a desire not to make this discussion too trivial, I cannot list all the intriguing findings of my process of investigating Tzu-chi participants' motivations for prosocial commitment. However, as these three examples indicate if I hadn't gone deeply into Tzu-Chi's micro-interactional contexts, I might have taken participants' accounts of motivation at face value and never discovered what underlines them.

Similarly, studies of motivation for volunteerism in America have long been troubled by problems of measuring, particularly when using self-reporting measures of motivations for volunteerism. Since American society praises altruism and condemns "using" charitable activities for the pursuit of selfish goals such as social position, diversion, and socializing, there is a social-desirability bias in stated reasons for volunteering. In turn, as research has shown, "the giving of altruistic reasons for involvement is fairly popular" (Smith, 1981:25). Thus one researcher (Minnis, 1952) has even rejected the immediate reasons for volunteering given by the volunteers. Since there is always some distortion in people's accounts of their motivation for prosocial commitment, I would argue that exploring the patterns underlying people's accounts of motivations is the necessary preliminary work for researchers to really understand people's motivations for prosocial commitment,

Furthermore, what is theoretically more important is that

people's accounts of motivation actually serve to maintain commitment. Mills (1940) noticed that there is only a limited range of acceptable justifications which will be efficacious in any group and that these may not so much be the original motives for acting as may be motives adapted as we are acting. Once articulated, however, they become reasons for continuance, they "strengthen" our will to act (p.907). If we are not able to articulate such motives, then we may not continue the behavior. Our vocabulary of motives is, therefore, an important internalized mechanism of social control. Following this line of argument, empirically, Piliavin and Callero's (1991:94-108) findings on blood donation show that once a donor can attribute his (her) action to an intrinsic reason (e.g., enjoying helping) rather than an external reason (e.g., strong social pressure), he (she) will be more likely to return again to donate blood.

Similarly to the sociological way we talk about deviance (Lemert, 1951), I would argue that motivation, also, may be distinguished as "primary motivation" or "secondary motivation." Primary motivation refers to an organism's internal states and deep needs, "which govern its sensitivity to environing objects, [are] are impossible to discern directly, because they operate spontaneously and immediately and because they are very quickly transformed by self-consciousness" (Hewitt, 1991:184). Secondary motivation, or that termed by sociologists as "motive" (Blum and McHugh, 1971; Hewitt, 1991:133; Mill, 1940; Taylor, 1974; Wuthnow, 1991:49-85), refers to those words people actually say

about their conduct, since they are highly socially constructed and enmeshed in the situation. Individuals typically formulate and cite motives for their behavior from "stable vocabularies of motives" (Mills, 1940:906), motives which they consider will be regarded as acceptable by their audience. If no such motives are available, the behavior itself may not continue or may not even occur.

For studying Tzu-Chi participants' motivation for prosocial commitment, this distinction between primary and secondary motivation is crucial for both theoretical and empirical reasons. First, past research has indicated that, in the settings of voluntary organizations, because of the uncertainty and ambiguity of role definition, rewards system, and tasks, "volunteers usually don't know exactly why they are working" (Pearce, 1993, 3-6, 63-64). Thus most volunteers actually articulate their motives for prosocial commitment primarily based upon rich situational cues. Secondly, as I have mentioned in previous chapters, particularly because Tzu-Chi participants are mainly recruited through personal networks, these participants do not have a very clear sense of why or what they will do in Tzu-Chi before they become involved in it. Therefore, the characteristics of settings of voluntary organizations both in general and for Tzu-Chi in particular indicate that after Tzu-Chi participants become involved in prosocial commitment, they must learn how to use certain words to explain their acts to themselves and to others. The social dimensions underlying

their motive talk certainly cannot be ignored.

To summarize, then, motivation, the inner force of people's conduct, may be difficult to observe; however, motive, or secondary motivation--the verbal reasons for conduct--is an objective social fact that can be studied intensively. Moreover, according to the characteristics of Tzu-Chi's settings, the social dimensions of motivation are very salient, as most Tzu-Chi participants rely heavily on situational cues to articulate their motivation for prosocial commitment. As Mills has stated: "verbalized motive is not used as an index of something in the individual but as a basis of inference for a typical vocabulary of motives of a situated action" (1940:909). To explore the social dimension of Tzu-Chi participants' accounts of motivation it is thus necessary to obtain further understanding of the hidden dimensions of people's prosocial commitment.

CULTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL REPERTOIRES FOR TALKING ABOUT MOTIVATIONS

People act on meanings. As meanings come from contexts, our articulation of motives is thus always enmeshed in social systems. That is, in a specific social system, there are different sets of vocabularies of motive, or, cultural repertoires (Wuthnow, 1991:50), that may allow us to explain to ourselves and others why we are doing what we do. Every time we talk about our motivation, specific cultural repertoires may be enhanced and become salient; thus as we articulate our

motivation to correspond to the cultural repertoire, our actions are also justified. Motives thus are "accepted justifications for present, future, or past programs or acts" (Mills, 1940:907).

Specifically, what kinds of culture repertoire can be identified in Tzu-Chi's collective settings? What kinds of cultural norms are inherent in participants' motive talk? Based upon our discussion in chapter 3 (the cultural backgrounds of Tzu-Chi), chapter 5 (Collectivist society in Taiwan), and chapter 6 (Tzu-Chi's organizational frames), here I would like to discuss how these cultural and organizational backgrounds can be related to participants' motive talk. Specifically, I identify three sets of cultural repertoires that are particularly relevant to Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk.

1. Self-Perception in a Collectivist society

In chapter 5 we showed that Taiwanese society is a collectivist society in which ingroup members may relate to each other through stronger social bonds. Empirically we also have shown how this collective orientation in Taiwanese society has affected the patterns of Tzu-Chi's recruitment. Here, going further, we ask how may this orientation affect people's understanding of themselves, others, and the relationships among people?

The overall pattern from past findings provides strong support for the hypothesis that, in collective societies, the

self will be more absorbed in and attached to the group, while in individualist societies the self is more autonomous and separate (Bochner, 1994; Triandis, Brislin, & Hsi, 1988). It further has been pointed out that the self-concept varies along an interdependent-independent dimension. That is, individualist cultures produce more independent and private self-descriptions and fewer interdependent and collective self-descriptions because the role of other people is less central in the self-conception for individualistic than for collectivist cultures (Bochner, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995).

In an interdependent formulation of the self, "others become an integral part of the setting, situation, or context to which the self is connected, fitted, and assimilated" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991:727). This interdependent view of the self may have important consequences for one's cognition, emotion, and motivation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Relevant to our discussion, several points should be emphasized:

1) Very straight-forwardly, in a collectivitist society, group interests are always prior to personal interests. **It is not legitimate to talk about personal preferences and interests before talking about group goals**.

2) People in collectivitist cultures are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups. Collective identity, emotional dependence,

in-group solidarity and harmony, duties and obligations, etc., are all regulated by in-group norms. Personal abilities, opinions, attitudes, and personality characteristics are not understood as abstract qualities but in terms of specific relationships to significant others (Shweder and Bourne, 1984). **Thus the Western way of thinking about self as an entity that can behave primarily as a consequence of some internal attributes** (Geertz, 1975; Sampson, 1989; Shweder & LeVine, 1984), **is for a collectivist, either uncomfortable or at odds** (see Markus & Kitayama's [1991] empirical evidence).

3) Since collectivists give priority to group goals, they quite often withhold their personal opinions and preferences when these are at variance with those of their group. As collectivists become accustomed to conforming to group standards, they also become afraid of being unique (see Yamaguchi's [1994] empirical evidence). **It would be embarrassing for collectivists to show their unique opinions** since they would then have failed to conform to the majority's wish. The famous Chinese adages, "High-class songs have few singers" and "The tall tree is crushed by wind first" (see Hsu, 1981:134), show clearly that ordinary people in a collectivist society believe that being too unique or distinguished from others should be socially dis-encouraged and may often cause one some special trouble.

4) **In a collectivist society, as the group boundary becomes more salient for participants in this group, they may have a much higher tendency (higher than people in an individualistic society) to follow the ingroup norms**. Several criteria may raise the salience of the group boundary. With the first, distinctiveness, the boundary is more distinctive in customary social milieu (such as the boundary of race, see McGurie, McGuire, Child, and Fujioka, 1978). Based on my observations in Tzu-Chi, I would add three other criteria: formality--whether the group boundary appears in a more formal or less formal occasion; degree of investment--the more one invests various resources in the group, the more salient the group boundary becomes for him/her; and degree of role-person-merger--the higher the degree of a participant's role-person-merging toward the organizational role, the more salient the group boundary becomes for the actor.

While the first three points emphasized here regard collectivists' way of self-expression, the last issue concerns when the specific in-group norms may become more salient. We will soon discuss how these basic principles of collectivist orientations have affected the way that Tzu-Chi participants talk about their motives.

2. Norms of merits-accumulation in Tzu-Chi

As the Biblical tradition is the important culture repertoire underlying most Americans' prosocial commitment,

merits-accumulations (as I described in chapter 3) is very important culture repertoire for stimulating people's prosocial commitment in Taiwan. However, very differently from the way people in the U.S. can explicitly use biblical language to explain and justify their motives for becoming involved in caring activities[47] (see Wuthnow, 1991), people in Chinese culture can only talk about merits in an implicit way. As I reported in chapter 3, although the historical reasons for this are complicated, people under Chinese cultural contexts know that merit-earning activities must be done in secret, for receiving public praise or remuneration for a deed means an individual can no longer expect any rewards from the gods, for one is never recompensed twice.

Certainly in both past and present Taiwanese and Chinese society merit-accumulation has been a very important rationale to stimulate and justify people to act altruistically (Claet, 1994/1995; Hsu, 1981). And, as we described in chapter 3, particularly for lay people engaged in everyday life, merits-accumulation is certainly psychologically more satisfying (in terms of measurability and forms of positive act rather than abstention) and the soteriological fruits of it are also more explicit and clear, than ideal moral actions. Thus, although the

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[47] There are plenty of examples. For example, Wuthnow (1991:50) reported that his informant quoted a verse from James (3:17) as his reason for caring: "If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" Also O'Connell (1983) has provided a brief introduction to the key biblical references to charity.

moral ideal of unconditional giving (for both Buddhism and Confucianism) has been postulated as a higher virtue than the self-interested concern of merit-accumulation,[48] in the practical world, there can be no doubt that in Taiwanese society the desire for merits is one of the primary bases for prosocial commitment.[49]

How can we know that the concern for merits-accumulation is also prevalent among Tzu-Chi participants? Actually the clues have been found through out our entire discussion. For example,

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[48] For example, one famous paragraph from the Chinese great Zen Master *Hui-neng*'s (A.D.638-713) book "The Platform Scripture" states that: "building temples, giving alms and making offerings are simply means of seeking blessings (*fu*). One cannot make blessings into merit (*kung-te*). Merit is in the Dharmakaya (*fa-shen*), not in the field of blessings. There is merit in the Dharma nature (*fo-hsing*); seeing your nature is *kung*, straightforward mind *te*. See the Buddha nature within you; outwardly practice reverence. If you make light of men, and do not cut off your ego, then you have no merit. If your own nature is deluded, the *Dharma* body has no merit. If you constantly think of virtuous practice and keep a straightforward mind, then *te* will note be held light, and practice will always be reverent. The cultivation of your body is *kung*; the cultivation of your mind is *te*. Merit is created in the mind; blessings and merit are different." (see Brokaw, 1987:163; Yampolsky, 1967:156) Thus, the supreme cultural value in Chinese cultural contexts, merit, should be created from the mind rather than from giving to others.

[49] Even in a Buddhist society, where Buddhist norms put so much emphasis on salvation through the release from the continuous round of rebirths. However, for laity living in their everyday life, the primary motivation for Buddhist action is still the rather self-concerned merit-accumulation that can help people get a better next life. For example, anthropologist Spiro (Spiro, 1982) has shown clearly that in Burmese society, even under the extraordinary norms of Buddhism (the so-called *Nibbanic* Buddhism), people should seek nirvanic salvation, however, actually, in the ordinary norms of Buddhism (the so-called *Kammatic* Buddhism), acquisition of merit is the primary motivational basis for Buddhist practice. People's great concern with dana in the Burmese society thus "is a true measure of the salience of merit in the Burmese motivational system" (p.111).

Members donating to Tzu-Chi usually do so in the name of all family members, even the dead ones (see chapter 4); a rich person may obtain Honored Patron status in the name of him or herself, his (her) spouse, parents, or even a new-born baby (see chapter 4); participants are usually concerned about how much their chanting of the name of buddha can accumulate merits (see chapter 4); and participants are quite concerned that the confidential networks of asking for contributions guarantee that the merits follow one's prosocial acts (see chapter 5).

Actually, the full title of the Tzu-Chi Association, *Tzu-Chi kuang-tang hui*, according to each Chinese character, should be translated as Compassion (*Tzu*), Relief (*Chi*), Merit (*kuang-tang*), Association (*hui*). However, in Tzu-Chi's English publications, this organization is called the "Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation." Certainly, in the grassroots contexts, merits-accumulation is a very primary concern for Tzu-Chi participants, even though it is not expressed in a very direct way.

Tzu-Chi's formal purpose, as shown in chapter 1, does not mention even one word about merits-accumulation. Nevertheless, it does state that: "The first priority is to walk into the door of charity. Then after entering, when the wealthy give, they will attain blessings and happiness. When the poor receive, they will have salvation and peace" (p.20). On other occasions, as shown in chapter 6, Tzu-Chi's organizational frame actually states clearly, although still in a rather implicit and

rhetorical way, that doing good is important for merits-accumulation: "opportunity knocks only once. We should grasp every chance to do something good...When all the good little things you have performed accumulate, they collectively stand as a great meritorious deed"; "everyone has an account in the merits-bank. Philanthropic acts are deposits in the bank. If you do not do these kinds of acts, you withdraw from this account. So we should do more good things, in order to have more merit-deposit. Otherwise, our good fortune will run out"; "The Tzu-Chi Association is like a fertile rice paddy. You plant in it the seeds of good fortune, and you reap from it a fine harvest at the time of your reincarnation."

In addition to the examples of merits-accumulation we discussed previously I would also like to cite several more interesting examples. First, **with regard to the enhancement of the latent function of merits-accumulation in various situations**: At many Tzu-Chi occasions, such as recycling, charity sales, visiting improvised families, etc., after the work is done, Tzu-Chi participants always say to each other: "Immeasurable merits! Immeasurable merits!" (*Kung te wu liang! Kung te wu liang!*). Although Tzu-Chi's agencies state that this phrase refers to participants' appreciation of and good wishes toward each other, these words certainly also reflect that the merits and blessings that follow a specific prosocial act are immeasurable, and participants are encouraged and happy to confirm each other in these good results, since they themselves

will also be confirmed. The symbolic construction of meaning for the charity work--through the specific patterned action of saying "immeasurable merits! immeasurable merits!" to each other--thus confirms for Tzu-Chi participants both their goodwill in doing charity and the good results that may follow the act. All prosocial acts in Tzu-Chi are inherent with this specific symbolic meaning, that is, they are worth immeasurable merits.

Second, **with regard to the reasons for joining and switching to Tzu-Chi**: A female Member told me honestly that her mother is also a Tzu-Chi Member. However, her mother previously belonged to another famous Buddhist group. When her mother began to believe that Tzu-Chi spends participants' donations more carefully and efficiently, by which contributors can accumulate more merits, she then switched to Tzu-Chi. Although Tzu-Chi participants rarely express their reasons for joining Tzu-Chi in such a frank way, it is obvious that, due to the credibility and efficiency of Tzu-Chi's management, many participants from other folk-religious or Buddhist groups have switched to Tzu-Chi. One male Honored Patron stated the reasons for his greater involvement Tzu-Chi than in Taoist group he had joined before:

> In that Taoism group, I am also an Honored Patron. However, since I joined this group [Tzu-Chi], I feel that it [Tzu-Chi] is more sincere and honest...Since I joined that Taoist group, it has not been very trustworthy. It is very different from Tzu-Chi

> (Interview note, 56:1)...This group [Tzu-Chi] is very honest, it really does good things for this society... Commissioners go to collect contributions and visit impoverished families directly. Commissioners thus understand well how the money comes and how the money goes. In Tzu-Chi, you can perceive all things clearly. It's all transparent. (Interview note, 56:7)

Although he has not mentioned merits-accumulation directly, on the surface, at least, the credibility and efficiency of Tzu-Chi's charity work certainly has drawn him to switch from another folk-religious organization to Tzu-Chi; thus religious reasons cannot account for why this Honored Patron switched from another group to Tzu-Chi. Credibility--and, I would argue further, the transparentization in merit-making that may underlie that credibility--is actually the most important reason that Tzu-Chi can attracts so many participants from other religious groups.[50]

Third, **with regard to participants' continual concern with the results of merits-accumulation**: Once a female Apprentice

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[50] However, this actually shows that if other organizations have a higher credibility than Tzu-Chi in accumulating participants' merits, participants, especially those marginal members, may easily switch to other organizations without any hesitation. By building upon the credibility of merit-accumulation as the source of legitimacy, a charitable organization in Chinese and Taiwanese culture thus has an inherent frangibility and unstableness. Participants' long term loyalty toward a charitable organization actually is very difficult to maintain. In Taiwan, many folk groups based upon the folk ideas of merit-accumulation face this kind of problem.

Commissioner complained to me that her mother-in-law was neither honest nor fair. She had given her mother-in-law the Tzu-Chi Member fee of 500 NT dollars for her, her husband, and her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law had said that she would put 100 NT dollars in for herself and 200 NT dollars for both her son and daughter-in-law. However, when this Apprentice Commissioner later found that her mother-in-law had put less Member fee under her name, she feel that her mother-in-law was unfair. From her complaint we see her concern that her merits have been unfairly distributed by her mother-in-law. This example illustrates the continual concern of Tzu-Chi participants with the possible results of their good deeds.

The cultural norms postulate clearly that if one's good deeds for merit-accumulation are spoken about or praised publicly, the merits may possibly be gone. This kind of norm certainly causes an inherent tension in Tzu-Chi participants' articulation of their motivation for prosocial commitment, especially between their concern about merits-accumulation and their motive talk that cannot be related to merits-accumulation in any direct way. How can they know at last that their prosocial act can be oriented to merits-accumulation? Or, from the other side of this issue, under the tension of this normative requirement for one's motive talk how can Tzu-Chi agencies, or any other cultural designs, make participants believe that their prosocial actions do orient to merits-accumulation effectively?

As we pointed out in chapter 7, after a specific process of meaning transformation by Tzu-Chi organizational agencies, Tzu-Chi participants may actually feel o.k. talking about their good deeds publicly without worrying about merit-loss. The remaining untouched issue is, under the circumstances of Tzu-Chi participants' concern about merits-accumulation and the cultural prohibition against talking about merits-accumulation, what kinds of vocabularies can Tzu-Chi participants use to talk about their good deeds in a way that may orient to merits-accumulation? This issue will be discussed in the next section.

3. Organizational frames for motive for prosocial commitment

In their very essence, the culture repertoires have offered a set of ideas for "merit-makers" to accumulate their merits legitimately and to speak about these acts openly. The ideas of merit-transfer (discussed in chapter 3) have been accepted by Buddhists all over the world, and the transfer of merit itself is a meritorious act. Thus by performing some type of meritorious act with the intention of sharing the consequent merit, one not only acquires merit from the original act but also from the meritorious intention of sharing.

Under the ideas of merits transfer, people even can talk about merit-accumulation acts openly. For example, as discussed in chapter 3, after the ritual of "recitation of the name of buddha" for a dead person, participants should recite the formula of merit-transfer (*hui-hsing*) together. Thus this act of

merit-transfer is a publicly accepted and encouraged (or institutionalized) form of merits-accumulation. This vocabulary of "transfer of merits" makes it legitimate for people to talk openly about merits-accumulation.

In Tzu-Chi, too, the above ideas of merit transfer have been confirmed by Tzu-Chi's agencies. For example, Cheng Yen has stated frequently that:

> Tzu-Chi's success is due to you virtuous gentlemen's and ladies' support. Cheng Yen here seeks most sincerely to express my unlimited wish for you virtuous gentlemen and ladies. Let us again sincerely "chant the name of buddha" and "transfer the merits." All those who have made a vow will have immeasurable merits." (Cheng Yen, 1993:164)

Also, Cheng Yen's following statement has been heard at various public occasions:

> We should sincerely worship these three Jewels (*Buddha, Dharma, Sanga*); then we can obtain great immeasurable merits to transfer to our parents. If our parents are still alive, it can also increase their blessings; the merits can also help them to leave miserable situations." (Cheng Yen, 1993:148)

At the same time, we also found that "merits transfer" is often mentioned by participants as their motive for doing charitable work. Among the 76 people I interviewed, eleven

participants (14%) stated at sometime during the interview that they wanted to transfer the merits of doing Tzu-Chi to their parents and grandparents. As one member of the Faith Corps stated, "It is a great blessing that I can stay in Tzu-Chi. I have made big progress in Tzu-Chi...I want to transfer all these merits to my grandma-in-law [already passed away]. Today I am willing to do these things, in a happy and wishful mood...Merits transfers to myself are useless!" (Interview note, 21:6). Whether this informant has accurately understood the ideas of merits transfer is not our issue; rather, the above quotation illustrates clearly how merits transfer can be used as an important vocabulary for motive talk about prosocial commitment.

Besides the vocabulary of "merit transfer," Tzu-Chi's organizational agencies also provide participants with important cues about motive talk. As we have shown in chapter 6, Tzu-Chi's formal organizational frame states clearly that: "Kindness, compassion, joy, and giving are the total substance of Buddhism"; "Others' suffering is our suffering, and others' pain is our pain...as Bodhisattva treats everybody who help others to get rid of suffering without any reservation"; and "Our ideals are: To save those who are suffering and those going through difficulties with compassion and joyful giving; to extinguish suffering with happiness and to create a clear, pure world of Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi." Participants can easily apply these vocabularies to account for their own prosocial commitment.

Moreover, particularly in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame (chapter 6), the dimension of motivation framing may offer participants more direct and rich cues for justifying and attributing their motives for prosocial commitment, including: "To spread the purified love to our society"; "To make our society become more harmonious"; "To spread our hands to help this society"; "To have the good cycle for meritorious acts" (see citation in chapter 6). Since these vocabularies are in a very positive and moral form, and are under the organization's "endorsement" (that is, not articulated for the self or in abstract form, but in a form of collective concern and organizational role) participants may feel comfortable articulating their motives through these terms.

As participants have articulated these kinds of motive enmeshed in Tzu-Chi's organizational frames their "secondary motivation" is also linked to their prosocial commitment. Under these positive and moral forms of vocabulary, participants' prosocial commitment can become strengthened and more strongly justified. For example, a female Commissioner who had participated Tzu-Chi for about 20 years stated:

> Like our Master said: "Sorrow is in all beings, we are come to this world for becoming buddha." My motivation is just so. **To try our best, for Buddhism, for all beings**. This is my motivation. **Being willing to do and be happy to accept**. My motivation is, to say, human being, buddha,..mm..Master is applying the Dharma

> [truth] of Buddha..It's Buddhist dharma, it cannot exist beyond this world...When I began I did so, and now is the same. **To do for Buddhism, and for all beings. Taking the Buddha's mind as my own mind**, and then I am more and more happy. Never ever thinking about not doing [Tzu-Chi]. (Interview note, 10:5).

Among the phrases she has used and learned from the vocabularies provided by Tzu-Chi's organizational frame are "For Buddhism, for all beings"; "Being willing to do and be happy to accept"; and "Taking the Buddha's mind as my own mind." We can clearly sense her strong emotional attachment to these phrases. As she articulates her motives from such a strong and positive stance of moral concern, she also confirms for herself and for others that her long term prosocial commitment is understandable; thus she can also more easily continue her prosocial commitment in front of others.

To summarize, this section, we have identified three sets of ideas that may regulate Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk: 1) how the self can be presented in a collectivist society; 2) how people can talk about merits-accumulation in Chinese and Taiwanese cultural contexts; and 3) what kinds of vocabularies of motivation are provided by Tzu-Chi agencies that Tzu-Chi participants' can use to justify and maintain their continued prosocial commitment. In the next section, we will examine how these ideas interact with each other in guiding Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk about prosocial commitment.

THE DYNAMIC PICTURE OF TZU-CHI PARTICIPANTS' MOTIVE TALK: AN INTERACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

1. General principles

Having identified the basic cultural repertoire and organizational repertoire of motive talk, we can now see how these sets of repertoires actually work in every-day life. The interactions of these three sets of repertoires create a very complicated picture that underlies Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk. For the convenience of our discussion, we will first summarize the general principle of participants' motive talk and then offer empirical evidence to support this general principle.

Briefly speaking, three principles can be identified in Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk. Two are concerned with the vocabularies of motive talk and one with the definition of situation.

Principle 1. Regarding the negative form of motive talk: Some taboos inherent in the cultural repertoire have been transmitted to Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk. These include: people cannot articulate directly that their prosocial acts are mainly for merits-accumulation; and people should not speak their motives for prosocial acts with too much sense of uniqueness or with self-centered characteristics, such as to say: "I am a loving and caring person, so I like to help others much."

Principle 2. Regarding the positive form of motive talk, including both the weak positive form and the strong positive form:

A. the weak positive form of motive talk. Certain kinds of legitimacy or justification by organizational agencies can make it possible, on some occasions, for people to talk about some "taboos" in a specific way. For example, people can talk about merit-accumulation in terms of merits-transfer and "planting the seeds of good fortune" (an abstract way to talk about merit-accumulation without referring to the measurability of merits) rather than directly using the secular and too specific term "merits-accumulation."

B. the strong positive form of motive talk. Some vocabularies of motive talk that are provided by organizational agencies can justify Tzu-Chi participants' motivation for prosocial commitment in a stronger manner, particularly as these vocabularies of motivation are stated in a more socially desirable way. For example, some Tzu-Chi participants state that "We Tzu-Chi people are doing charity purely due to unconditional love; my motivation thus is purely due to compassionate concern for others." As Tzu-Chi participants gain clues from the organizational frame to confirm positively their other-regarding concern in prosocial commitment, their prosocial commitment can thus be continued in a more meaningful and plausible way.

Here we must emphasize that, as we described above, people

in a collectivist society cannot articulate their motives for helping in a way that emphasizes uniqueness or self-centered concern. However, if that collective identity is underlying one's motive talk, that uniqueness of self actually can be articulated in a specific way. For example, as a female Commissioner stated:

> My motivation is just like this. Be happy to do and be willing to accept...From the beginning I have been doing so, and now it is the same.....I should work hard to do for buddhism and for all beings...take buddha's minds as my own minds..do more and feel more happy...I never think of giving up doing. (Interview note, 10:5)

As she emphasizes that her motivation is simple and pure, and that her self-motivated helping is constant and other-oriented, some kind of uniqueness of self is thus presented. However, we should notice that she has related this uniqueness to her collective identity many times: "be happy to do and be willing to accept"; "for buddhism"; "take buddha's minds as my minds"; etc. That is, when one presents his (her) motivation for prosocial commitment in terms of a certain kind of self-uniqueness, such as the self's unconditional love or the self's purely other-oriented concern, it must also be presented as an integral part of the collectivity, such as by saying "touched by leader" or "for Buddhism." Articulation of motivation for prosocial commitment purely in terms of self-concern or as on

abstract kind of value concern is also rarely heard in Tzu-Chi participants' statements.

Principle 3. Regarding the meta-analytic level of the above two principles: As the organization boundary becomes more salient on specific occasions, Tzu-Chi participants have a strong tendency to articulate their motives in accordance with the above two principles.

2. What really happened there?

How can these principles work together to affect Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk? Based upon our discussion, we can begin to disentangle the intriguing phenomena about Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk step by step. The first one is:

1. The inconsistency between talking about and scale measurement of the item of merits-accumulation reflected in Tzu-Chi participants' responses.

Talking about merits-accumulation at an informal occasion and answering formal questions on merits-accumulation are two quite different things. The latter is regarded as a rather formal occasion, even when the researcher emphasized repeatedly to respondents that they could fill out the questionnaire in a flexible or relaxed manner.

In the rather formal occasion, that is, the occasion of filling out the questionnaire, I would argue that respondents'

collective identity may become more salient, particularly as the questions being asked are directly related to the group norms. For some, the collective identity may become more salient if they have participated in the group more intensively, say, with a stronger role-person-merger tendency and more investment toward the group. Specifically, for Tzu-Chi participants, Commissioners, Apprentice Commissioners, and Multiple-role Commissioners will have a stronger tendency toward being aware of the salience of their collective identity than will Faith Corps and Members. Under the organizational and cultural norm of "not talking about merits-accumulation publicly," Commissioner, Apprentice commissioners, and Multiple-role Commissioners even have a strong tendency to report less on merits-accumulation as motivation for prosocial commitment.

That is, on the formal occasion, because of their stronger collective identity with Tzu-Chi, Commissioners, Apprentice Commissioners, and Multiple-role Commissioners may become more sensitive to the term "merits-accumulation" than the other Tzu-Chi subgroups and thus report a lower score on the item of merits-accumulation for motivating their prosocial commitment (see table 8.2). Honored patrons, however, are an exception to this, which we will discuss later.

Very often, as Tzu-Chi Commissioners, Apprentice Commissioners, and Multiple-role participants answered the question of whether merits-accumulation is their motivation for prosocial commitment, they responded to me strongly that:

"No..no..no ..it is not right, we cannot think so." Sometimes they even tried to give me a lesson about the differences between the intention of merit-earning and blessings. As one male Commissioner tried to clarify for me when he was filling out the questionnaire:

> My commitment [to Tzu-Chi] is without any external expectations. I never think about how many merits I can get. Master also said that you should do your best...then your blessings will come. You must have this good mind, than you can get good results naturally. That's all! We never think about getting some kind of blessing. I never have this kind of expectation...However, as you do good things and say good words, you will experience deeply that the blessings will come naturally. We never have expectations in advance." (Interview note, 1:in tape)

On the other hand, Members almost never expressed this kind of comment during their process of filling out the motivational scale.

Table 8.2 clearly shows that Commissioner, Apprentice Commissioner, and Multiple-role participants with a higher tendency of role-person merger have a lower average score (2.38, 1.91, 1.71) for answering the item of "merits-accumulation as their motivation for prosocial commitment." Apprentice Commissioner here has the lowest average score on this item, perhaps because they are only halfway through the socialization

process toward full commitment and thus particularly sensitive about and more willing to conform to the organizational norm than are other participants.

On the other hand, the Faith Corps, that category of membership with a moderate degree of investment and role-person-merger toward Tzu-Chi, has a moderate average value (3.00) in answering the item of "merits-accumulation as the motivation for prosocial commitment." And Members, those with the least degree of investment and role-person-merger toward Tzu-Chi, have the highest average score (4.46) in answering the item of "merits-accumulation as the motivation for prosocial commitment."

We found a similar discrepancy for the Tzu-Chi young college group. Among the 6 college students I interviewed, no one thought that merit-related issues were important for them. However, on the formal occasion of filling out the motivational scale, on the item asking whether merits-accumulation motivated them to help, this category of membership had a quite high average score (4.83), even higher than Member's average score (4.46; see table 8.2).

I would argue that there are two reasons for Tzu-Chi young college students not to be very sensitive to the term "merits-accumulation" and thus able to respond rather normally to this item in the motivation scale. First, Like Members, the Tzu-Chi young college group, as a student club in college, is only loosely involved in Tzu-Chi. This lesser involvement and weaker role-person-merger toward Tzu-Chi means the organizational norms

of not talking about Tzu-Chi also become less salient for them. Secondly, also culturally, because of their different experience from that of the earlier generation in Taiwan (see chapters 5 and 7), they have also become more indifferent toward some traditional ideas such as merits-accumulation. As a male college student stated:

> I think that those who invented this idea [merits-accumulation] had its special purpose. But people at a later time distorted the original meaning. For example, one Master, "A", asks you to do good things to accumulate merits for both you and those who are dead, while another Master, "B", tells you that there are absolutely no merits in this world. And a third Master, "C", tells you that virtuousness is merits. I think that all these are not important. The important thing is that somebody obtained personal development through these activities of merit-making. On the other hand, somebody who focuses too much on merits-accumulation then hurts himself (herself). However, it is true that the positive effects of merits-accumulation are stronger than the negative effects of merits-accumulation. So the idea of merits-accumulation can be popular at the folk level. Most fundamentally, however, we should respect these folk ideas, that's enough. (Interview note, 28:4)

This statement shows that since this student does not buy into

the ideas of merits-accumulation very much, he thus also does not need to take a very defensive stance in talking publicly about merit-accumulation. And in turn, while Tzu-Chi college students do not talk about merit-related issues often, on the formal occasion of filling out the questionnaire item on merits-accumulation as their motivation, they can give a rather normal moderate score without too much being normatively distorted in their response.

However, there is still the exception to the principle that the less one's role-person-merger toward Tzu-Chi, the higher the score one reports on the item of merits-accumulation as motivation for prosocial commitment--that is, the Honored Patrons have a less intense role-person merging in Tzu-Chi, we also find that their average reported score for merits-accumulation as motivation for prosocial commitment is even lower than that for Commissioners, Apprentice Commissioners, and Multiple-role Commissioners. I would argue that this contradiction is due to the specific characteristics of Honored Patrons' prosocial commitment making the norms regarding merits-accumulation--"people should not say that their good deeds are for merits-accumulation"--thus become much more salient for them than they are for other Tzu-Chi categories of membership.

Since this norm is both an organizational norm and a cultural norm, its salience can be enhanced under the circumstances that either 1) organizational boundary and group identity become salient, or 2) the characteristics of the

prosocial act in regards to merits-accumulation are particularly salient. For Honored Patrons, this second circumstance is the most crucial.

Certainly merits-accumulation could be an important motivation for prosocial commitment for every Tzu-Chi category of membership. However, because Honored Patrons' prosocial acts are mainly based upon large monetary donations (and very little voluntary labor services), they face a particular dilemma when Tzu-Chi outsiders ask them whether their prosocial acts are due to merits-accumulation. If they say "yes," it not only sounds too secular but also at least a large proportion of the accumulated merits may be gone. On the other hand, if they say "no," then under the Chinese and Taiwanese cultural repertoire, from a Tzu-Chi outsider's perspective, what other reason could explain Honored Patrons' prosocial acts?

Honored Patrons do not have the explanations available to other Tzu-Chi categories of membership. For example, Members' monetary contributions are very small, thus their prosocial acts are seldom noticed, and, under their marginal commitment toward Tzu-Chi, they do not have a strong tension toward justifying their attributions for prosocial commitment. Faith Corps members give labor services, implying a strong altruistic concern to which they can attribute their prosocial acts. Finally, Apprentice Commissioners, Commissioners, and Commissioners with multiple roles, who are committed to giving in various forms, can also easily attribute their prosocial acts to a strong

altruistic concern.

I would argue that, to avoid cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) under this kind of tension, an Honored Patron may more strongly reject the explanation that his (her) prosocial act is for merit-accumulation. This will allow all accumulated merits to be kept, and under his (her) strong rejection of merit-accumulation as motivation for prosocial commitment, he (she) may also make others--or at least convince himself (herself)--that his (her) virtuous behavior is purely other-regarding. Only by this strong rejection of merit-related concern can an Honored Patron keep his (her) accumulated merits, sustain his (her) good feelings toward himself (herself), maintain positive meanings about his (her) prosocial commitment, and continue his (her) further prosocial commitment. Thus, under the circumstances that the cultural norms have become more salient for them, on average, Honored Patrons reported a very low score for the item of whether one's prosocial commitment is motivated by need for merits-accumulation.

However, on the informal occasions of open-ended and flexible interviews we got a quite different story. Although the norms of not talking about merit-accumulation were still prevalent on those occasions, we found that participants mentioned often that their prosocial commitment was for some kind of merit-related reason. For example, among the 74 valid respondents on the motivational scale, 33 selected score 1 (not important) in replying that their prosocial commitment was not

at all for the reason of merits-accumulation. However, during the interview, 18 of these 33 (55%) mentioned somewhere that merit-related reasons (planting the seeds of good fortune, blessings, and merits transfer) were also their concern. Here let me cite several examples of the informal talk from these 18 respondents. A female Commissioner remarked:

> We do not need to ask for "spiritual aids for good results" [*kan-yin*], but it is very strange, good results may always come. Children are so well-behaved, without any trouble. We come to Tzu-Chi looking for both blessings and wisdom. (Interview note 10:2)

While a female Apprentice Commissioner stated:

> Do not think about those things [merits]. If we can do something..in our ability, we should do it. Don't think about it [merits]....I believe there is this thing [merits] there. I believe we just naturally go in that direction. (Interview note 20:5)

And a Male participant with multiple roles (Commissioner, Honored Patron, and Faith Corps) said:

> My father [a farmer] worked so hard before. Every morning he got up around 3:30 a.m. Most of the farmfields he cultivated belonged to others, few were his own...Now both of my parents have passed away. I want to do virtuous things for them. I have begun to donate money under their names every month. (Interview note 19:7)

Thus, although while filling out the formal motivation scale these 18 respondents noted that their motivation for prosocial commitment was not at all related to merits-accumulation, during the open-ended interview their reasons for prosocial commitment were in one way or another based in merit-related issues.

However, as these examples also show, Tzu-Chi participants almost never used the words "merits-accumulation" directly during the open-ended interview. Rather, they applied many different kinds of vocabularies. Besides merit-transfer (as I discussed above), the vocabulary most often talked about in regard to merit-related issues is "plant the seeds of good fortune." One male multiple-role Commissioner, who had a high score response on the item asking whether his prosocial commitment is due to the reason of merits-accumulation (6 among the 1-7 Likert scale, see Appendix E), presented his ideas in the informal talk in such language:

> because we have the religious belief, if you plant that kind of cause, you'll get that kind of results... you help others,..so..on the other side, we now have such a comfortable life...it is our causes, the good fortune we planted in the last life...because life does always continue without resting. At a certain age of life, we all are dead. If you have done good deeds, in the next life you'll get good results. It's a cycling of cause and effects. How much you give, how much you can get, this is the truth that never

> changes...because of this truth, so many people want to join Tzu-Chi. (Interview note 4:7)

While articulating that doing deeds is important for one's next life, he never uses the words "merits" to describe the good deeds and good results. Instead he employs an abstract axiom about cause and effects. Similarly, a male Honored Patron stated:

> Master taught us that you should try your best. Don't hurt others, thus you will be blessed. If you have these kinds of virtuous thought, you will get good returns. That's all. I do not think too much of getting specific good returns for specific good actions...After I became involved in Tzu-Chi, as I learned from Master's words, I experienced more deeply that if we do good things, say good words, it is natural that good returns will come; it just happens imperceptibly. (Interview note, 56:6)

This Honored Patron articulates that we cannot keep the intention of merits-earning in our minds too much; instead, blessings will come naturally, if we stay focused on good things. A female Commissioner's statement illustrates this point even more clearly:

> Today, our volunteering in Tzu-Chi really is without asking for anything...It is unconditional giving solely. Today, when I come to Tzu-Chi, it is not for merits, fame, or personal interests. However, of

> course, privately, I have some hope that as I spend so much time volunteering here, my children can become..mm..it is because our good deeds can bless them. It's a private wish, but we cannot pray for it too much....(Interview note, 3:8)

That is, under the Chinese and Taiwanese culture repertoire, Tzu-Chi participants know well that asking for blessings is only a private wish, that they cannot talk about merits accumulation in any measurable way. Yet, on other hand, such abstract terminology, as "law of cause-and-effects" or "plant good seeds" and a tone emphasizing good intentions rather than specific good results make possible talking about merits-accumulation without that word being specifically said.

Another important pattern that can be identified in Tzu-Chi participants' mentioning merit-related issues is that merit-related motivations such as merit-transfer or planting good seeds, are rarely articulated as the sole motivation for prosocial commitment. That as, in the process of the in-depth interview, although more than half (55%) of the Tzu-Chi participants I spoke with mentioned merit-related concerns as one of their main motivations for prosocial commitments, they never mentioned this concern as their only motivation for prosocial commitment.

Indeed, most participants mentioned multiple motivations for prosocial commitment. However, among the 76 participants, 14 gave only one reason for this commitment. These sole reasons

included: "doing virtuous things is our responsibility" (5 cases); "Compassion to the needy" (5 cases); "For a more stable life, particularly for family and children" (3 cases); and " To cultivate myself being like a buddha" (1 case).

During the interviews, when one once articulated that his (her) good deeds to some extend were for getting a better life in the future, either consciously or unconsciously he (she) soon added somewhere else in the conversation that his (her) good deeds were also more importantly based upon some other reason, such as unconditional compassion or social responsibility. However, this kind of additional articulation did not happen in those cases where one attributed his (her) prosocial commitment solely to non-merits-related reasons.

The female Commissioner's statement quoted above illustrates that while she wishes that good deeds could bless her children, at the same time she also emphasizes that her giving is certainly unconditional. Tzu-Chi participants seem to know well which kind of motivation can be justified solely by itself and which kind of motivation can be accepted by others only in the circumstances that these motivations are articulated as additional ones.

2. Members' relative higher tendency to be aware of personal development as their motivation for prosocial behavior.

Similarly to the phenomenon of talking about merits-

accumulation in conversation, the phenomenon of Tzu-Chi Member's higher average score in reporting personal development as motivation for prosocial commitment can also be easily explained through the principles mentioned above, especially (1) that people should not speak of their motives for prosocial acts with too much sense of self-centered characteristics; and (3) that as one's collective identity is less salient, one may have a less strong tendency to follow principle 1. Since Members have a much weaker degree of role-person-merger, their tendency to follow the collective norm of not being too self-conspicuous is thus also weaker than for other categories of membership.

3. On such positive forms of vocabularies of motive provided by Tzu-Chi agencies as leader's influences, for purifying this society, and for rebuilding traditional morality, participants have rather dramatic reporting differences between the motivation scale's score of current motivation and recalled initial motivation for prosocial commitment; yet for the kinds of items on the motivational scale such as those five dimensions in Omoto and Snyder's original scale, there is no such dramatic difference (see table 8.4).

This phenomenon can also easily understood through the basic principle we offer as principle 2: some vocabularies of motive talk offered by organizational agencies can strongly justify Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment. Tzu-Chi

participants also have a strong tendency to get clues from the organizational frame to confirm positively their other-regarding concern in prosocial commitment. Only through this process can Tzu-Chi participants maintain their prosocial commitment in a more continual sense.

In turn, Tzu-Chi participants may be more sensitive to such vocabularies of motivation that has been provided in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame as leader's role model, prosocial commitment for spreading purified love to this society, or to rebuild the moral order of this society. Therefore, this may result in:

1) On motivation for prosocial commitment, participants may generally report a high score for those items that have been provided in the organizational frame's generic vocabularies of motive, such as leader's influence, clearing the chaos of this society, rebuilding moral order, etc., since these vocabularies of motivation are the most popular in Tzu-Chi collective settings (see table 8.4).

2) As Snow and Machalek have pointed out, a movement participant's biography is "reconstructed in accordance with the new or ascendant universe of discourse and its attendant grammar and vocabulary of motives" (1984:173). In a similar sense, as some items of the vocabularies of motive are most salient in Tzu-Chi's collective settings, there may exist dramatic

differences between one's current motivation and one's recalled initial motivation on those items enmeshed in the organizational settings, since socialization experience in collective settings does change participants' vocabularies of articulation of motivation. On the other hand, for some items of the vocabularies of motivation that are not enmeshed in Tzu-Chi's collective settings in an obvious sense, there will not be dramatic differences between one's response on current motivation and on recalled initial motivation, or at least these differences will be less than for those items that have been provided in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame (see table 8.4).

To summarize, we found that people are highly enmeshed in their culture repertoires and social system. People's articulation of motivation thus must be understood through the backgrounds that may underlie people's motive talk. Here we do not take the radical stance to reject the validity of all measurement tools for measuring people's motivation for prosocial commitment. Instead, by showing that all motive talk is based upon some kind of cultural repertoire and organizational norms, we then can possibly understand the true meanings of people's motive talk and response to measurement tools, and, as they have been put in their real life contexts, we then may make the face value of people's motive talk become more conceivable.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Human actors both vocalize and impute motives to themselves. As Mills (1940) has argued, "to explain behavior by referring it to an inferred and abstract 'motive'" is one thing. To analyze "the observable lingual mechanisms of motive imputation and avowal as they function in conduct" (p.904) is quite another. Rather than being fixed elements in an individual, "motives are the terms with which interpretation of conduct by social actors proceeds. This imputation and avowal of motives by actors are social phenomena to be explained" (p.904). The differing reasons people give for their actions are not themselves without reasons.

Because of various intriguing facts that I observed about the measurement of Tzu-Chi participants motivation, I begin to take seriously the social dimensions of Tzu-Chi participants' motive talk, and I found clearly similar patterns underlying that motive talk. As one articulates his (her) reasons for doing Tzu-Chi, several sets of culture repertoires and organizational norms are enhanced, and then with one's language one has connected himself (herself) to the collectivity in which one is situated.

Wuthnow's (1991) study of American volunteers showed that, due to America's culture of pluralism, American volunteers just as reluctantly acknowledge their altruism, but they contextualize it, and limit it in their motive talk. As Wuthnow stated,

We manage it [pluralism] by situationalizing our

> accounts, by telling stories that embed values in specific contexts, that frame principles as particulars. We transform the pluralism of larger settings into the particular blend of our personal identities. (p.83)

In a similar sense, in their accounts of prosocial commitment, Tzu-Chi participants also need to tell stories that embed values in specific contexts. Nevertheless, we found that, unlike American volunteers who live in an individualistic and pluralistic society, Tzu-Chi participants are dealing with very different issues.

Two issues are hidden in the motive talk of Tzu-Chi participants, the first with regard to one's Tzu-Chi collective identity and the second with regard to merits-accumulation. A Tzu-Chi participant must situate himself (herself) with these two issues under different occasions of motive talk. In addition, in their accounts of prosocial commitment, more highly committed participants also need to connect their prosocial commitment with the more strongly positive vocabularies of motive talk provided in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame, so that their prosocial commitment may become more meaningful and easier to continue.

Therefore, these patterns are very different from Wuthnow's findings on motive talk for American volunteers. For Tzu-Chi participants, they are situated in a very strong unified collectivity. They can strongly confirm their altruistic concern

in their motive talk without too much hesitation. Under this strong confirmation, we may expect that Tzu-Chi participant to be more easily to last their prosocial commitment than those American volunteers who continually struggle with the issue of pluralism in their motive talk. With regard to the issue of maintenance and continuity of prosocial commitment under collective settings, we will discuss it further in the next chapter.

The discussion of this chapter raises our serious criticism of past psychological studies of volunteers' motivation that, unless cultural repertoires and organizational norms that may underlie people's accounts of motivation are considered, any measurement of motivation may be misleading. As this current study shows, under their motive talk, participants in different Tzu-Chi categories of membership have different ways to connect to the hidden cultural and organizational repertoire of motive talk. For example, the responses on the motivational scale for Tzu-Chi college students--who have neither a strong role-person-merger toward Tzu-Chi nor a very strong collectivitist orientation--are different from those of other Tzu-Chi participants. Since most psychological studies on helping behavior have been based upon the measurement of college students, certainly we should be more careful in applying those findings found in classroom or laboratory to subjects who have made an investment in their long-term, prosocial commitment.

CHAPTER 9 THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE NORMS OF GIVING: CONTINUITY AND MAINTENANCE OF HELPING BEHAVIOR IN THE COLLECTIVE SETTINGS

> ***...You come to participate in Tzu-Chi, it is a very perfect institution. We cannot find such a perfect institution in other places. In other groups, they do not have a qualified religious Master. There are only those virtuous people. Their commitment cannot last long...In those places [different from Tzu-Chi], you cannot commit heartily like we do now. Because we have a religious Master to lead us, we know the right path. Those virtuous people in other charitable organizations, they do not have a deep philosophy of life, they do not have goals for life. All they want to do is to do virtuous things. That cannot last too long. (A male Commissioner, Interview note, 4:6)***

THE DILEMMA OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE NORMS OF GIVING

If an organization is to survive for any significant period of time, it must experience some kind of institutionalization or rountinization (Zald and Ash, 1966). That is, it must establish a stable set of roles and statuses and generate and adhere to a consistent pattern of norms. There are various reasons for an organization being institutionalized in some way if it is

continue its maintenance and growth (see Roberts, 1990:152-4). Particularly for a Charismatic organization like the Tzu-Chi Association, the group gathered around a dynamic leader must later evolve into one with a stable matrix of norms, roles, and statutes (Weber, 1947).

Further, Tzu-Chi's need to become more institutionalized in order to handle both its increasing recruited resources and participants and the problem of succession, has some specific implications for our concern with helping behavior.

Institutionalization can be generally referred to as the stabilizing of roles, norms, and patterned interactions. An institutionalized charitable organization thus might refer to the ways that participants in that organization can be channelled to prosocial commitment by various definite role requirements, obligations, and patterned collective expectations.

However, in the real world, the institutionalization of helping behavior has its own specific dilemma. As Leeds (1963) has argued, enforcement of the norms of giving, realistically, cannot be routinized. Giving, like charisma, changes its nature once it is circumscribed by the formal rules and sanction procedures which accompany the rationalization of action processes. If giving were routinized, one might give to avoid negative sanctions or to receive rewards rather than for the sake of giving, in which case one is no longer acting within the limits of the moral norm. Therefore, there is an inherent

paradox for the institutionalization of the norms of giving. Leeds further pointed out that, according to Parsons' definition of the institutionalization of value patterns[51] (see Parsons, 1951, p.38), the norms of giving can only be partially institutionalized. This means that one has internalized the norms to the point where he or she has a need-disposition to give, and only in this sense are the norms of giving institutionalized in a society. At the same time, constraints external to the individual--i.e., sanctions -- regarding the norms of giving are not institutionalized at all. Here, although we may not accept completely Leeds's argument that the norms of giving cannot be routinized, nevertheless, his ideas indicate that implementing the norms of giving in a social system is much more complicated than we first thought.

One empirical phenomenon, the so-called Boomerang Effect (Schwartz and Howard, 1981, 1982, 1984), may result from this dilemma of the institutionalization of the norms of giving. Although not their original focus, Schwartz and Howard's

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[51] As Parsons mentioned (1951, p. 38), "from the point of view of any given actor in the system, it is both a mode of the fulfillment of his own need-dispositions and a condition of 'optimizing' the reactions of other significant actors, that standard will be said to be 'institutionalized.'" Here Parsons means that there is a double aspect of the expectation system which is integrated in the rountinization process of value. On the one hand, one has been socialized into being a person with need-dispositions to do culturally prescribed behavior; on the other hand, there is a sanction system (reaction of other significant actors) related to the specific action that has been postulated in the cultural value (see Parson, 1951, p. 36-45).

findings on the boomerang effect[52] fit well here for explaining what happens after the institutionalization of the norms of giving. Based upon Deci and his colleagues' (Deci, 1975; Deci & Porac, 1978; Deci & Ryan, 1980, 1985) argument and persuasive laboratory evidence about the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation[53]--that the addition of extrinsic rewards to a task that is already intrinsically motivating will result in an actual decrease in intrinsic motivation--Schwartz and Howard's extensive experiments further found that as people perform activities under conditions that are apparently externally controlling, their intrinsic motivation to perform these activities decreases, and that the observed prosocial acts of these people may also be reduced. Schwartz and Howard called this result as the boomerang effect.

Therefore, according to the boomerang effect, after the institutionalization of the norms of giving in a social system, say, that giving is circumscribed by the specific roles, formal rules, and sanction procedures of this system, we may expect

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[52] This effect is originally found in Schwartz and Howard's (1981, 1982, 1984) series of studies on personal norms. This effect also has been empirically supported by many others' research (Batson et al., 1978; Uranowitz, 1975; Zuckerman, Lazzaro, and Waldgeir, 1979).

[53] Deci (1975) suggests that people's motivation can be categorized as being either intrinsic or extrinsic: "Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. The activities are ends in themselves rather than means to an end" (p.23). By contrast, extrinsically motivated activities thus are those performed in order to obtain some benefit or some reward given by another, hence extrinsic to the work itself.

that participants' intrinsic motivation for giving decreases, and that that may further decrease their prosocial commitment.

The boomerang effect is thus a big challenge for a charitable organization that is on its path toward institutionalization.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE NORMS OF GIVING IN TZU-CHI

Tzu-Chi has become more and more institutionalized in various dimensions, such as computerization, regularized division of labor, organized reward system, systematic training sessions, etc. Especially after 1990, when Tzu-Chi's Managerial Center (the system of the Tzu-Chi Managerial Center is shown in Table 9.1) was established, institutionalization has become one of the Tzu-Chi agencies' main goals to pursue, as Cheng Yen's statement has shown: "Tzu-Chi now particularly needs two kinds of talented people, one talented in computers, one talented in managerial science" (qtd. in Hwang, 1991:122).

Many formal explicit rules also have been printed in pamphlets to regulate the formal procedures of Tzu-Chi. When I was observing, I had the chance to collect about ten of these pamphlets, including the most important one, "Tzu-Chi's Spiritual Manual," which documents the criteria for becoming a member of the different Tzu-Chi categories of membership, the way for evaluating new participants, the specific role requirements for members of each category, the way to ask for contributions and to give receipts, the rights and obligations

of being a Tzu-chi participant, various regulations and precepts that Tzu-Chi participants must observe, etc. Other pamphlets, such as "Introduction of the Regulation for Organization and Human Affairs," "Manual for Volunteering," and "Training Manual for New Staff," document the kinds of formal rules for Tzu-Chi's regulating procedures.

With regard to prosocial commitment, I have discussed in chapter 7 that Tzu-Chi's collective settings can foster participants' helping behavior effectively in various ways and that quite often these organizational influences, such as role-requirements, collective anticipations, assigned testifying, regulated settings, etc., are patterned and institutionalized. Particularly as Tzu-chi agencies have been pursuing the goal of institutionalization, a more strict type of normative regulation and organized reward system have emerged. Here I would cite several examples:

Example 1, **with regard to the reward system**. After 1989, under the methods introduced by the Tzu-Chi Managerial Center, every formal Tzu-Chi participant (Commissioner, Faith Corps, and Honored Patron) should wear a Tzu-Chi name-card. In addition to the participant's name, each name card is also printed with one, two, or three lotus flowers (symbol of purified love or Buddhist compassion). While for men, from left to right in sequence, each lotus flower refers to the formal status of 1) Commissioner, 2) Faith Corps, and 3) Honored Patron, for women, from left to

right, each lotus flower refers to the formal status of 1) Commissioner, 2) so-called Admirable virtue (*Yih-te*) Mother, who are volunteers in Tzu-Chi's nursing college, and 3) Honored Patron. One's status and the efforts of one's charity work are thus formally printed on the name card that is pinned on one's Tzu-Chi uniform at all formal occasions.

Example 2: **With regard to the evaluation system for new participants**. The way of evaluating new participants has become more routinized. After 1995, the probation period for Taichung's apprentice Faith Corps changed from half a year to one year. The training sessions have also become more regularized and organized, while before there weren't any training sessions for new participants.[54] To some extent, at least in the training stage (one year), apprentice members (apprentice Faith Corps and Apprentice Commissioner) must behave very compassionately to show that they are qualified to become Tzu-Chi formal participants.

I remember that one apprentice member of the Faith Corps in our subgroup, because he admitted to the Chief of the Taichung Faith Corps that he sometimes must drink some wine, reluctantly, at special social occasions (drinking wine violates the Tzu-Chi Ten Commandments), he was rejected by the cadre of the Faith Corps as a qualified member of the Faith Corps, even though he had given a lot of labor services to Tzu-Chi's various

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[54] As those senior participants told me.

activities.

Example 3: **another example with regard to the reward system**. Although it does not happen in Tzu-Chi's Taiwan Branch, another example shows the strong tendency toward Tzu-Chi's institutionalization of the norms of giving. In 1996, Tzu-Chi's American Branch announced a new regulation for encouraging participants.[55] In that new regulation, volunteers' accumulated hours of volunteering can be awarded specific kinds of medals; Orange color for 500 hours; yellow color for 1,000 hours; green color for 2,000 hours; blue color for 5,000 hours; indigo-blue color for 7,500 hours; and purple color for 10,000 hours. In this way the reward system in Tzu-Chi has become routinized and systematized gradually.

To summarize, the above examples show that a strong tendency toward institutionalization can indeed be found in Tzu-Chi's collective settings. To some extent, certainly, some kinds of patterned influences and external controlling have begun to be implemented in Tzu-Chi's structural arrangement.

Since Schwartz and Howard's boomerang effect and Deci et al.'s arguments about the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have shown that as people perform activities under conditions that are apparently externally

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[55] When I joined Tzu-Chi Chicago Branch's 5-annual-year celebration in May 1996, I saw Tzu-Chi's American Director award these various kinds of medals to Tzu-Chi volunteers. Also, Tzu-Chi's information on the world-wide web 1996, May, lists these regulations clearly.

controlling, their intrinsic motivation to perform these activities decreases, and the observed prosocial acts of these people may be reduced, what may happen to Tzu-Chi's participants under the process of Tzu-Chi's institutionalization?

Indeed, under these gradually patterned organizational influences, some Tzu-Chi participants expressed complaints to me about this tendency. Out of all my interviews (76 cases), four participants complained about Tzu-Chi's gradually rigid division of labor and organized reward and evaluation system. Some of the kinds of tension caused by institutionalization of the norms of giving can be found in their statements. For example, a female Commissioner who had participated Tzu-Chi for about 20 years complained:

> Indeed, Buddhism is very popular now. Indeed, there are only we Tzu-Chi who have worked on charity so hard. But according to my opinion, Tzu-Chi is changing now, it is different from our early days. Master told us that we should not have the minds of distinction, but I feel that now we have a lot of minds of distinction, you know...." (interview note, 7:7)

And a member of the Faith Corps said:

> It seems..mm..that some distinction is too salient now. Why may only those who have formal status wear some kind of special uniform, and those who do not have formal status may not?...That..mm..indeed, an organization may have its own regulations, I do not

> have too many things to say about it. I just feel that, why should we make distinctions on our status in Tzu-Chi [formal and informal]? Why do we have something like this [distinction]? (Interview note, 61:8)

Another member of the Faith Corps mentioned:

> Sometimes I have this kind of observation. I feel that sometimes doing things [in Tzu-Chi]..mm..like our Buddhists always say, is about "compassion"! "Being compassionate to be concerned about others." Isn't it? But I notice, for example, like last time at the charity sale, I noticed that..mm..some Brothers might not have done well [in the division of labor], mm..some senior Brothers, or..Commissioners, or say, some Cadres, then reproved them. I think that..mm..although they [senior participants or cadres] have a good intent for Tzu-Chi, but maybe..mm..I think..mm..a good manner is better.... (Interview note, 71:11)

Also, another member of the Faith Corps expressed that:

> As I began to join Tzu-Chi..mm..sometimes..of course, some cadres, they might be just thoughtless, in hoping that we can do better work, actually they probably are just thoughtless, of course. They just wanted to ask us to be as good as possible. However, as we began to join, I thought that we all are volunteering here.

When you talk to us...sometimes your tone should be more courteous.. maybe...." (interview note, 58:5)

Although all these statements are expressed in a very uncertain tone, certainly, some Tzu-Chi participants feel uncomfortable about these externally institutionalized patterned influences. However, on the other hand, I also need to emphasize here that even under Tzu-Chi's more rigid division of labor and more routinized pattern of rewarding, these complaints actually are still rarely heard.

We might assume that, because of some kind of normative requirement for not talking about Tzu-Chi in a negative manner, Tzu-Chi participants' private complaints cannot easily be heard by an outsider-researcher. Nevertheless, according to my observations, I do not think so. I actually found that, even on very informal occasions, where other participants either did not know my researcher role or had almost forgotten my researcher role, the above kinds of complaints actually were still rarely heard. Thus I would conclude that most Tzu-Chi participants actually do not sense--or do not feel it as a problem--the increasingly external control of Tzu-Chi's patterned organizational influences (after 1990) that has followed its gradual tendency toward institutionalization.

For example, one member of the Faith Corps commented about Tzu-Chi's division of labor that:

Indeed, we are not all equal in Tzu-chi. How could it be possible that we all be equal? Nevertheless, we

> should see each other through the mind of equality. Somebody may have taken Tzu-Chi as his (her) home [so s/he feels comfortable about Tzu-Chi], somebody else has just taken Tzu-Chi as a transient place [thus s/he may feel uncomfortable about Tzu-Chi's division of labor]...."(Interview note 81:2)

Although this member has not expressed his statement in a very clear sense, we can infer that he actually feels that everything in Tzu-Chi is O.K.; if you feel any problem about it, it is not Tzu-Chi's problem, rather, it is due to your problematic attitude about Tzu-Chi. Another female Commissioner commented:

> In a group, you cannot make all the participants have the same kind of opinion...We all are common people, we all come here to express the good sides of ourselves. However, sometimes you may feel that what others ask you to do sometimes is just their ideas. Even though they ask you to do good things, you just feel that, why should you follow them?....these things happen here often; nevertheless, our group is so good that we will not harm each other..." (Interview note, 75:27)

Thus, from the above statements, we find that even though Tzu-Chi participants may feel some kind of external control, they actually would not think about it in that way. Generally, Tzu-Chi participants believe that there is no harm in Tzu-Chi and that all Tzu-Chi participants, cadres, and even agencies, are

just family members to each others. In Tzu-Chi, there is no such thing as the so-called external control.[56]

In other words, while there are robust laboratory findings about the boomerang effect, in the real world, especially in collective settings like Tzu-Chi, although the conditions for fostering this boomerang effect do exist (the tendency toward gradually increasing external control), this effect seems to not happen in any obvious sense. At least according to my observations, during my year of participating, I rarely saw highly committed Tzu-Chi participants decrease their commitment. I also rarely heard Tzu-Chi participants complain about the gradually routinized reward system and division of labor.

What has happened there? Are there any mechanisms that can prevent Tzu-Chi participants from feeling the pressure of social control and strongly collective anticipation? Since Tzu-Chi's collective settings are so important for fostering participants' prosocial commitment, are there any mechanisms that can function in the collective settings to prevent the "boomerang effect" for each individual participant? If so, how? Whether empirically or

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[56] However, we may argue that those who have withdrawn from Tzu-Chi may feel a stronger tension than current Tzu-Chi participants about Tzu-Chi's institutionalization of the norms of giving. The limitations of my data (not having interviewed many people who have withdrawn from Tzu-Chi) prevent me from drawing conclusions about the issue of the institutionalization of norms of giving. Nevertheless, while we may not be able to draw the whole picture of the issue of the institutionalization of the norms of giving in Tzu-Chi, we still need to explain why, under the circumstances of a gradually externally controlling and routinized pattern of interaction, most of the current Tzu-Chi participants still keep their prosocial commitment and, moreover, are not much aware of the gradual external control.

theoretically, these issues are crucially important. Below we will thus try to shed light on these issues.

MECHANISMS FOR REDUCING THE BOOMERANG EFFECT IN TZU-CHI'S COLLECTIVE SETTINGS

In this section we will explore why, in Tzu-Chi's settings-- even under the influential mutual collective anticipation and the tendency for Tzu-Chi's gradual institutionalization--the boomerang effects of people's prosocial commitment decreasing as they are circumscribed by some external anticipation, regulation, or control does not happen in any obvious sense.

In general I would argue that the key points for preventing the boomerang effect are how organization agencies make participants believe that their prosocial commitments are basically self-motivated and also highly motivated by other-regarding concern, even under the circumstances that some external role requirements and patterned interactions exist. That is, as one believes that his (her) prosocial commitment is not under any external control, we would expect his (her) prosocial commitment to continue without reducing the intrinsic motivation for helping. Generally speaking, three kinds of mechanisms can be identified here, all of which have been mentioned in earlier chapters. Based on those knowledge backgrounds we can here discuss them in a more systematic way.

1. **Vocabularies of motive in Tzu-Chi's collective action frame**

can help participants confirm that their motivation for prosocial commitment is purely due to self-motivated and other-regarding concern. As we discussed in chapter 8, the cultural repertoire and organization agencies may provide social actors with various vocabularies of motive, such as transfer of merits, compassionate concern, unconditional giving, etc. Since these generic vocabularies of motive are richly enmeshed in Tzu-Chi's collective settings, Tzu-Chi participants can easily link these vocabularies, or "secondary motivations" (see chapter 8), to their prosocial commitment. In turn, Tzu-Chi participants may have a strong tendency to believe that their helping behavior is purely self-motivated, other-regarding concern.

Moreover, as Tzu-Chi participants have often been encouraged by Tzu-Chi agencies and active participants to testify publicly about their positive experiences in prosocial commitment (see chapter 7), these participants' may have a strong tendency to believe, after publicly testifying, that their good deeds are purely due to their true self. Since, according to Bem's self-perception theory (1972), people learn about themselves through observing their own behavior, one's testifying in front of others may enhance the salience of one's role behavior, and further may make one attribute his (her) role behavior of helping to his (her) true self (see chapter 7).

Furthermore, as Tzu-Chi participants identify strongly with Tzu-Chi's "super" role-model of unconditional giving--Master Cheng Yen--they may also easily believe that, at least to some

extent, their helping behavior is in the same mode as the Master's type of helping, that is, unconditional giving. Therefore, as the quotation in chapter 8 showed, one female Commissioner stated that: "Like our Master said: 'Sorrow is in all beings, we are come to this world for becoming buddha.' My motivation is just so...Master is applying the Dharma [truth] of Buddha...From my beginning I have been doing so [like Master's way of giving], and now it is the same" (Interview note, 10:5). Tzu-Chi leader Cheng Yen's model of unconditional giving certainly provides very strong situational cues for participants to believe that their helping behavior is purely other-regarding.

Under the "strong" tone of the vocabularies of motive that surround Tzu-Chi's collective settings, participants can quite easily ignore such situational cues of external control as the routinized reward system and the rigid division of labor. At least, they may not perceive or believe that their helping behavior is to some extent fostered by these patterned organizational influences.

Therefore, it is very common to hear Tzu-Chi participants state their motivation for helping in such a tone: "I feel that..mm..I really like to do. I am willing to do without any condition. I feel it is so good...It is great...I am happy to do. The feeling is so good, so there is not any regret in my doing charity" (interview note, 49:6; also see many examples in chapter 8).

That is, in an intense interaction setting, the social actors are not like those respondents who just sit in the laboratory and are ready to respond to any kind of stimulus. Rather, like the Tzu-Chi participants, they only focus on certain specific situational cues and filter out others. Therefore, before Tzu-Chi participants' being aware of the cues of external control, various cues in the collective settings have actually drawn Tzu-Chi participants' attention toward making them believe that they are self-motivated and other-oriented helpers. This further reduces the probability of the boomerang effect in Tzu-chi's settings.

2. **The characteristics of Tzu-Chi's collective settings may also prevent the actual occurrence of the boomerang effect.** That is, under Tzu-Chi's primary relationship and the family metaphor of its organizing principle, participants' subjective perceptions about social relations in Tzu-Chi actually become totally different from those in other places.

That is, from an outsider's view, Tzu-Chi's social interactions might be filled with too much mutual encouragement, appreciation, and, sometimes, a strongly anticipated expectation between Tzu-Chi participants' various conversations. Yet, from an insider's view, under the circumstances that participants believe they are voluntarily and altruistically motivated in doing Tzu-Chi, all social interactions in Tzu-Chi, including mutual encouragement and appreciation, become much more

meaningful. In turn we should say that, in Tzu-Chi, from an insiders' view, these interactions are basically full of mutual concern and a willing division of labor.

This kind of description of Tzu-Chi may sound too ideal-typical, however, here I am emphasizing the big differences between role-obligation or social pressure and the voluntary mutual encouragement and social support under the family metaphor of social relationships. It may not be possible for us to understand why collective helping actually occurs and even lasts long in various Tzu-Chi settings without noticing this difference.

3. **Collective experience of success.** It has been reported by many researchers of social movements that successful collective experience itself may become a new factor affecting the development and pathway of a social movement (Edelman, 1971; McAdam, 1982:48-59; Piven and Cloward, 1979:3-4). Indeed, the collective experience of success may also affect Tzu-Chi participants' perceptions of their own prosocial commitment.

Two sources of Tzu-Chi's successful collective experience especially may influence Tzu-Chi participants' perceptions of their own prosocial commitment. First of all, it has been shown by Isen (1970) (see Salovery et al. 1991, p.217) that positive feelings can be induced by successful experience and, by Salovery (1987-1988), that happiness increases the saliency of norms concerning selflessness and charity. Therefore, we would

assume that as Tzu-Chi has become a well-known, successful charitable organization, the experience of success has itself elicited Tzu-Chi participants' feelings of selflessness and charitable concern and, further, that Tzu-Chi participants may have a particularly strong tendency to feel that their helping behavior is purely based upon other-oriented concern. This point is illustrated by the following account from a female Commissioner:

> I feel I just give a little bit of strength, and it has made our society become purified...Indeed, every month, we have a hard time in asking for contributions. However, if you go back [to Hualien] to see Tzu-Chi, you'll feel that you are so great. You'll feel that even one person can have the ability to join this great task. And then..you..mm ..you'll be very sure about your efforts in helping others. (Interview note, 45:9)

That is, this commissioner's positive feelings obtained through the collective experience have elicited her further other-oriented concern. Since these positive feelings also come from her helping others in Tzu-Chi's collective settings, there may be a virtuous cycle fostered by Tzu-Chi's successful collective experience that induces Tzu-Chi participants' feelings of selflessness and other-regarding.

Secondly, collectivity itself is a strong social validation of one's other-regarding motivation for prosocial commitment. A

male Honored Patron's comment shows this clearly: "Everyone comes to Tzu-Chi to do good deeds. Everybody here [Tzu-Chi] feels the confidence of doing charity. Collectivity is power. If you really want to do something, more people are better" (Interview note 76:6).

It is almost intuitively apparent that, as so many people gather together to help others, there must be some similar kind of other-regarding concern based upon this collectivity. Moveover, since the generic vocabularies in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame also support the idea that the prosocial acts by Tzu-Chi's collectivity are based upon unconditional loving and caring, the success of Tzu-Chi's collective experience may particularly foster participants' feelings that they are motivated to help based upon other-regarding concern rather than on some kind of external control.

To summarize, we thus have found three factors in Tzu-Chi's collective settings that may actually prevent the occurrence of the boomerang effect in Tzu-Chi's pathway toward gradual institutionalization.

However, it must be emphasized that the above mechanisms can effectively reduce the boomerang effect in Tzu-Chi's settings only in specific historical and social contexts. Corresponding to the above three factors, we should notice the following.

1) The repertoire of motive talk is embedded in a specific

context. Certainly the way to talk about merits transfer is so culturally embedded. Moreover, even the motive talk provided by the Tzu-Chi agencies that is articulated in terms of strongly other-regarding concern is also stimulated by a special historical situation. That is, under the context of a society in rapid social change, collective altruistic action may become much more plausible, and thus the vocabularies of other-regarding concern may also become more much meaningful for the social actors.

2) It is possible to find the primary group everywhere. However, different kinds of primary groups may have different kinds of cultural and social bases underlying ingroup members' interactions. Tzu-Chi's primary relationship and family metaphor may come from three sources: a) Buddhist ideas that we all were relatives and good friends in a previous life; b) under the current Taiwanese social chaos (at least for most Tzu-Chi participants' subjective feelings, there is social chaos), there is a particular social psychological need for family kinds of social relationships; and c) in a collectivist society like Taiwan (see chapter 5), most people, particularly middle-aged people, are familiar with and accustomed to living with the collectivist principle of organization. The characteristics of Tzu-Chi's collective settings are thus also contextually determined.

3) The collective successful experience itself is also a special historical product. Indeed, Tzu-Chi's success must be explained by how Tzu-Chi has successfully mobilized so many people. However, in a more fundamental sense, there are special historical forces, such as new social problems under rapid economic and social change, pre-civil society's lack of chances for women's civil participation, the new rise of the local middle class, etc., that have made Tzu-Chi's collective experience of success become possible (see chapter 3). Tzu-chi's rapid gathering of a huge collectivity thus must be understood through its specific historical background since, without this background, Tzu-Chi's rapid collective gathering probably would not have become possible.

To conclude, then, while the various mechanisms in Tzu-Chi's collective settings can obviously reduce the boomerang effect, we should also notice that these mechanisms can function well only in specific historical and cultural contexts.

Thus I would argue that, as I discussed in the preceding chapter, there are two kinds of motivation: primary motivation and secondary motivation. The primary motivation here is people's deep psychological needs and intention for action. The secondary motivation is how people attribute their behavior according to the cues surrounding them in their settings. In turn, therefore, how collective helping becomes possible may crucially depend on participants' primary motivation, that is, on the macro-historical contexts that may stimulate people to

conduct some specific kind of collective action; however, for this collective action's maintenance and continuity, the construction of participants' secondary motivation is crucial.

For example, in Tzu-Chi's case, many participants come together for whatever reasons to conduct collective helping behavior (this may be explained by participants' primarily motivation). However, in order to continue, maintain, and institutionalize this collective social action, various mechanisms must exist in the settings that can make participants believe that their collective helping behavior is self-motivated and other-regarding (that is, certain kinds of secondary motivation must be articulated and confirmed by the participants themselves).

Particularly for a charitable organization, we should notice that as it becomes more routinized, under the patterned and external influences, participants may tend to reduce their intrinsic altruistic concern and to undermine further their altruistic act. Therefore, how participants articulate a secondary motivation in the tone of purely internally-motivated and other-regarding concern becomes extremely important for maintaining and continuing each individual's further prosocial commitment.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND INFLUENCES ON THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE NORMS OF GIVING IN TZU-CHI

The above discussion shows that while some mechanisms can

reduce the boomerang effect that may be caused by the institutionalization of the norms of giving, these mechanisms are actually highly bounded in social and cultural contexts. Thus we may expect that as the social and historical backgrounds underlying these mechanisms change, those mechanisms that originally functioned well in reducing the boomerang effect may also possibly stop working.

For example, the culture repertoire of talking about merit-making in terms of merit transfers can effectively lead Tzu-Chi participants to believe that their prosocial commitment is based upon other-regarding motivation and, in turn, that their helping behavior is self-motivated rather than under some kind of external control, thus further reducing the boomerang effect in general. However, for the younger generation in Tzu-Chi, such as Tzu-Chi's "Young College group," this kind of culture repertoire is not very popular (see discussion in chapter 8). As more and more young people become involved in Tzu-Chi, and as the cultural repertoire of talking about merit-transfers does not lead them to perceive that their helping others is based upon intrinsic concern, Tzu-Chi's agencies must find new mechanisms to hold these young people's continually collective helping. Otherwise, these young Tzu-Chi participants may feel the tension under Tzu-Chi's gradual tendency toward institutionalization.

Thinking about another example: as we have described above, the family metaphor is also the product of a particular historical context. However, it is highly possible that as

Taiwanese society begins to change into a new mode of social interaction, say, the individualist type of social interaction, the traditional kind of family metaphor of human relationship may lose its power to convince. In turn, the currently perceived warmly mutual encouragement in Tzu-Chi's collective settings may later be perceived by the younger generation as some kind of uncomfortable social pressure, and thus the original characteristics of the collective settings to prevent the boomerang effect may also begin to disappear.

Furthermore we also can expect that, in the future, Tzu-Chi's loss of its symbol of unification and its role model of unconditional giving through Cheng Yen's death may also threaten Tzu-Chi's plausibility structure of collective unconditional giving. All of these newly-emerging facts may undermine the effectiveness of mechanisms that originally reduced the tension between organizational institutionalization and participants' continuity of altruism.

Therefore, in the near future, under Tzu-Chi's pathway toward continual institutionalization, we would expect that whether Tzu-Chi can adjust well or not in the new historical contexts may highly depend on how well the Tzu-Chi agencies can invent new mechanisms (or possibly Tzu-Chi can develop its special mechanisms naturally) to avoid the tension between the various tasks of institutionalization and Tzu-Chi participants' possibly reducing altruism.

To summarize, for collective helping, we notice that there

is always an inherent tension between the institutionalization of the norms of giving and the continuity and maintenance of a collectivity's altruism. Further, under different historical and culture contexts, the solution to resolve this tension may also differ.

SUMMARY

If an organization is to survive for a significant period of time, it must to some extent take the path toward institutionalization. However, specifically with regard to the norms of giving, institutionalization may have special implications, because if giving were routinized, one might give to avoid negative sanctions or to receive rewards rather than for the sake of giving, in which case one is no longer acting within the limits of the moral norm. This is the particular paradox for the institutionalization of the norm of giving. Moreover, empirically, according to the boomerang effect, under an institutionalized system's external control, we may expect that people's prosocial commitment decreases. This is the particular challenge for a charitable organization that is on the path toward institutionalization.

Tzu-Chi has certainly become more and more institutionalized. However, empirically, we found that the boomerang effect has not occurred in Tzu-Chi in any obvious sense, and that three mechanisms found in Tzu-Chi's collective settings can actually prevent the boomerang effect.

1) Vocabularies of motive in Tzu-Chi's organizational frame can help participants to confirm that their motivation for prosocial commitment is due to purely self-motivated and other-regarding concern; therefore, they may not think that their prosocial commitment is under some kind of external control.

2) The characteristics of Tzu-Chi's collective settings--that is, the relationship based upon the family metaphor and primary interaction--may also prevent the actual occurrence of the boomerang effect.

3) The collective experience of success can bring Tzu-Chi participants both a happy experience and a strong sense of collectivity. Both of these results may help to stimulate and confirm Tzu-Chi participants' other-regarding concern, and may further reduce the boomerang effect.

Although these mechanisms can effectively reduce the boomerang effect in Tzu-Chi's settings, we should notice that these mechanisms can function well only in specific historical and social contexts. We also found that as the social and historical background begins to change, mechanisms that originally functioned well to reduce the tensions of institutionalization, may begin to lose this function, and may cause new tensions for the charitable organization on its path toward institutionalization.

To summarize, we notice that for collective helping there is always an inherent tension between the institutionalization of the norms of giving and the continuity and maintenance of the

collectivity's altruism. Under different historical and cultural contexts, the resolution for this tension may differ.

CHAPTER 10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: COMMENCEMENT, MAINTENANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT OF HELPING BEHAVIOR IN SOCIAL CONTEXTS

For purifying the human mind, [we] need to intensify the substantial construction in this world; [If] The manifest construction is there without any disconnection, human beings' loving hearts and good minds then will not be dispersed because of the reason of being too idle. As if you had left the footprints of love in this world, you won't have regrets for your life. (Cheng Yen, 1996: in Tzu-Chi Monthly, 354:24)

This study is mainly concerned with how helping behavior may actually happen, develop, and be maintained in real social settings. It is well known that people's helping activities are intertwined with cultural contexts and social systems. However, as past experimental paradigms of helping behavior have dealt only with the relations between a few measurable variables in a "one shot" test, the social and cultural dimensions of helping behavior rarely have been explored before.

For example, scholars did discuss that several cultural norms may influence people's prosocial tendency in American society (The norm of social responsibility: Berkowitz and Daniels, 1963; The norm of reciprocity: Gouldner, 1960; Pruitt,

1968). A further elaboration of this approach has emphasized that the more one has internalized the norm of helping, the more one may engage in actual helping behavior (Schwartz, 1977). The relationship between cultural norms and each individual's helping behavior has thus only been treated as a relationship with some kind of direct corresponding link.

Moreover, some researchers have begun to focus on people's helping behavior under nonspontaneous situations; however, due to the difficulty of observing the situations for large numbers of people over a long period of time, research on nonspontaneous helping usually has been restricted to paper-and-pencil self-reports of such behavior (chapter 1), the influence of social contexts, particular cultural norms, and social systems, on people's long-term prosocial commitment has never been explored systematically before.

Here I would argue, then, that, in regard to people's helping behavior in everyday life, cultural norms are very complicated. They provide people with motivation to help, make people's helping become more meaningful, and also delimit the patterns and paths of people's long-term prosocial commitment. The influence of social systems, too, include not only that people's social networks may restrict the targets one can help and those one can ask for help (e.g., Amato, 1990), but also that they can foster a plausibility structure that continually validates our prosocial commitment. The influences of cultural norms and social systems on each individual's patterns of

helping behavior are less than straightforward, and much more complicated and dynamic than we first thought.

In Taiwan, in the collective settings of the Tzu-Chi Association, we are witnessing the beginning, maintenance, and development of many individuals' voluntary long-term prosocial commitment (chapter 1 and 3). In the Tzu-Chi settings, both cultural and social factors are highly salient. There is a clearly postulated collective action frame and intensive social interaction involved in the Tzu-Chi settings (chapter 1, 4, 6), in which participants are continually involved in both those collective action frames and various forms of social interactions. In addition, they try to contextualize themselves in the specific settings (chapter 6 and 8). There is no simple relationship between the social and cultural factors, and each individual actor is engaged in a long-term prosocial commitment in his/her everyday life. Because the Tzu-Chi Association is an organization with its most primary emphasis on participants' obligations of unconditional giving, the study of Tzu-Chi may therefore promise us in-depth information on how people actually engage in prosocial commitment in cultural and social contexts, and how these cultural and social factors may affect people's patterns and perception of helping behavior.

Specifically, the findings of the current study can be summarized as follows:

As a grassroots charitable organization, for particular social and historical reasons (the specific role private space

may play in one's life spaces for people live in a collectivist and pre-civil society, see chapter 3 and 5), the establishment and development of Tzu-Chi is mainly based upon participants' pre-existing social networks (chapter 5).

On the one hand, this characteristic makes helping behavior in Tzu-Chi highly influenced by the way personal networks actually function in Taiwanese society (chapter 5). Therefore, people in "private places", particularly relatives, are the most important recruiters for bringing both males and females into Tzu-Chi. Further examination of the "private places" of both males and females in Taiwan revealed qualitative differences between them, with males' "private places" being still more limited than those of females. Moreover, we found that one's position inside or outside this reticulated system may determine one's path and speed of commitment at an early stage of prosocial commitment. It may also enhance one's feelings of credibility and satisfaction from good deeds (thus furthering one's prosocial commitment), as these deeds quite often are motivated for the reasons of merit-accumulation.

On the other hand, Tzu-Chi's personal recruitment system may most often recruit new participants who have little pre-existing knowledge about charity and volunteering (chapter 5). These results of new recruited participants' naivete regarding charitable actions also make collective influences: the organizational ideational system--the collective action frames (chapter 6), and various forms of social interaction (chapter

7), have far-reaching effects on each individual Tzu-Chi participant's prosocial commitment.

With regard to collective action frames (chapter 6), we found that the "relevancy" of each participant's personal life, in Tzu-chi, is the most extraordinary characteristic of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame. On the other side of this "relevancy", Tzu-Chi participants do not passively take for granted the contents of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame, but rather, by linking the contents of the collective action frame to their own life framework, they actively engage in making meaning of Tzu-Chi's collective action frame.

With regard to the social interaction process that may foster Tzu-Chi's prosocial commitment (chapter 7), we identified the most important nine stages of Tzu-Chi participants' commitment processes toward helping behavior. Analytically, these nine stages can be labeled as a three-phase model, in which one's earlier structural proximity and availability, chances of playing a Tzu-Chi's role, and testifying in front of others to fix one's tendency toward role-person-merger, are the most explicit characteristics involved in each phase of the commitment process. This model shows that prosocial commitment (particularly under the circumstances in which the collective settings underlying these commitments are salient) are socially fostered and constructed in a rather lengthy interactive process.

An immediate question may arise: if Tzu-Chi participants'

helping behaviors are highly influenced by social contexts, how will they perceive their own helping behavior? Will Tzu-Chi participants still believe that their helping behaviors are purely self-motivated without external control (chapter 9)? Moreover, empirically, according to Schwartz and Howard's "boomerang effect" (1981, 1982, 1984), when people perform activities under conditions that are apparently externally controlled, their intrinsic motivation to perform these activities decreases, and further the observed prosocial acts of these people may decrease. Then, to what extent, has the boomerang effect appeared or not appeared among Tzu-Chi participants?

These issues are highly related to how people may actually make meanings and attributions for their own prosocial commitment, and then how these meanings and attributions may actually influence one's further path of prosocial commitment. We found that people actually talk about their prosocial commitment based upon some kinds of cultural repertoires and collective norms (chapter 8). By contextualizing themselves in various cultural repertoires and collective norms, Tzu-Chi participants not only make their prosocial commitment become more meaningful and more perceivable, but also persuade themselves and others that they should continually engage in the prosocial behavior in which they are currently engaging. We also notice how cultural repertoires and collective norms have been transmitted by organizational agencies and activists into the

vocabularies of highly "life-relevant" terms (chapter 6). It will be extremely important for participants to make meaning of their social action through these collective action frames.

While we may not know what the primary motivation--one's internal state and deep needs--is under Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment (actually even the social actors themselves may not quite know it), we may, however, trace the secondary motivation--the verbal reasons one attributes to his or her behavior--for Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment. We found that social dimensions are deeply intertwined in people's perceptions about their own prosocial behaviors. These perceptions may further determine whether one's prosocial commitment can be maintained and developed (chapter 8). At the collective base, whether or not collective settings and collective action frames can be helpful in fostering participants' feelings that they are helpers acting for self-motivated reasons and other-regarding concerns, may determine participants' perceptions of the collectivity that they are joining. They may also determine participants' further interests in continually engaging in prosocial commitment (chapter 9).

To conclude, we found that in Tzu-Chi cultural norms and social systems not only affect the possibility and patterns of people's helping behavior in everyday life, but also formulate people's perceptions of their own helping behavior. On the other hand, we found that in a patterned way, individuals also create their own meanings by situating themselves in the cultural norms

and social systems in which they are. As a result, each Tzu-Chi participant thus can continue his or her prosocial commitment in a specific social context. Grounded on data from long-term observation of Tzu-Chi participants' daily patterns of interaction and in-depth interviews with Tzu-Chi participants about their experience and feelings about long-term prosocial commitment (chapter 2), the current study has reconstructed a picture of Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment under specific cultural and social backgrounds. The study also shows that these backgrounds can have patterned influences on each individual's path of prosocial commitment.

We may argue that cultural norms and social systems are very specific things. But if so, then how can we generalize the current findings obtained from a study of a single case in a specific social context to helping behaviors in other social contexts?

Indeed, Tzu-Chi is a specific case in a specific historical context. However, we should notice that many basic mechanisms and processes that may be involved in people's helping behavior actually are quite universal: perceived cost and rewards, role modeling of a giver, bystanders in social contexts, the definition of situations, playing a helper's role, concern for meanings following each action, etc. For this reason, helping events in different social contexts may be fostered and delimited by different forms of cultural norms (for example, the norm of reciprocity vs. the norm of merit-accumulation in

secret) and social systems (for example, individualist society vs. collectivitist society). However, the general patterns and dynamics underlie one's prosocial commitment of how one will interact with his/her social systems and cultural norms, I would argue that in different settings they are actually quite similar.

We notice that the findings from the current study are obtained from an examination of a collective setting with rather intensive interactions. In one way or another an individual is always situated in some kind of cultural and social collectivity. From this we may assume that his/her commencement, maintenance, and development of prosocial commitment are also cultural and social products. Therefore, by causal explanation of various phenomena in Tzu-Chi, we get quite a good understanding of the general properties and patterns of people's helping behavior in natural settings.

As we reviewed in chapter 1, past paradigms of studies of helping behavior actually contain a couple of related implicit assumptions: 1) helpers act as individuals isolated from any social and cultural contexts, and any organizational or institutional settings; 2) one's decision to help is timeless; changes over time through feedback or learning are ignored. Thus, people's prosocial commitment is perceived as both timeless and non-contextual. While some researchers have begun to take account of how individuals may make the decision to help in nonspontaneous situations, their way of thinking about

helping is still timeless and non-contextual. Helpers in nonspontaneous situations are usually perceived as individuals with stronger internalized moral standards and altruistic personalities. They also have a clear thought of how they may engage in the long-term prosocial commitment. This way of perceiving helping behavior under nonspontaneous situations has limited the scope of investigated problems and has often restricted the examination of social reality.

With multiple methods for collecting data, the current study has provided a new lens with which to view some aspects of social reality. Many findings in the current case study are in direct contrast with the findings of past studies of nonspontaneous helping behavior, for example:

1) Findings from cross-sectional survey data have shown that participants are more empathic, have more internalized moral standards, have generally positive attitudes and moods toward both self and others, have feelings of self-efficacy, have better emotional adjustment, and perceive a lower cost of helping others than non-participants (see chapter 1). However, we found that in Tzu-Chi most participants engage in prosocial commitment without any pre-existing interests or experience with helping. People's earlier stages of prosocial commitment are highly affected by their position in their social network. The characteristics of people's life spaces in Taiwanese society may also determine who will become more helpful than others (for

example, women may become more helpful than men, and older people may become more helpful than younger people). We found that people's tendencies toward helping are highly determined by their social backgrounds and position in the social networks.

2) Similarly, studies also found that long-term helpers have stronger value concerns and internalized moral standards. We found that moral concerns in people's daily lives are not in static codes or timeless forms. The same moral code for different persons may have different meanings. How an individual links the contents of some moral codes to his (her) own life framework may determine whether he (she) will get involved in prosocial commitment. We found that Tzu-Chi's collective efforts in formulizing a collective action frame with highly personal-related forms and contents thus have made collective moral actions become much more likely to happen. As Tzu-Chi participants commit to help, they do not commit to some abstract moral value, but commit to some very personal concerns.

3) Several variables have been found important in leading to people's long-term prosocial commitment in nonspontaneous situations, such as perceived benefits (Reddy, 1980), ability (Clary & Orenstein, 1991), and extensivity in personality (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). The current study on Tzu-Chi participants shows that these variables should not be viewed primarily in categorical terms. We notice that, particularly in

intensive collective settings, all of these variables are highly socially constructed. Collective processes (symbolic construction and social validation) may influence how one perceives his/her perceived benefits and costs, how one validates and develops his/her ability in helping, and how one's feelings of extensivity become much more salient. An individual is not divorced from the social contexts in which he/she is situated, nor is he/she apart from the preceding and following actions in which he/she engages. Research on Tzu-Chi participants' prosocial commitment show this fact clearly.

4) Findings on people's motivation across time for prosocial commitment in the nonspontaneous situations are in conflict. Piliavin, Evans, & Callero (1984) showed that committed blood donors reported higher humanitarian or altruistic concerns in motivating their prosocial commitment than less committed blood donors, while Omoto and Snyder (1995) found that more highly committed helpers report higher self-oriented reasons in motivating their prosocial commitment than less committed helpers. My findings on Tzu-Chi participants shows that one's motive talk is determined by two factors: 1. Specific organizational norms and cultural repertoire about the motive talk in the settings; 2. Differences between participants' degree of prosocial commitment and organizational identity that may affect one's link with some of these norms and repertoires. Therefore, in Tzu-Chi, for some kinds of prosocial commitments

(such as Commissioners in Tzu-Chi), the longer one commits, the more strongly one may believe that he/she is helping for altruistic reasons. For another kind of prosocial commitment (such as Members in Tzu-Chi), the longer one participates, the more strongly one may believe that he/she is helping for self-beneficial reasons. Therefore, both Piliavin, Evans, & Callero's (1984), and Omoto and Snyder's (1995) findings of people's motivations for prosocial commitment are right to some extent but also are limited due to the fact that they only view partial aspects of social reality. Methodologically, the current study shows that to ask people's motivation for prosocial commitment without observing the actual social processes (the processes of normative influences and social interaction) involved in the organization, and without considering the specific backgrounds of social actors (age, gender, and the degree of role-person-merger toward the organizational role), will lead us to get quite misleading researching results.

5) Substantially, a key finding that was never pointed out directly by past studies is that people with a long-term prosocial commitment in natural settings must find, and articulate when the chance arises, the legitimate reasons for validating their long-term prosocial commitment. Under natural social settings, without this social process of imputing motives of prosocial commitment to themselves and others, people may have difficulties in continuing their prosocial commitment. The

agenda of our further study on helping behavior in nonspontaneous situations certainly should take the mechanisms and influences of people's motive talk on their prosocial commitment into account more seriously.

The contribution of the current case study is both methodological and substantive. Methodologically, we show that through a detailed case study by combining different lines of in-depth data (participant observation, intensive interview, and various written documents), we can explore how social contexts (cultural norms and social interaction) could have far-reaching influences on each individual Tzu-Chi participant's pattern of prosocial commitment, and also we obtained a deep understanding of each individual Tzu-Chi participant's feelings and expectations toward their prosocial commitment. Therefore, studying long-term committed helpers within their social contexts could be done in our intensive study of a "strategic research site" (Merton, 1959). Substantially, as both social actors and social settings have been observed and investigated together at the same time, we get a better picture of how people actually engage in prosocial commitment in their everyday lives.

The current study is an exploratory study with an interest in finding out the fundamental characteristics of helping behavior in intensive collective settings and norms-salient environments. It is the first step toward exploring how helping behaviors work in the real world. Several agendas for further

study in this line should be done in the future.

First of all, my own background allows me to explore how participants in a charitable organization of Taiwan become involved in long-term prosocial commitments. Even though the current study has offered many useful ideas on viewing helping behavior in people's everyday lives, how these ideas can actually apply to helping behavior under settings of Western societies is still an open question.

In different social contexts, people may behave differently due to different kinds of influences from norms and social systems. The current study assumes that the patterns and processes of how these norms and systems work in different social contexts are similar. Therefore, for both American volunteers and Tzu-Chi participants, in order to continue their prosocial commitment, by the processes of contextualizing themselves in the specific cultural repertoires and organizational norms, they must struggle hard to convince themselves and others that they are self-motivated and other-regarding helpers.

Nevertheless, as our finding is only from in-depth study of a single case, these patterns of helping behavior found in the current study should be examined, tested, and compared to findings in other charitable organizations or helping settings, particularly to those American voluntary organizations that are based upon both biblical tradition and civil participation (Bellah, Sullivan, Madsen, Sullivan, & Tipton, 1985). Some

special political and religious processes involved in these American voluntary organizations may cause people's patterns of prosocial commitment to be different from the current case study.

Secondly, with regard to helping behavior, due to the limitations of space, the analysis of the current case study has mainly operated at a micro-level; that is, the level of analysis was on people's immediate face-to-face encounters in the settings, with only partial notice on the meso-level issues, such as social networks and interaction in small-group settings. However, many things at the meso-level of collective settings, such as leadership styles, job design, role definition, participation in decision making, organizational communication, that may affect people's prosocial commitment have not been explored at all in the current study. As these things are also important parts of collective settings, they certainly may influence people's perceptions of and their path of prosocial commitment. Exploring how in natural settings complex organizational processes may affect people's patterns of prosocial commitments thus may bring our understanding of nonspontaneous helping a step further. It is one of the future research agendas that we need to pursue.

In sum, we are in the process of depicting how helping behavior actually occurs in the real-life world. We not only need cumulative and aggregated efforts to do this job, but we also need a new perspective to make our social reality become

more perceivable. The current study is a step toward both of these goals. More studies in this line of efforts should emerge in the future.

TABLE

Table 2.1. The crosstable between the way I get my sample and sex composition

	My relationships with interviewed respondents		
Sex	Known directly by myself (n=24)	Introduced by those I known (n=35)	Purposive sampling in Tzu-Chi's settings (n=23)
Male (n=39)	19 (79%)	13 (37%)	7 (30%)
Female (n=43)	5 (21%)	22 (63%)	16 (70%)

Table 2.2. Distribution of purposive sampling schedule

Different Subunits[a]	Sex							
	Female (n=43)				Male (n=39)			
	<30	31-40	41-50	>50	<30	31-40	41-50	>50
MEM (n=13)	3	3	2	1	3	1	1	1
HON (n=10)	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
FAITH[b] (n=13)	-	-	-	-	2	4	5	2
APP (n=13)	2	10	3	2	2	2	2	2
COM (n=13)	2	1	5	5	2	1	2	1
MUL (n=14)	2	1	1	3	2	1	3	5
YOUNG[c] (n=6)	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Total	6	17	9	11	8	7	12	12

[a] MEM:Member; HON: Honored Patrons; FAITH: Faith Corps; APP: Apprentice Commissioner; COM: Commissioner; MUL: Participants with Multiple-roles; YOUNG: Tzu-Chi college student Association.

[b] Faith Corps: all participants are male.

[c] All participants of Tzu-Chi college student Association are college students age whose age are below 30.

Table 5.1. Recruitment Patterns for Tzu-Chi (N:76)

Recruitment Avenues	Frequency	Percent
Public Places	2	2.6
Social Networks	66	86.8
Mass Media	8	10.5
Mail/telephone	0	0.0
Total	76	100.0

Table 5.2. Gender by First contact with ISKON (Hare Krishna Movement)[1]

Way of first contact	Female (n=104)	Male (n=110)
Social network[2]	61%	34%
Public places	33%	51%
Others[3]	8%	15%
Total	101%	101%

[1] Sources are based upon Rochford's (1985:125) original table.

[2] Contacts coded as Social Network are collapsed from the two items in Rochford's original table: 1. Devotee network: contacts leading to membership initiated through social ties with person who are already ISKON members, and; 2. Nonmember networks: contacts initiated with movement sympathizers that lead to persons taking up membership with ISKON.

[3] Contacts coded as "other" include being picked up hitchhiking by ISKCON members, visiting a Krishna community for a school project, meeting the devotees at an Antinuke rally, and contact with the movement on their own.

Table 5.3. Gender by Different Recruitment Avenues in Tzu-Chi

Recruitment Avenues	Female (n=40)	Male (n=36)
Social network	34 (85.0%)	32 (88.9%)
Mass Media	5 (12.5%)	3 (8.3%)
Public places	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.8%)
Total	40	36

* χ^2 = 0.3510 D.F.= 2, P = 0.8390

Table 5.4. Patterns of being recruited through person-to-person networks in Tzu-Chi: comparing males and females

Network of being recruited	Female (n=40)	Male (n=36)
By relatives	17 (50.0)	17 (53.1)
By neighbors	5 (14.7)	4 (12.5)
By friends	6 (17.6)	6 (18.6)
By co-workers	6 (17.6)	5 (15.6)
Total	40 (100.0)	36 (100.0)

* χ^2 = 0.14154, D.F.= 3, P = 0.9864

Table 5.5. Age Composition for Several Categories of Membership in Tzu-Chi's Taipei Branch 1994[a]

Age group	Honored Patron (n=2544)	Commissioner (n=2425)	Faith Corps (n=757)
≥40	6%	5%	22%
41-50	38%	60%	52%
51-60	42%	25%	25%
>60	12%	10%	1%
Total	98%	100%	100%

[a] Sources based upon K'ang and Chien's (1996:90) original table.

Table 5.6. Gender Composition in Different Categories of Membership of Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch's new participants in 1996

Sex	Commissioner (n=166)	Faith Corps[a] (n=75)	Honored Patron (n=133)
Female	127 (77%)	--	62 (47%)
Male	39 (23%)	75 (100%)	71 (53%)
Total	166 (100%)	75 (100%)	133 (100%)

[a] This category of participants must be male.

Table 5.7. Gender differences in patterns of being recruited by relatives among those Tzu-Chi participants who were recruited into Tzu-Chi by relatives[a]

By whom one was recruited	Female (n=17)	Male (n=17)
Spouse or Parents[b]	5 (27.8%)	13 (72.2%)
Other Relatives[c]	12 (75.0%)	4 (25.0%)
Total	17(100.0%)	17 (100.0)

[a] Since the sample size for both proportions (male and female) is too small (less than 30, see Ott, Larson, Mendenhall, 1983:315), instead of using chi-squire test of independence, I present the exact p value that is calculated from the Fisher's exact test. The exact p value here is 0.0067 (< 0.05).

[b] Specifically, for females, among the 5, one is recruited by spouse, 4 are recruited by parents; among males, 9 are recruited by spouse, 4 are recruited by parents.

[c] Contacts coded as "Other relatives" are collapsed from four items: parents-in-law, siblings, relatives-in-law (not including parents-in-law), and other distant relatives. Specifically, for females, 13 are coded in this category, 4 by parents-in-law, 4 by siblings, 4 by relatives-in-law, and 1 by daughter; for males, 4 are coded in this category, none by parents-in-law, 1 by sibling, 2 by relatives-in-law, and 1 by aunt.

Table. 5.8. The patterns of recruitment among different age groups[a]

Patterns of Recruitment	20 thru 50 (n=53)	51 and above (n=23)
By networks	43 (81.1%)	23 (100.0%)
By media or in public places[b]	10 (18.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	53	23

[a] Since the sample size here is too small (one proportion is less than 30, see discussion in Ott, Larson, & Mendenhall, 1983:315), instead of using chi-squire test of independence, I present the exact p value that is calculated from the Fisher's exact test. The exact p value here is 0.0204 (< 0.05).

[b] For age group from 20 thru 50, among 10, 8 are recruited through mass media, and 2 are recruited in public places.

Table 7.1. How many Tzu-Chi participants in each category of membership have reached which stage of the commitment process

Stages of Commitment Process	Different Categories of Membership in Tzu-Chi[a]						
	MEM	HON	FAITH	APP	COM	MUL	Total
1. Initial contact with a participant							0
2. Frame alignment process							0
3. Affection bond	9	4	4				17
4. The commitment events	4	5	1	3			13
5. Role Playing							0
6. Perceived rewards and benefits			1	2			3
7. Breaking away from structural limitations			3	7	1	2	13
8. Testifying to the experience			2	1	1		4
9. Group support for changed cognitive and behavioral patterns		1	2		11	12	26
Total	13	10	13	13	13	14	76

[a] MEM:Members; HON: Honored Patrons; FAITH: Faith Corps; APP: Apprentice Commissioners; COM: Commissioners; MUL: Participants with Multiple-roles.

Table 7.2. Experience of Testifying in Public by Degree of Commitment

Whether one has experience of testifying in public	Highly Committed[a] (n=27)	Less Committed[b] (n=49)	Total
Yes	24 (89%)	6 (12%)	30
No	3 (11%)	43 (88%)	46
Total	27 (100.0)	49 (100%)	76

* χ^2 = 39.65284 (After Yates Correction) D.F.= 1, P = 0.0000

[a] Including Commissioners and those playing multiple roles in Tzu-Chi.

[b] Including Members, Honored Patrons, Faith Corps, and Apprentice Commissioners.

Table 7.3. Three Phases of Participants' Commitment Processes in Tzu-Chi

Three Phases	Main Characteristics	Main Obstacles for further Commitment	Corresponding Stages
1. Structural Proximity and Availability	*Mediated by structural availability one begins to be cognitively transformed by the patterned influences from Tzu-Chi	*Not sitting in Tzu-Chi's reticulated network *The pre-existing personal network about Tzu-Chi is not intensive enough	1. Initial contact with a Tzu-Chi's participant 2. Frame alignment processes 3. Affection bond 4. The commitment events
2. Role Playing	*Chances of playing Tzu-chi's roles elicit one's subjective feelings toward Tzu-Chi and Tzu-Chi's roles	*Structural limitations for less time and money *Structural limitations from personal network	5. Role playing 6. Perceived benefits and satisfaction 7. Breaking away from structural limitations
3. Role-Person-Merger	*Tzu-Chi's role becomes the essential part of participants' self	*Opposite reactions from society	8. Testifying to the Tzu-Chi experience 9. Group support for changed cognitive and behavioral patterns

Table 8.1. Average score in different dimensions of motivation for joining Tzu-Chi for Tzu-Chi participants of different categories of membership

Average score in different dimensions of the refined Omoto and Snyder's motivation scale	Different Categories of Membership in Tzu-Chi[a] (N=74)[b]					
	MEM n=13	HON n=10	FAITH n=12[c]	APP n=12[d]	COM n=14	MUL n=14
VALUE[e]	6.09	5.34	5.27	5.77	*6.29	5.94
UNDERSTANDING	4.92	3.70	*5.25	4.42	3.38	4.21
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	*5.40	3.26	5.12	4.15	4.29	4.54
COMMUNITY CONCERN	*4.54	2.16	3.45	4.32	3.16	3.46
ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT	*4.34	2.22	3.35	3.48	3.28	3.39

* Highest average score on the specific item.

[a] MEM: Member; HON: Honored Patron; FAITH: Faith Corps; APP: Apprentice Commissioner; COM: Commissioner; MUL: Participants with multiple roles.

[b] Two cases are missing, see notes c and d.

[c] In the sample of motivation measurement by the motivation scale, here is one missing case in the category of the Faith Corps.

[d] In the sample of motivation measurement by the motivation scale, there is one missing case in the category of Apprentice Commissioner.

[e] Average score for each dimension is obtained from the average score of participants' (of the same category) average scores for the 5 items of the specific dimension.

Table 8.2. Number of participants in each category who mentioned planting of blessings and merit transfer as their motive for prosocial commitment, and the average score obtained from the motivational scale on the item of merit-accumulation for each category of membership

	Different Categories of Membership in Tzu-Chi[a]						
	MEM	HON	FAITH	APP	COM	MUL	Total
Average score on item of merit-accumulation as motivation for prosocial commitment	4.46 (13)[b]	2.20 (10)	3.00 (12)[c]	1.91 (12)[d]	2.38 (13)	2.71 (14)	(74)[e]
number mentioning planting the seeds of good fortune and merits transfer as motive for prosocial commitment	7 (13) (54%)	6 (10) (60%)	5 (13) (38%)	8 (13) (62%)	9 (13) (69%)	7 (14) (50%)	42 (76) (55%)

[a] MEM: Member; HON: Honored Patron; FAITH: Faith Corps; APP: Apprentice Commissioner; COM: Commissioner; MUL: Participants with multiple roles.

[b] Number in the parentheses is the total for each category of membership.

[c] In the sample of motivation measurement by the motivation scale, there is one missing case in the category of the Faith Corps.

[d] In the sample of motivation measurement by the motivation scale, there is one missing case in the category of Apprentice Commissioner.

[e] Two cases are missing, see notes c and d.

Table 8.3. Average score in dimensions of personal development on the motivation scale for different Tzu-Chi categories of membership

Average score for each of the items in dimensions of personal development on the motivation scale	Different Categories of Membership in Tzu-Chi[a]					
	MEM n=13	HON n=10	FAITH n=12[b]	APP n=12[c]	COM n=14	MUL n=14
1. To get to know people who are similiar to my self	5.62*	3.10	5.00	3.83	4.46	4.50
2. To meet new people and make new friends	5.62*	3.40	4.75	3.42	4.38	4.36
3. To gain experience dealing with emotionally difficult topics	5.46	3.70	5.83*	4.58	4.46	5.14
4. To challenge myself and test my skills	5.31*	2.50	5.25	4.42	4.69	4.71
5. To learn about myself and my strengths and weaknesses	5.00*	3.60	4.75	4.50	3.46	4.00

* Highest average score on the specific item

[a] MEM: Member; HON: Honored Patron; FAITH: Faith Corps; APP: Apprentice Commissioner; COM: Commissioner; MUL: Participants with multiple roles.

[b] In the sample of motivation measurement by the motivation scale, there is one missing case in the category of the Faith Corps.

[c] In the sample of motivation measurement by the motivation scale, there is one missing case in the category of Apprentice Commissioner.

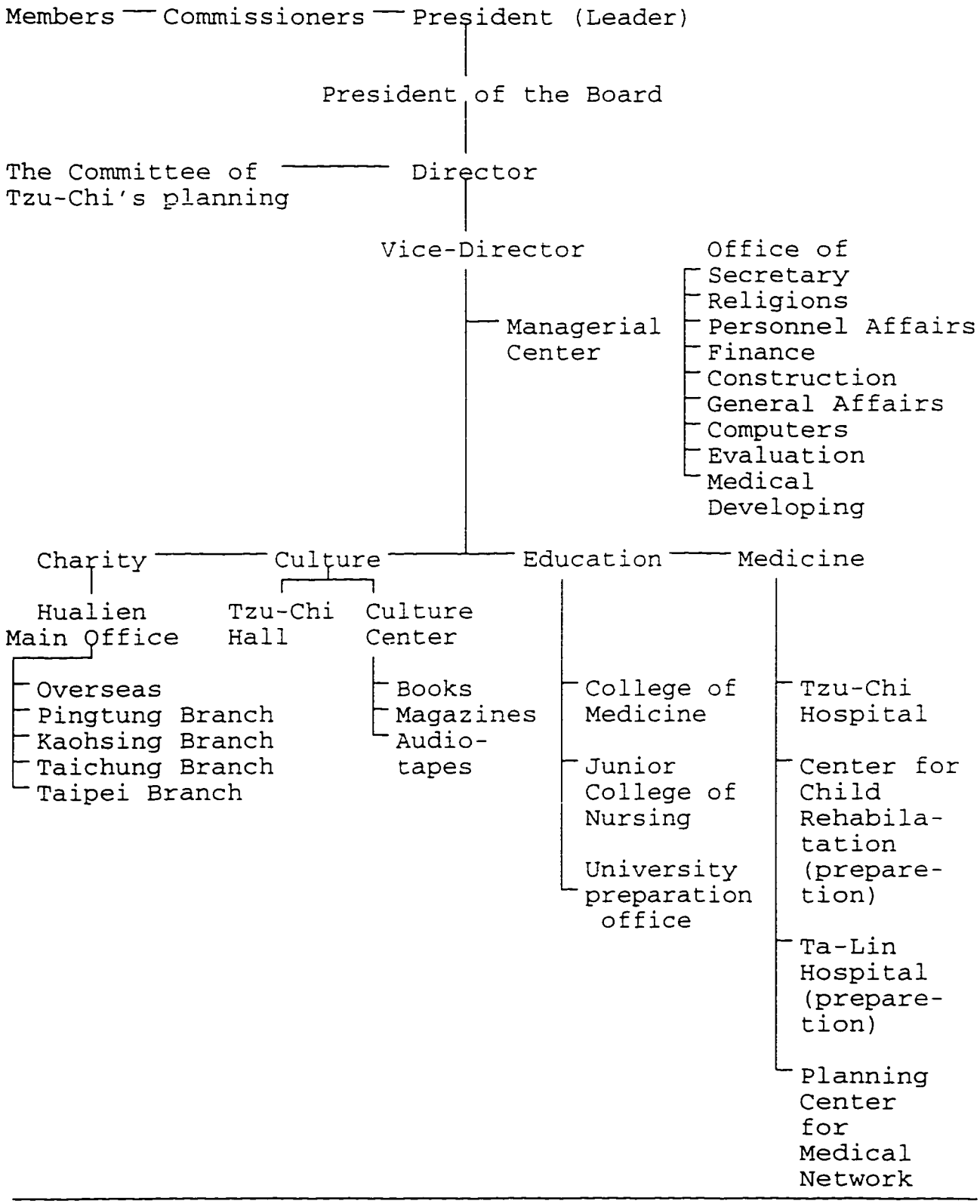
Table 8.4. Differences between current motivation and recalled initial motivation in average score of different dimensions or items on the motivation scale for all Tzu-Chi participants in current sample (N=74)[a]

Average score in different dimensions or items on the motivation scale	Average score on current motivation	Average score on recalled initial motivation	Difference
1. Value[b]	5.81	5.04	0.77
2. Understanding	4.41	3.27	1.14
3. Personal Development	4.51	3.27	1.24
4. Community Concern	3.56	2.71	0.85
5. Esteem Enhancement	3.39	2.70	0.69
6. Leader's Influences	6.04	4.66	1.38
7. Purifying this Society	6.00	3.72	2.28
8. Rebuilding Morality	5.18	3.36	1.82

[a] Two cases are missing.

[b] Average scores for dimensions 1 to 6 are obtained from the average scores of participants' (of the same category) average scores for the 5 items of the specific dimension. Score for items 7 and 8 are the average score of participants' (of the same category) responses on the specific item.

Table 9.1. The Organizational System of Tzu-Chi's Four Great Missions*



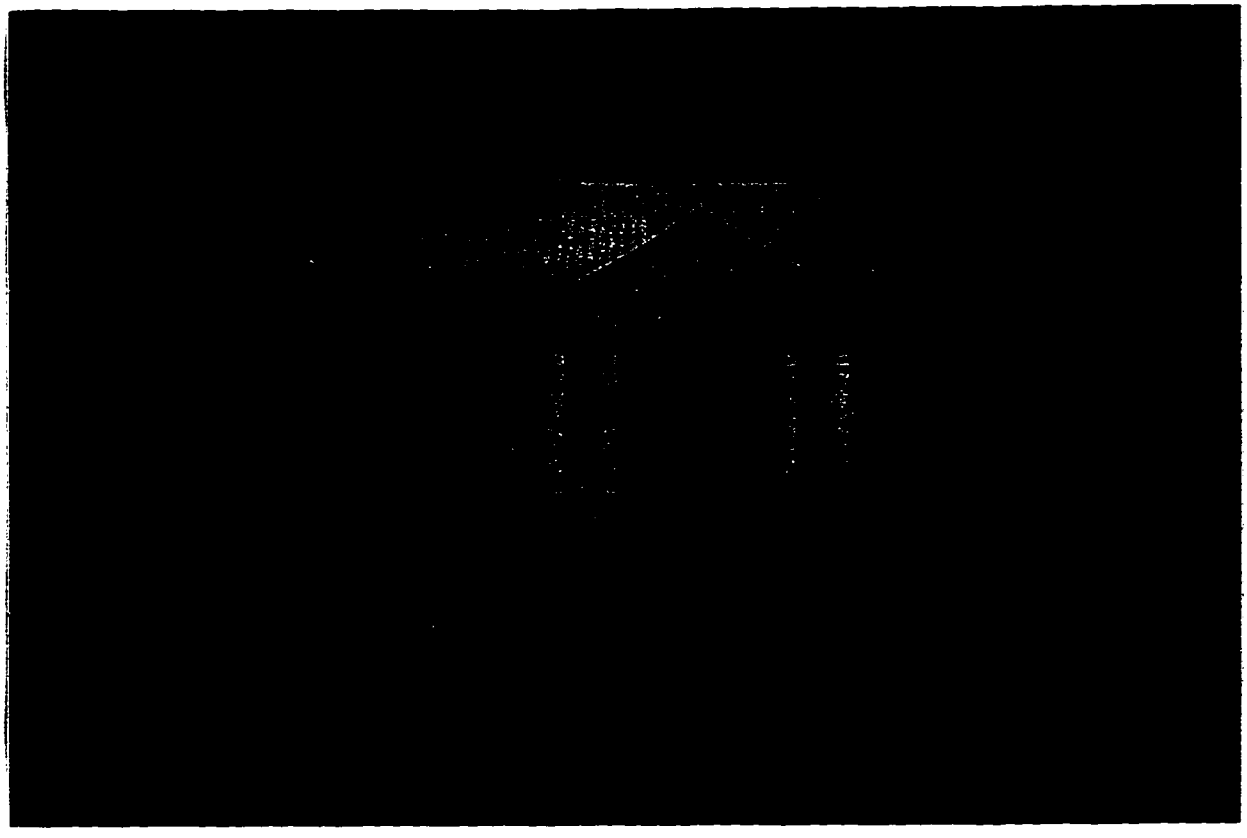
* Source: Tzu-Chi Yearbook 1992 (1992:34).

PICTURE

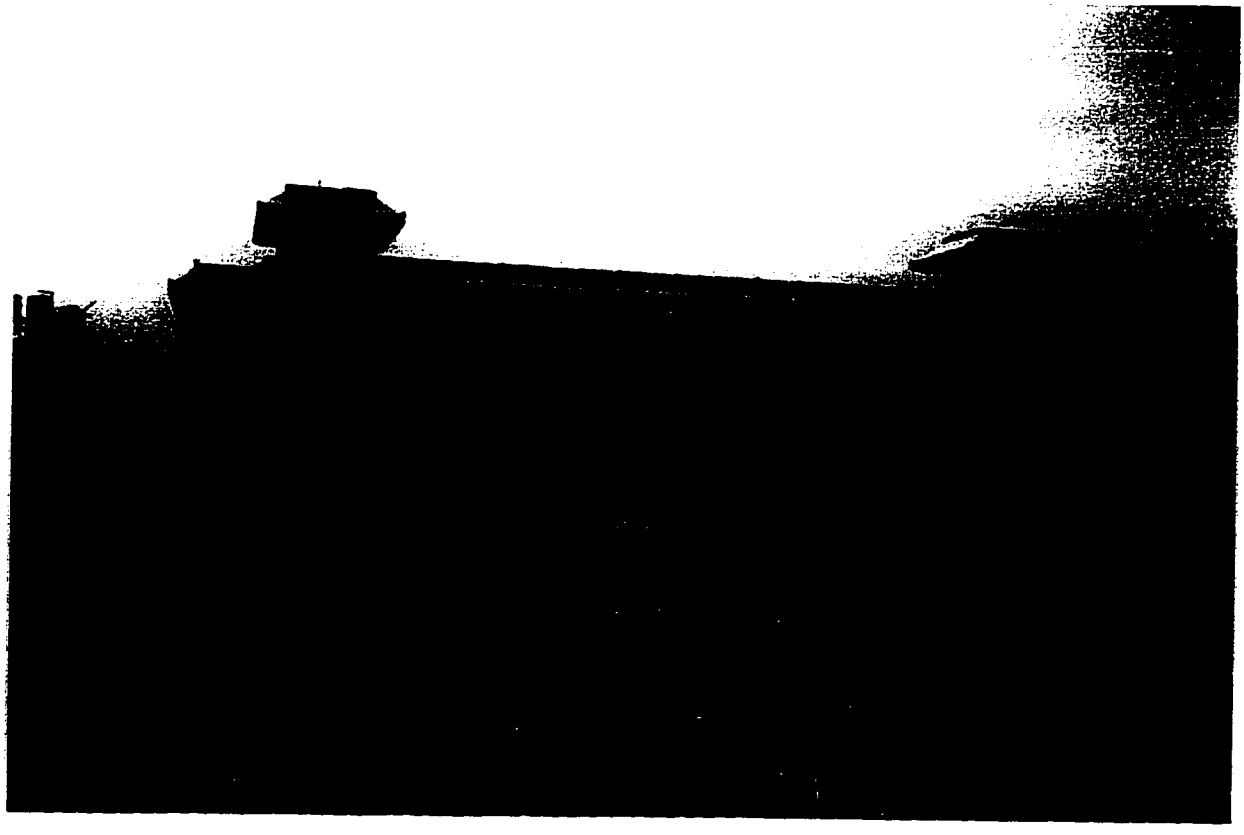
Picture 1.1. Tzu-Chi's Leader Master Cheng Yen and her Teacher Master Yin Shun[1]

[1] Source: Tzu-Chi Yearbook, 1992 (1992: Preface)

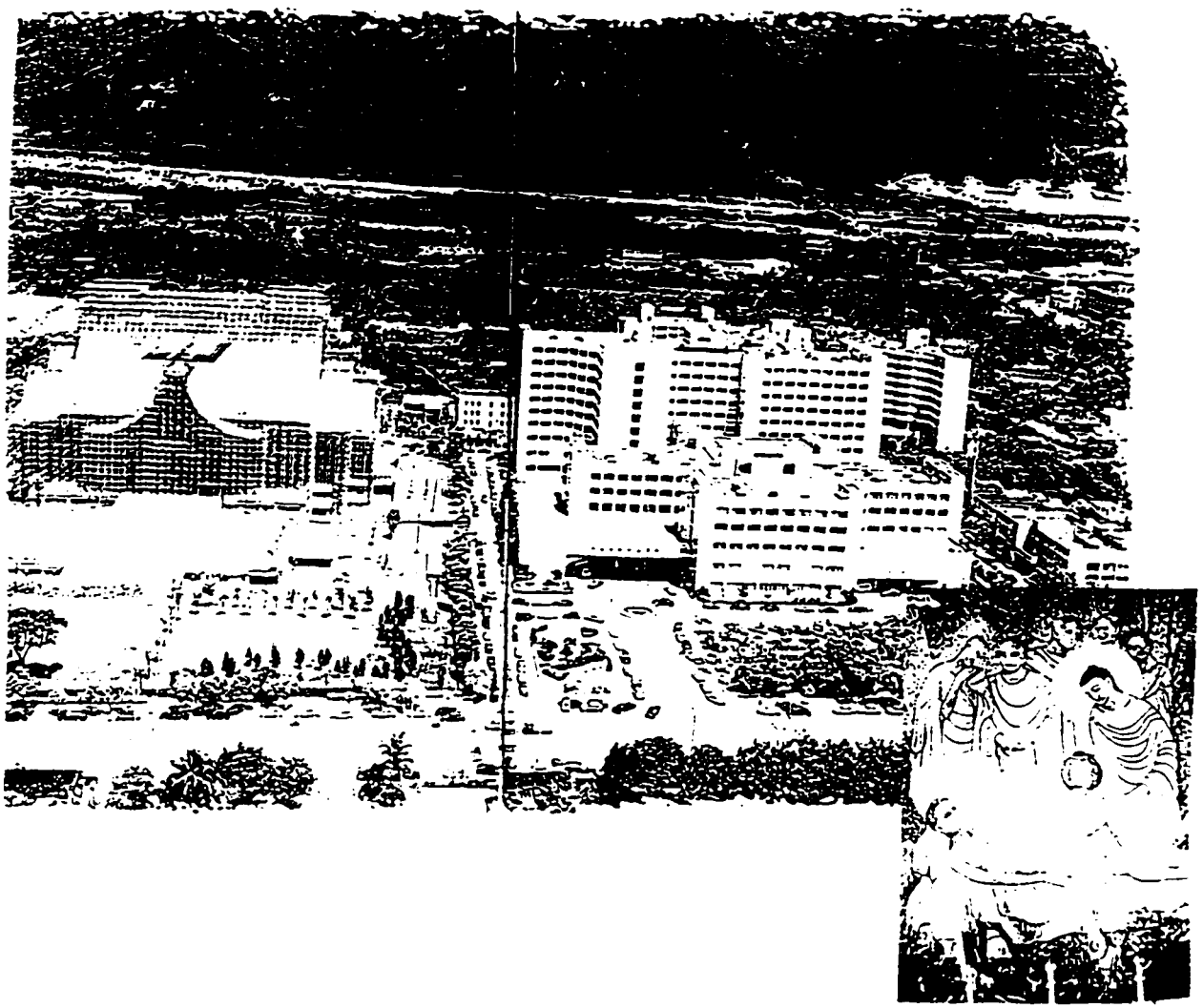
Picture 2.1. Tzu-Chi Still Thought Abode (1): View from front



Picture 2.2. Tzu-Chi Still Thought Abode (2): View from back

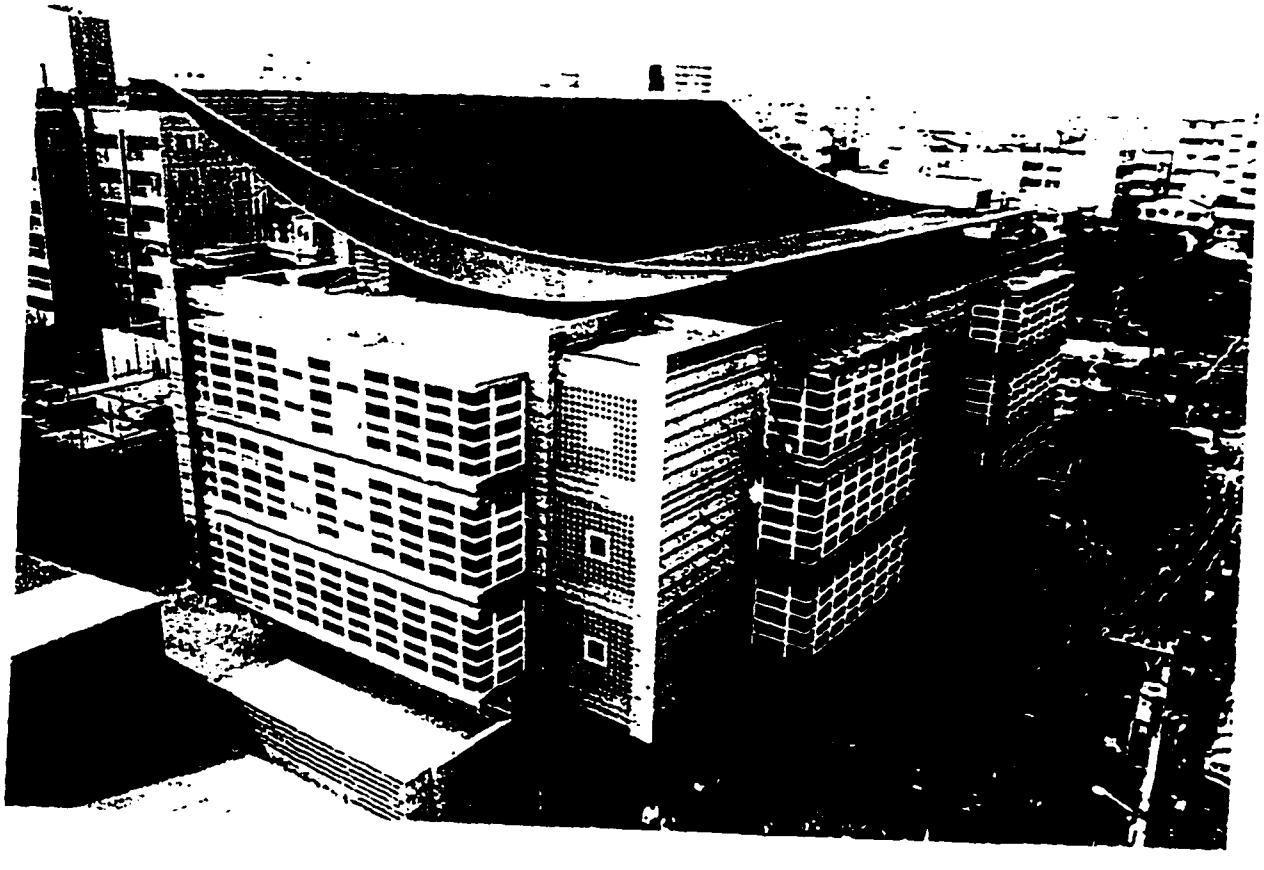


Picture. 2.3. Tzu-Chi Hospital and Tzu-Chi Memorial Hall[1]



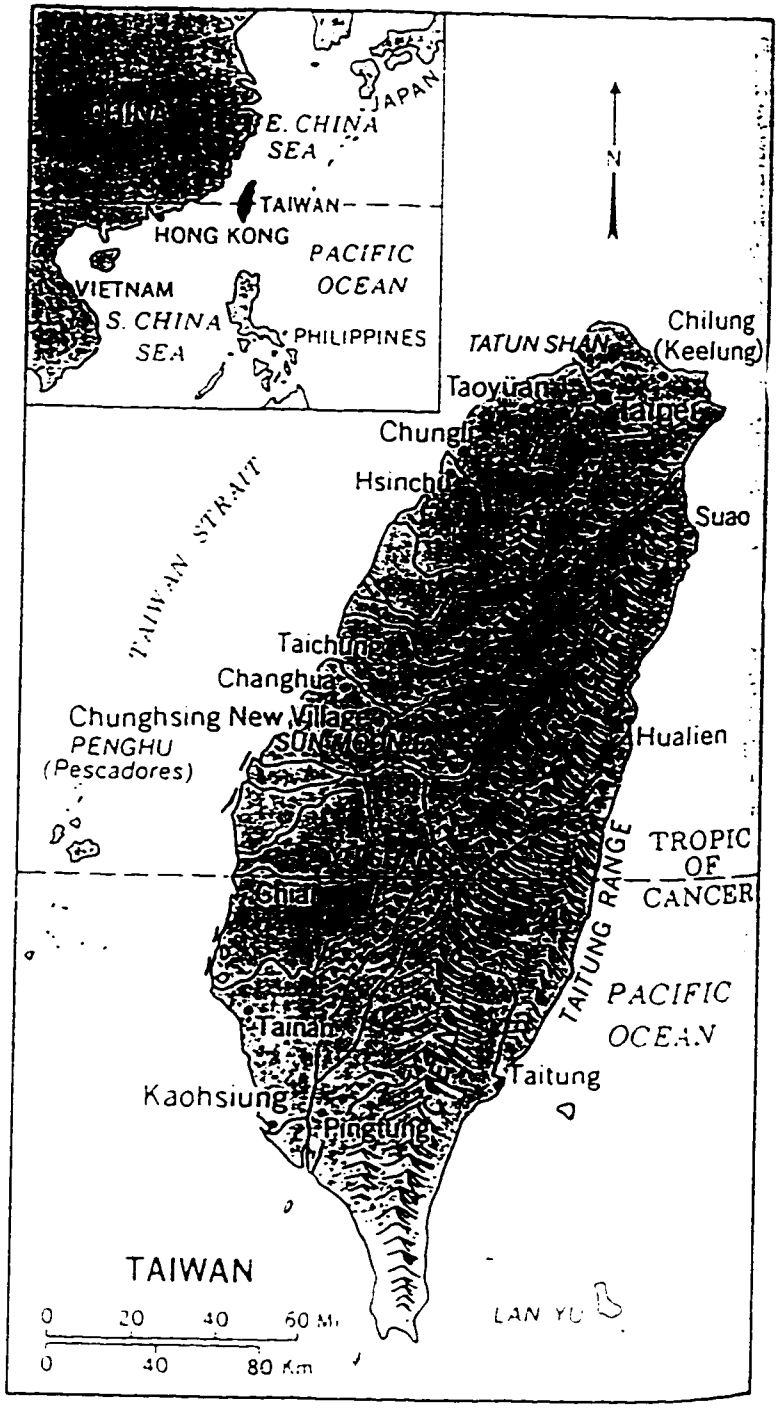
[1] Source: Tzu-Chi Culture Center (1993: 41-42)

Picture. 2.4. Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch[a]



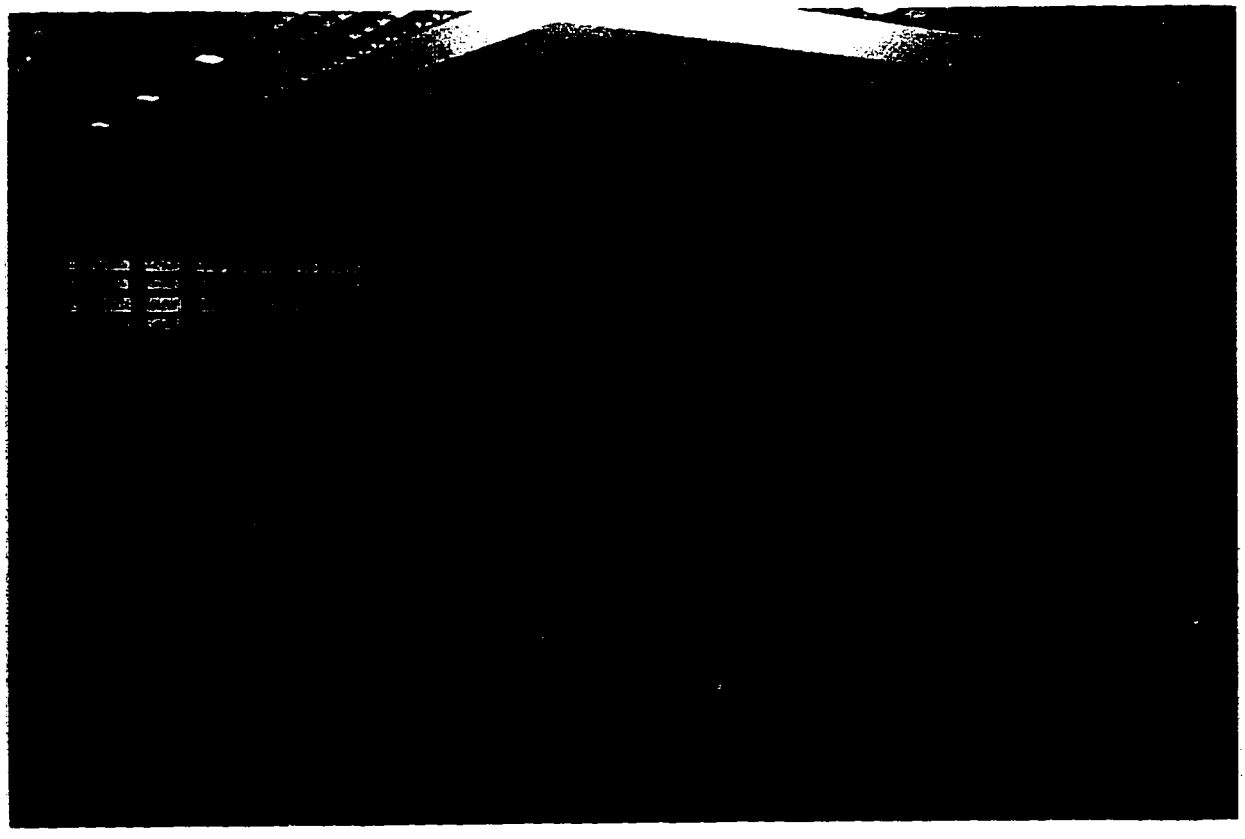
[a] Source: Tzu-Chi Monthly 312 (Cover)

Picture. 2. 5. Map of Taiwan, and the position of Taichung and Hualien[a]



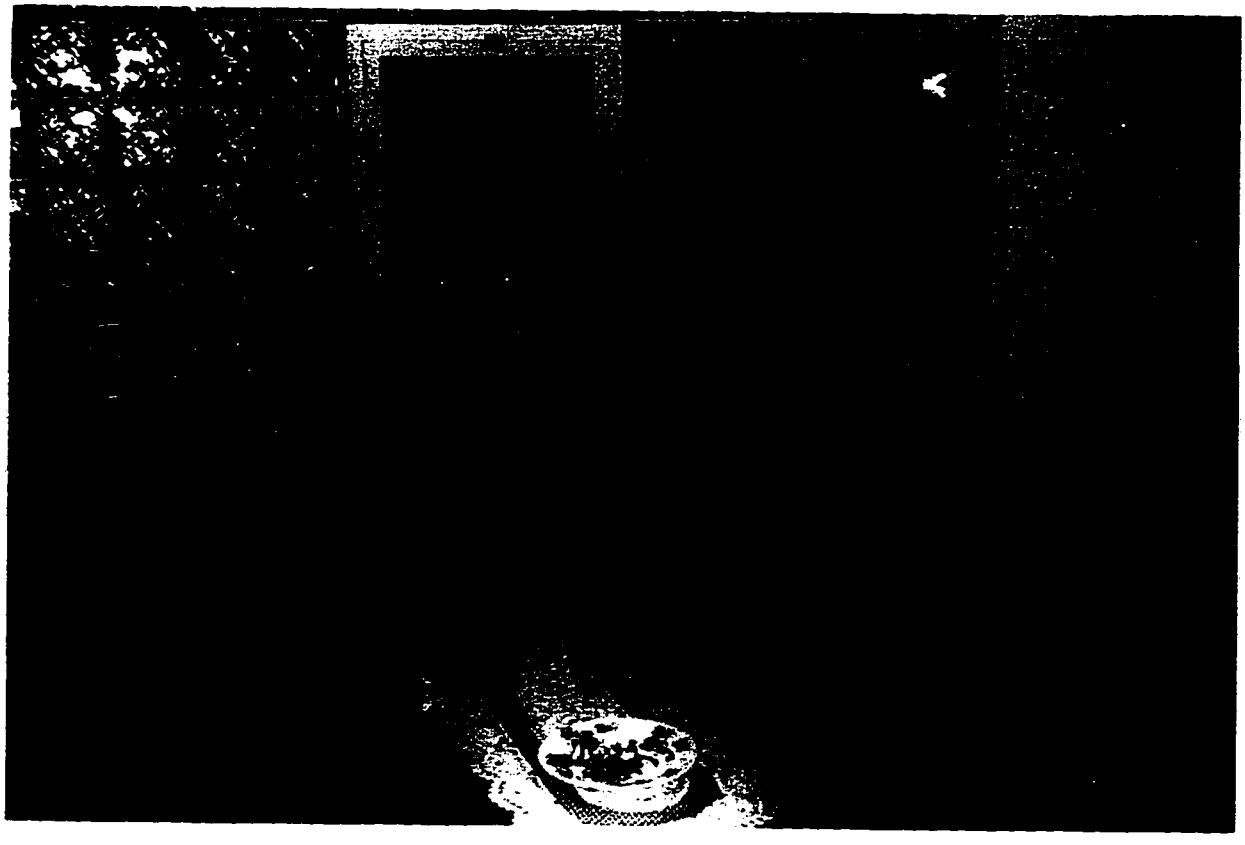
[a] Source: Unger (1992:232)
Note: Tzu-Chi's original place Still Thought Abode is in Hualien; Tzu-Chi hospital is in Hualien; And there are four main branches: Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsing, and Pingtung.

Picture 2.6. Collective gathering in Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch (1)

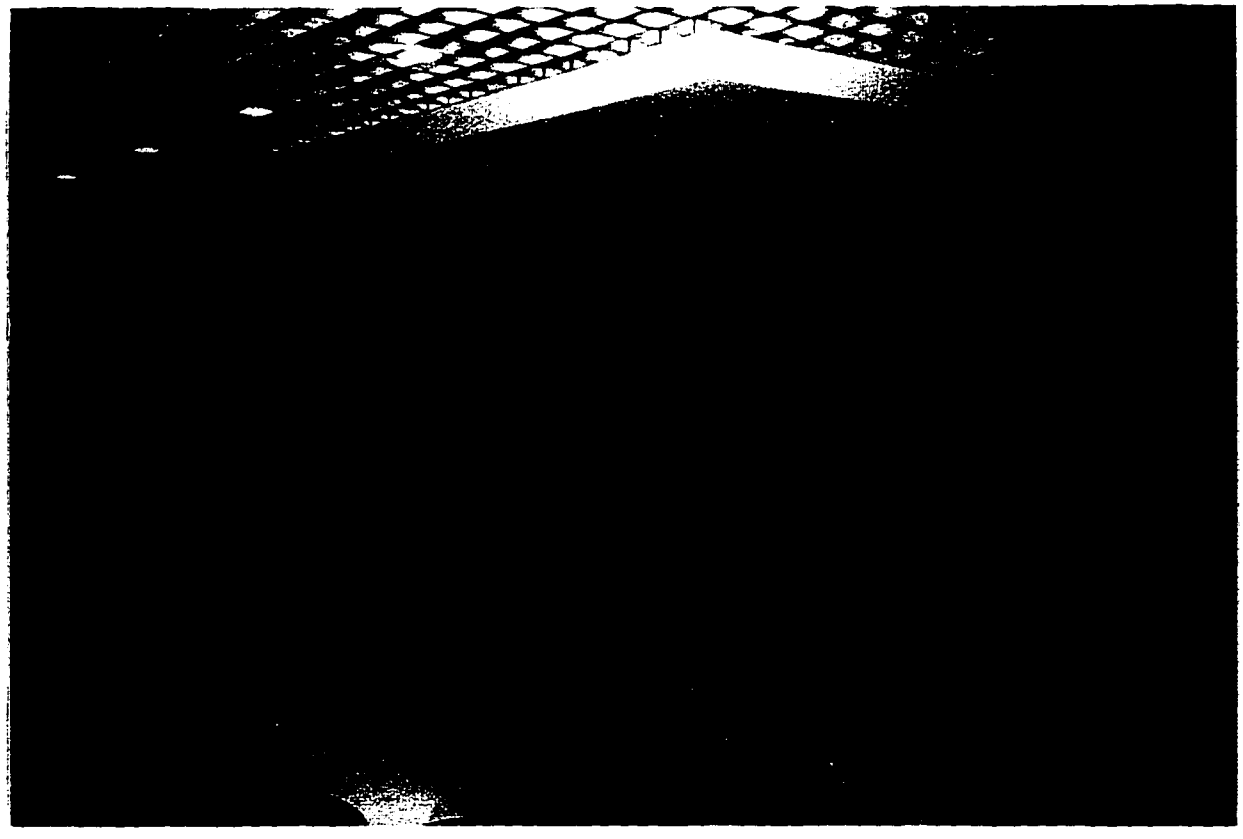


Picture 2.7. Collective gathering in Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch (2)

Picture. 2.8. Interviewing a Tzu-Chi participant in the Visitor room in Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch



Picture 2.9. Wednesday night's collective Religious Practice in Tzu-Chi Taichung Branch



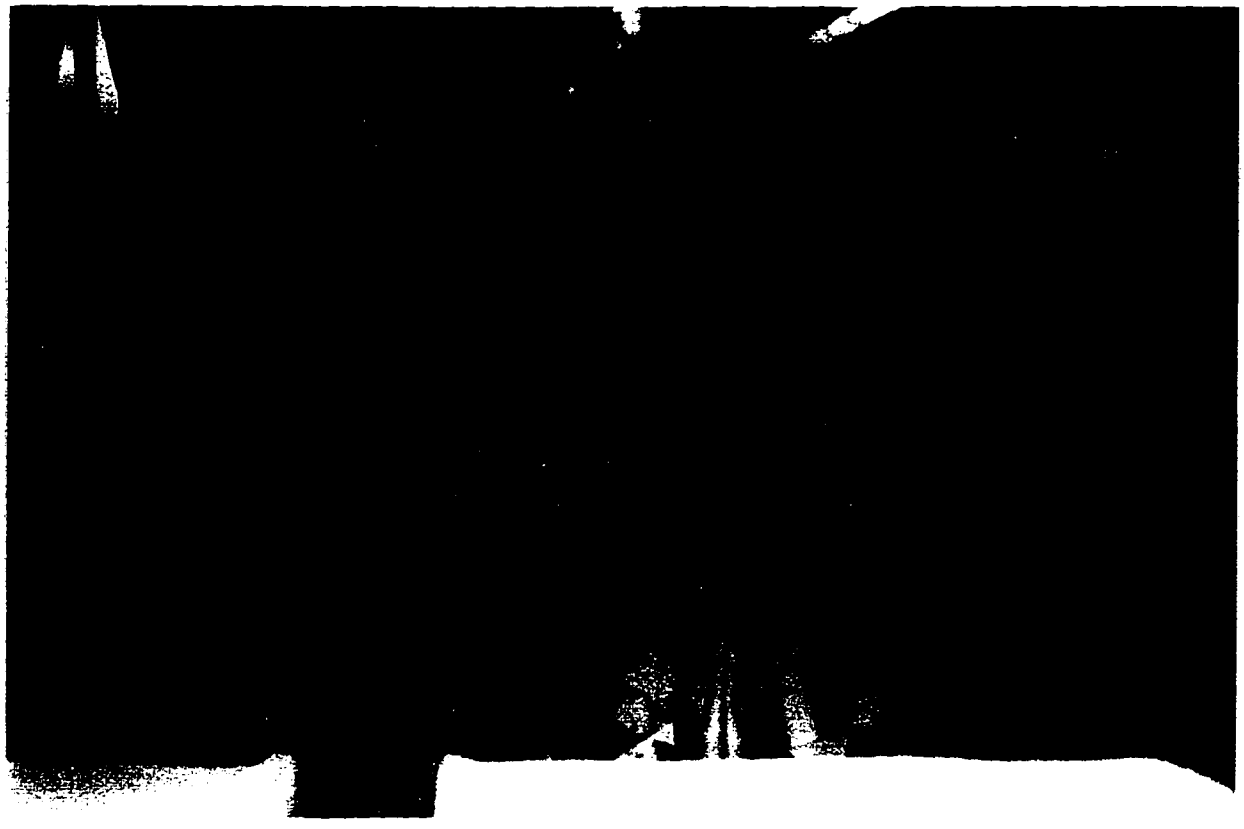
Picture 3.1. Chanting the name of Buddha[illegible]

[illegible]

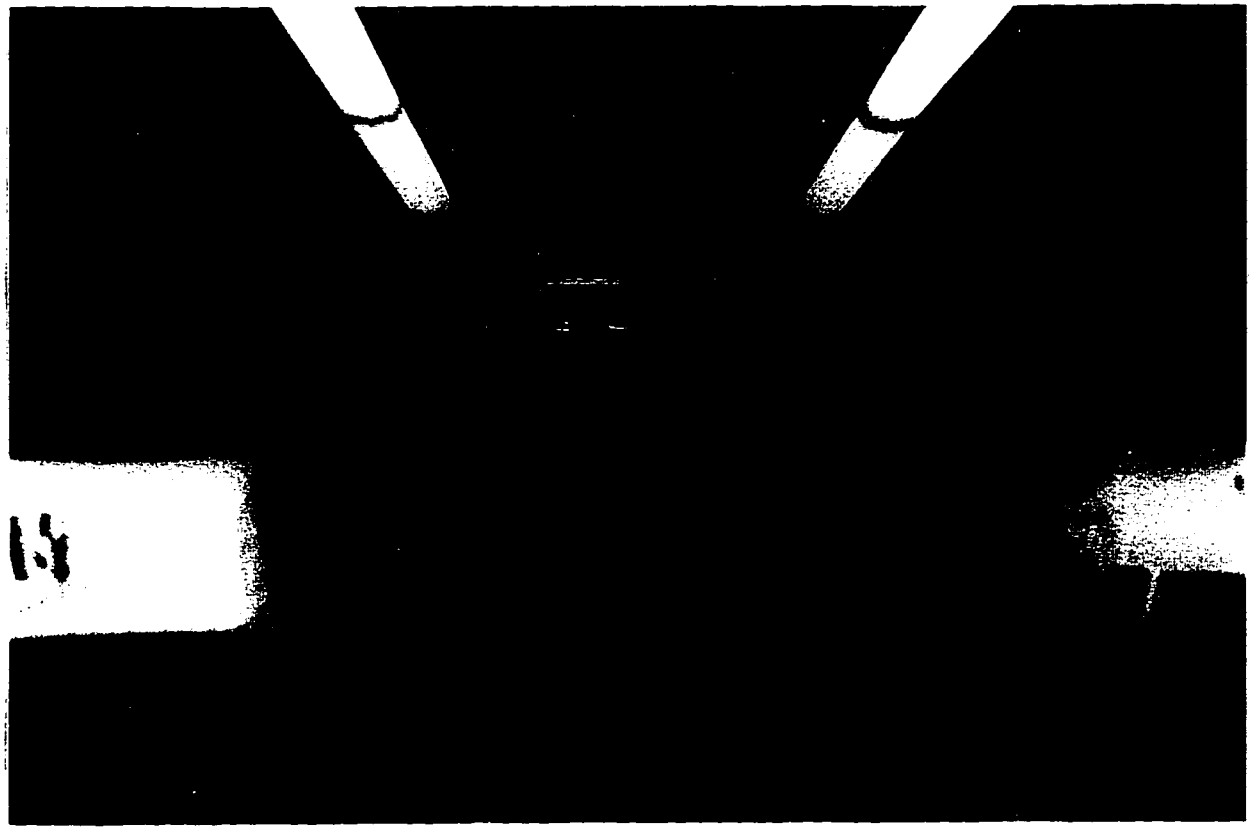
Picture. 4.1. Tzu-Chi volunteers working in recycling (1)

Picture. 4.2. Tzu-Chi volunteers working in recycling (2)

Picture. 7.1. Tzu-Chi Train (1): The pilgrimage back to Tzu-Chi's original place



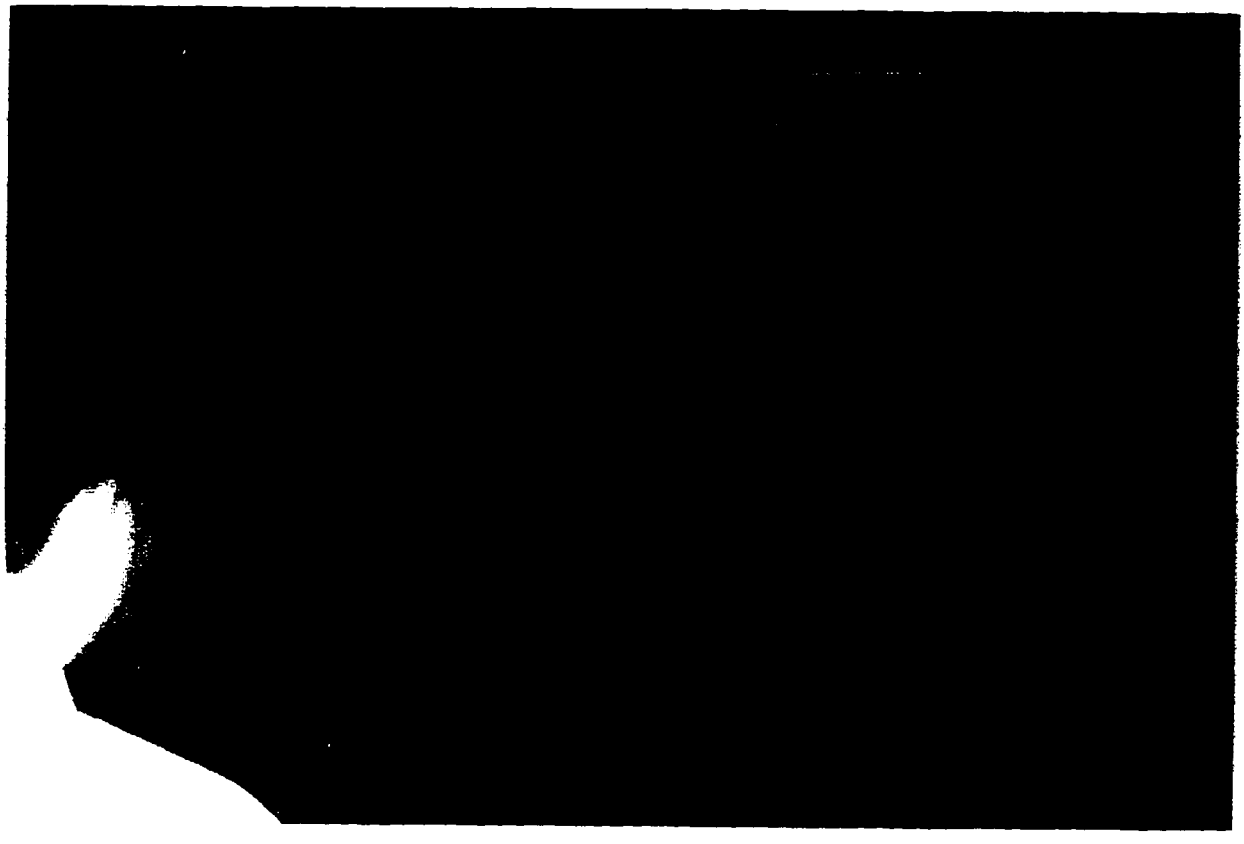
Picture. 7.2. Tzu-Chi Train (2): The pilgrimage back to Tzu-Chi's original place



Picture. 7.3. Tzu-Chi Train (3): The pilgrimage back to Tzu-Chi's original place

Picture. 7.4. Tzu-Chi participants wearing uniforms (1): Commissioners

Picture. 7.5. Tzu-Chi participants wearing uniforms (2): For Male (Commissioners, Faith Corps, or Honored Patron)



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APPENDIX A. SCRIPT FOR ORAL CONSENT

(English Translation: Originally Asked in Chinese)

Hi, my name is _____ , I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in the US, doing research for my doctoral work. I am studying people in charitable organizations who have made sustained commitments to helping others. Participants in the Tzu-Chi Association are a very interesting case for me. In terms of different kinds of functional groups, people in Tzu-Chi have continually made a lot of contributions to our society. You are a _____ in Tzu-Chi. As a part of this study, I am very interested in interviewing you about your life history, what led up to your decision to join Tzu-Chi, your experiences as a participant in Tzu-Chi, and your relationship with your family or friends since you began participating in Tzu-Chi.

The interview probably will last about 1 to 2 hours. If you prefer, I can interview you two or more times. If it is convenient for you, I can either interview you at your home or in the Tzu-Chi's Taichung branch, room ____. All of your responses will be held confidential. Interviews will be audiotaped or, if you want, during the interview, you may turn off the audio-recorder at anytime. The interview later will be transcribed by me, and all names will be changed to pseudonyms. Those audiotapes will be kept in file by numbers. If for some educational or research purpose I may use these tapes in public, but any specific names appearing in these tapes will be erased before the tape is used. In all probability there will be publications about the results of the study, but they will not contain identifying material.

I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have now, or you may call me later at Taichung 3216431, with questions about the interview and research.

Your participation is completely voluntary; you may, at any time, withdraw from the interview process. You may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts used, if you notify me at the end of the interview or interview series.

Now could I ask you whether you agree to be interviewed for the current research? (If yes) Could we set up an appropriate time and place for the interview? ...

Thank you very much for your kind help in this research.

APPENDIX B. SCRIPT FOR ORAL CONSENT
(In Chinese)

口頭徵求同意之說辭

您好，我叫____，我目前是美國威斯康辛大學——麥迪遜校區的博士候選人，我正從事於博士論文的資料收集工作，我的興趣在研究慈善組織中，志願服務者對慈善行爲的參與。而目前，台灣的慈濟功德會，對我而言是一個非常有趣而重要的例子，透過慈濟功德會中不同的功能性團體，像委員，會員，榮董，慈誠隊，志工服務隊，教師聯誼會等等組織，慈濟功德會對我們的社會，有著非常大的貢獻。

您是慈濟功德會中的一名____，我很想了解您加入慈濟功德會的過程和種種心路歷程，以及這之間您和親戚及朋友的關係，因此我想就這幾方面和您聊一聊。

本訪問將進行約一到兩個小時，若您願意我也可以分開幾次來對您進行訪問。依您的方便我或者可在分會，或者可在您的家中，對您進行訪問。目前的這份訪問，我將會加以錄音，並在事後整理爲文字，在訪問中間，若您有需要，您可以隨時關掉您眼前的錄音機，而在整理出來的文字資料及以後的研究結果中，我將會使用假名來代替任何文字中出現過的人名，關於錄音帶的保存，錄音帶上面將只會標著號碼，我會用另外的本子註明它的來源。在一些教育或是研究的場合，或許會用到這些帶子，但使用前，任何在帶子中出現的人名都會被洗掉的。

請問您現在有任何的問題嗎？或者以後您有任何的問題可以打到我台中的電話：3216431。

您的接受訪問完全是自願的，您可以隨時退出我的訪問，如果您有一些話不想被我引述，您也可以告訴我，我將不引述它們。

現在我想請問您是否願意接受我的訪問？（如果回答是）那我們是否現在可以安排一個適當的時間跟地點來進行我們的訪問？

非常感謝您對本研究的幫忙和協助，謝謝！

APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW REFERENCE QUESTIONS

(English translation: Originally asked in Chinese)

No: _____
Date: _____
Start Time: _____
End Time: _____

A. Introduction

Hi, I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin at Madison doing research for my doctoral work. I am studying people in charitable organizations who in their individual lives have made sustained commitments to helping others. Participants in the Tzu-Chi Association are a very interesting case for me. In terms of different kinds of functional groups, people in Tzu-Chi have continually made a lot of contributions to our society.

You are a _____ in Tzu-Chi. I am very interested in your life story, in what led up to your decision to join Tzu-Chi. And I am also interested in your experiences as a participant in Tzu-Chi and your relationship with your family or friends since you began participating in Tzu-Chi.

As the interview proceeds, I may ask an occasional question for clarification or for further understanding. Each interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed by me. In the final form the interviews will be identified by pseudonyms. Those audiotapes will be kept in file by numbers. If for some educational or research purpose I may use these tapes in public, any specific names appearing in these tapes will be erased before the tape is used.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

B. Questions about current behaviors and experiences in Tzu-Chi

1. You are currently a participant in the Tzu-Chi Association. Can you describe what a typical day (week, month, or year) would look like when you are involved in Tzu-Chi's activities?

2. In general, how much time do you spend in Tzu-Chi's various activities on a weekly or monthly basis?

(On average, how much time do you spend in Tzu-Chi's activities in a week [or a day, or a month]? Why or how can you have this time to join Tzu-Chi?)

C. About the process of one's being involved in Tzu-Chi

3. How long have you participated in Tzu-Chi? (how old were you when you joined?) How did you first hear about Tzu-Chi? What was your first contact?

(Did any person introduce you to Tzu-Chi? At the time you considering joining Tzu-Chi, what things were happening in your life?)

4. What were your first impression about Tzu-Chi? Have these impressions changed?

5. In your participation in Tzu-Chi, what roles have you played? (Is there any change in the roles you played in the past and in the present?) Did you have any expectations about the roles you played in Tzu-Chi?

(Do you expect in future to add a role or change your role in Tzu-Chi?)

6. What kinds of decision processes did you go through in thinking about whether or not to participate in Tzu-Chi? (gradually or rather suddenly? Was there a turning point?)

7. Is there anything in your Tzu-Chi experience which has touched you a lot? (a special event or experience that you feel is important and want to talk about?)

8. Compare your current participation in Tzu-Chi with your other activities (work, family life, etc.), how important it is? (for your current life, how important is your participation in Tzu-Chi to you?)

9. Are there any barriers or limitations for your participation in Tzu-Chi in the past or the present? How do you face (or resolve) these problems?

D. Questions about participants' reasons and motivation for prosocial commitment

10. Why you want to donate money to help? (mainly asked of Members and Honored Patrons)

11. What would you say is for your real motivation for joining Tzu-Chi? Do you feel that these motivations have ever changed?

12. Have you ever thought about the reasons you have continued

to help for such a long time? (only ask some participants)

E. Participants' feelings of participating in Tzu-Chi

13. In your participation in Tzu-Chi, are there any experiences which have been particularly valuable for you? Why?

14. Do you feel any change in yourself after you joined Tzu-Chi? What sort of change?

15. What is your biggest gain in joining Tzu-Chi? (Do you feel any feedback from your experience in Tzu-Chi?)

16. If you were not participating in Tzu-Chi right now, what do you think might be different for you? (If Taiwan had no Tzu-Chi Association, what would be different for you now?)

F. The relationships between participants and family members or friends

17. Did your family members or friends support your joining Tzu-Chi? Did any one of them also join Tzu-Chi?

18. Comparing the time before and after you joined Tzu-Chi, do you feel any change in your family relationships?

19. In your circle of good friends, has anything changed since you joined Tzu-Chi? (Do you have any change in your social world since joining Tzu-Chi?)

G. Some questions about values and beliefs

20. Why (or why not) do you think we should help others?

21. How do you view your own behaviors in Tzu-Chi? Do you think your motivation is to help others? (if not, why not? If yes, what kinds of ideas make you do so?)

22. What were you doing for charity before you joined Tzu-Chi? (if yes, why did you do this charity work? Have you ever joined any other charitable or volunteer organization? Why? And how about now? Is there any relation between your joining Tzu-Chi and other kind of charitable services?)

23. In what ways did you begin to learn about Buddhism? Do you think that by doing good things one can accumulate good merits and increase one's blessings? (Are you a Buddhist now? How about

before you joined Tzu-Chi? Is there any relation between your joining Tzu-Chi and your religious belief?)

H. Question about respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and past socialization history

24. age

25. sex (by observation)

26. religions: How would you describe your past religious background (identification, degree of involvement, how long)? How would you describe your present religious involvement?

27. residence? Now? Grew up in (rural area of city)? Moves?

28. childhood family: composition, values, religion, parental schooling and work? How would you describe your relationships with your parents and siblings?

29. schooling: where, what studied, how long?

30. work: doing what, feeling about it, plans? do you have a career or vocation? Describe it.

31. marital status, single, married, divorced, living with someone?

32. children? do you have any children? Number? Age range?

33. social standing, class background? economic situation of family.

I. Filling out the motivation scale

Below I need your further help to fill out a small questionnaire about reasons for joining Tzu-Chi

(hand the motivational scale to respondents)

Now I am going to ask you to rate the importance of each of the items below in motivating your current participation and initial participation in the Tzu-Chi Association. From 1, not at all important to 7, extremely important. Now I would like to ask you: would you say that your current participation in Tzu-Chi is because of or in order to (then ask respondents to fill out the motivational scale):

(This part respondents can either fill out by themselves, or, if

necessary, I can read it to respondents and record their responses for them)

Now, thank you for your patience in answering this questionnaire.

(then, see the motivational scale)

****

(after respondent had filled it out)

34. Now do you have any questions about above items?

J. Ending

35. Do you have anything more that you want to say?

36. Can you suggest people who have had experiences with participating in Tzu-Chi to whom we might talk?

* Thank you very much for your cooperation and I highly appreciate your kind help in my research.

End Time: _____

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW REFERENCE QUESTIONS
(IN CHINESE)

問卷參考問題

No: _____

Date: _____

Begin Time: _____

End Time: _____

A. 導言：

您好，我現在是美國威斯康辛大學--麥迪遜校區的博士候選人．我正從事於博士論文的資料收集工作．我的興趣在研究慈善組織中，志願服務者對慈善行為的參與．而目前，台灣的慈濟功德會，對我而言是一個非常有趣而重要的例子．透過慈濟功德會中不同的功能性團體，像委員，會員，榮董，慈誠隊，志工服務隊，教師聯誼會等等組織，慈濟功德會對我們的社會，有著非常大的貢獻．

您是慈濟功德會中的一名_____，我很想了解您加入慈濟功德會的過程和種種心路歷程，以及這之間您和親戚及朋友的關係．因此我想就這幾方面和您聊一聊． 在這個訪談進行中，我可能也會在某些時候請您進一步說明某些您所談到的事情．

目前的這份訪問，我將會加以錄音，並在事後整理為文字．在訪問中間，若您有需要；您可以隨時關掉您眼前的錄音機．而在整理出來的文字資料及以後的研究結果中，我將會使用假名來代替任何文字中出現過的人名．關於錄音帶的保存，錄音帶上面將只會標著號碼，我會用另外的本子註明它的來源．在一些教育或是研究的場合，或許會用到這些帶子，但使用前，任何在帶子中出現的人名都會被洗掉的．

下面即將開始我們的訪問，在我的訪問開始之前，請問您有任何問題嗎？

B. 目前在慈濟功德會中，參與活動的性質：

1. 您現在是慈濟功德會中的一位參與者，您能否描述一下您平常對慈濟功德會的參與中，從事的活動包括有那些？

2. 一般而言，您大概花多少時間在參與慈濟功德會的有關活動上？

(您平均起來每個禮拜，[或每天，或每個月]，大概花多少時間在參與慈濟功德會的有關活動上？ 為什麼能夠，或者說您是怎樣來擠出時間來參與慈濟功德會的？)

C. 關於參與者參與慈濟功德會的過程：

3. 您參加慈濟功德會有多久了？(那時候您的年紀有多大？) 您一開始是怎麼知道慈濟功德會的？ 您又是因為什麼樣的因緣來加入慈濟功德會的？

(有沒有任何人的介紹或引見？您如何做成決定要加入慈濟功德會的？當您考慮要加入慈濟功德會的那時候，您的生活中正在發生著什麼事？)

4. 您對慈濟功德會的第一印象如何？而這個印象有沒有經歷過什麼樣的轉變呢？

5. 在參與慈濟功德會的過程中，您在慈濟功德會裡面所扮演的角色有沒有過任何的改變？(時間上各隔了多久呢？)
您對您在慈濟功德會裡面所扮演的角色有任何的期望或期許嗎？

(有沒有考慮將來改變或增加角色去做 _____?)

6. 您對慈濟功德會的參加，是一開始就很投入？還是漸漸的有更多的投入的(選擇性詢問)?

7. 可否談談您個人在慈濟功德會中的參與，有沒有什麼特殊的遭遇或經歷是特別值得談一談的？

8. 若拿您現在的參與慈濟功德會，來和您現在生活中其它的活動來做比較 (像工作，家庭生活等等)，您覺得您現在的參與慈濟功德會，在您現在的生活中，扮演了多重要的角色？

9. 在您的周遭環境中；對於您的參與慈濟功德會，有沒有存在著什麼阻礙呢 (由過去到現在)? 您是如何去面對或是克服它們呢？

D. 關於參與者參與慈濟功德會的參與動機和原因：

10. 為什麼您會捐錢給慈濟功德會？(此題對會員，眷屬等選擇性詢問)

11. 您覺得您參與慈濟功德會背後的真正動機是什麼？這種動機有沒有經歷過什麼樣的改變？

12. 您有沒有想過，是什麼樣的原因，您能夠這樣長期的從事於慈善事業的參與？(此題選擇性詢問)

E. 關於參與者參與慈濟功德會的感想和收穫：

13. 在您的參與慈濟功德會的經驗中，有沒有什麼經驗對您而言是特別寶貴的？為什麼呢？

14. 在您的參與慈濟功德會的過程中，您覺得您自己有沒有什麼改變呢？是怎麼樣的改變呢？

15. 您覺得參與慈濟功德會以後，您最大的收穫是什麼？（您有沒有得到什麼樣的回饋呢？）

16. 您有沒有想過如果現在臺灣社會根本沒有慈濟功德會，或是您並沒有參加慈濟功德會，您目前的生活會不會有什麼差異呢？

F. 參與者與家人和朋友間的關係：

17. 您的朋友和家庭中的親人支持您對慈濟功德會的參與嗎？他們之中是不是也有人參與呢？

18. 比較您參加慈濟功德會的之前和之後，您感覺到您和家人間的關係有什麼樣的變化嗎？（和家人相處時間上的調配呢？）

19. 比較您參加慈濟功德會的之前和之後，您的交友圈有沒有什麼變化？（對於您原來的一些非慈濟的朋友，你們是否仍經常連絡？）

G. 一些價值和信仰方面的問題：

20. 您覺得為什麼我們要去從事行善和助人的工作？

21. 當您參與慈濟功德會的時候，您覺不覺得您是在從事著一項幫助他人的事業？

（如果不是的話，為什麼不是？如果是的話，您覺得是什麼樣的想法使您願意或是想要去幫助他人？）

22. 在您加入慈濟功德會之前，您是否從事過任何慈善的行為？為為什麼您會從事那些慈善行為呢？您曾參與過其他的慈善或志願團體嗎？為什麼有？或為什麼沒有呢？

（如果有的話，這些行為對您現在的參與慈濟功德會有沒有什麼影響呢？）

而現在呢？您還有參與其他的慈善或志願團體嗎？為什麼有？或為什麼沒有呢？

23. 您是透過什麼樣的方式或因緣來接觸或瞭解佛教的？您認不認為做好事可以累積功德或增加福報？

(請問您現在是一個佛教徒嗎？在您參與慈濟功德會之前呢？您覺得您的參與慈濟功德會和您的宗教信仰之間有著怎樣的關係？)

H. 關於參與者的社會人口特質上的背景，以及過去社會化的歷史：

24. 年齡？

25. 性別（觀察）？

26. 宗教信仰？您如何來描述您的宗教背景？(由過去到現在？涉入的程度如何？信仰種類？信仰了多久？)，您會如何來描述您現在的宗教信仰？

27. 居住形況？居住於何地？於何地生長（鄉村還市城市)？搬遷狀況如何？

28. 過去生長的家庭其背景和經濟情況如何？父母有何樣的價值觀及宗教信仰？父母過去的工作情況如何？您會怎麼樣來描述您和您的雙親及其它兄弟姐妹之間的關係呢？

29. 過去您就學的形況為何呢？

30. 您的行業是？您目前的工作情況為何呢？您有任何具體的生涯規劃的計畫嗎？您對您的工作現況，有無任何特殊的感受？

31. 婚姻現況如何？（結婚？單身？離婚？分居？同居？)

32. 兒女狀況？（多少兒女？年齡？)

33. 您目前家中的經濟情況如何？

I. 測量參與者參與動機的 "志願服務者參與動機量表":

以下，我想請您幫忙填一份，關於您的參與慈濟功德會的原因和動機等等問題的問卷

(遞出問卷)

我想請問您一些關於您的參與慈濟功德會的原因和動機的問題．首先，在以下的每一個項目之下，都附有一組由 1 到 7 的數字，其中 1 表示不重要，7 表示非常重要，數目越多表示越重要．現在，我想請問您，您覺得以下的每一個項目，扮演了多重要的角色來引發您的現在，或是一開始的對慈濟功德會的參與呢？

請您仔細的想一想，然後在每一個項目的下方，由數字 1 到 7，圈選出一個適當的數字來，謝謝．

(此部份也可由研究者朗誦，幫助受訪者回答之)．

現在，請您耐心的回答這份問卷，謝謝．

(以下，參考問卷部份)

****

(問卷填完後)

34. 請問您對剛剛的題目，有沒有什麼特別的問題呢？

J. 結語：

35. 您還有任何意見或想法想要和我聊一聊嗎？

36. 您能給我一些建議名單，告訴我誰還有一些特殊的參與慈濟功德會的經驗，值得我和他們再多聊一聊？

非常感謝您的合作，我真的對您的幫忙感到萬分感激，
非常謝謝您對我目前的研究所提供的協助，謝謝．

End Time: _____

APPENDIX E. REVISED MOTIVATIONS SCALE FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

(English translation: Originally asked in Chinese)

No: _____
Date: _____
Start Time: _____
End Time: _____

(Now I am going to ask you to rate the importance of each of the items below in motivating your current participation and initial participation in the Tzu-Chi Association. From 1, not at all important to 7, extremely important, would you say that your current participation in Tzu-Chi is because of or in order to:)

NI=NOT IMPORTANT
VI=VERY IMPORTANT

	My current participation in the Tzu-Chi? NI VI	My participation in the Tzu-Chi at beginning? NI VI
[VALUES]		
1. Because of my humanitarian obligation to help other.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
2. Because I enjoy helping other people.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
3. Because I consider myself to be a loving and caring person.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
4. Because people should do something about issues that are important to them.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
5. Because of my personal values, convictions, and beliefs	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[UNDERSTANDING]		
6. To learn more about how to prevent illness and poverty through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.

	My current participation in the Tzu-Chi? NI VI	My participation in the Tzu-Chi at beginning? NI VI
7. To learn how to help people with illness and poverty through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
8. To deal with my personal fears and anxiety about illness and poverty through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
9. To learn about how people cope with illness and poverty through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
10. To understand illness and poverty and what it does to people through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT]		
11. To get to know people who are similar to myself through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
12. To meet new people and make new friends through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
13. To gain experience dealing with emotionally difficult topics through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
14. To challenge myself and test my skills through participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
15. To learn about myself and my strengths and weaknesses through my participation in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.

	My current participation in the Tzu-Chi? NI VI	My participation in the Tzu-Chi at beginning? NI VI
[COMMUNITY CONCERN]		
16 Because of my sense of obligation to my community, so I participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
17. Because I consider my self an advocate for community-relate issues, I participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
18. Because of my concern and worry about our community, I participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
19. To get to know people in our community, I participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
20. To help members of our community, I participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT]		
21. To make my life more stable	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
22. To escape other pressures and stress in my life (e.g., from work, from home).	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
23. To fell less lonely.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
24. To feel needed.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
25. To feel better about. self	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[SOCIAL NETWORK]		
26. Because of my friends or relatives' strong recommendation.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
27. Because of my friends or relatives' expectations.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.

	My current participation in the Tzu-Chi? NI VI	My participation in the Tzu-Chi at beginning? NI VI
28. To get further understanding of why my friends or relatives come to this organization.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
29. Because of wanting to come to the Tzu-Chi with my relatives or friends together.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
30. Because of having seen the change in my friends or relatives since their participation the Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[LEADER'S INFLUENCES]		
31. Touched by Cheng Yen's personal story.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
32. Touched by Cheng Yen's books, speeches, audiotapes, etc.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
33. Feeling that Cheng Yen's Tzu-Chi mission is too heavy, I thus want to join Tzu-Chi to help her carry out this mission.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
34. Feeling that Cheng Yen's Tzu-Chi's enterprise can have a great influence on our society, I thus participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
35. Feeling that by following Cheng Yen's Tzu-Chi Association, my life will be filled with much meaning.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.

**(If you now have children, please answer questions 36-40, OTHERWISE SKIP TO question 41. Thank you.)

	My current participation in the Tzu-Chi? NI VI	My participation in the Tzu-Chi at beginning? NI VI
[EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE]		
36. Tzu-Chi's story can help me to teach my children, my participation in Tzu-Chi can help me to educate my children more successfully.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
37. I hope I can be a role model for my children, so I participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
38. I am afraid that my children will be influenced by bad social environments, so I come to Tzu-Chi and bring my children, hoping they can make some good friends here.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
39. Now that my children are grown up, I think our family can have a shared social activity, thus I choose to participate in Tzu-Chi.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
40. I hope to participate in Tzu-chi with my children together, thus we may improve our relationship.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED]		
41. I have received a lot of help in my life, thus I hope by helping in the Tzu-Chi, I can also help those people in need.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.

	My current participation in the Tzu-Chi? NI VI	My participation in the Tzu-Chi at beginning? NI VI
[GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY]		
42. Getting from society, we should give back to society. I want to participate in Tzu-Chi to give back to our society.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[CALMING THE CHAOS]		
43. Our society is now in chaos. I want to do something to help our society.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[MORAL CONCERNS]		
44. Our society has lost its moral standard. I want to do something to help our society rebuild its moral standard.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[MERITS-ACCUMULATION]		
45. By helping others one can accumulate merits and get blessings.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.
[RELIGIOUS NORM]		
46. It is the Buddhist norms Dana that postulate that we should help others, so I help.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.	1.2.3.4.5.6.7.

(Thanks for your patience in answering those questions. I really appreciate your kind help.)

APPENDIX F. REVISED MOTIVATIONS SCALE FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION (In Chinese)

志願服務者參與動機量表

No: _____
Date: _____
Begin Time: _____
End Time: _____

	我的現在的對慈濟功德會的參與是？ 不重要 非常重要	我的一開始的加入慈濟功德會是？ 不重要 非常重要
(1). 出於我人道上的關懷，我認為我應該去幫助別人	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(2). 因為我原來就以助人為樂	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(3). 因為我認為我是一個關心別人和充滿愛心的人	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(4). 因為我認為人們應該對他覺得重要的事情去做一些努力	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(5). 因為我個人的某些價值，信念，和信仰的關係	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(6). 因為我想經由對慈濟功德會的參與來更深入的了解如何預防疾病和貧窮	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(7). 因為我想藉著參與慈濟功德會，來了解如何去幫助疾苦的人	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(8). 因為我想藉著參與慈濟功德會的機會，去學習如何去處理內心裡對貧窮和疾病的害怕和憂慮	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(9). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來了解別人是怎麼樣來克服貧窮和疾病的	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(10). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來了解貧窮和疾苦對別人的生活會造成什麼樣的影響	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(11). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，去認識更多和我相類似的人	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(12). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來認識更多的朋友	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(13). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來學習到如何去處理各種情緒上的問題	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7

	我的現在的慈濟功德會的參與是？	我的一開始加入慈濟功德會的人？
	不重要 … 非常重要	不重要 … 非常重要
(14). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來做為一種自我成長和能力發揮上的一種挑戰	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(15). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來進一步的了解我個人的長處和弱點	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(16). 因為我對我的社區心中有一份責任感，所以我參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(17). 因為我認為我應該支持並且參與和社區有關的各種活動，所以我參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(18). 因為我對我的街坊鄰居和居住的社區有一份關懷，所以我參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(19). 我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，去認識更多我的社區中的朋友們	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(20). 因為我想去幫助我的社區中的朋友們，所以我參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(21). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來擁有一種更穩定的生活型態	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(22). 我想藉著參與慈濟功德會來減輕我生活中（譬如說工作或家庭）的壓力和緊張	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(23). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來減少內心孤寂的感覺	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(24). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來獲得一種被人需要的感覺	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(25). 因為我想藉著對慈濟功德會的參與，來對自己有更肯定的感受	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(26). 我的參與慈濟功德會，是因為家人或親戚朋友的大力推薦和勸說	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(27). 因為家人或是一些親戚朋友的期望或是心願，所以我來參加了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(28). 為了想進一步了解一下，為什麼我周圍的家人和一些親戚朋友會加入慈濟功德會，所以我也加入了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7

	我的現在的對慈濟功德會的參與是？	我的一開始的加入慈濟功德會是？
	不重要 1.2.3.4.5.6.7 非常重要	不重要 1.2.3.4.5.6.7 非常重要
(29). 因為家人（先生，或太太，或其他家人），和親戚朋友中，有人參加了慈濟功德會，我想和他（或他們）一起來參加，所以我也加入了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(30). 因為我看到了家人或是親戚朋友參與慈濟功德會以後行為上的改變，所以我也加入了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(31). 因為被證嚴法師個人的事蹟所感動，所以我參加了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(32). 是因為閱讀證嚴法師的著作，或是因為聽過她的講話，深受感動，所以我來加入了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(33). 是因為感念證嚴法師個人所負擔志業實在是太重了，為了想幫助她來分擔她的擔子，所以我來參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(34). 是因為感覺有著證嚴法師領導的慈濟志業，能夠對我們的社會發生很大的影響，所以我加入了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(35). 是因為覺得參與了證嚴法師所領導的慈濟功德會，可以帶給我的生命一種踏實的感覺，所以我參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7

** 下面的題目，由 36 題到 40 題，如果您目前有子女的話，請您繼續回答，如果您目前沒有子女的話，請略過第 36 題到 40 題不答，並請繼續跳到第 41 題來回答，謝謝

	我的現在的對慈濟功德會的參與是？	我的一開始的加入慈濟功德會是？
	不重要 1.2.3.4.5.6.7 非常重要	不重要 1.2.3.4.5.6.7 非常重要
(36). 和慈濟功德會有關的點點滴滴的故事，很可以做為我教育子女的素材，我個人的加入慈濟功德會，可以使我能夠更成功的運用這些素材來教育我的子女	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7

	我的現在的慈濟功德會的參與是？ 不重要 非常重要	我的一開始的慈濟功德會的加入是？ 不重要 非常重要
(37). 我加入了慈濟功德會，是因為希望自己能夠在行為上做子女的表率	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(38). 很害怕和擔憂子女會被目前社會上不好的風氣所感染，我於是帶著孩子一起來參與慈濟功德會，希望他們能夠得到良好環境的薰陶和交到好的朋友	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(39). 子女漸漸長大，我覺得我們全家應該有共同的社會活動，我於是選擇了慈濟功德會來做為我們全家共同參與的社會團體	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(40). 希望和子女能透過參加一些共同的活動來改變或促進我和子女間的親子關係，我選擇了參加慈濟功德會，希望它能達成這樣的目的	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(41). 過去的人生歷程中，我得到很多人的幫助，今天我也想藉著參與慈濟功德會，去幫助那些需要幫助的人	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(42). 我認為個人所擁有的一切，都是來自於社會，取之於社會，應用之於社會，我選擇了參加慈濟功德會，做為我回饋社會的一種方式	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(43). 目前我們的社會亂象叢生，需要有心人出來淨化我們的社會，我想透過參與慈濟功德會，來達成這樣的目的	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(44). 目前我們的社會，傳統的倫理道德已經淪喪，為了重新找回失去的價值標準，我參與了慈濟功德會	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(45). 我參加了慈濟功德會，是因為做好事和幫助別人可以累積功德，增加福報	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7
(46). 我參加了慈濟功德會，是因為想透過幫助別人來實踐佛教中的佈施與普渡眾生的道德規範	1.2.3.4.5.6.7	1.2.3.4.5.6.7

非常謝謝您耐心的回答了以上的這些問題，現在我還有一些其他的事項想再和您聊一聊．請您繼續接受我的訪問，謝謝．