

A woman wearing a grey short-sleeved shirt and white gloves is smiling while working on a black electronic device. She is holding a green tool with a red cable attached. The background is a light green color with a faint outline of a globe showing the Americas. The title 'TIMA Protecting the Earth' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# TIMA

## Protecting the Earth



## *Abstract profile of 2007 Tzu Chi International Medical Association Convention*

There is a group of medical doctors, scattered all around the world. Because of their selfless, generous love, they are brothers, hand in hand, marching together, even though they may not know each other.

There is a group of angels in whites. Because of benevolence, they roll up their sleeves, walk out the white medical facilities, and walk into poor and diseased neighborhoods to serve and teach medicine.

There is a group of pharmacists. Because of not wanting to give up, they pick up their medicine chests, work hard to serve the poor and sick, outside the buildings, in the classrooms, and under the old trees.

There is a group of volunteers who, however, without any medical background, are silently walking in the front, to open the prelude of free clinics and work until the last minute, visit the poor and the sick, and follow-up the cares.

All of them are “TIMA” – members of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association. Every year during the Mid-Autumn Festival, when the moon is full and families are together, just like the return of the swallows, they gather in their spiritual homeland, and share their foot prints left from the love of Tzu Chi medical treatment.

However, during the time of global warming and the gradual shortage of natural resources, it also prompted the people from Tzu Chi Medical Association to do their best to protect the environment and reduce the use of carbon, to protect people’s health, and cure the long-wounded Mother Earth while traveling around the world.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!” The sound from the shattering drum is echoing from every corner of the Hall of Meditation, which announced the opening of the 2007 annual meeting of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association. Right before the Mid-Autumn Festival, the rain went on and on outside the Hall of Meditation. But inside the Hall it’s a busy atmosphere. Over 300 members from the Medical Association from all over the world, traveled long distance, and returned their spiritual homeland. From September 23 to 26, they would have a four-day three-night Annual Convention, with the theme of study Medicine and Environmental Protection. They would also encourage each other, and share the research results with each other among members from different countries.

These three hundred plus members are from Paraguay, Japan, Indonesia, Dominica,

Argentina, Bolivia, United States, Hong Kong, Thailand, New Zealand, Malaysia, Netherlands Antilles, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Burma, and Australia. Along with local Taiwanese, the gathering in Hualien is made up of citizens from eighteen countries on Earth. The Foundation motivated teams consisting over four hundred volunteers in coordination, assistance, ticketing, translation, life, clothing, public relation, transportation, humanity, photography, finance, and medicine, etc., to serve the global medical doctors.

### The Earth is Warming Up, The Doctors are Taking Responsibilities

Due to global warming, the ice-coverage in the Arctic made another record low, and

At the opening ceremony of the 2007 Tzu Chi International Medical Association annual convention, attendees unveil this year's theme of “Medicine & Environmental Protection.”





the time for a shipping lane that would let vessels smoothly passing through the North Pole has come five years earlier, from the originally expected 2012. The ocean passage through the North Pole can reduce over 6,000 kilometers traveling distance for vessels, so neighboring countries along the Arctic Circle have started fights for their own interests – shipping lanes, oil, and natural gas. However, the Arctic is gradually shrinking, and its ice coverage is reducing by an average of about 100,000 square kilometers from its previous level every year. However, between 2005 and 2006, the ice coverage reduction reached one million square kilometers within a year, which was ten times the rate from before. Currently there are only three million square meters ice layers left. Scientists predict that by 2040, there will be no ice left in the Arctic.

“However, things may happen much faster than predicted...” Brother Chin-Kuei Hsieh of the Religious Affairs Dept. of Tzu Chi Foundation told people during a lecture titled “The Macrocosm and the Microcosm – Discussion between Medicine & Media.” There worry was felt by the entire lecture hall at the time. This year’s theme “Medicine and Environmental Protection” is to gather the forces from the global Tzu Chi members to contribute for the cure of the warming Earth. However, the current rate of deterioration let us feel it’s too late to do anything, and makes the meeting attendees feel what the Master often says, “There is no time, no time.”...

Although many people consider unusual climate and impacts from natural and ecological changes are phenomenon far beyond our reach and unrelated to us, scientists have solemnly warned that rising



**Representatives of the Medical Association from seventeen far away countries return to Taiwan. Holding each country's flag & Tzu Chi flags, they represent a united force working and providing medical care in every different country.**

sea levels, climate change, and transformation of ecosystems are extremely likely to cause pest disaster, infection of contagious disease, and even grave and unknown diseases caused by the mutation of viruses. In order to avoid the human catastrophe, one must face the fear with careful...

### **The Air Dinosaurs Breathed Would Stay for Tens of Thousands Years, But Consumption of Natural Resources Would Bring Destruction to Ourselves**

“How do we treat the Earth today, will be reflected on us tomorrow!” the content of the movie by Japanese Canadian director David Takayoshi Suzuki, just echoes what the Master has warned “the imbalance of

the four elements in the universe.” Director Suzuki compares the human body to “earth-water-fire-wind.” Nature is macrocosm, and a human body is microcosm. The skin, muscle, and bone of a human body are earth, the blood is water, the body temperature is fire, and the breath is air. In the meantime, scientists used argon atom, which cannot be absorbed by the human body, to conduct an experiment: A person exhaled at one place, and a year later the person returned to the same location. Every time he/she breathed he/she would still inhale 15 units of argon atoms he/she exhaled a year before. This shows that in today, not only people continue to breathe the air they themselves breathed before, they also breathe the air others exhaled, and that they even breathe the air breathed by dinosaurs before. Due to the outrageous and

The lecture “Macrocosm and Microcosm – A Discussion on Medicine and Mass Media” provided by Da-chin Lin, producer of Da-Ai TV, Chin-Kuei Hsieh, director of Religious Affairs Department of Tzu Chi Foundation, and Dr. Yi Lee, Tzu Chi Hospital) combines three different points of view, and brings the latest information and warning of global climate warming to the members who attend the meeting.



reckless destruction of the Earth by human beings, it has become a “patient with serious illness” caused by high fever, which in return is threatening the lives and health of human beings themselves. The destruction of soil, air and water by human beings is the same as destroying their own bodies, and consuming their own lives. Human beings and the Earth are closed related and inseparable. How can human beings be so completely indifferent when ruthlessly destroy and consume nature.

Only when the souls are in balance and having achieved mutual respect with nature, can human health be truly improved. Environmental conservation of the human bodies, souls, and the Earth, is the responsibility of every citizen on this Planet. While the best environmental protection through medicine business, is reflected by

every member of the Medical Association who “can do a little more.” Starting from the operations by every branch of the Medical Association and the medical system, to promote global environmental conservation of the medical system, while in the same time when curing disease and souls does not forget to form good habits, it should be an easy way to protect the Earth.

### **Resources Recycling and Vegetarian, the Balance of Macrocosm and Microcosm**

During in eleven years between 1992 and 2006, regardless men and women, old and young, Tzu Chi volunteers have rescued forests the size of 2,294 football fields. However, currently the disappearance



Showing smiles with satisfaction, overseas TIMA members work as volunteers at a Tzu Chi recycling center.



of Amazon rainforests is at the rate of the size of one football field every second. By calculation, ten years efforts by environmental conservation volunteers could only keep the African tropical rainforest to live for four hours. Even though, environmental conservation volunteers still “do what they love and bear the suffering.” They understand, through their action, that in the meantime when recycling resources and saving the Earth, their souls will also be purified. Therefore, it is always the more they do they more they enjoy.

So, how to do “environmental conservation of human bodies”? The only answer from global ecologists is “being a vegetarian.”

Greenhouse gases from cattle industry takes 18% of total emission, which is much

higher than from transportation. Sixty-four percent of ammonia, which is a major cause of acid rain, from human activities comes from cattle industry. British physicist Alan Calverd once said, “the simplest way to solve global warming is to stop eating meat.” Ecologist Mathis Wackernagel also pointed out that “eating meat is to consume the Earth’s resources.” Therefore, eat less meat, even to become a vegetarian, is not a virtue of religion, it’s a true way to protect your body and the Earth.

### Medical Recycling

Natural resources consumed during medical treatment, and its resulting trash and potential hazardous materials could all become a burden to the Earth. Therefore,

**There are over three hundred members from 18 countries attended the annual convention. Simultaneous translation is provided for different languages by members of different races and colors.**



during this annual Association meeting, six Tzu Chi Hospital exhibited its daily achievement for environmental conservation. All six hospitals have begun medical wastes management a long time ago. Through electronic paperless, promoting green buildings, and reducing carbon production movement among its medical personnel, every hospital has made prominent achievement over the years.

Overseas medical doctors often promote the concept of environmental conservation through free medical care. For example, TIMA in the U.S. uses neighborhood clinics to promote environmental conservation. Although in small areas it can only carry out small scale paper and bottle recycling, the admonishing words and kind feeling towards patients who are waiting for treatment

have paid off. Currently there are even disabled patients on wheelchairs going to the community trash bins to recycle newspapers.

Besides reduction of medical wastes, Tzu Chi members also conduct “formless” environmental conservation, which is another mainstream during this annual Association Meeting. Donating bone marrow – insert stem cells into another person’s body and save another person a life; donating organs – donate usable organs to who are urgently in need; and donating human bodies – contribute bodies to medical research after one’s death. All these are not just extension of love, these are also practical ways for saving medical resources, recycling and regeneration, which is the true spirit of environmental conservation.



Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital showed the hospitality to TIMA members around the world by local aboriginal dance. In the middle is Superintendent Ming-hwang Shyr of Tzu Chi Hospital.



## Help Earth to Lower Down Warming

Two experts were invited to give speeches on disease management and vaccine development during this year's annual Association Meeting. Dr. Scott Santibanez, Assistant Professor of the U.S. Center for Disease Control, talked about the lessons learned from the 1918 Spanish flu, and emphasized that only with a complete disease control mechanism in place, the spread of disease can then be prevented. This was followed by a speech by Dr. Hsiu-Sheng Chen, a devoted researcher of vaccine development from the U.S. National Institute of Health, who emphasized that only through universal vaccination, can the majority

poor citizens be saved from disease, and can tremendous manpower and materials be saved from disasters caused by disease outbreak.

Not only medical treatment and environmental conservation are closely related, they are also a topic covering deep and wide areas. Besides the tangible environmental conservation, the invisible spirit of environmental conservation is in deed more crucial. And the "soul of environmental conservation" is the spirit baptism felt by the members of the Medical Association who returned home this time. The Master cited American meteorologist Edward Lorenz's "Butterfly Effect" that a butterfly flutters its wings in Brazil can cause a tornado in the U.S. a month later.

**Onstage celebration by members wearing traditional customs of their home countries, shows the beauty of harmony and love by Tzu Chi. Photo shows performance by members of the Indonesian Tzu Chi Medical Association.**



From that we can see that even the smallest mindful thought cannot be overlooked, therefore, the “mind effect” is a force to fight back again “greenhouse effect.” Just like what Carol Reiss from the Netherlands Antilles said on September 25 on the last day of the annual Association Meeting during the closing remarks, “there are many people discussing love, discussing care, but it’s only here I see (love and care) are being truly implemented. I will also bring what I have learned here back home...”

The hard working TIMA volunteers who live all around the world, are just like swallows that came to their spiritual homeland from far away during the Mid-Autumn Festival. It’s just like take a rest in mother’s bosom, meditate, recharge, and

again return to their residents, return to their home country, before every mindful thought and every action, implement environmental conservation, provide medical care to the poor, and also wish the wound of Mother Earth will also be cured gradually...



**Member from Paraguay and Argentina dancing and singing on the Festivity Day of the Mid-Autumn Festival.**