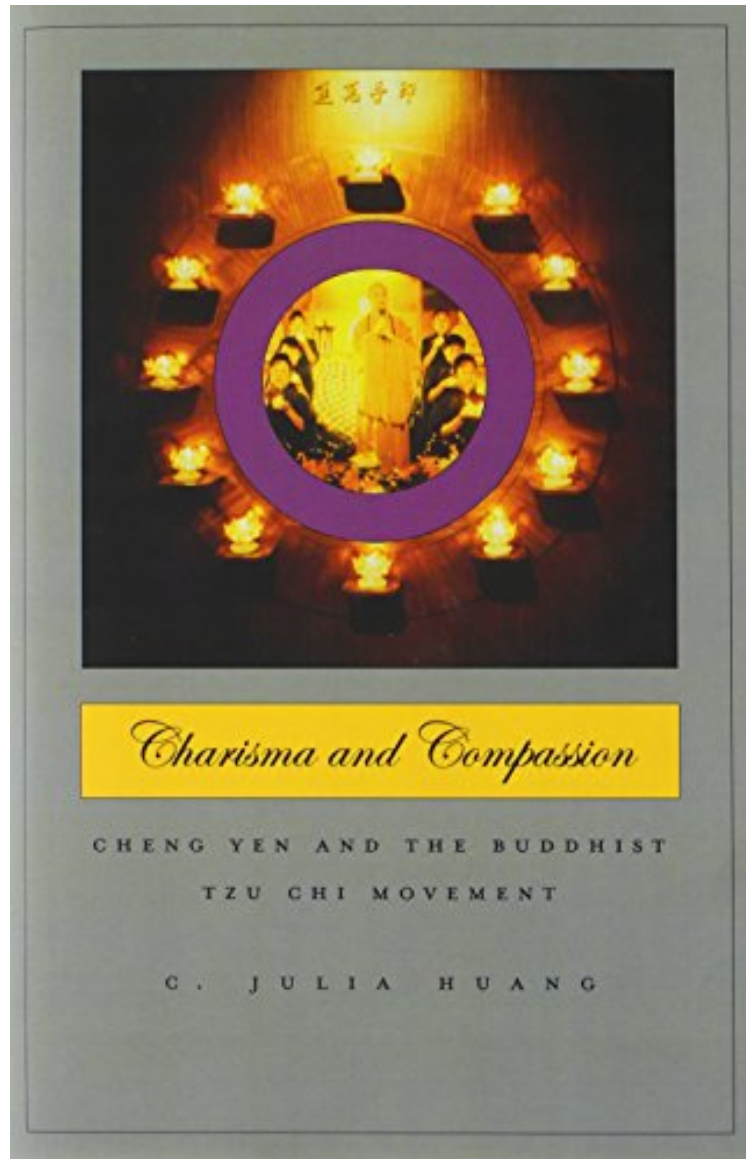


# Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement

C. Julia Huang

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**C. Julia Huang : Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. how it works - taiwan's tzu chi organizationBy sam wangwhy did i

read this book? a friend recommend it to me.why am i writing a review? so that i can recommend it to others.i am not an anthropology student, so i read this like any other non-fiction book that caught my interest.and caught it did. how did Taiwan produce such a powerful Buddhist organization in such a short period of time, that expanded beyond its national boundaries and grabbed the attention of global headlines? they were among the first groups to provide direct assistance to the tsunami victims of the Japan quake in March 2011. prior to that, they had helped in the China quake, etc. so much so, that cheng yen, the charismatic leader of the tzu chi organization, was named among the 100 influential persons in Time magazine for 2011?for the longest time, i used to wonder why the Buddhist movement wasn't very outreaching, unlike Christian organizations. well, i was wrong. it was there all along, i just wasn't aware of it.the book tells the tale of how a nun and her small group of women followers, had a vision and mission to do good. had it just stayed a small group, there would have been no story to write a book about, no Time magazine and other accolades showered on cheng yan and her organization.no. they grew because they had a vision larger than themselves, and a determination to make it happen, and also because they were in the right place and time with the right motives. as such, the political situation in Taiwan, then, permitted and assisted the mission. and as the politics and economy of Taiwan changed for the better, so did the tzu chi organization ride along on the waves of prosperity and freedom to grow and grow. and as they grew, the book shows how the group becomes structured and process-oriented.nevertheless, it is not all order without passion (and compassion). the organization is the extension of the charisma of cheng yan. the book also illustrates her personal charisma and demonstrates how that personal touch flows throughout the organization.personally, i don't know any other organization that has been built around 1 person that has been that successful in the NGO (non-governmental organization) arena. that's why i am amazed at the success of tzu chi and wish them all the best in the future.this book will expand your horizons. you just need to read it.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Inspiring BookBy Truth SeekerThis is a hard review to write because there is so much to say about the book and, most importantly, about the movement it describes. While at times the academic style detracts from enjoying the subject, and parts delve more deeply into related topics that may or may not be interesting to the average reader (me), I came away with an impression of Tzu Chi as an incredibly fascinating and helpful movement toward providing medical and social relief at the most comprehensive and modern yet at the most personal level imaginable. I wasn't so much swayed by the issue of Cheng Yen's obvious charisma in creating and running it as I was by the incredible degree of devotion of her followers to a Buddhism dedicated to doing something concrete in the world and not just building temples or engaging in meditation. Not that those are necessarily bad things but they are definitely not part of Tzu Chi. Unfortunately, but understandably, most of the information about Tzu Chi on the web is in Chinese. But much is in English including a very well designed site for the U.S. component. I recommend you read that first and then the book. Ms. Huang is a member of Tzu Chi as well as an academician (Harvard Ph.D) who kept her integrity intact while describing a movement she is proud to be a part of.

The Venerable Cheng-yen is an unassuming Taiwanese Buddhist nun who leads a worldwide social welfare movement with five million devotees in over thirty countrieswith its largest branch in the United States. Tzu-Chi (Compassion Relief) began as a tiny, grassroots women's charitable group; today in Taiwan it runs three state-of-the-art hospitals, a television channel, and a university. Cheng-yen, who has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, is a leader in Buddhist peace activism and has garnered recognition by Business Week as an entrepreneurial star.Based on extensive fieldwork in Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, and the United States, this book explores the transformation of Tzu-Chi. C. Julia Huang offers a vivid ethnography that examines the movements organization, its relationship with NGOs and humanitarian organizations, and the nature of its Buddhist transnationalism, which is global in scope and local in practice. Tzu-Chi's identity is intimately tied to its leader, and Huang illuminates Cheng-yen's successful blending of charisma and compassion and the personal relationship between leader and devotee that defines the movement.This important book sheds new light on religion and cultural identity and contributes to our understanding of the nature of charisma and the role of faith-based organizations.