

BILLIONAIRES VOW TO BECOME CHARITY FUND-RAISERS

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Tan Sri Vincent Tan (left) and Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai (centre) sharing their experience in charity efforts at a seminar at Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia in Kepong.

IN THE not-so-distant future, if you see two men looking like billionaires Tan Sri Vincent Tan and Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai walking down the street with an empty can begging for money, you should not doubt your eyesight.

One of them will be the older version of the 65-year-old Tan, who controls Berjaya Group. The other will be 59-year-old Lim, the chairman of Top Glove Corporation Bhd – the world’s largest glove manufacturing company.

These two respected business leaders have pledged to go down to the ground to raise funds for charity. The pledge was made at an experience-sharing session at Tzu Chi in Kepong on Oct 13.

While Tan said he would become a “full time” volunteer raising funds for Tzu Chi when he turned 80, Lim said he would start doing more after a two-year volunteer course in Tzu Chi.

The Berjaya boss said when he first read the story of Tzu Chi founder Master Cheng Yen in 2015, he was touched by her sacrifice, leadership and teachings.

The 80-year old legendary nun, with little formal education, has devoted her entire life to building up Tzu Chi into a huge organisation known to have spread universal love and carried out speedy relief work at disaster-hit areas.

“As I was an outstanding salesman before I became a businessman, I will use my marketing skills to help Tzu Chi fund-raise for its charitable activities. When I fully retire from business, I may become a full-time volunteer, but I could be 80 then,” said Tan at the two-day international seminar

attended by 400 entrepreneurs.

Tan also shared a personal story about how his mother felt when he took her to a Tzu Chi activity earlier this year, which required participants to wash their mothers' feet in public as a sign of filial piety and gratitude.

"This was the first time I had ever washed my mother's feet. She said that was her happiest day in life," said Tan.

Unlike Tan, Lim got involved in Tzu Chi's fund-raising efforts several years back, thanks to his persuasive wife Puan Sri Tong Siew Bee, a full-time Tzu Chi volunteer for years.

Sharing his experience, Lim said he could only raise RM36 for his first effort after walking the streets for two hours.

"Nobody knew me and few donated. But that frustration did not dampen my enthusiasm to carry out good and meaningful work," he said.

Despite having to manage a huge corporation for six-and-a-half days a week, Lim insisted on taking time off to attend Tzu Chi's volunteer course to be a "qualified and certified" volunteer.

Lim quipped: "The pressure of carrying out charitable works seems to be greater than chairing Top Glove's annual general meeting. But as long as my wife is happy, I can surmount any problem."

On a serious note, he said: "We should encourage more people to get involved in charity work. Tzu Chi is a very solid organisation and will only become bigger and stronger. It will outlive its founder."