

COMPASSION & RELIEF

# TZU CHI USA JOURNAL

## The 80/20 Lifestyle

*For Health, For Good, For Earth* p. 8

Tales of Hope in Haiti and Iran p. 25

Inspiration in Every Nightstand p. 55

Teens Find Joy in Serving Others p. 67



ISSUE 41 | FALL 2014



**DHARMA MASTER CHENG YEN**  
**FOUNDER OF**  
**TZU CHI FOUNDATION**

## **CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM**

thoughts for meditation, contemplation, and reflection from Master Cheng Yen

### **Realizing Our Greater Self**

Remaining unenlightened,  
ordinary people foolishly crave fame, wealth, and pleasure.  
Clinging to our egos and biases,  
we engage in endless conflicts and arguments.

Things are impermanent, but we cling to permanence.  
There is no permanent "self," yet we cling to our sense of self.

When desires arise, we commit evil actions.  
We worry over gains and losses, cling to and fight over all things,  
and thus become entangled by afflictions.

When our selfishness dominates, the world is filled with calamities.  
When we go from being selfish to selfless,  
we will not be tarnished by conflicts or be bothered by petty things;  
we will abide in the truth and be in harmony with principles.

When we let go of our limited self and realize our greater self,  
we will remain pure and undefiled and develop selfless great love.  
We will relieve the suffering of sentient beings and eliminate all afflictions.  
When we work for the greater self, the world will be filled with peace and harmony.

*Compiled into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team*



Cover Photo: By setting aside just a handful of rice a day, farmers in Burma have been able to help the less fortunate through the 80/20 Lifestyle.

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**Words from Master Cheng Yen**

4 Eating Less to Help the Poor *Master Cheng Yen*

**CEO's Note**

7 A Simple Change of Mindset *Han Huang*

**80/20 Lifestyle**

*For Health,  
For Good,  
For Earth*

8 For Health, For Good, For Earth

10 A Truly Blessed Life *Chifen Lin*

14 Food Waste in the United States *Colin Legerton*

19 Bay Area Bread Rescue *Winson Sun*

22 Compost 101 *Lulu Wu*

25 An Oasis of Love in Iran *Audrey Cheng & Grace Wong*

**Volunteer Sharing**

28 The Light of Hope in Haiti *Marie-Ange Colinet*

30 My Path to Tzu Chi *Elaine Villaverde*

32 Talking with Your Hands *Martina Lo*

**36 Tzu Chi Global in Action**

**Medical Corner**

39 Prescription Drugs: Safety First! *Jerry Yue*

**Education Corner**

42 Composting with Great Love *Mary Carlson*

**Living Bodhisattvas**

44 Calvin Hsi: Seeing the World with Compassionate Eyes *Shirley Tseng*

**Song of Bodhisattvas**

48 A Clean Planet *Master Cheng Yen*  
*Music: Rio Lee*

**Storytelling**

50 The Value of Wealth *Master Cheng Yen*

**52 Tzu Chi Americas in Action**

55 Inspiration Every Day

56 A Journey across the Nation *Eric Tseng*

58 Inspiration to the Weary *Tzu Chi Volunteers*

**Book Excerpt**

64 *From Austerity to Prosperity*, Chapter 7 *Master Cheng Yen*

**Vegetarian Style**

66 Hot & Sour Soup *Cooking Team*

**Young Bodhisattvas**

67 Happiness in Giving *Carol Lee*

69 Hot Meal Distribution Sharing *East LA Tzu Shao*

72 Tzu Chi USA Directory

75 Tzu Chi: A Brief History



8



25



44



55



67

# Eating Less to Help the Poor

**W**hat is a poor person's life like? In Jakarta, Indonesia, our Tzu Chi volunteers discovered a poor family of twelve: a grandmother living with her daughter and her ten grandchildren inside a very crammed house. This sixty-five-year-old grandmother herself had borne eleven children but nine of them died because her family was always too poor to afford medical treatment when they were ill. Now she has to raise her ten grandchildren left by her deceased children. The grandmother says, "Our three meals depend on whatever people give us. Some will give us cash, 12,000 or 15,000 Indonesian rupiah (US\$1.50), to buy food or snacks for the children."

What a hard life this family is living! They don't even know where their next meal will come from. In fact, there are many families like this one around the world. Out of a total population of seven billion people in this world, one billion are malnourished or starving.

At the same time, we often see news reports of people wasting their food and producing a

lot of food scraps. For example, many people like to eat out. When they do, many order too much and simply leave whatever they cannot finish.

In Japan, there are many convenience stores which provide ready-to-eat food. To keep the food product fresh, the stores set a very short expiration date. For example, in some stores, food such as rice balls and sandwiches has an expiration window of eight hours. To give the consumer the freshest possible food, when the rice balls and sandwiches are within two hours of their use-by limit, they are thrown away. Other less time-sensitive foods not sold by their expiration date are taken off the shelves and thrown away, even if they are still perfectly edible. One store owner noted that many imported ingredients are used for the box meals; the ingredients are brought into Japan from around the world, but they end up being thrown into the trash. The amount of food thrown away nationwide is three times more than what the country produces.\* So much food is thrown away; such



From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks  
Written by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

an attitude of consumption and wastefulness is truly alarming.

Our eating habits have changed a great deal. In the past, people cooked and ate meals at home. When they went to work or to school, they brought their own lunches; after work or school, they went home to eat dinner. Whatever breakfast they didn't finish in the morning, they would warm up at dinner and finish. Very little food was wasted. Nowadays, people like to eat out. When they go out in the morning, they buy breakfast. For lunch, they eat out also. After work, instead of cooking, the family goes to a restaurant where they tend to order more than they can finish. This is a waste of money and food which could help a starving family to survive another day.

If we can eat more simply and donate the money saved, we can help families like the one in Indonesia avoid going hungry. When eating out, choosing a simple meal can save us money. For example, when we go to a restaurant, we might spend NT\$1,000 (US\$33) on a meal. In this country, there are many other

food venues to choose from, such as street food stands. People can buy a simple bowl of noodles for NT\$100 (US\$3) that is as filling and nutritious as a restaurant meal. Instead of spending NT\$1,000 at a restaurant, we can save NT\$900 (US\$30) when eating at a food stand, and even after donating twenty percent of the NT\$1,000 to charity, which would be NT\$200 (US\$7), we will still have NT\$700 (US\$23) left in our pocket.

There are so many people suffering in this world because they have a hard time surviving. If we can keep them in our mind when we make decisions in our daily life, it can help us cut down on our extraneous expenses. With the little extra we save we can help people in need and bring much relief to them. If everyone can donate a little bit of what they save, collectively it can become a sizable sum to help the poor. 🌱

*\*See Earth from Above, a DVD set produced by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.*

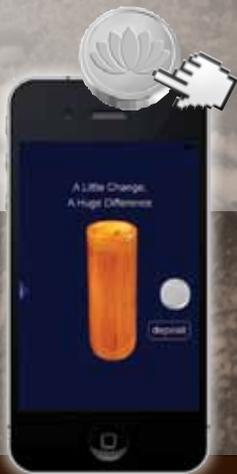
# TZU CHI'S BAMBOO BANK SPIRIT

When Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded Tzu Chi in 1966, she fashioned coin banks from bamboo and asked her lay followers—thirty housewives—to save NT\$0.50 (about US\$0.02) from their grocery money every day to help the poor.

One follower asked, “Can’t I just donate NT\$15 each month?” But Master refused. She explained that though the amount was the same, it was important to give rise to a kind thought each and every day.

From these humble beginnings forty-seven years ago, Tzu Chi has grown into a global NGO with ten million volunteers and donors in over fifty countries, because it collects not only donations, but also kind hearts.

*Download eBambooBank  
app for free on iPhone, iPad,  
and Android devices.*



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## CEO'S NOTE

# *A Simple Change of Mindset*

**I**t was a couple years ago now that Dharma Master Cheng Yen first started promoting the 80/20 Lifestyle—the idea that we should eat only until we are eighty-percent full and use the other twenty percent to help others. At that time, I remember that Superintendent Chien of Taichung Tzu Chi General Hospital joked that it should not be too difficult to reduce our consumption. After all, only a portion of what we eat is for ourselves anyway; the rest is just to keep our doctors in business from all the health problems that overeating creates.

Superintendent Chien's joke was actually a very good point. In its essence, 80/20 is just a matter of changing our mindset. What we need and what we want are two completely different things. Instead of always thinking about what we want and giving in to our greed, we should instead focus on simply fulfilling what we need. When we do that, we can start eating less, purchasing less, and thus wasting less.

Just this simple act of changing our mindset—of turning toward simplicity instead of greed—can make an enormous positive impact, not only for ourselves but for the people we can then help and for the environment as well. As we reduce our own consumption, we improve our health. With the money we save, we can help others. By reducing our purchasing, we also reduce our waste and help our ailing planet.

In today's world, we see each day the harmful effects of polluting the environment with so much unnecessary garbage. We also see the incredible inequality of so many people enjoying excess on the one hand, and so many others failing even

to get enough to eat on the other. Each of our actions, small as they may be individually, can pool together to achieve a balance between the extremes: a better world for everyone.

Living the 80/20 Lifestyle, buying only what we need instead of what we want, starts with our small actions. For instance, when I visit the supermarket, I have simply changed the way I look at things on the shelves. Instead of buying five different vegetables so that I can choose which ones to use later, I just make the decision first and only buy two kinds. Without so much excess, it is easier to finish everything so that I do not waste anything I buy. This simple change of mindset both saves me money and prevents waste.

If you think about it, we spend so much money on food, and ultimately waste so much food, because we are too focused on how delicious our food is and thus attach too much importance to taste. Actually, only the nutrients are important; we enjoy the flavor for just a few moments. If we could stop chasing this fleeting pleasure and instead simplify our approach, we could reduce a significant amount of both waste and expense.

In fact, Dharma Master Cheng Yen encourages us to apply this philosophy of 80/20 not only to food, but to all of our habits. If we can embrace moderation and focus on our needs instead of our wants, we will improve our own lives, help the environment, and do something meaningful for others as well. 🌱

*Han Huang*



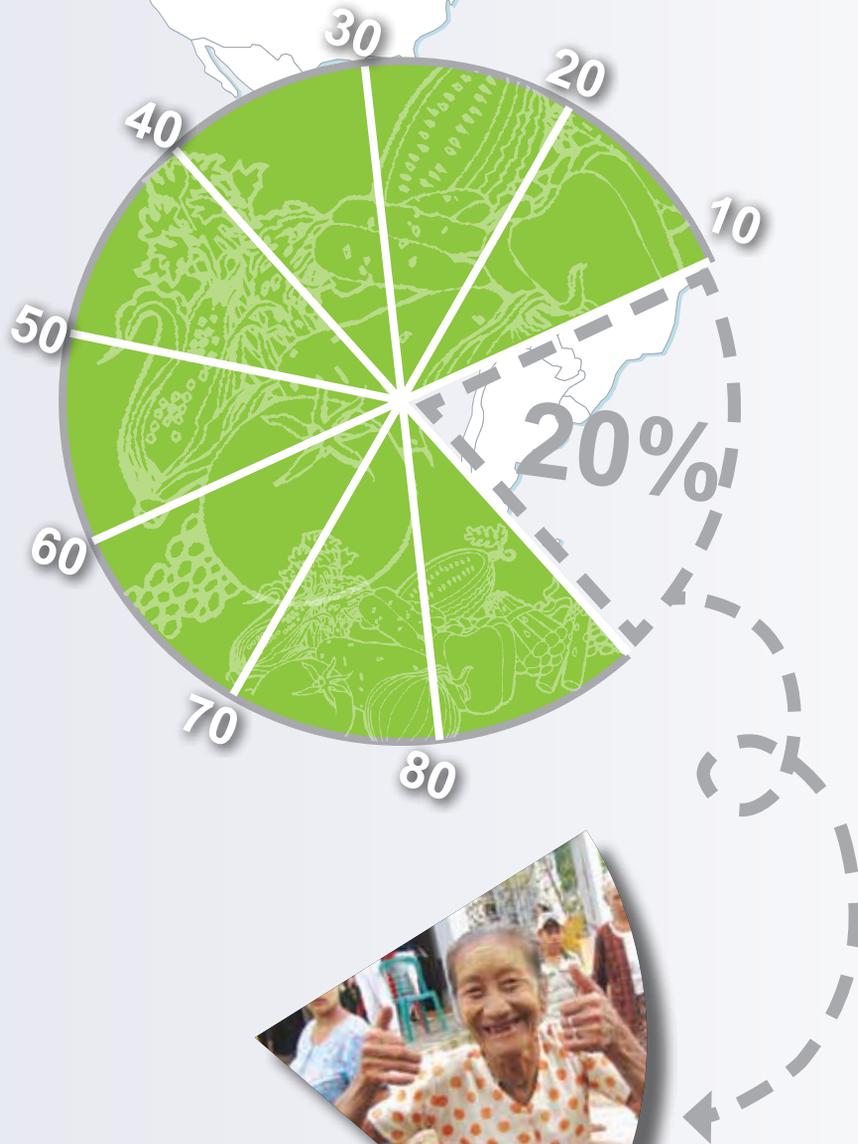
# The 80/20 Lifestyle

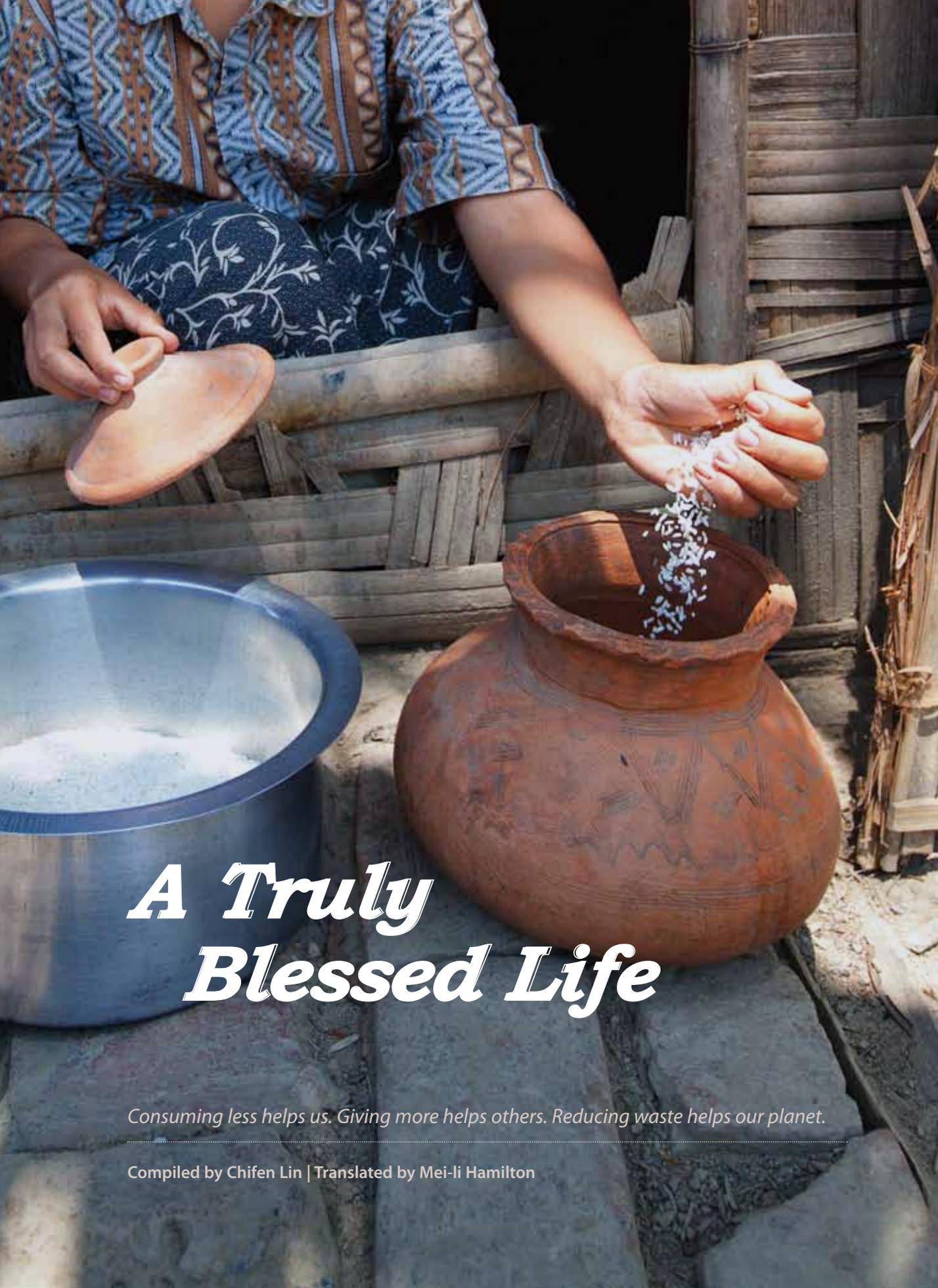
## *For Health, For Good, For Earth*

**In our world of seven billion people, more than eight hundred million are undernourished, while a billion others are overweight or obese. Meanwhile, one third of all food produced worldwide goes to waste. In the face of such an enormous problem, any solution needs to begin by many individuals changing habits.**

**Dharma Master Cheng Yen has a suggestion: 80/20. If we choose to eat only to eighty-percent full, we protect our bodies from the threat of obesity while saving money that we can then donate to help others. By reducing consumption, we also reduce waste and help protect the planet. Each action may be small, but the cumulative impact will be enormous.**

*\*All statistics drawn from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).*





# ***A Truly Blessed Life***

*Consuming less helps us. Giving more helps others. Reducing waste helps our planet.*

---

Compiled by Chifen Lin | Translated by Mei-li Hamilton



## The 80/20 Lifestyle

A television station in the Philippines showed a news story depicting a group of wealthy young people ordering fried chicken at a fast food restaurant, eating just a little, then dumping the rest in a garbage bin. The reporter explained that this is such a frequent occurrence that there is even a man who goes to that restaurant, collects the discarded food, and delivers it on his bicycle to poor children, who are eager to have it.

As Dharma Master Cheng Yen shared this story, she said, “The gap between rich and poor is wide. The poor go hungry with nothing to eat, while the rich lose themselves in enjoyment, creating much karma.” She continued, “Isn't there enough food on this earth for everyone? Is it simply because of insufficient food that so many people must live in hunger?”

*When we see that someone else has something, we want it ourselves, but is it truly necessary?*

In fact, there is enough food in the world to feed its entire population of seven billion, and yet one of every eight people goes hungry—a full 870 million people, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Each day, twenty thousand people die of hunger or hunger-related causes, many of them young children. A key reason for this disparity is food waste: a full thirty percent of grains are wasted worldwide every year.

### 20% to Help Others

Master Cheng Yen encourages people to follow the 80/20 Lifestyle—the practice of eating until you are eighty-percent full and using your twenty-percent savings to help the poor—in part because of the terrible waste of food in the world today. Eating only until you are eighty-percent full has significant health benefits and helps reduce waste, however the focal point of the philosophy is donating the remaining twenty percent to others in need. Just reducing the amount consumed is only half of the equation.

The 80/20 concept can be extended to every aspect of life, not just food consumption. For example, we can also reduce our consumption of water and electricity by twenty percent, place our savings into a piggy bank, and then donate it to help the needy.

At Tzu Chi's elementary school in Hualien, there is a fourth-grade student who has truly taken this philosophy to heart. Each month he donates twenty percent of his allowance to help others. When it is his turn to sweep up at school, he hurries to finish ten minutes' worth of chores in just eight minutes, so that he can dedicate the remainder to helping his classmates.

In many villages in Lesotho, a small country in southern Africa, people earn less than one



*As even tiny amounts accumulate in bamboo banks, they eventually accomplish great things. Photo: James Huang*

dollar a day. Since 2005, Tzu Chi has been providing annual winter aid distributions to such people, and in 2014, Tzu Chi donated a thousand kilograms of corn and sorghum to those in need. Inspired by these compassionate actions, so far thirty-two local residents have joined Tzu Chi to happily wear the blue or gray volunteer uniform.

One such volunteer said, "When I give to others, I feel that I too am blessed." Some of the villagers even donate money to Tzu Chi to help make sure that others in the village will not go hungry. Though their donations may be small, these individuals are willing to share what is, to them, a very large gift. Like a spiritual harvest, the seeds of giving that are sown sprout and give rise to even more seeds.

### **80% Full**

Giving is not just for the rich. The story of the farmers in Burma who kept a "rice piggy bank" provides an example that resonates around the world.

In 2008, Cyclone Nargis struck Burma, causing the worst natural disaster in the

country's history. More than one hundred thirty thousand people died, while survivors faced severe difficulties recovering from the storm. Tzu Chi volunteers not only provided rice seeds for local farmers to plant, they also introduced them to Buddhist Dharma. By better understanding the effects of chemicals on nature, one farmer changed his farming practices to stop using pesticides. Every day, he reads Jing Si Aphorisms on a ridge overlooking his rice fields. Not only does his rice crop look better, it yields much more than in previous years. He calls the rice seeds he was given the "seeds of blessing."

Many of these farmers who have received rice seeds now share excess seeds with others even poorer than they are. This allows the poorer farmers to grow their own rice, rather than rely on donations from others. One farmer said, "I can't afford to donate money, but I can donate rice." Before his family cooks rice each day, they first grab a handful and deposit it in a "rice piggy bank." Once the piggy bank is full, they donate it to people who are even poorer than they are.

Some prison inmates in Taiwan heard this story. While they are not allowed money in prison, they have stamps they can use to buy things. Inspired by this story, they began to donate some of these stamps. One even decided to eat two fewer slices of bread each day and donate the remainder in the form of stamps. Another inmate reported that he reduced his smoking by one cigarette a day in order to donate stamps, a decision which he hopes will also help him quit smoking.

Teachers at the Nibong Tebal Tzu Chi kindergarten in Peninsular Malaysia encouraged students to save one of the three cookies they were given each day during their daily snack time. The students agreed readily and now they deliver the collected cookies to low-income families as a way of spreading love.



*Happy Campus students in New York decorate their own bamboo banks to help others joyfully.  
Photo: Peter Chu*



## The 80/20 Lifestyle

### 80% Fulfilled

Eating to eighty-percent full is a healthy choice, and we can follow the same concept with other materials we use. This means just using what we need, as there is no need to be extravagant.

On a visit to Tainan, Dharma Master Cheng Yen met with a group of children who brought piggy banks filled with donations. One kindergartener said, "I don't buy toys on my birthday; I can make my own. So, I deposit the money people give me as gifts into my piggy bank." He eats neither meat nor snacks and only drinks water. He is wise beyond his years in his ability to practice self-restraint at such a young age.

In contrast, the impact on the environment of electronic products is enormous, as they consume both natural resources and energy. Dharma Master Cheng Yen reminds us that cell phones and computers can certainly help us be more productive, but excessive consumption and waste pollutes both the earth and our minds. Now, even very young children use electronics, and many people purchase new cell phones almost constantly. Master says with great concern, "Look at people's hearts and greed. When we see that someone else has something, we want it ourselves, but is it truly necessary?"

In Tzu Chi's many recycling centers, you can often find pristine, nearly-new furniture and new clothes with the price tags still attached. People bought them all, but for some reason, possibly because they had too little space or no time to use them, they ended up donating them to

the recycling centers. This wastes time, energy, and materials. If we simply avoid purchasing unnecessary things, we can extend the supply of natural resources for future generations.

### Blessings Accumulate

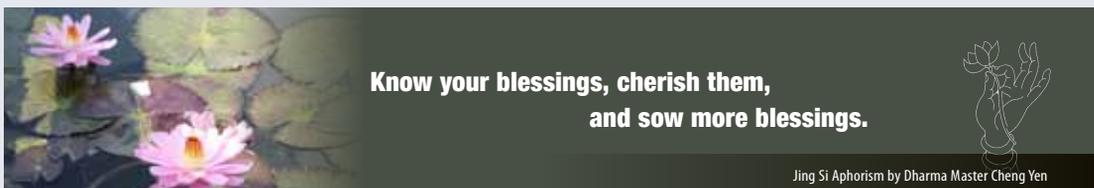
In the third chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha describes the world as a dilapidated old house that catches fire. Ignorant people are like small children inside this burning house, playing joyfully without fear or thought of escape.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen uses this allegory to describe how the earth is like an old house, continuously burning because of global warming. If we do not take good care of the earth, it too can become dilapidated, so we should not act like innocent children who only play, oblivious to the approaching fire.

For example, at the Jing Si Abode in Hualien, when volunteers finish a meal, they rinse their bowls with a little hot water and then drink that water. Therefore, no water or food fragments go to waste. From such small actions, we can do a lot of good.

We must sow the seeds of blessing in order to be blessed ourselves. Dharma Master Cheng Yen often reminds us that mighty oaks from little acorns grow, so we should never underestimate small actions. Even a small handful of a rice is a seed of a goodness. If we are mindful, we can live the 80/20 Lifestyle, a truly blessed life. 🌱

*For a doctor's perspective on 80/20, see Issue 33 (Fall 2012).*



**Know your blessings, cherish them,  
and sow more blessings.**



Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



**40% of America's food is thrown away**

# **FOOD WASTE** **in the United States**

*Food waste is a rampant problem, but one we can all help address.*

---

**Colin Legerton**

**W**aste not, want not."The idea seems simple enough to accomplish, but these four short words encapsulate a never-ending challenge for humanity. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the heart of this message appears all the way back in Genesis, when Joseph wisely advised the Egyptian pharaoh to set aside surplus grain throughout seven years of plenty in order to prepare for the seven years of famine that would follow. Even twentieth-century America was full of inspiring examples. As our parents and grandparents lived through two horrific wars and the Great Depression that bridged them, they persevered through tight food rations, widespread hunger, and the Dust Bowl by living austere and making the best of whatever scant resources they had at hand.

More recently, the United States has enjoyed several decades of unprecedented plenty. But as a consequence, our resolve not to waste has faltered, bringing great harm to our health, the environment, and the future of the country and world. The consequences have built slowly, and often imperceptibly, but the cumulative impact is becoming severe. Today, an incredible amount of food is produced in the United States, but a full forty percent is wasted between production and consumption. Of the barely half that remains, distribution is far from equitable. On one extreme, more than ninety million Americans suffer from obesity; on the other, seventeen million households live with food insecurity. Seven million of these families have serious difficulties putting food on the table each and every day. We live in a society today with both far too much waste and far too much want.



## The 80/20 Lifestyle

Not only are we wasting perfectly good food as so many go hungry, the food we waste also causes major harm to our environment. In the first place, twenty-five percent of all water and four percent of all oil consumed in the United States goes to produce food that will never even be eaten. Once it is thrown out, this food becomes the largest component of municipal landfills. Surrounded by other garbage, and thus unable to decompose naturally, it goes on to create twenty-five percent of our total methane emissions, thereby releasing one of the most harmful greenhouse gases—twenty-five times more powerful than carbon dioxide—into an increasingly ailing atmosphere.

*The average American family of four spends up to \$2,275 each year on food that is thrown out and never eaten.*

But, if we truly take Master Cheng Yen's teaching to heart and put the 80/20 Lifestyle into action, we can take positive steps toward resolving each of these issues. By stopping ourselves from eating when we reach eighty-percent full, we help protect ourselves from obesity and the health issues it both causes and exacerbates. By donating our twenty-percent savings, we help many others, including families who struggle to put enough healthy food on their tables. With the same mentality, we can also begin to bring down this staggering statistic of forty-percent waste.

Adopting the 80/20 Lifestyle means changing our mindset and approaching the world differently. Master Cheng Yen often guides us to evaluate our thinking and improve the way we think about things. She stresses that major problems in the world—such as climate change caused by imbalances in nature—actually originate from imbalances in our own minds. The problem of food waste is a good example of this.

The stunning forty percent figure is a combination of many different factors in every

stage of food production and consumption: farm, transportation, packaging, supermarket, restaurant, and consumer. In fact, our incorrect perceptions are responsible for much of the waste in each of these stages. At the very first stage of the process, perfectly edible produce is left on the ground in farms simply because it is not deemed sufficiently attractive. While the appearance of fruits and vegetables has no correlation to what really matters—nutrition and taste—supermarkets will only accept products with the most perfect size, color, and shape, because they know that those factors are what attract consumers.

Once food products find their way into supermarkets, more waste is again caused by misguided perceptions. Knowing that customers value variety and abundance, markets pile their products high to provide these illusions, leading to many items being discarded when they inevitably leaves their window of peak freshness. This is especially true of the mountains of fresh produce, which are the most wasted of all foods. More than half of fruits and vegetables grown in the United States are never eaten.

The situation in restaurants is similar. As portions grow ever larger to keep up with customers' perceptions of value, they exceed our capacity to eat them, and more and more leftovers are ultimately thrown out. The phenomenon is even more pronounced at home, where individuals purchase too much food so that they can maintain the illusions of choice and plenty. When leftovers remain, or food items begin to go bad, they too are thrown out. In fact, the Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that the average American family of four spends up to \$2,275 each year on food that is thrown out and never eaten.

What compounds this problem is the

## Why So Much Waste?

**50%**

more waste by average American today than in the 1970s

**25%**

of total methane emissions come from food waste

**50%**

of fruits and vegetables grown are wasted

**\$2,000+**

spent annually by a family of four on food that will never be eaten

**40%**

of all food in the US is wasted from farm to fork

**90,000,000+**

individuals in America suffer from obesity

**25%**

of water used in the US produces food that will not be eaten

**17,000,000+**

American families struggle with food insecurity



## The 80/20 Lifestyle

system of dates printed on food products. Thinking that the food is no good, or even not healthy, many people discard food items as soon as the dates printed on them pass. But whether it is marked “Best If Used By,” “Sell By,” or even “Expires On,” the printed date is misleading at best. The calculation and usage of such dates is not federally regulated for any product other than infant formula and companies use a variety of different methods to come up with these dates, all of which are more concerned with taste and company reputation than freshness and consumer health. Even though printed dates target the moment when food’s taste just begins to slowly decline, or even conservatively earlier, many people mistakenly throw their food out as soon as the date is reached, thus wasting food days or weeks before it ceases to be edible.

The state of food waste in the United States is truly worrisome. To waste forty percent of food when so many lack enough to eat is a shameful truth that we must address and resolve. The average American today wastes ten times more than the average person in Southeast Asia, and even fifty percent more than the average American of the 1970s. These too are stunning statistics, but they also provide examples which attest that it is possible to change and waste less.

We can point our fingers at producers, markets, restaurants, or the government as sources of food waste, and some responsibility certainly lies with each, but we consumers must also recognize that we are ultimately responsible. Farmers would not leave unattractive vegetables to rot in the fields if consumers did not make their choices based on appearance. Restaurants would not offer ever-larger portions if patrons did not respond so positively. Governments would enact different laws if citizens pushed in that direction.

Ultimately, the problem starts with many individuals’ actions pooled together, and it must

be resolved in the same manner. We can start by simply planning our meals better: not buying too much food that will eventually be tossed into the trash can, and remembering to freeze or preserve unused foods before they start to spoil. We can refrain from preparing more than we know we can eat, and if we do buy or prepare too much, we can be more open to eating leftovers and creating new dishes with the odds and ends languishing in our refrigerators and cupboards.

When we go out to a restaurant, we can order smaller portions and remember to carry our own containers, so that we will not only package our leftovers to take home and enjoy, but also avoid creating extra Styrofoam or plastic waste in the process. We can even put inedible items—melon rinds, coffee grounds, eggshells—to productive use as compost, where they will feed plants in our gardens instead of producing greenhouse gases in landfills.

These are just a few of the many things we can each do every day. On a larger scale, various movements are already afoot to address this pervasive food waste problem, including many long-standing food banks that collect expired or near-expired, but still edible, food to deliver to those in need. Within the Tzu Chi world alone, volunteers in New Jersey run a food pantry, volunteers in Phoenix prepare food boxes at a local food bank and deliver them to families in need, volunteers in San Jose collect unsold bread from bakeries to deliver to the needy, and volunteers in cities all across the country work closely with food banks to provide regular food backpacks to underprivileged students in the Happy Campus Program.

In a more recent development, a former president of Trader Joe’s even plans to open a new grocery store in Massachusetts that will sell the foods that other grocery stores discard—including items past their expiration dates or with damaged packaging—making them more

accessible to the working poor and changing our incorrect perceptions of expiration dates.

In many cities, there are individuals who make the best of the current situation by scouring through dumpsters to find still-edible food that has been discarded by markets and restaurants. Calling themselves “freegans”—a combination of “free” and “vegan”—they thus remove themselves from the cycle of consumption and waste production, while at the same time saving themselves money and making use of others’ waste before it piles up in landfills instead.

Many also turn to a zero waste lifestyle to resolve food waste and so many other ills of our modern culture of consumption. Instead of contributing to the endless cycle of production, consumption, and waste, they prevent waste in part by growing their own foods to eat and then using the remaining scraps as compost to feed the soil for growing the next set of crops. In this cycle, nothing is wasted. Growing food is not difficult, even in today’s bustling urban centers, and many resources are available for those just starting out. EcoVerse in San Diego, for instance, offers regular workshops in urban

gardening, even showing how to repurpose used plastic bottles into compact planters in order to conveniently grow vegetables at home.

All told, there are many steps we can take to help mitigate the rampant food waste problem in our country, but all the solutions require us to change our thinking and put our knowledge into action. Dharma Master Cheng Yen often reminds us that time is running out, but it has not yet passed us by. Let us seize this opportunity, reduce food waste any way we can, and by doing so help ourselves, the environment, and those around us. 🌱



EcoVerse Vertical Garden



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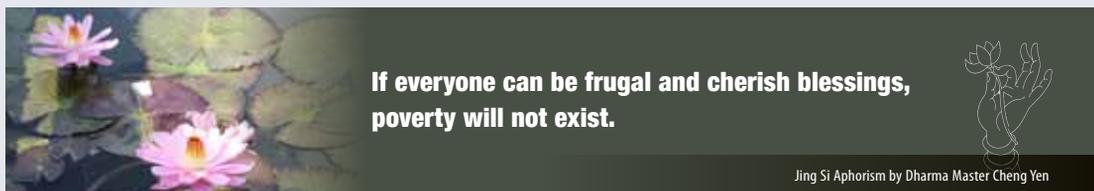
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**If everyone can be frugal and cherish blessings,  
poverty will not exist.**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



# Bay Area Bread *Rescue*

*Dedicated volunteers in North California give baked goods second life.*

Winson Sun | Translated by Estella Fung

**W**hen you first step into a bakery, your senses are greeted by the delicious aroma of freshly baked bread. It is a warm welcome, and quite likely the precise thing you have come for: to enjoy something warm, fresh, and straight out of the oven. Fresh bread, or anything freshly baked, is a special treat, for it only remains that way for a very short time. Soon it will lose its warmth and the aroma will dissipate. It will still be nutritious and edible, just not quite the same.

*Altogether, they distribute approximately ten thousand pounds of bread each month.*

Yesterday's bread does not have the same draw, nor does anyone want to walk into a bakery and discover that there is no fresh bread to be had. As a result, in order to attract customers, bakeries need to keep baking new loaves of bread so that they never fall short. At the end of the day, they simply discard whatever remains.

United under a common belief that good food should never go to waste, volunteers from the Tzu Chi Northwest



*Each Monday morning, volunteers gather in the Northwest Regional Office to re-pack hundreds of pounds of bread.*

*Photo: Winson Sun*



*This shop owner donated twenty percent of her donuts each day to help others in need.  
Photo: Winson Sun*

Regional Office in San Jose, California, began collecting this leftover bread in 2005. Today, volunteers pick up bread daily from bakeries in ten Bay Area cities and then distribute it to thirty-one different destinations, including homeless shelters, low-income families, community centers, and schools. Altogether, they distribute approximately ten thousand pounds of bread each month.

This project is a concerted effort between volunteers and the bakery owners who make such generous donations. What started as a single bakery in Cupertino has grown to ten bakery franchises scattered throughout Dublin, Livermore, Fremont, Union City, Hayward, Newark, San Jose, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, Santa Clara, and Morgan Hill.

Volunteers on the Northern California Tzu Chi Bread Team are ordinary office workers, housewives, and retirees who use their spare time after work or after dropping their children off at school. One team collects the bread and deposits it at a centralized location, then another team handles the distribution. The process is a true relay of love.

No matter how tired the volunteers are, whether rain or shine, summer or winter, they

work to finish sorting the bread after work or dinner, so that it can then be distributed to homeless people around five o'clock the following morning.

Every Monday, volunteers transport three to four hundred pounds of bread collected in Dublin, Livermore, and Cupertino to a Tzu Chi office where they slice, sort, and pack the different types of bread. The whole center becomes filled with compassion and the warm aroma of bread. The team finishes cutting and sorting this large amount of bread amidst friendly chatter and laughter, and the small packages are later shipped to schools, low-income families, shelters for abused women and children, homeless shelters, and senior homes.

Volunteer Wu Jingyun shared of the deliveries to low-income families: "I'm very moved every time a mom and children answer the door in great anticipation. With just these few loaves of bread, we can help so many hungry kids and especially allow low-income families to feel the warmth of a caring society."

Zhou Yufeng, owner of Donut Delight Oriental Pastries, has firsthand experience of hunger from growing up in a poor, deserted village in northern Burma. After learning about Tzu Chi, she wanted to join in and help. "If I donate twenty percent of my donuts every day for 365 days, could you help me distribute them to the needy?" she asked. Lacking in manpower for such a major daily task, her offer was shelved at first. But several months later, in October of the same year, the ball started rolling. It was a shame that she had to throw away many fresh donuts over the preceding months, but late is still better than never.

Volunteer Kevin Chiang promised to help and invited other volunteers to join the cause. In the evenings, after work or dinner, they rushed to the bakeries to collect the unsold donuts and drive them to homeless shelters. Seeing the joy on the faces of the residents at



## The 80/20 Lifestyle

Newark's Second Chance and Abode Services Homeless Shelter brought much happiness to the volunteers.

Three hundred sixty-five days of nonstop pickups and deliveries touched bakery owner Zhou Yufeng's heart, and she ended up becoming good friends with the volunteers. Yufeng noted, "I've lived through the kind of life where you don't know where the next meal is coming from, and I've received help from fellow poor people. My mother told me, 'It's enough to live on eighty percent in life; donate the other twenty percent to those who are struggling in darkness. With a gracious heart, give your love to those who are suffering. It is already a blessing to have a family that is safe and healthy.' Therefore, I'm grateful to Tzu Chi for helping me realize my heart's desire."

She continued, "Paying the same costs for flour and the same salaries to the staff, I can still survive by selling eight pans of bread out of ten produced. Donating the other two pans to those in need is a good thing. It cuts down on twenty percent that could potentially become waste and yields positive karma."

Volunteer Zhang Wanlin joined the Bread Team in 2013, delivering bread to shelters along with her son Justin. The volunteering experience has been a special bonding time for mother and son as they both enjoy participating in the bread delivery together every month. "We always arrive a little early at Panera and have

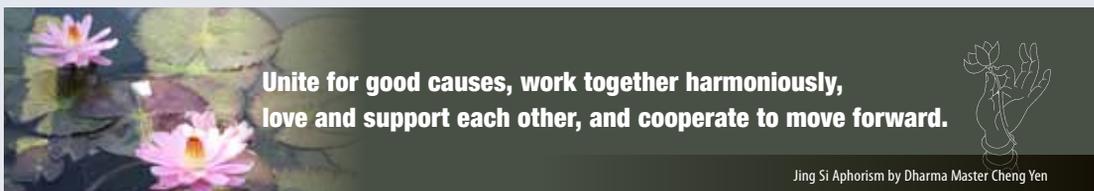


*Rain or shine, volunteers patiently transport hundreds of pounds of bread each day.  
Photo: Winson Sun*

dinner. It's a time for us to chat about his school life and friends while I tell him about my work. Since I go on business trips often, I also take the opportunity to share some of the stories of interesting encounters I've had on my business trips. We laugh together or complain together. It's a time that I cherish. Justin has now outgrown my husband and me. Whenever we carry large bags of bread, he says, 'Mom, let me take it.' I think he's really grown up now. Justin is responsible for carrying the heavy loaves from the car to the shelter. As he completes his work, everyone in the shelter smiles and thanks us. I can tell that Justin feels great satisfaction. I love the fact that there is an opportunity for young people to have a chance to help others."

From a single drop of kindness in 2005, a wave of compassion has rippled forth. This year-round relay of love is a cycle of beauty and kindness, combining vow and action. Through this first decade, volunteers from all corners have participated 320,000 times, collected a total of 960,000 pounds (nearly five hundred tons) of bread and benefited tens of thousands of low-income families and children. Food that would otherwise be wasted instead fills hungry stomachs and brings hearts closer together. 🌱

*\*For more on the Bread Rescue Program, please see "One Loving Heart" in Flowers in the Snow: Mindfulness in Action (Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, 2011).*



**Unite for good causes, work together harmoniously,  
love and support each other, and cooperate to move forward.**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

# Compost 101

*Even inedible food scraps need not be wasted.*

Lulu Wu



**D**o not spread the compost on the weeds.”

This sound advice given by Hamlet to his mother, the queen, is also common sense to gardeners everywhere. Compost is full of macro- and micronutrients that organically fertilize the soil to allow healthy growth of trees and plants. It is any gardener’s greatest ally—when applied properly, that is.

From early settlers in the Akkadian Empire more than five thousand years ago to modern farmers and gardeners, composting has benefited and contributed to human life longer and more significantly than most people realize.

*Spread it on everything in your garden to help it grow.*

As life depends on soil for food, feed, forage, fiber, and environmental stability, composting helps to sustain and promote soil health by:

- Increasing nutrient content
- Improving soil structure
- Balancing soil chemistry and pH
- Expanding water retention
- Repairing and cleaning contaminated soil
- Preventing erosion

Composting also plays an important role in improving the general health of our planet. As population grows and civilization advances, we have put far greater stress on Mother Earth in the past century than our ancestors did in many millennia. Non-decomposing waste products—including plastic bottles and bags, Styrofoam, car tires, and much more—pile up in landfills, where they release toxic pollutants into the air and contaminate the groundwater. Meanwhile, an estimated 650 pounds of compostable waste generated by the average US household every year adds to the already overflowing landfills, where it constitutes a full one third of waste. By composting, we can prevent it from ever entering our landfills and put it to good use instead.

There are several different ways to compost, but thankfully it’s easy to get started in just a few simple steps:



## The 80/20 Lifestyle



### Green material (nitrogen):

cooked or uncooked fruits and vegetables  
 breads and grains  
 coffee grounds and filters  
 grass clippings and flowers  
 seaweed and kelp  
 tea leaves or paper tea bags (no staples)

### Brown material (carbon):

dryer and vacuum lint  
 eggshells, nut shells, corn cobs  
 wood ashes, sawdust, wood chips  
 yard trimmings, leaves, straw, hay  
 houseplants, used potting soil  
 cardboard, newspaper, clean paper (not glossy)

**Avoid:** animal products—meat, seafood, dairy, eggs, lard, bones, pet feces—  
 metals, glass, plastics, and anything treated with chemicals.



Following these simple steps can turn your garden trimmings, kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, paper, and other household waste into healthy, nutritious, organic food to feed your garden. Spread it on everything in your garden to help it grow—except for weeds of course.

If you're interested in trying composting for yourself, there are many easy-to-follow resources readily available on the web. The United States Environmental Protection Agency, for example, offers information, step-by-step guides, and more at [www2.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home](http://www2.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home). 🌱

*The author shares environmental tips with community members during a March 2012 event at the Los Angeles County Arboretum.  
Photo: Luca Ye*



**Our mind is like a garden; if no good seeds are sown,  
nothing good will grow from it.**



Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



# ***An Oasis of Love in Iran***

*In the middle of the Iranian desert, Dr. David Ting found an unexpected but welcome sight: Tzu Chi's Dharma ship.*

**Audrey Cheng & Grace Wong | Translated by Jeff Steward**

**D**r. David Ting, a Las Vegas dentist, traveled to Iran in February 2014 to observe the local culture, customs, and conditions. One day, his travel group arrived at an ancient town near the border of Afghanistan. The tour bus had just traversed six hours of difficult terrain, and everyone onboard was already exhausted. At the edge of sleep, David faintly heard the tour guide saying, "In front of us, not far, is a place not originally included in our tour—a school that was built by a Taiwanese charity. Shall we go and have a look?" After the long ride, David was happy just to have a place to use the restroom. He decided to go take a look.

As David exited the bus with everyone else and walked towards the entrance of the school, what he saw there amazed him. He stood in wide-eyed surprise, for in the center of the school, above the main entrance, a Tzu Chi flag glittered as it waved in the sunlight! From the tour guide, he came to understand the name of this ancient city was Bam and on December 26, 2003, there had been a major earthquake. The local architecture primarily consisted of mud bricks, and as a result more than seventy percent of the buildings collapsed and tens of thousands of people were killed. At the time, Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien immediately sprang into action to provide disaster relief. Overcoming all difficulties, they even helped rebuild five schools in order to

*David saw with his own eyes that Great Love transcends all borders.*

provide a place for Iranian girls to receive an education: something that is often very hard to come by. David now stood before one of these schools.

Coincidentally, 2003 was also the year when David was first becoming involved with the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) in Las Vegas. Ten years later, he was not only supporting community

TIMA medical talks, but was also providing material and financial support for various activities, and volunteering to present dental items such as toothpaste and toothbrushes to children living in domestic violence shelters. On the weekends, David would send his children to attend Tzu Chi Academy, where he took on the role of room parent. He said, "As a Tzu Chi volunteer, seeing the school in Bam, seeing that there is a school in Iran that I donated money to





All photos provided by David Ting

help build, it really both moved and excited me! The world has many charitable organizations, and there are many people in the world involved in doing good deeds, but there is no organization that can accomplish things like Tzu Chi. They not only bring joy to those who receive benefits, but also fill the hearts of those who have donated with gratitude.”

flying high. The workings of karma are truly inconceivable! As he walked at length through the Tzu Chi school, David saw with his own eyes that Great Love transcends all borders. He also learned that Tzu Chi had not only donated money and manpower to build the school in Iran, they also accepted students without condition. The students who came need not be

### **Tzu Chi Disaster Aid in Bam, Iran**

*Bam experienced a 6.6-magnitude earthquake on the morning of December 26, 2003. Of the forty thousand residents of the ancient city, more than half—twenty-six thousand individuals—were killed. Tzu Chi medical volunteers in Hualien immediately sprang into action. Working in conjunction with Tzu Chi volunteers in Turkey and Jordan, they arrived on the ground in Bam on December 29 for disaster assessment. When the second wave of volunteers arrived, they not only dispensed medical care but also distributed rice to disaster survivors.*

*As local schools had collapsed, students were attending school in shipping containers and taking tests out on the concrete under the punishing sun, even when the summer brought temperatures exceeding 120 degrees Fahrenheit. As a result, Master Cheng Yen directed that schools should be built with great haste, and Tzu Chi assisted in building five schools that opened in March 2007.*

Flying from the Western Hemisphere to the blowing sands of Iran, David Ting, a traveler in the great vastness of the world, unexpectedly found the green Tzu Chi Dharma ship flag

Buddhist, and Tzu Chi did not preach within the school. In fact, Tzu Chi did not even operate the school but had instead given it to an Muslim organization to operate with the goal of letting students concentrate solely on their education.



## The 80/20 Lifestyle

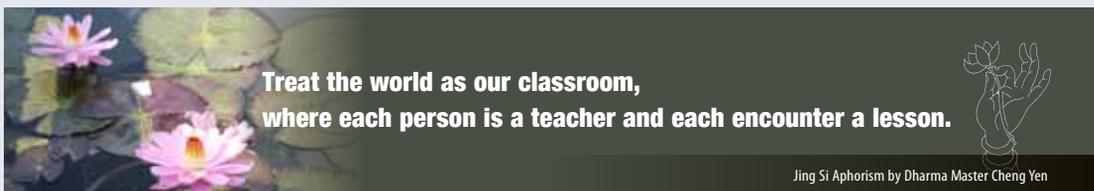
David seized the opportune moment to record these inspired feelings with his camera, and in each frame he captured joyous and laughing faces of the Iranian children that opened his heart wide. He said, "Tzu Chi not only feeds the hungry, it also allows Iranian children, especially girls, to have an opportunity for an education. Once these seeds mature into large trees, they will also be able to help care for a great many people." Through Tzu Chi's project of hope, David Ting saw and understood Master Cheng Yen's words: "Selflessness is the essence of doing good. When you have no objective and seek nothing in return, only then will love spread unceasingly in the purest way."

During his vacation in Iran, David originally thought the local environment was dirty and disorderly. It was also very difficult to communicate with the outside world, and so he was not very satisfied with his trip. However, when he experienced the unselfish Great Love of Tzu Chi, he had a revelation: before coming to Iran, he had taken for granted the blessings and happiness around him, but he now understood that for people living in some parts of the world, these blessings and happiness are as rare as precious jewels. Before going to Iran, he would only ask his children to go to Tzu Chi Academy each week if they felt like it, but now he understood that going to school is not a privilege that all children in the world can afford—it is an opportunity that should be treasured.

His journey to Iran was no longer just a leisurely trip, for this Tzu Chi school in an Islamic country had taught David Ting an appreciation for so-called everyday blessings. His greatest harvest from his trip was thankfulness for



human life. He returned with the influence of this goodness, and in March he shared the story of this spiritual trip with the Las Vegas Tzu Chi community, including Tzu Chi Academy teachers and students. As someone who had personally witnessed the unfolding scroll of history shared his story, it was as if the audience was transported there as well, and all were very moved. After seeing David's photos, Charlie Huang observed, "Seeing the beautiful faces of the Iranian children enjoying the campus Tzu Chi had built for them was truly wonderful! Tzu Chi does so many good things in the world, it is truly amazing. I take being even a small part of Tzu Chi as an honor, and I will continue to support Tzu Chi in all they do." 🌿



**Treat the world as our classroom,  
where each person is a teacher and each encounter a lesson.**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

# The Light of Hope in Haiti

*Translation of speech delivered to a United Nations Commission on the Status of Women parallel event on March 13, 2014. The theme of the 58th session was "The Light of Hope: Women as role models in rural communities."*

Marie-Ange Colinet | Translated from the French by Brenda Liu

First of all, I would like to thank my Tzu Chi brothers from the United States for inviting me to such an important meeting to represent my dear little homeland and especially to talk about my sisters, Haitian women.

Who is the Haitian woman?

The Haitian woman is a simple little peasant who does not know how to read or write, but who takes care of her family and the wellbeing of her husband and children.

The Haitian woman is a professional woman, an entrepreneur, and a politician, who is also a wife and mother in spite of her professional obligations.

The Haitian woman is a mother or a wife abandoned by her negligent companion. She takes care of her children and her responsibilities on her own.

*It is this kind of devoted, courageous, loving, and sensible Haitian woman who since 2010 has discovered and joined the Tzu Chi Foundation.*

Browsing through the history of our country, at different levels and at different times, we find the Haitian woman with all the characteristics and qualities we know.

Very early in the history of Haiti, we find the submissive Haitian woman, accepting under her roof without question all the many concubines of her husband the chief. Even now we see some women who still have this fear of men.

Fortunately, in the past few decades, some associations and organizations have been created to protect women and their rights. To mention just a few of these organizations and associations: Women's League for Social Action, Women's Congress of Church of God of Haiti, SOFA, Kay Femm, Women's Court, and lastly, the Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights.

As a result, the Haitian woman has become well-informed and aware of her



*The author (right) joyfully receives a bamboo bank donation for Tzu Chi. Photo: Luca Ye*

rights and has started to work hard to realize these rights.

The United Nations declared 1975 to be International Women's Year. This gesture and all the activities undertaken on this occasion substantially influenced the debate on the situation of women in the third world, including in Haiti. Alongside this political development, the Haitian woman became fully aware of her intellectual value. She now goes to university and obtains advanced diplomas, degrees, and licenses. She participates actively in research and in the social and political activities of the country.

This is how Ms. Ertha Pascal-Trouillot became the first Haitian woman to be President of Haiti and how Ms. Michèle Pierre-Louis became Prime Minister. Besides these two women, people take pleasure in quoting some heroines from our history, strong women who left their mark either as wives or as sisters in the battles fought by our ancestors for the independence of our country.

- Queen Anacaona, who, after the death of her husband Caonabo, mobilized the Indian population for revenge,
- Catherine Flon, who sewed the national flag for the first independent black republic,
- Marie-Jeanne, who was always at the front line of the battlefields next to her husband, an aboriginal general, distributing cartridges and loading cannons,
- and the so-called "Crazy Woman," who after Dessalines's assassination had the courage to pick up and bury the Emperor's mutilated body.

To describe the Haitian woman effectively, we would need an endless chart to list all of her qualities. She is simple, sensible, devoted, courageous, diligent, proud, determined, valiant,

and hard-working. Her self-esteem is sometimes compromised by the misunderstandings of men and society, but her courage and her determination are never affected.

The Haitian woman is now and has always been a force to be reckoned with. She is the one who takes care of her family, her children's education, household finances, commerce, and agriculture. She is the one who works hard in the fields, planting, harvesting, and then selling in the market. Regardless of her intellectual level, social status, or financial situation, whether rich or poor, from city or countryside, and whatever her skin color, she leads an active life and participates actively in Haiti's social, economic, and political life. The Haitian woman is a woman engaged.

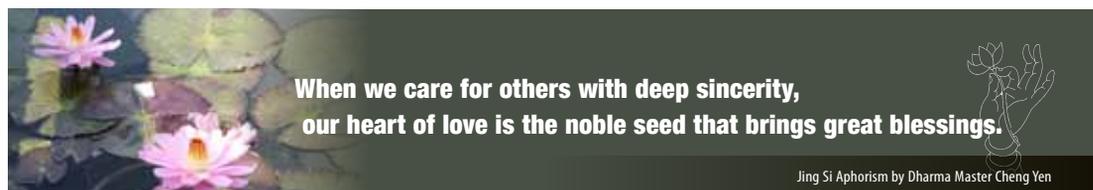
It is this kind of devoted, courageous, loving, and sensible Haitian woman who since 2010 has discovered and joined the Tzu Chi Foundation, which was founded by our Venerable Master Cheng Yen based on love and compassion. She has found her sense of belonging in Tzu Chi. Since the earthquake in 2010 until now, she has committed herself to serving others by cooking: first for more than fifty cleaning ladies, and now four times a week for 150 to 200 children. We can also find her in the SAKALA farm of Cité Soleil, toiling and sweating under the hot Haitian sun, planting, watering, and growing the Moringa miracle tree to help others to eat and be cured.

We would like to take this opportunity to publicly express our gratitude to Master Cheng Yen who has never given up on Haiti. We would also like to thank Tzu Chi Foundation's American volunteers for their support and commitment and, especially, for helping us discover the Moringa that we have always had in abundance in our country but we never knew we had.

*Thank you!* 🌿



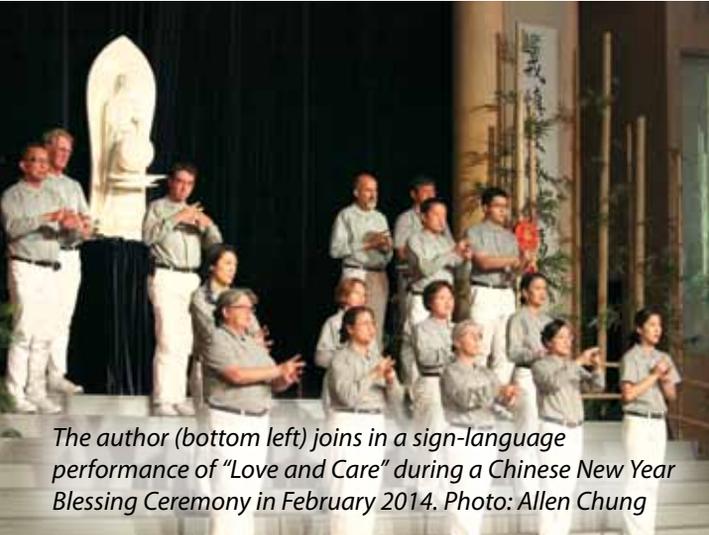
*For more on Tzu Chi in Haiti, see Issue 37 (Fall 2013).*



# My Path to Tzu Chi

*A chance encounter sparks a new affinity and an opportunity to put compassion into action.*

Elaine Villaverde



*The author (bottom left) joins in a sign-language performance of "Love and Care" during a Chinese New Year Blessing Ceremony in February 2014. Photo: Allen Chung*

When I first learned about Tzu Chi in September 2012, I was so surprised that I had never heard of it before. As a fourth-generation Chinese-American and third-generation Mexican-American, like many Americans of diverse ethnicity I grew up always wanting to learn more about my ethnic background. My great-grandmother and great-grandfather came to the United States from southern China. Both my mother's parents were born in San Francisco. Both my parents were born in Los Angeles, which is where I was born, too.

I teach in Santa Ana, California, where the majority of our students are Mexican-American, so I was quite surprised one day in September 2012 to see a Chinese lady in our school office. I rushed into my principal's office and whispered

*I could see their compassion grow week by week.*

excitedly, "Who is that Chinese lady?" My principal, Edna Velado, told me it was Emily Chu from the Tzu Chi Foundation. "Really?" I asked, "What do they do?" Mrs. Velado told me that Emily and Tzu Chi bring Happy Campus backpacks full of food for students that need it. She and Emily had worked together at Romero-Cruz Elementary and now wanted to bring the program to Lincoln. I was very intrigued!

In November 2012, Mrs. Velado showed me her invitation to the Tzu Chi Year-End Blessing event being held at the Irvine Marriott, and I decided to buy a ticket to attend. Everyone was so gracious to me throughout the event. Emily even fed me vegetarian sushi! I thoroughly enjoyed being around so many kind and gracious people. My colleague from Lincoln Elementary School, Janette Perez, came to speak on behalf of Mrs. Velado. At the end of the night, she whispered to me, "I've never been around so many Chinese people before!" When she thanked Emily, she had a glow on her face and said that her heart was so full being around Tzu Chi. I totally agreed with her. That was the beginning of my affinity to Tzu Chi.

I was very excited to start Happy Campus at Lincoln Elementary, and I knew that we teachers needed to be involved in the program to make it work. I told my principal that we could pack the backpacks more efficiently if we stored the food at Lincoln, and I volunteered my fifth grade students to help pack the food. I didn't tell her that I hadn't yet approached my students about this project, but when I did ask them, they responded enthusiastically. For the rest of



Students serve students with bows of respect. Photo: Gina Shih

the 2012-2013 school year, twenty-four of my thirty students participated every week, and Emily and I could see their compassion grow week by week. Only one of my students was also a recipient of a Happy Campus backpack, but they were happy to have the opportunity to give and did not concern themselves about receiving.

The Happy Campus Program has been a wonderful opportunity for me to see how caring and giving can bring out the compassion in people. My students loved working with Emily and all the Tzu Chi volunteers. Each week before they left Lincoln Elementary to head over to Romero-Cruz Elementary and deliver Happy Campus backpacks there, the volunteers would pause to eat a snack, and my students would sit and join them. It was amazing to watch twenty or more of my students sit side by side with them and enjoy each other's company. I was very touched to witness this. Whatever happened in the classroom, I would never deprive them of helping with Happy Campus. I know that their experience with Tzu Chi will stay with them forever.

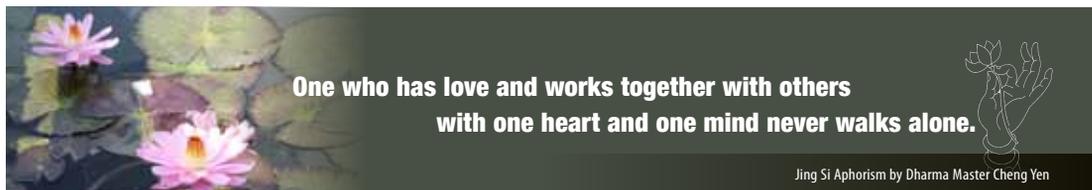
My affinity to Tzu Chi and Master Cheng Yen grows each and every day. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have been given to help and serve. Besides Happy Campus, Emily and I

organize Tzu Chi tutors at Lincoln Elementary during the week. Once a month on Saturdays, Susan Chen and I organize Tzu Ching volunteers from University of California, Irvine, to tutor at Lincoln. The Orange County Service Center has even brought the Medical Outreach program to the Santa Ana Unified School District. Most recently, Emily and I have reached out to seven of our Santa Ana high schools to guide them through the Tzu Chi Scholarship Program. I was so proud to meet the scholarship applicants and see their compassion, enthusiasm, and work ethic. As a teacher, I want to support these students on their journey. As a Tzu Chi volunteer, I want to be a part of their compassionate journey.

This fall, I plan on traveling to Hualien to become certified as a Tzu Chi commissioner. I am very excited to share this with all the Tzu Chi brothers and sisters who have embraced me and helped me on my path. Many have asked me if it is difficult to attend commissioner training classes in Chinese. I tell them that when I am in class, surrounded by all the Chinese brothers and sisters, I feel like I am with family. I may not understand the spoken language, but I can understand the language of the heart. 🌱



For more on Happy Campus, see Issue 34 (Winter 2012).



**One who has love and works together with others  
with one heart and one mind never walks alone.**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



# Talking with Your Hands, Listening with Your Eyes

*Not only beautiful to watch, Tzu Chi's sign language is a way to connect more deeply with Master Cheng Yen's teaching.*

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**Martina Lo**

*As I stand under the spotlight on stage and look down into the silent crowd in the darkness, it occurs to me that merely a few months ago, I would not have imagined that I would be telling a story with my hands, much less delivering Master's words; in this moment, I feel calm and pensive as I take a deep breath and start signing.*

Sign language is part of the humanistic culture of Tzu Chi, and throughout the years I have grown to understand its place in charity work. I believe sign language is a way for Tzu Chi volunteers to express Master's teachings to others.

In 1986, Master Cheng Yen requested that the students of Tzu Chi's nursing school integrate sign language into their singing as a way of expressing their thoughts. Such integration added visual appeal while expressing the lyrics in Tzu Chi songs, which are essentially core teachings from Master. Therefore, instruction in

sign language began and soon the practice of integrating sign language performances into many Tzu Chi activities spread worldwide.

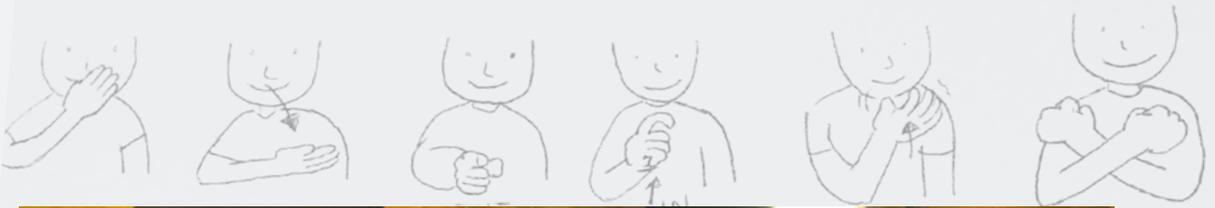
Prior to college, I saw sign language more as performance than communication. From a young age, the majority of my exposure to sign language was either spent singing and "signing" to popular songs at school or participating in Tzu Chi's sutra adaptation of the Sutra of Filial Piety (aka Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents). Although I was always interested in sign language and enjoyed the process of "performing," I never really thought too much about it after each performance. It wasn't until college when I truly started to form a deeper connection with sign language.

In the summer of 2010, out of a whim, I decided to sign up for a level one American Sign Language (ASL) class. This proved to be useful when I then became the president of the Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (Tzu Ching) at University of California, San Diego (UCSD) from 2010 to 2011. At many events, we would perform in sign language to Tzu Chi songs, so not only



# Love in the World

thank you for giving me such a warm embrace



The author (second right) leads sign language practice during the 2012 Tzu Chi Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas. Photo provided by Martina Lo

did I find myself explaining the signs more clearly when learning the song, but I also found performing the songs more meaningful. I finally understood that sign language is not simply a performance, but rather a way for Tzu Chi volunteers to take Master's teaching to heart. Rather than performing sign language for the sake of performing, I was able to incorporate my understanding of the messages in each song and communicate these messages to others. From there, I went on to complete courses in levels two through four. Wanting to immerse myself more in the deaf community, I attended various deaf events and began transcribing English songs into ASL as a way to practice. I even started posting video tutorials online to share my passion for sign language with others.

*I finally understood that sign language is not simply a performance, but rather a way for Tzu Chi volunteers to take Master's teaching to heart.*

I like sign language because it is intuitive, visual, and structured. Sign language is similar to body language in that it derives a lot of its signs from conventional expressions and recognized gestures. Sign language is a form of art which uses the hands, facial expressions, and body movements to tell an action-packed story. A language in itself, sign language appears in many different forms as it is paired with more than one hundred languages in countries all around the world. What I have learned is that the sign language used must match the corresponding language being interpreted—e.g., American Sign Language will be used to interpret English and Chinese Sign Language will be used to interpret Chinese. Although Tzu Chi often has both Chinese and English versions of the same song, at the current stage,

the majority of the songs performed in sign language are performed to the Chinese version in Chinese Sign Language, and only a few songs are performed to the English version in American Sign Language. With a growing English-speaking audience at most Tzu Chi events, the use of English songs is even more crucial.

The opportunity came for me to transcribe my first Tzu Chi song into ASL when I was invited to host a sign language class at a summer retreat for Tzu Shao high-school-age volunteers in 2011. I chose "Love in the World" because I believed the Tzu Shaos would appreciate a fast-paced song with a positive melody. They did. A year later, one Tzu Shao told me that she and her group had just performed the same song at their event. These little things are what inspire me to continue making sign language videos.

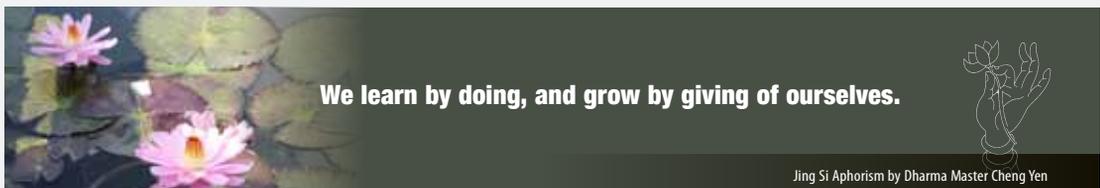
So what do sign language and Tzu Chi have in common?

Like Tzu Chi, sign language teaches me principles of life. Sign language has allowed me to add descriptive, yet controlled, expressions in my daily communication, just as in Tzu Chi, doing volunteer work can be passionate but also grounded. Sign language has also taught me to be more attentive. Unlike verbal communication, you cannot just "listen" to sign language. For example, I find that if I just look away from the person signing for more than

three seconds, I will miss what is being said. One must pay attention to the signs in order not to miss anything. Since one cannot look away for too long, it allows the "listener" to concentrate more on the other person; therefore, it allows the describer to feel more valued and appreciated. Lastly, although I still have a lot to learn from sign language and Deaf culture, through time and practical experience, sign language has taught me the importance of dedication and relating to others. This principle never holds truer than in Tzu Chi's charity mission, because it is only through long-term care and a mindful attitude that Tzu Chi volunteers carry Master's spirit and teachings.

Volunteering in Tzu Chi and learning sign language to Tzu Chi songs are both ways to invite Master's teachings into our hearts and to purify our hearts. When a group performs sign language, they all share the same mindset. When people volunteer together in Tzu Chi, they all have the mindset of "gratitude, respect, and love." A sign language performance will only touch people's hearts when signed with sincerity, just like how a Tzu Chi volunteer only gives others a good feeling when serving with compassion. 🌿

*The author has prepared a sign language tutorial video for this issue's song, "A Clean Planet." Please visit "The Song of Bodhisattvas" under "Videos" on [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org).*





**Buddhist TZU CHI Foundation**  
[www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org)

# The 80/20 Lifestyle

**Be healthy: Reduce your meal portions to 80%**

**Be generous: Use your 20% savings to help the poor**

**Improve your health by reducing meal portions to 80% of your normal consumption. With the 20% you save on food, you can help the needy.**



▶ An 8.2-magnitude earthquake and dozens of aftershocks rocked Iquique Province in northern Chile on April 1, 2014. On April 12, Tzu Chi volunteers traveled over a thousand miles north from Santiago to distribute daily necessities and provide love and care to affected residents. Here, the volunteers share a sign-language song. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Santiago Service Center



▶ Tzu Chi volunteers in Penang, Malaysia, held an activity on March 23, 2014, to promote environmental protection to local residents, urging them to treasure Earth's resources. Photo: Degen Liu



In Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Tzu Chi volunteers visited senior citizens on March 30, 2014. In addition to feeding them, providing massages, and trimming their nails, the volunteers brought care and companionship that warmed residents' hearts. Here, a Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) doctor checks up on one of the residents. Photo: Lingdan Chen



▲ On March 29, 2014, Tzu Chi Argentina volunteers collaborated with the local Red Cross to hold a medical clinic in Guaquay, Entre Ríos. Through this event, they were able to provide medical care to locals otherwise unable to afford it. Photo: Junren Bai



In May 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers and community members in thirty-nine countries worldwide celebrated Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Tzu Chi Day. In Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where the ceremony has been held annually since the 2010 earthquake, more than two thousand locals attended the May 22 event at Stade Sylvio Cator, the national soccer stadium, where volunteers held numerous relief distributions four years earlier. Photo: Colin Legerton



◀ To celebrate Tzu Chi's fifteenth anniversary in the Dominican Republic and thank the local community for their long-term support, volunteers from the United States and the Dominican Republic held a dental clinic and health seminar in Santo Domingo on March 22, 2014. Photo: Jiankai Chen



▲ Tzu Chi Indonesia volunteers partnered with the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Defense to provide medical services for underprivileged residents of Bintaro, Jakarta, on March 22, 2014. Here, a doctor performs surgery to remove a patient's cataracts. Photo: Ivana



▲ On March 23, 2014, volunteers of Tzu Chi Australia's Gold Coast Office visited Ipswich to hold a relief distribution for underprivileged local families. Many recipients paid their gratitude and love forward by contributing to bamboo banks. Photo: Peiyi Qiu



*Villagers in Machache, Lesotho, have taken on the spirit of the 80/20 Lifestyle by setting aside corn and sorghum to share with others in even greater need. Here, villagers hand their donations to Tzu Chi volunteers on March 9, 2014. Photo: Meijuan Chen*



*On April 4, 2014, Tzu Chi Jordan volunteers traveled to Wadi Araba to provide dental care and material relief to those in need. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Jordan*

▲ *Tzu Chi volunteers' care for the Philippines following last November's Typhoon Haiyan continues. On April 12, 2014, Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) volunteers from six countries traveled to hard-hit Tacloban to provide medical care for local residents. Photo: Wenlong Liu*



▲ *Tzu Chi volunteers in Paraguay held a relief distribution of food and daily necessities for residents of Bañado Tacumbú, Asunción, on March 23, 2014. Photo: Lili Xu*

# Prescription Drugs: Safety First!



Medical Corner

A pharmacist and Tzu Chi volunteer suggests guidelines for safely taking medicine.

Jerry Yue

Prescription medications are vital tools for doctors to treat patients. Medicines can save, cure, and improve quality of life, but they can also cause great harm if not used correctly. As elderly patients advance in age, metabolism slows and eyesight, hearing, and memory are weakened, so it becomes more difficult to take medications exactly as prescribed. In order to educate readers on how to take medications safely and minimize the risk of drug interactions and side effects, I have come up with nine suggested guidelines to follow:

**1 Be consistent:** See the same family doctor and fill your prescriptions at the same pharmacy. If you visit multiple doctors, each one may not know what prescriptions the others have written. If they write duplicate prescriptions, you run the risk of a harmful overdose. If they write different prescriptions, there is the possibility of dangerous drug interactions. Always make a list of all the drugs you are taking and give it to your doctor.

**2 Read the labels:** Always carefully read medication labels and learn the shapes, sizes, and colors of the tablets or pills that you are taking. Before leaving the pharmacy, make sure you know clearly how to take the medicine. Open the bottles and look at the tablets or pills. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the pharmacist. If language is a problem, bring a friend or relative to help translate.

*Caring for the elderly is a blessing.*

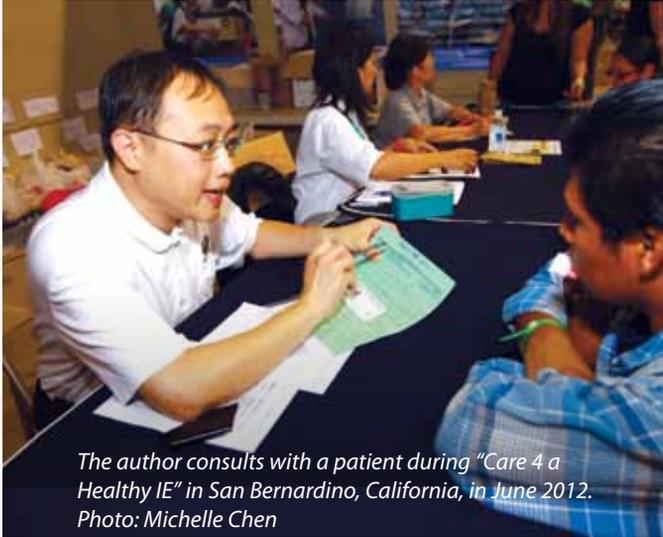
**3 Follow instructions:** This is the most important rule of all. Some patients skip doses when they feel better or take extra when they feel worse, but doing so can delay the course of treatment or cause dangerous adverse reactions. When you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is close to the next scheduled time, just take the next dose as usual. Never take two doses at the same time, and trust in your doctor's instructions.

**4 Take with water:** Water is the best thing to drink when swallowing medicine. Coffee, tea, milk, and juice may cause unwanted interactions or side effects.

**5 Swallow whole:** Do not crush or open tablets or pills, unless specifically instructed otherwise. Some tablets are designed to be released slowly in our intestines. Crushing them will lead to abrupt absorption into the bloodstream, which may cause toxicity.

**6 Call your doctor:** If you experience any allergic reaction or side effect, call your doctor right away. While side effects are uncommon for most medications, if you do experience something out of the ordinary, call your doctor or pharmacist. Do not just wait for it to go away. Some reactions may be dangerous and harmful.





*The author consults with a patient during "Care 4 a Healthy IE" in San Bernardino, California, in June 2012.  
Photo: Michelle Chen*

someone to help you. When you look at each dated compartment, you will know whether you have taken the medicine or not.

**9 Always recycle:** Discard or recycle expired medicines. You can call your city's recycling department to find out if there is a drug take-back program in your area, or ask your pharmacy if they will recycle the meds for you. Even if these options are not available, do not flush your old medicines down the sink or toilet! Simply discard them with household trash by taking the pills out of the bottles, mixing them with coffee grounds,

and putting it all in a plastic bag. Make sure you use a black marker or pen to remove your personal information from the label.

**7 Inform your doctor:** Always tell your doctor about any prescription drugs, nonprescription drugs, or herbal supplements that you are taking. Certain over-the-counter medicines may have the same effects as your prescription medicines or may interact with certain medical conditions. For example, cold medicines may contain decongestants which could aggravate hypertension. Your doctor needs to know all the variables in order to make the right decision for treatment.

As baby boomers age, the population of elderly patients getting prescriptions is growing. Thus, making sure they have the right knowledge about medications is crucial to ensuring successful treatment. By understanding and following their doctors' instructions, more people can live long, healthy lives.

**8 Keep organized:** Use drug organizers, pill cutters, and magnifying glasses to help you keep your medications in order. Most pharmacies sell these over-the-counter. If you cannot read the labels or have trouble taking your medicines on time, these simple gadgets can be a great help. Sort your medicines into the daily compartments once a week, or ask

Caring for the elderly is a blessing. If there are seniors in your household, please pay special attention to their medical needs: know what medical conditions they have and what medications they take. Spend time to get to know how they feel. After all, love is the best medicine of all. 🌿

**Disclaimer:** *The information above is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician, physical therapist, or other qualified health provider prior to starting any new treatment.*



**True filial piety is not only providing material comfort but also showing respect and obedience to our parents.**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



# US Tzu Chi 360°

## New Episode Each Week

Real-life stories about US Tzu Chi volunteers  
active in their communities and around the world:  
a view from all angles,  
a view from all perspectives:

### USTzuChi360°

Watch episodes online at [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org)  
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Click the "Videos" tab on [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org)  
to watch USTzuChi360° and programs including  
Life Wisdom, a twelve-minute daily talk by  
Dharma Master Cheng Yen, and Tzu Chi This  
Week, a half-hour weekly roundup of Tzu Chi  
news from around the world.





# Composting with Great Love

*Composting provides a valuable lesson in cherishing our resources.*

**Mary Carlson**

At the beginning of last summer, students here at Tzu Chi Elementary School in Monrovia, California, started a small garden filled with cucumbers and pumpkins. Over the last several months, the garden has grown to include plants like broccoli, basil, corn, and peas.

Noticing that students were in the garden quite a lot, Tzu Chi Education Foundation made a wonderful decision to bring a compost tumbler to the school. The students didn't quite know what to make of this composter at first, but they were excited to learn more about it. A class was held to explain to students more about composting, and the students, especially those in Grades Three and Four, are off to a great start making compost to nurture our garden.

The students are now using the compost to nurture plants in the garden. Most of the compost contents are brought from students' homes, and the list of items brought includes grass clippings, food scraps, dried leaves, coffee grounds, and much more. We have also taken food scraps and fruit peels from the students' school lunch and clippings and leaves from our own school garden to add to the compost tumbler.

Our class is now using the compost to nourish the "three sisters"—companion plants of corn, beans, and pumpkins—and students are very excited to see the results. When I asked students what they thought of our journey to learn more about and use compost, Audrey said, "It's great because you don't waste food scraps."

Edward likes composting because "it's a great way to get your garden organized." Abigail is also a fan of composting: "Composting is better for plants and it's a natural way to fertilize." Terra loves composting because "it helps the Earth!"

Mia was more pragmatic about composting. "At first, there are gnats flying all over the place because all the things inside haven't broken down, but that's compost!" Justin loves the sounds and textures of the leaves we collected, because "you get to crunch, crush, cut, and stomp leaves." Janice enjoys our walks to collect materials around the school, and had this to say about composting: "I think it's pretty fun, because we get to go outside and collect leaves." Theodore also loves the sensations from the compost. He told me, "It's fun to put your hands in the greens that are mushy and the browns that are really crunchy—the sounds are really good." Ava likes compost because "it can help our plants grow!"

The students have a lot to teach about composting. Here is some advice from third and fourth graders if you are new to this process.

*Sidney: "To start composting, greens and browns are needed to fill up the composter. Greens are things like flower petals, fruit and vegetable peels, or unwanted plants. Browns are plants or other stuff that are dried up or dead."*

*Terra: "Browns are things that are what they sound like. Brown. That's because they are dead!"*

*Theodore: "The browns give carbon. The greens give nitrogen."*

*Learning about composting has been one of my favorite experiences while here at Tzu Chi Elementary School.*



Edward: "You can use dry grass, tea leaves, and coffee grounds, too."

Ava: "To make good compost, we must let in oxygen. We must also spin the compost tumbler."

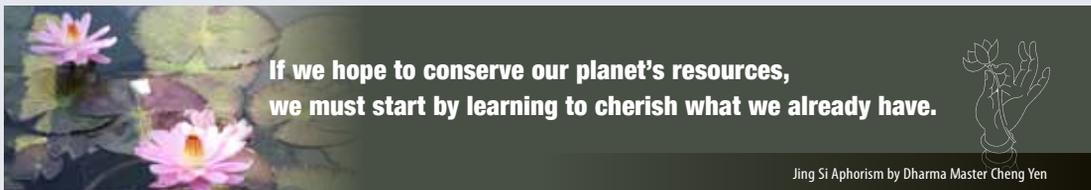
Janice: "It has to be moist and it has to stick together."

Mia: "Check on it every day. Too dry? Add water. Too wet? Add browns!"

Terra: "Turn your compost about six times a day."

Sidney: "When the compost is finished, use it for many things."

Learning about composting has been one of my favorite experiences while here at Tzu Chi Elementary School. I have been fortunate enough to enjoy the expertise of the Education Foundation in acquiring the compost tumbler and providing instruction as to how to use it. I would highly recommend composting to anyone interested in making the most of the materials we might otherwise throw away. And if you're curious, come visit the Tzu Chi Elementary School's garden to see just how easy and fun composting really is! 🌱



**If we hope to conserve our planet's resources, we must start by learning to cherish what we already have.**



Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Students prepare "browns" and "greens" for composting. Photo: Ihsuan Tsai



The author hands out seeds to her students. Photo: Ihsuan Tsai

# Calvin Hsi: Seeing the World with Compassionate Eyes

*"He had such a pure heart. In his eyes, he always saw the good in others." – Dharma Master Cheng Yen*

Shirley Tseng | Translated by Colin Legerton

At 3:22 PM on February 22, 2014, Calvin Hsi, a beloved member of the Tzu Chi family, quietly left this world. As the news of his passing was received, it was met not only with unspeakable grief, but also with shock. Physically, Calvin had been thinning steadily for more than a year, but no one knew that he was struggling with a serious illness. Diagnosed three years earlier, Calvin had been advised by his doctors to take it easy, but he never strayed from the path he set for himself. He was determined to tread steadily and joyfully along the Bodhisattva Path.

Calvin Hsi was born on September 2, 1958, the youngest of four siblings. Though the much-loved baby of the family, he never let himself become spoiled and proud. Instead he always remained humble and filial. Calvin's family originally hailed from Pinghu, Zhejiang, China, and his father, the eighth-generation doctor in the Hsi family, frequently offered medical

service to the poor. In 1993, a reporter for *Tzu Chi Monthly* magazine asked Dr. Hsi, "Is the ability to practice Chinese medicine an innate talent?" He answered, "Talent does matter, but the most important thing is to have the heart of a Bodhisattva." Calvin's mother was naturally cheerful and understanding, and she always treated others equally. Calvin was clearly influenced by both of his parents, as he nurtured an optimistic attitude and a habit for helping others.

In 1976, Calvin moved to the Dominican Republic with his mother and siblings and completed his high school education there. In 1981, they immigrated to the United States, where Calvin completed a degree in architecture at the University of Southern California (USC) and became a professional

*His eyes did not see others' faults, only their virtues.*



Photos provided by the Hsi family.



*Calvin accepts the 2013 National VOAD Member of the Year Award on behalf of Tzu Chi. Photo: Norman Yang*

architect. However, helping others was both his nature and his heart's desire, so he returned to USC to earn his Master of Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling and Psychology. He then took a job as Mental Health Therapist at the Asian Pacific Family Center in Rosemead, California.

In 1982, when Calvin's father, a Buddhist disciple, learned that Tzu Chi Foundation was building a Buddhist general hospital, he was thrilled by the news. He immediately became a Tzu Chi donating member to support the hospital construction fund, and thus created an affinity between Tzu Chi and his son. Calvin himself encountered Buddhist Dharma in 1990, and he began to eagerly seek enlightenment. As time, causes, and conditions came together, he joined Tzu Chi. In 1991 he took refuge as Dharma Master Cheng Yen's disciple and was given the Dharma name of "Si Dao" (Contemplating the Way).

In the early 1990s, Calvin gradually became more and more deeply involved with Tzu Chi activities in the United States. When he was certified as a Tzu Cheng Faith Corps member in 1995, he wrote, "After participating in the United States Tzu Cheng Faith Corps for several years, I have deeply understood why Master wants us to 'cultivate our mind on all occasions, train our mind in all situations, and elevate our mind in all places.' Performing guard duty in the Tzu Cheng Faith Corps involves standing guard like a military policeman, and it truly gives us a good

opportunity to 'cultivate our mind on all occasions.' Planning all manner of activities and working together with Faith Corps teammates is a prime opportunity to 'train our mind in all situations.' Directing traffic, dealing with crises, and maintaining safety and order are excellent learning

environments for us to practice 'elevating our mind in all places.' Each time I participate in different activities and take on different responsibilities, I always learn and experience different things."

Calvin never married. After his father passed away, he not only cared for his mother, but dedicated all his time and energy to working for Buddhism and for all living beings. In the early years, he volunteered as Tzu Cheng Faith Corps team leader and then as a reporter for Tzu Chi's Chinese-language magazine. At events both large and small, he was always carrying a camera to record Tzu Chi's history. He also led the Tzu Shao youth group for high-school-age volunteers who lovingly referred to him as "Big Brother Hsi." When Tzu Chi's education team was just beginning to develop its humanistic education program, he served as the team's vice-director.

In 1998, Calvin was a founding member of the training team that planned curriculum for volunteer training classes. In all situations, he utilized his mental health therapy skills and understanding of both Buddhist Dharma and Tzu Chi philosophy to lead fellow cultivators to explore their innate pure nature, recall their initial determination, and strengthen their resolve to walk the Bodhisattva Path.

In 2004, as Tzu Chi USA Headquarters grew and actively sought employees, then-



## Living Bodhisattvas



*Calvin brought joy to people of all ages. Here, he joins an activity for parents and children in 2005. Photo provided by Tzu Chi USA Education Dept*

CEO Austin Tsao spared no effort in convincing Calvin to lead the Charity Department. Within a year, Calvin had successfully transferred all of his patients and left the Asian Pacific Family Center to serve as Tzu Chi's Director of Charity Development. He fully dedicated himself to Tzu Chi's missions for the rest of his days: a decade that passed in the blink of an eye.

After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Calvin immediately joined the relief effort to Port-au-Prince and returned there many times. He



*Calvin was frequently in Haiti after the 2010 Earthquake. Photo: Shirley Tseng*

was diagnosed with liver cancer later that same year, but he hid his diagnosis from all but his immediate family, so as not to cause others to worry. Not only did he continue working, he became even more diligent in his Tzu Chi work and treasured even more his time spent together with each individual.

Calvin was a pure, gentle individual, a kind of person rarely seen in this world. His eyes did not see others' faults, only their virtues, and he always spoke nothing but praise and gratitude for others. Calvin was always attentive and considerate, and he deeply treasured all his friendships. Whenever a fellow cultivator visited from afar, Calvin always arranged for friends to gather together over a meal. When it came to the other employees and volunteers he worked with, he would prepare little gifts by hand to give to each of them every Chinese New Year. On Thanksgiving Day and Chinese New Year's Eve—days when people gather together with their families—he would extend special care to Los Angeles-area Tzu Chi volunteers who lived alone and were unable to return home by inviting them to join his own family to share a meal together. Whenever anyone had a problem they didn't know how to deal with, all they had to do was give Calvin a call. No matter how much work he had before him, he would always set it aside to mindfully listen to their troubles and warmly resolve their suffering, and then he would work through the night to complete his own work.

At the end of 2013, as his body weakened, Calvin quit his job at Tzu Chi to convalesce at home. A week before he passed away, he was still able to drive his mother to the restaurant for his family's weekly dinner gathering. Days later, he sat on his sofa, quietly staring at a photograph of Dharma Master Cheng Yen. Later, his mother realized that he had been bidding her farewell.

On the morning of February 20, 2014, Calvin collapsed at home and was rushed to the hospital. His brother and sisters stayed by his side, and his sister chanted the name of the Buddha beside his ear. When he regained consciousness in the afternoon, he insisted on returning home, where he appeared calm and steady. He chatted with his family and even joked with his sister: "Sister, there was no need to chant so loud. I was already chanting in my heart." That night he rested peacefully, but the next morning his pulse weakened, and he



Calvin helps lead the 2013 Buddha Bathing Ceremony in San Dimas, CA. Photo: Hucheng Xie

peacefully left this world that afternoon.

Once they heard the news of Calvin's passing, more than one hundred Tzu Chi volunteers from all across Southern California flooded into his home to send Calvin off on his final journey by piously chanting the name of the Buddha. Everyone took turns chanting until midnight, when his eyes, which had been peacefully closed, opened slightly. With his

downward gaze and solemn spirit, everyone was reminded of a passage in the Lotus Sutra:

*Equipped with all blessings  
Viewing all with compassionate eyes,  
His ocean of accumulated blessings is immeasurable.  
Heads should be bowed to him.\**

Calvin's life was not long, but it made a powerful impact. When his memorial service was held on March 13, it became very clear just how many lives he had touched as more than five hundred individuals of all races and creeds filled the chapel to pay their respect to this man who had touched them so deeply. Among the Tzu Chi volunteers in attendance were not only those from across Southern California, but many from Northern California, Arizona, Nevada, Texas, New Jersey, and even Canada, including some who had to request vacation time to drive or fly in especially for the service. Though Calvin has departed, his spirit will remain with those he has touched and in the positive impact they pass on to others. 🌿



\*Translation from Reeves, Gene. *The Lotus Sutra*. Wisdom Publications: Boston, 2008. (379)

For more on Calvin's life, please watch the March 13, 2014, episode of Life Wisdom, under "Videos" on [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org).

# A Clean Planet

一個乾淨的地球  
yī gè gān jìng de dì qiú

詞：證嚴上人開示輯錄 | 曲：李壽全

Lyrics from Master Cheng Yen's teachings | Music: Rio Lee

Video: Tzu Chi USA Media Center

Sign Language Instruction: Martina Lo

Let's leave for our children

留給我們的孩子  
liú gěi wǒ mén de hái zi

Let's leave for our children

留給我們的孩子  
liú gěi wǒ mén de hái zi

Let's leave for our children

留給我們的孩子  
liú gěi wǒ mén de hái zi

Let's leave for our children

留給我們的孩子  
liú gěi wǒ mén de hái zi

A planet clean and pure

一個乾淨的地球  
yī gè gān jìng de dì qiú

A river crystal clear

一條清澈的河流  
yī tiáo qīng chè de hé liú

A blue sky shining bright

一個碧藍的天空  
yī gè bì lán de tiān kōng

A meadow lush with life

一片草原綠油油  
yī piān cǎo yuán yuán yóu yóu



Tzu Chi songs are composed based on the teachings of the sutras and Dharma Master Cheng Yen. When we sing the song, we are reminded of the way of the bodhisattvas in daily living. Please visit “The Song of Bodhisattvas” on [www.us.tzuchi.org](http://www.us.tzuchi.org) to enjoy music videos for this and other Tzu Chi songs.

**May love's Great Compassion**

讓我們的愛心

ràng wǒ mén de ài xīn

**Comfort all the weary souls**

溫暖你寒冷的手

wēn nuǎn nǐ hán lěng de shǒu

**May love's Great Compassion**

讓我們的愛心

ràng wǒ mén de ài xīn

**Make the world a brighter place**

照亮黑暗的角落

zhào liàng hēi àn de jiǎo luò

**May this Great Compassion**

讓我們的愛心

ràng wǒ mén de ài xīn

**Make a stream of pure Great Love**

化作大愛的清流

huà zuò dà ài de qīng liú

**Flowing round the planet**

清流繞著全球

qīng liú rào zhe quán qiú

**Changing hearts forever more**

淨化人心不煩憂

jìng huà rén xīn bù fán yōu

# The Value of Wealth

Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Compiled into English by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team

**W**e often hear people say, "That person's greed is insatiable." Why is it so hard to satisfy our desires? When our minds are led by our material desires, we cannot help but fall into the trap of endless greed.

In the kingdom of Magadha in ancient India, there lived an elder by the name of Sankha. Elder Sankha was born into a wealthy family and owned many successful businesses. Similarly, in the kingdom of Varanasi, there lived an elder named Piliye, who possessed a comparable fortune. The two families had been close for generations, and the two men were good friends.

However, good fortune does not last forever. One year, Varanasi experienced a natural disaster that caused all the crops to fail. Thus, Elder Piliye's wealth disappeared overnight. Feeling completely disheartened, he traveled to Magadha to ask Elder Sankha for help.

At first, Elder Sankha was very happy that his old friend had come to visit, but when he saw how shabbily his friend was dressed, he became concerned. He anxiously asked, "My friend, what has happened to you? How did you end up like this?" Elder Piliye then told the story of his bad luck.

Elder Sankha said, "Don't worry! Money and riches are merely worldly possessions. I will simply give you half of my wealth, so you can rebuild your home and business." Without another word, he gave Elder Piliye half of his gold, money, servants, domestic animals, and other property. Elder Piliye was very touched by his friend's generosity and returned home with half of Elder Sankha's fortune to rebuild his life.

Still, life is unpredictable. Many years later, a natural disaster struck Magadha. Elder Sankha's property was washed away by a flood, and he was left with nothing.

His wife was extremely distraught, so Elder Sankha tried to comfort her by saying, "Don't worry! Although we have lost our possessions, we can start over."

"We don't even have a place to live!" his wife replied. "How can we possibly rebuild our lives?"

Elder Sankha said, "When Elder Piliye faced a similar disaster, I gave him half of my fortune. Since good friends help each other in times of trouble, I'm sure that he will help us now." Thus, Elder Sankha and his wife set out on foot for the long journey to Varanasi to see his old friend.

When they arrived at the gates of the city of Varanasi, they were still quite far from Elder Piliye's home. So, Elder Sankha said to his wife, "There is shelter here. Why don't you rest while I go into the city to look for Piliye? Then I can ask him to send a carriage for you."

On reaching Elder Piliye's home, Elder Sankha asked the sentry to announce his arrival. When this old man dressed like a beggar asked to see his master, the sentry was not sure whether he should convey the request. He thought, "My master's friends are all members of the upper class; how could he have a friend who is dressed so poorly?"

The sentry hesitantly announced the visitor to Elder Piliye. "Master, there is someone here from the kingdom of Magadha. He says that his name is 'Sankha' and that he would like to see you."

Elder Piliye asked, "How many people did he arrive with?"

"He's by himself, and he looks terrible."

Elder Piliye frowned at this and said, "Okay, since he's here, let him in."

When Elder Sankha entered, Elder Piliye did not even stand up to greet him. Instead, he coldly asked, "Why have you come?" Elder Sankha explained his misfortune and asked his old friend for help to rebuild his life. Elder Piliye replied,

## Happiness is not about wealth, power, or status; it is about living freely, happily, and peacefully.

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



### Storytelling by the Master

"That's impossible! I'm in the midst of expanding my own businesses. How could I possibly help you? But since you're here, let me ask the servant to pack some leftovers from lunch for you to take with you." Hearing this, Elder Sankha remained silent.

After asking Elder Sankha to wait outside, Elder Piliye turned to his servant and said, "Pack some old cornmeal for him. One meal's worth is enough." The servant complied with his master's instructions.

When the servant brought the food, Elder Sankha thought, "Should I accept this or not? If I accept it, all that I will walk away with is a crude meal. If I reject it, I might hurt this friendship. I have already lost all my material wealth; I do not want to lose this friendship, as well." After much deliberation, he accepted the food.

When Elder Sankha returned to the shelter, his wife asked, "Why hasn't the carriage arrived?"

Holding back tears, he said, "Piliye is unwilling to help. However, he gave us this one meal."

Hearing this, his wife broke down completely. "When he had nothing, we gave him half of our fortune. Why isn't he willing to help us now?"

At that moment, a passerby looked into the shelter and thought he saw a familiar figure. Upon coming closer, he was surprised to see his former master. This servant, who had been one of those given to Elder Piliye after he lost his fortune, asked his former master, "How did you end up in this state?" So, Elder Sankha recounted the entire story, including his meeting with Elder Piliye.

When the servant heard the whole the story, he realized how vicious and cruel people can be. How could Elder Piliye not honor his friend's former kindness? Recalling the generosity of his former master, the servant said, "Although I'm only a servant, I'm able to provide you with a warm shelter and food. You and your wife are

welcome to stay with me." Elder Sankha and his wife thanked him and accepted his offer.

This servant also shared the news of Elder Sankha's arrival with the rest of his former servants. After hearing this story, they all thought, "Although he has fallen on hard times, as our former master, he still has a place in our hearts." One by one, they came to visit him and expressed their outrage at his poor treatment.

Thus, the news of Elder Piliye's behavior spread throughout the city and eventually reached the king's ears. The king was so angry that he immediately summoned the two elders to the palace. After thoughtfully inquiring after Elder Sankha's present situation, the king turned to Elder Piliye and said, "You were able to rebuild your life because of Elder Sankha's financial assistance. Now that your benefactor has fallen upon hard times, you stand by and do nothing. I order you to hand over your entire fortune to Elder Sankha."

Now it was Elder Piliye who remained silent. Elder Sankha quickly spoke up, "Please, Your Majesty, I do not want his entire fortune. The amount that I originally gave him will be enough." Elder Sankha's forgiving and generous nature touched the king. He ruled that Elder Sankha would take back his former servants and everything else he had originally given to Elder Piliye, so he could return home and rebuild his life.

Elder Piliye's greedy tendencies were so deeply ingrained that he did not honor their friendship and even repaid his friend's kindness with animosity. He was so caught up in the acquisition of wealth that eventually everyone lost respect for him. Material goods are merely tools to assist us in our lives, so we must learn to make good use of them. Otherwise, if we are controlled by our material desires, we face the danger of ultimately losing sight of what is valuable in life.





On May 11, 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers and community members in thirty-nine countries celebrated Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Tzu Chi Day by expressing gratitude to the Buddha, their parents, and all sentient beings. Here, Dharma Masters lead the ceremony in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. Photo: Weilun Wu



On May 10, 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers served breakfast to the homeless in Washington, DC, bringing them warmth and care as well as food. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Greater Washington DC Regional Office



Tzu Chi Junior Academy students in Austin, Texas, celebrated Mother's Day on May 4, 2014, by washing their mothers' feet to express gratitude for giving them birth and raising them. Photo: Fang-Wen Huang



▲ As part of the Happy Campus Program, Tzu Chi volunteers conducted health consultations and physical examinations for low-income families at Summit Hall Elementary School in Gaithersburg, Maryland, on April 7, 2014. Photo: Mark Tsai



◀ On March 15, 2014, San Francisco Department of Public Works held its annual tree-planting activity in honor of Arbor Week. Tzu Chi volunteers promoted environmental protection to the community, doing their part to keep San Francisco clean and beautiful. Photo: Lulu Yin



▲ On April 11, 2014, students and teachers from Linden High School volunteered at Tzu Chi's Food Pantry in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, to help prepare fruits and vegetables for distribution to needy families in the area. Photo: Wankang Wang



▲ At the invitation of the Harbor Community Benefit Foundation, Tzu Chi participated in the second annual Wilmington Health Fair at Tzu Chi Community Clinic in Wilmington, California, on March 22, 2014. Volunteers provided medical consultations and treatment, and promoted vegetarianism and environmentalism. Photo: Yuhua Chen



Tzu Chi volunteers and Tzu Shao high school volunteers visited St. Edna Subacute and Rehabilitation Center in Santa Ana, California, on May 11, 2014, to bring a joyful Mother's Day to elders confined to wheelchairs. Photo: Chifen Lin



*Volunteers in Las Vegas, Nevada, invited local law enforcement personnel to an event on March 28, 2014, to acquaint them with Tzu Chi and its missions. Here, volunteers lead an icebreaker. Photo: Michael Lenford*

▲ On March 12, 2014, a gas leak caused an explosion that leveled two apartment buildings in Manhattan, New York, killing at least eight and injuring scores more. Tzu Chi volunteers conducted a relief distribution in Harlem on March 20 to provide cash cards and sincere care in the hope that survivors can return to their normal lives as soon as possible. Photo: Peter Lin



▲ On March 8 and 9, 2014, Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and its partners held the second annual "Healthy Fresno" clinic to provide medical care for underprivileged families and uninsured migrant farmers in California's Central Valley. Here, volunteers set up before the event. Photo: Robert Ku



▲ A deadly mudslide engulfed a small community in Snohomish County, Washington, on March 22, 2014, destroying three dozen homes and claiming more than forty lives. Tzu Chi volunteers went to assess the damage on March 27, and returned twice in April to provide relief. Photo: Fengjiao Huang

# Jing Si Aphorisms

## Inspiration Every Day

ความงดงามของมวลรวม ขึ้นอยู่กับการบำเพ็ญตนของแต่ละคน  
La nobleza de un grupo está en la cultura de cada uno de sus miembros.



**The beauty of a group lies in the refinement of its individuals.**

*L'harmonie collective repose sur l'attitude bienveillante de chacun.*

整體的美，在於個體的修養。

*Die Harmonie der gesamten Gruppe beruht auf der spirituellen Entwicklung ihrer Individuen.*

**Amoni nan yon gwoup chita sou pèfeksyonman chak grenn moun ki fè pati gwoup la.**

全体の美は、個体の修養により現れる。

Botle ba sehlopha bo boptjoa ka bohloeki ba motho ka mong.

*La bellezza di completa armonia di un gruppo si basa sulla raffinatezza e coltivazione individuale.*

整体的美，在于个体的修养。





# A Journey across the Nation

*Inspired by Master Cheng Yen's words, volunteers vow to share them with others.*

## Eric Tseng

*For the peace we wish for tomorrow, start working on it today.  
The path of life is difficult and rough, but as long as one is willing to give with joy,  
the path will not be arduous.*

*- Jing Si Aphorisms by Master Cheng Yen -*

Love, the essence of human existence. Hope, the fuel that drives progress forward against all odds. Compassion, the driving force of life which defines our purpose and direction. As we face the trials and tribulations that present in our lives, we often find ourselves running low on our tank of love, our fuel of hope, and then cracks begin to surface on our wall of compassion. Eventually, the seeds of exhaustion grow into doubt and confusion—finally, we give up. In the dark of the night, we need only a flicker of light to keep us going in the right direction. Here, through Tzu Chi, Master Cheng Yen offers that flicker of light through her *Jing Si Aphorisms*.

*Jing Si Aphorisms* are words compiled from dialogues between Master Cheng Yen and her disciples or visitors. Written in short verses, the aphorisms are guidelines practiced by the Master. They are easy to comprehend and practice, and they have been translated into many languages and promoted in every corner of the world.

The Chinese edition of *Jing Si Aphorisms, Volume 1* was first published in 1989. Since then, millions of copies have been printed in over a dozen languages and through different media, including children's books, cartoons, bookmarks, small decorative items, and cards.

*Steadily, the influence  
of compassion and love  
spread across the nation.*

In an effort to spread the wisdom of Master Cheng Yen's *Jing Si Aphorisms*, Tzu Chi volunteers have embarked on a campaign to distribute copies of a four-language edition to hotels and other establishments across the United States. Like the Bibles you may find in the top drawer of your hotel room nightstand, *Jing Si Aphorisms* offers another spiritual source to accompany you and inspire you on your journey.

Distribution of *Jing Si Aphorisms* across the country is a project of enormous magnitude just within the scope of what compassionate Tzu Chi volunteers do best. Everything begins with taking the first step, and one by one, Tzu Chi volunteers have taken on this project as their own individual responsibility. For example, Andy Kaoh in Southern California was so inspired with hope by the wisdom shared in *Jing Si Aphorisms* that he first purchased five thousand copies with his own money, and many thousands more since, to be donated to various hotels across the United States.

The compounding effects of Mr. Kaoh's efforts led the Hotel Association of New Jersey to notice his kind deed and contact the local Tzu Chi office for copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* to place in hotel rooms. The ripple effects continued to broaden as Debbie Chen, Mid-Atlantic Regional

Director, took advantage of this opportunity to go out and share this book of wisdom with hotels that have long been supportive donors of Tzu Chi.

Steadily, the influence of compassion and love spread across the nation, and Tzu Chi's little project grew into a mammoth movement. In New Jersey, a hotel manager indicated that the multilingual *Jing Si Aphorisms* would first be provided in more than forty executive suites so that guests could benefit from them in their busy and stressful travels. Another hotel owner took notice and initiated the distribution across all of his holdings.

From June 2011 through December 2013, volunteers visited more than seventeen hundred hotels and motels across the United States. Of these, nearly seven hundred accepted the offered donations, a total of more than sixty thousand copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms*. Southern California Tzu Chi Volunteer Lusha Lee, who has long promoted Tzu Chi publications in the

United States, has spread the word for more volunteers to join in this long-term undertaking by contributing even just one copy, talking to hotel personnel about the project, or placing the book in their own hotel or motel. Any one of these simple actions could help change someone's life.

Volunteers involved in this project have a long road ahead of them; there are, after all, more than five million hotel rooms in the United States. But their lengthy path does not daunt them. As one of the aphorisms states, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one first step. Even the saint was once an ordinary human being." The next time you stay at a hotel, remember to look for a copy of *Jing Si Aphorisms* in your room. When you have read it, share it with others. It may set in motion an ever-widening ripple of goodness. 🌿

Volunteers deliver copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* in San Jose, California, in February 2013. Photo: Runsheng Yang



**Truly beneficial teachings beautify life and inspire wisdom.**



Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Volunteers in Miami, Florida, hit the streets in September 2013. Photo: Cibi Lu



## Jing Si Aphorisms

# Inspiration to the Weary

*Tzu Chi volunteers deliver words of wisdom as well as love and care.*

## Tzu Chi Volunteers



### Words of Wisdom

For many people, a little reading before bed is a nightly ritual. If you can read just a few positive words at that most peaceful moment of the day, they will sink deep into your mind. As you sleep, good seeds can begin to sprout and grow. The fruits they produce will be your reward.

In September 2009, Elizabeth Lawrence had such an experience. On a vacation to China, she came across a book of wise maxims at her hotel in Suzhou, with each concise saying presented in four languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese. Today, Elizabeth's copy is full of notes and markings, vivid reminders of repeated readings of this book that means so much to her. Not content to keep it only for herself, when she returned home to Canada from China, she purchased dozens of copies to give as favors at her wedding in 2011. Now all her friends and family have a chance to benefit from this book just as she has.

Andy Kaoh experienced a similar revelation in Taipei in 2011. Opening his nightstand drawer, he found the same collection of profound wisdom encapsulated in simple language. Andy had long been searching for a book that could express Buddhist wisdom clearly and simply.

Now he found what he had sought.

What Elizabeth and Andy discovered was Dharma Master Cheng Yen's *Jing Si Aphorisms*, a collection of words of compassion and wisdom. The first English-language volume of *Jing Si Aphorisms* (then called *Still Thoughts*) was published in 1996 as a compilation of advice and counsel that Master Cheng Yen had provided to visitors throughout the first three decades of Tzu Chi's history. In the nearly two decades since, the first volume has been reprinted thirty times and has been followed by two additional volumes and several multilingual collections.

Some aphorisms have been translated into as many as eighteen different languages, and millions of books have been sold, many of them then passed along as gifts to others. As Tzu Chi has grown and spread around the world, the wisdom of *Jing Si Aphorisms* has provided inspiration and guidance for volunteers, donors, and care recipients and has supported countless individuals, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, on their life journey.

*By the end of 2013, more than 60,000 books had been donated to nearly 700 hotels.*

## One in Every Nightstand

After he found the book of Buddhist wisdom that he had been seeking, Andy Kaoh vowed to share *Jing Si Aphorisms* with hotels and motels across the United States to ensure that other weary travelers would find solace, wisdom, and inspiration on their journeys, just as he had. With his donation and vow to continue donating

as many copies as needed, Tzu Chi volunteers in Southern California started promoting the book to hotel owners and managers in June 2011.

There was already a strong precedent in Southern California, where volunteer Sheng Ping Liu started keeping copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* at the motel he manages in 2009, accompanied by notes encouraging patrons to take a copy with them if they wanted. He also introduced the books to many other hotel and motel owners. With Andy's vow and Sheng Ping's example, five thousand books had already been distributed by the end of 2012, but this was only the beginning.

In early 2013, volunteers in Northern California picked up the mantle. First, they tried calling local hotels, but found that the people on the other end of the line tended to be uninterested or apprehensive. They decided a phone call was no replacement



for a personal visit, so they began trekking up and down US Route 101 to introduce *Jing Si Aphorisms* to hotel owners and managers along the way. On one particularly productive day, they visited fourteen hotels in just four hours. Of these, eleven graciously accepted their donation, a total of more than five hundred copies.

These volunteers discovered that people who had been dismissive on the phone became very receptive when they had a chance to read aphorisms themselves and learn what Tzu Chi is all about. Up in Sonoma County, they saw a huge smile break out on a manager's face as soon as she opened the book. Two aphorisms—"Do not underestimate yourself, for human beings have unlimited potential" and "Nothing is impossible with confidence, perseverance, and courage"—immediately touched her, and she graciously accepted the donation on behalf of her hotel.

## Jing Si Aphorisms





## *Jing Si Aphorisms*

In the small city of Ukiah, fifteen of eighteen local hotels accepted copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* for their guest rooms. In one small motel, the manager was filled with excitement as he watched several volunteers walk into his lobby, but his excitement was quickly replaced by disappointment as he learned they were not customers. Nonetheless, when the volunteers explained that they were offering free books to interested hotels, his eyes lit up again. He gratefully accepted these books so that he could offer his guests something more fulfilling than just a good night's sleep.

In Las Vegas, Nevada, volunteers were also eager to donate *Jing Si Aphorisms* to local hotels. After all, the world-famous gambling destination has roughly 150,000 hotel rooms and forty million annual visitors. But their project met resistance at first. Hotel owners complained that many of their guests were focused only on gambling, without spiritual beliefs or interest in personal growth. Volunteers saw only closing doors.

After numerous successful visits to hotels along US Route 101, Northern California volunteers traveled to Las Vegas at the end of March 2013 to help the Nevada volunteers. With both groups working together, their project saw more success. In late March and early April, the volunteers wound up donating more than six hundred copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* to nineteen hotels in Las Vegas. It was a small start, but a beginning nonetheless.

### **Inspiration Far & Wide**

After the movement first picked up steam along the West Coast, the spirit soon spread all over. Through the hard work of volunteers all around the country and the support of volunteer Brian Yang, who traveled far and wide to share the expertise he gained in Northern



California, copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* have found homes in hotels in roughly twenty states, including Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. By the end of 2013—just two and a half years after the project started—more than sixty thousand books had been donated to nearly seven hundred hotels.

Just as the movement did not remain bound to the West Coast, neither did it stay exclusively in the United States, as volunteers in several other countries soon also started promoting *Jing Si Aphorisms* to hotels in their areas. In March 2012, Hong Kong volunteers donated five hundred copies to a major hotel in Kowloon. In September of the same year, Malaysia volunteers delivered a hundred copies to a hotel in Sabah, while volunteers in Taichung gave two hundred copies to another hotel the following month.

In October 2013, the Metro Hotels chain in Australia announced that it would be placing copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* in its properties

throughout the provinces of New South Wales and Queensland. In January 2014, Tzu Chi Canada volunteers also joined the movement, carrying the Tzu Chi spirit and copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* into hotels and motels throughout Greater Vancouver. In February, volunteers in Indonesia also joined, delivering aphorisms not only to local hotels, but to hospitals as well.

While volunteers in all areas have encountered difficulties and resistance along the way, they have placed tens of thousands of copies of *Jing Si Aphorisms* in hotel rooms around the world because they have persevered and stayed true to their goal of providing inspiration to others. Most importantly, the aphorisms themselves have helped convince hotel owners and managers of their worth. Many volunteers have reported that hotel representatives were very hesitant or even dismissive about putting a book—especially one provided by a Buddhist organization—into their hotels. But after opening the book and reading an aphorism or two, they saw the wisdom held within and were both convinced and moved.



In addition to the intrinsic value of the wise sayings, the format of the book collections makes them ideal for hotels. Each aphorism is a concise sentence or two in length—short enough to read and absorb in seconds, deep enough to keep readers thinking throughout their journey. While rooted in Buddhism, the aphorisms eschew specialized terminology and focus on life philosophy applicable to all, regardless of their individual beliefs.



Four-language collections are also ideally tailored for the diverse backgrounds

of travelers who visit any particular hotel. In the Americas, the English-Spanish-Chinese-Japanese collection speaks to many traveling for business or pleasure. In Europe, the English-French-German-Italian edition covers most of the region's major languages. The Chinese-Indonesian-Thai-Vietnamese edition serves Southeast Asia in the same way, while several other major world languages—including Russian, Hindi, and Arabic—are served by bilingual editions.



When he first started donating books for this cause, Andy Kaoh explained that if the books could make a positive impact on just one person, it would all be worthwhile. Through the efforts of so many dedicated volunteers across the country and around the world, palpable effects are already being seen. Volunteers frequently follow up with the hotels that have accepted their book donations to hear their feedback, and they have often revisited establishments to replace books carried home by patrons.

Even though hotel guests are encouraged to take a copy of *Jing Si Aphorisms* home with them, some have instead visited Tzu Chi offices to purchase copies, unwilling to leave future guests without the wisdom they have enjoyed. For example, an Indian family vacationing in Hawaii even purchased three additional books of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teaching after reading the aphorisms in their hotel room, and a Massachusetts woman, after encountering the book during a vacation to California, drove over an hour to the Boston office to purchase copies for herself and each of her sisters.



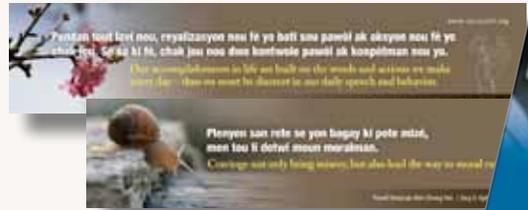
## Jing Si Aphorisms

### Locked Up, Not Forgotten

Far from home and weary from travel, hotel guests are often in need of wisdom and guidance, but they are far from the only ones. Another group of people in great need of spiritual resources are the more than two million prison inmates in the United States.

Tzu Chi volunteers in several communities around the country have been supporting local prison inmates for many years. In Las Vegas, volunteers started donating books to prison libraries several years ago and continue to do so frequently. Volunteers in New York have conducted prison visits to bring comfort to inmates for well over a decade, while in Seattle, volunteers have been offering meditation and other classes to individuals on release programs. In late 2013, the prison support program joined together with the *Jing Si Aphorisms* donation project. In October, volunteers in Las Vegas provided three hundred copies to four local prisons, and in December, Tzu Chi USA Headquarters donated 445 copies to the Buddhist Association of the United States, which then distributed them to members of its correspondence course in prisons across the country.

While this project has only just begun, the response thus far has been both positive and overwhelming. In the first four months, nearly a hundred letters poured in from prison inmates in twenty-two different states, thanking Tzu Chi for the gift of Master Cheng Yen's words of wisdom.



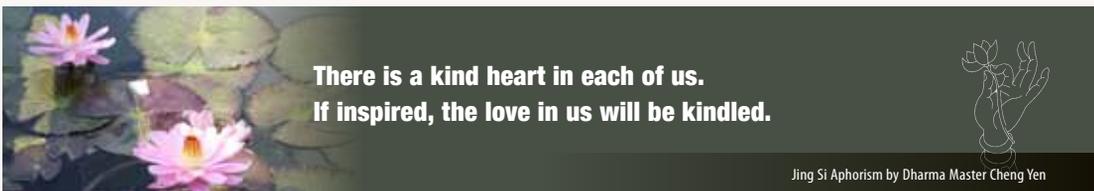
Sent from people living in a world where they all too often feel neglected and forgotten, many of the letters express deep gratitude to Tzu Chi volunteers simply for remembering them and caring about them. Others specifically describe what the aphorisms have brought them, describing the book as “a Wonderful Blessing,” daily affirmations to be studied and applied in everyday life, and “a drop of calmness in an otherwise scattered and frenetic environment.”

What is important about the *Jing Si Aphorisms* book donation project is not how many books have been donated or how many hotels and prisons have accepted them. The goal is neither to convert anyone to Buddhism nor to recruit new donors and volunteers, though both are always welcome. Instead, volunteers and book donors strive to provide a little inspiration and guidance so that good seeds will be planted in more minds, and individuals will choose the right path in every decision they make. After all, the world continues to grow ever smaller, and the decisions of each of us greatly affect all of us. 🌱



For more information about *Jing Si Aphorisms*, please visit [jingsi.us.tzuchi.org](http://jingsi.us.tzuchi.org) or your local *Jing Si Books & Café* (directory on pp. 72-74).

Elizabeth's and Andy's stories can be found in issues #29 (Summer 2011) and #33 (Fall 2012), respectively.



# New Books by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Several new books of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings are now available in English from Jing Si Publications.

**From Austerity to Prosperity**

**The Power of the Heart**

**Life Economics**

**Dharma as Water** (Volume 1)

**The Essence of Filial Piety**

**Jing Si Aphorisms** The Fundamentals of Virtue

Selected titles also available for Amazon Kindle



Find these and more at [jingsi.us.tzuchi.org](http://jingsi.us.tzuchi.org) or your local **Jing Si Books & Café**.  
(Directory on pp. 72-74)



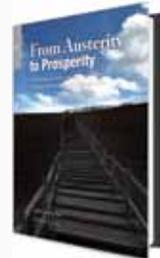
JING SI PUBLICATIONS



# From Austerity to Prosperity

(Excerpt)

*In Chapter Seven, Dharma Master Cheng Yen discusses vegetarianism and dining etiquette.*



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Dharma Master Cheng Yen

**T**he world population has exceeded seven billion. Imagine how much food needs to be consumed every day! The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN FAO) has raised a red flag over the global food supply: Many countries are experiencing food shortages due to inflation and insufficient harvest caused by abnormal weather. In the midst of the food crisis, some experts have found that 1.6 billion people in the world are overfed while 800 million are starving.

We should all ponder the question: Why do we eat? The fundamental reason is for survival. In Buddhism, dinner is called “medicinal remedy,” which shows that the purpose of food is to heal hunger. However, it is worrisome to see people these days eating and drinking to excess. A boxed lunch that costs just a couple dollars can be filling and contains sufficient nutrition, but there are also boxed lunches that cost seventeen dollars each. Does the expensive one even provide balanced nutrition? If it contains excess nutrients, then it could easily create discord in our bodies.

Some people think that since they were born as humans, their purpose in life is to enjoy themselves. They show off their wealth and social status through the pricey food they eat. This is a mindset of indulging in luxury. When people put on extra weight due to overeating, it is hard work to lose that weight. They try everything: diet, exercise, even undergoing liposuction surgery. Just think about how many people in the world are living in poverty without even a piece of bread to eat. We should nurture our compassion and look after those who are suffering.

Heaven and Earth have been very good to us, providing all kinds of grains for us to choose from. In Asia, we eat rice; in the West, people eat wheat; on the high plateaus, barley and corn. We should be grateful and give back to the world. We should adapt to a simple lifestyle and enjoy the natural flavors of food. Grains are truly the best food. When we realize the meaning of food and eat the proper amount of the right food in the right season, our lives will be balanced, and our body and mind will be happy and healthy. This is the most blissful life for a human being.

The earth is the mother of mankind. It supports everything—trees, grass, flowers, and grains—all the resources that the earth has provided to humans. But now the earth is covered with cuts and bruises and humans are ungrateful: they excavate mountains, dig trenches, and pollute both water and land. These have caused our turbulent climate.

Look at how seriously we pollute the Earth just to produce our food. In the past, livestock were raised outside in a natural way. Nowadays, chickens, ducks, pigs, and cows are all raised in a confined space, fed with special feed and even given growth hormones. When people consume these animals, the chemical residue in the animals' bodies will enter into and have a negative effect on the human body.

The more cattle are raised in a confined space, the more easily viruses spread among them. This is a serious problem; it is why we urge people to protect their health by eating as many vegetarian meals as possible and eating simply.

Large-scale cattle farming uses a lot of resources and pollutes the Earth. For example, it takes seven kilograms of grain and a hundred thousand liters of water to produce one kilogram of beef. During the process, about forty kilograms of excrement and thirteen kilograms of carbon dioxide are generated.\*

We should give the earth a break so that it can recuperate. This requires the right time, the right place, and the cooperation of the right people. We should allow the climate to run its course according to the four seasons. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter should be clearly divided to nurture the growth of all living things, and crops should be grown according to their natural planting schedules. When it is time to let land rest, nothing should be planted. When the planting season starts in the spring, sowing and irrigation should commence to help crops grow. In the summer, crops should grow vigorously into maturity so they can be harvested in the fall.

For the Earth to benefit all people, people must all work together. If everyone can live harmoniously with others and not create bad karma by being greedy, then the Earth will not suffer. That is why we must all cultivate love in our hearts.

\*Based on the feed conversion ratio of the United States Cattle Industry.

*Excerpted from From Austerity to Prosperity by Shih Cheng Yen (Jing Si Publications, 2013).*

*For more information, please visit [jingsi.us.tzuchi.org](http://jingsi.us.tzuchi.org) or your local Jing Si Books & Café (directory on pp. 72-74).*



*You can try this too:*

*Do not waste food. Buy only as much as you can eat.*

*To keep healthy, stop eating when you feel eighty-percent full.*

# Hot and Sour Soup

Recipe provided by Vegetarian Cooking Team  
Tzu Chi University Continuing Education Center  
Instructor: Jimmy Chiu | Photo: Kevin Chiang

## Ingredients

3 Pieces Wood Ear Fungus    1 Egg  
1/2 carton Silken Tofu\*    Cilantro  
1 small Bamboo Shoot    1/3 Carrot

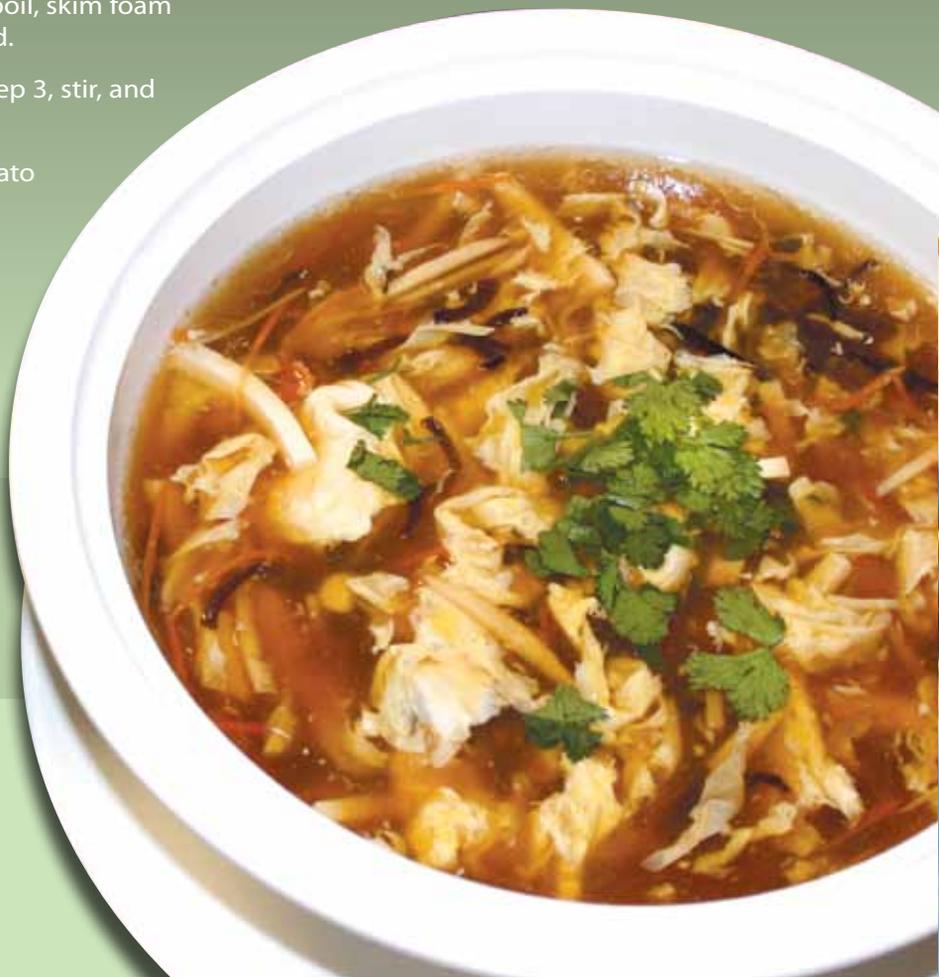
## Seasonings

2 tbsp Soy Sauce    1 tbsp Vinegar  
1 tsp Mushroom Essence    1 tsp Sesame Oil  
1 tbsp Potato (or Corn) Starch    3 Cups Water  
1 tsp White Pepper Powder

## Directions

1. Wash wood ear fungus and soak in water until soft.
2. Shred carrots, wood ear fungus, and bamboo shoots. Cut tofu into thin strips. Set aside.
3. Mix together mushroom essence, soy sauce, and white pepper. Set aside.
4. Fill a pot with water and bring to a boil. Add ingredients from Step 2.
5. When water returns to boil, skim foam from surface and discard.
6. Add seasonings from Step 3, stir, and return to boil.
7. In a small bowl, mix potato starch in a little water. While steadily stirring, slowly add mixture to soup until desired consistency is reached. (Do not add at once.)
8. Beat egg and slowly add to soup, a little at a time, while stirring in a clockwise motion. After 10 seconds, stir counterclockwise once, then turn off heat.
9. Prepare large soup bowl, then add chopped cilantro, a dash of sesame oil, and vinegar. Pour the soup into the bowl, stirring as you pour.

\*Use silken (soft) tofu, not firm (hard) tofu.



A wholesome life begins with  
vegetarianism.

*Jing Si Aphorism*  
by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Young Bodhisattvas

# Happiness in Giving

*East Los Angeles Tzu Shao Program Director reflects on the Winter Homeless Shelter hot meal service.*

**Carol Lee**

**A**s I stand watching in amazement how quickly the people in the room finish their meals that we just served, all my concerns about how well the vegetarian meals would be received are quickly replaced with feelings of empathy. How fortunate we are to have a roof over our heads and abundant amount of food and choices, yet how many of us are truly content and grateful for what we have?

A man comes up to David Hoy, Tzu Chi's winter shelter liaison, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Rowland Heights, and asks to speak to the person in charge of the meal serving. David points at me. This man appears to be in his early sixties, skin tanned and deeply wrinkled, perhaps from being under the sun often. He grabs my hand with both hands so I reach out my other hand and we shake for

several seconds. His lips split into a bright smile, showing his teeth with a few gaps in between, and the food box he just threw away is completely empty except for a few grains of rice. He thanks us for giving him a wonderful meal. To me, this is the best moment in life!

This Hot Meal Distribution Program is the first one ever coordinated by the East Los Angeles Tzu Chi Youth Association (TCYA, aka Tzu Shao). The advisor team met with Brother David Wang, a Panda Restaurant Group executive and Tzu Chi commissioner, changing the menu several times to make sure that the ethnic meals would suit our guests' taste buds. Balancing affordability and health, our team decided to forego the cheaper option of soda and serve the healthier alternative of homemade lemonade. Lemons gleaned from a volunteer's backyard were cleaned, cut, and squeezed by our TCYA



*This night was a time to serve.  
Photo: Yu-Man Cheng*

students, allowing all members to participate in this program even if they were not able to attend the actual event.

Then there's always the logistics of how many meals the church would need, how big the space is, how many tables and the set up, and how much time we have to introduce our organization, etc. Fortunately for us, two veterans of Tzu Chi's Winter Shelter Program, Sherry Kao (medical) and Yuki Chiu (haircut), are also on the advisor team, so they served as the liaisons with the church and the East San Gabriel Valley Coalition for the Homeless (ESGVCH).

Since TCYA does not collect membership dues from its students, funding for an event like this depends on donations from parents, students and members of the community. When we reached out, parents and the community responded back with generosity! Some gave

ten dollars, some gave a few hundred, and Dr. Kevin Tran gave a thousand dollars to the program! No matter the amount, every dollar donated went straight into the direct costs of this program—the meals and desserts—with no overhead costs.

Our participation—be it serving free hot meals or providing free haircuts and dental care—was all carried out by unpaid Tzu Chi volunteers. This is what sets Tzu Chi Foundation apart, and what makes me so proud to be a volunteer and certified commissioner of this great organization.

As I stand watching the three files of students return back to the kitchen with empty trays, and catching the glimpse of smiles on their faces, I know that they too share my sentiment of happiness in giving. 🌱

*For more on the Winter Shelter program, please see Issue 33 (Fall 2012) and USTzuChi360° episodes 43 & 50.*

*Smiles were in abundance as Tzu Shao volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to serve and to learn.  
Photo: Carol Lee*



# *Hot Meal Distribution Sharing*



Young Bodhisattvas

*On February 28, 2014, high school volunteers gained a new experience: serving the homeless.*

## **East Los Angeles Tzu Shao Volunteers**

Hot meal distribution is something I have always wanted to experience, and I gained a lot from this opportunity. When we saw the contentment and joy on the faces of all the homeless people after they finished eating their dinner, our hearts were warmed. Even the steady drizzle outside could not extinguish the warmth in our hearts. At the very end, we also helped tidy up the church. Even though we were exhausted, we felt truly enriched. If there is another good opportunity like this in the future, I will certainly overcome any obstacles to participate. We learned our blessings by seeing others' suffering and realized that we are truly blessed and should be content and create more blessings.

*Roger Chou (11th grade, President)*

The hot meal distribution is an emotional experience that is hard to put into words. While I was there, I had the chance of helping those who were less fortunate than I am. Seeing the less fortunate reminded me of how blessed I am in the fact that I possess the intrinsic necessities of a normal life, something that not everyone there has. When I served them the food, I was able to see happiness on their faces: the happiness of someone who has undergone a lot of misfortune in life. Despite the cold and rainy weather that day, I felt a warm feeling that supersedes all other emotions.

*Vincent Chen (12th grade, Vice President)*



On the last day of February, I went to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Rowland Heights to help distribute Panda Express hot meals to the people staying there. During the distribution, I practiced how to distribute the meals with other Tzu Shao members. When we actually distributed the meals to the homeless, I felt a sense of gratification deep within me. The distribution proved to be an enriching experience I won't forget.

*Kevin Chen (11th grade)*

Handing out meals to the homeless people was a very eye-opening experience. We were able to see a world that was hidden from our eyes, something that's not witnessed in our everyday lives. These people rarely have a full meal in their stomachs or a comfortable place to sleep. As the feast began, I really enjoyed seeing their faces light up one by one as a delicious supper was placed in front of them. I know that at times we may not realize there are still those less fortunate ones out there, and that they are still suffering every day. Going to this hot meal distribution made me feel really lucky to have a home at this time of year.

*Amber Lee (9th grade, Grade Level Leader)*

The night at the hot meal distribution at Rowland Heights might sound normal to the people who don't know the lives of the homeless, but it was a day of relief for the people who were in need. What this hot meal distribution informed me of is the gratefulness for being alive, healthy, and able to eat properly. Overall, the hot meal distribution taught us a lesson of this cruel world, the unbalance of society, and the ignorance of humans. We should be grateful to everyone in this world, including the homeless people, and to the lives we have, including our own education, family, food, and supports.

*Ryan Chou (10th grade, Grade Level Leader)*

This hot meal distribution was the first time I've attended a food distribution event. As we were distributing, and when we were walking around after the distribution, there were constantly homeless people thanking us. You could say that these words of thanks made us feel that everything was worthwhile and warm.

*Christine Lu (11th grade)*

I am very thankful that I got to volunteer at the homeless shelter and serve hot meals because it taught me many things. I learned to appreciate everything that I have, such as a house to live in, new and clean clothes to wear, three meals a day, etc. Also, I learned not to be picky and waste food because the homeless don't even have any food to eat. This experience at the homeless shelter taught me to be grateful for everything I have.

*Denise Wang (9th grade)*

The experience at the homeless shelter was one-of-a-kind because I was able to interact with the homeless people and serve them a hot meal. Their gratitude towards the Tzu Shao volunteers made me grateful for the little things in my life that I've taken for granted such as being able to eat three meals a day, sleeping on a comfortable bed, etc. In addition, I've learned to be less finicky when it comes to eating because there are people who aren't able to afford a meal. Overall, the night was a great learning experience and I am grateful for being given the opportunity to serve.

*Brittany Wang (11th grade)*

When I placed the food down on the table, they all had huge smiles on their faces and I could tell they really appreciated it. As I walked around to serve dessert, which was about five minutes after we served the Panda Express meal, I already saw tons of empty trays. After I served the meal, I had a really great feeling inside, like I've accomplished something. I feel really thankful because I always have food on the table unlike the people at the homeless shelter.

*Mandy Lee (7th grade, Grade Level Leader)*

After going to the homeless hot meal serving, I was moved deeply. Comparing the homeless people to myself, I think I really need to thank to my parents for loving me and giving me such good living conditions.

*Sherry Ma (10th grade)*

During the experience at the Tzu Chi Food Distribution event, I was enthralled by the sheer amount of people arriving at the shelter in search of food. It made me realize just how fortunate we children truly are to live in such a positive, clean environment. This event showed



*In addition to the night's hot meal service, volunteers provided their regular dental and haircut services to homeless guests. Photo: Yu-Man Cheng (left), Shu Fan Chen (right)*



me the reality of the world, how many people are less fortunate than I, and that I should cherish every moment I have in life.

***Iris Wu (9th grade, Grade Level Leader)***

We volunteers arrived at the shelter area and awaited instructions from the higher-ups. After a short while, we proceeded to set up tables with utensils to prepare for the people. Practicing the procedure to carry out the food, we carried trays to and from the tables. As people began to file in through the door, we waited inside the kitchen, then we began to leave the kitchen with boxes of food in our hands to present to the hungry clients. The people ate quickly, and we soon were ready to clean the tables and sweep the ground. The volunteers spoke with the host of the event, and cleared out with fresh minds and thankful hearts.

***Jesse Wu (11th grade, Historian)***

The Tzu Chi meal distribution was an interesting experience, as we got to pass out meals to homeless people and also had the chance to interact with them. After volunteering in the hot meal distribution, I have become more grateful for all the things that I have in my life and wish to help more people who are in need. It was a very humbling experience, and I would definitely be willing to volunteer for this type of event again.

***Winnie Wang (10th grade, Activity Coordinator)***

The day of the hot meal distribution was truly a unique experience. Never before have I helped someone that was actually in need of help. It was very touching to hear the people at the church say "thank you," to know that they

truly appreciated my actions on behalf of Tzu Chi, and by extension Tzu Chi itself. I feel that this experience has changed my perception of the outside world.

***Danna Lin (8th grade)***

The hot meal distribution was a very rewarding experience for me. Helping others always makes me feel better about myself, and the sincere gratitude I received from those that I served really warmed my heart. On top of that, I was able to bond with my fellow Tzu Shao members between set-up and the actual food distribution. Once again, Tzu Chi comes through to help the impoverished, and my role, while small, really made me feel grateful for all I possess.

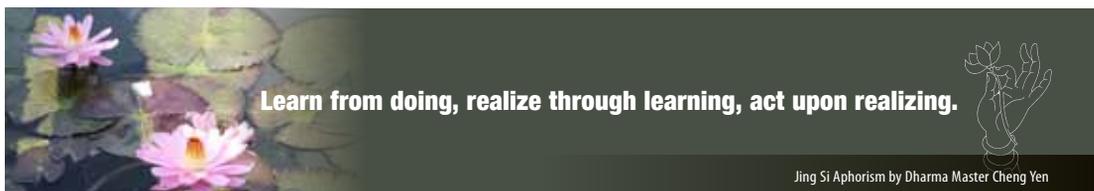
***Gavin Greene (11th grade)***

After going to the homeless shelter, I realized how fortunate I actually was. I felt lucky to have a home, family, and to be able to afford school. I loved seeing the faces of the people after I served them their food. Food that I considered as a cheap, everyday meal, seemed like a million dollars to them. I felt grateful as I saw a glow in their eyes and a wide smile sweep across their faces.

***Jeannie Chang (7th grade)***

My favorite part of this experience would have to be serving the guests. They were some of the nicest people I've ever come across in my entire life. A lot of them thanked me for serving them with warm smiles and words of praise, which warmed my heart. This distribution has definitely benefited me for the better. I now have the courage to make a difference by helping out the less fortunate.

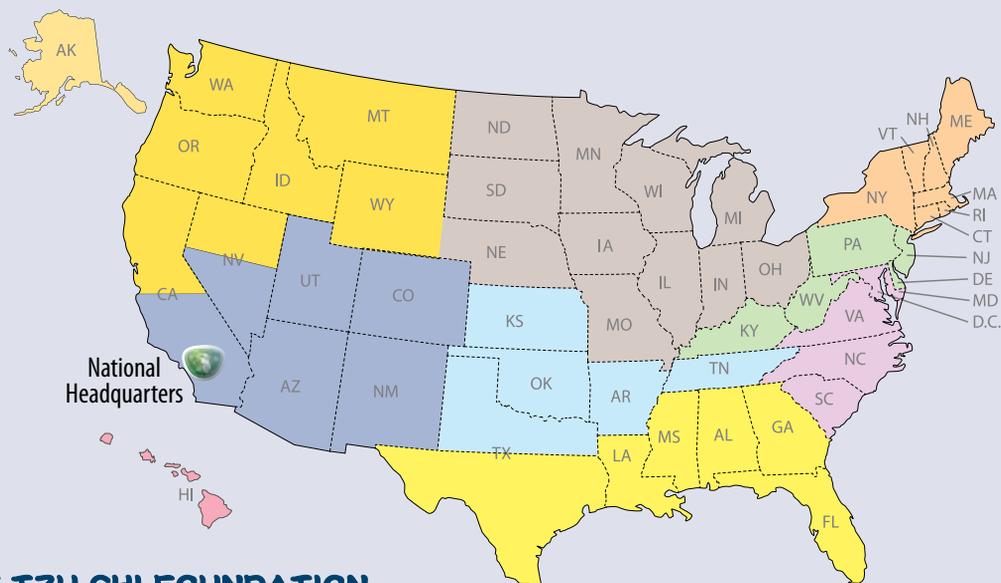
***Bonnie Chang (9th grade)*** 🌿



**Learn from doing, realize through learning, act upon realizing.**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

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# TZU CHI

## A BRIEF HISTORY...

**O**n April 14, 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Merits Society in Hualien with the support of thirty housewives who each put aside a couple cents of their grocery money every day to establish a charity fund. During the first five years, they helped a total of thirty-one elderly, ill, and poor people from fifteen families. As word spread, more people participated and the program gathered strength. It spread beyond Hualien: across the island and around the world.

Today, Tzu Chi is a nonprofit charitable organization with ten million volunteers and donors in roughly fifty countries worldwide. Over the past forty-eight years, Tzu Chi's four missions—Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture—have grown from the seeds of gratitude, respect, and love, and Tzu Chi's activities have expanded to include international disaster relief, bone marrow donation, community volunteerism, and environmental conservation.

In the United States, Tzu Chi operates nine regional service areas with more than eighty offices nationwide. Volunteers give back to their local communities through family services, emergency disaster services, homeless services, school support programs, college scholarships, income tax reporting assistance, relief distributions, holiday care packs, free and low-cost medical clinics and outreaches, preventive health education, cancer support groups, character education curricula, community education classes, and production of positive, inspiring media.

Whenever disaster strikes at home or abroad, Tzu Chi volunteers deliver cash aid, hot meals, and emergency relief supplies directly into the hands of disaster survivors. Over the years, US Tzu Chi volunteers have actively provided relief after such major disasters as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and Hurricane Sandy.

In recent years, Tzu Chi volunteers' charitable work has been increasingly recognized by the global community. In 2010, Tzu Chi was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In 2011, Dharma Master Cheng Yen was recognized with the Roosevelt Institute's FDR Distinguished Public Service Award and named to the 2011 TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people. In 2013, Tzu Chi was honored by the White House for its Hurricane Sandy disaster relief efforts.



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Photo: Ciguo Liu



Do not belittle small amounts of money, for their sum can serve a great purpose. Do not develop a habit of lavish spending, for thrifty and simple living is the key to abundance.

*Jing Si Aphorism by  
Dharma Master  
Cheng Yen*

