

A Time of Crisis, A Time for Great Awakening

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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[[Master's Teachings](#)]

"These are momentous times—our planet is ill and so is our society. We human beings are destroying our planet, and all across society morals are disappearing. It grieves me deeply that people are confusing wrong and right, and that this blindness and ignorance is spreading. We face a planetary emergency, but we are like children playing in a house on fire, oblivious to the danger. In such times, we truly must reconsider the way we are living and look deeply into our own hearts. We may think that we are only one person and can make little difference. But each of us, every day, is contributing to the collective problem through our daily actions. It is not too late to turn the tide. But, it can only happen if each of us thinks deeply about what is happening to our world and how our actions contribute, and take action to change. It is critical that we self-reflect, recognize the error of our ways, repent and begin anew. Only by transforming the hearts of humanity can our world be saved." —Dharma [Master Cheng Yen](#)

As a person who has taken up the religious life, Dharma Master Cheng Yen devotes herself to working for the good of all humanity. And in this, she sees that the world is in a state of turmoil, and our time is one of hidden crisis. This is a crisis that is not just looming on the horizon; more and more, the signs that crisis is coming upon us are appearing, and the Master is deeply worried, not for herself, but for the sake of all living beings.

It is in this light that the Master speaks every day of disasters happening all around the world. She is not merely a humanitarian who wishes to call our attention to disasters so that we may help people affected by them. In alerting us to disasters, she wants us to look up from what we are doing and see what is happening around us on a global level. Since the beginning of 2011, major disasters have happened around the world, and some of them have been the worst in close to a century; one is the devastating floods in Queensland, Australia. By telling us every day of the disasters currently occurring, what the Master wants us to realize is that disasters are now happening all the time and that this is in fact abnormal. She is concerned that we will remain in the comfort of our own little worlds, unaware of what is happening in the world at large, oblivious that the extreme weather resulting from global warming that scientists have forecast is already starting to happen.

The Master is afraid that we will be like the children in a parable from the Lotus Sutra. The parable goes that a fire has broken out in a house. The children inside are playing, completely oblivious to the danger of the fire. Their father, knowing his children are inside, urgently tries to get them out of the house. But, caught up in their games, they refuse to budge. Deeply distressed, the father at last thinks of a way to get his children out—he remembers that they have always wanted to have carts drawn by animals. He tells them that outside the house are the carts they so wish; hearing this, the children eagerly rush out of the house to see for themselves. When they are safely away from the house, the father not only gives them carts, but ones even better than they had hoped for.

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[Awakening Humanity, Awakening the Heart](#)