

## Cultivating Our Mind

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

Have we taken good care of our heart?  
Have we looked after our mind?  
Where is our mind now?  
Has our mind wandered outside?  
Or is our mind focused on our body?  
Or on our mind itself?

**Editor's note:** The following is compiled from a talk Dharma Master Cheng Yen gave to her monastic disciples in a morning Dharma talk, offering direction for their spiritual practice.

To take care of our heart and mind, the best focus for our mind is our mind itself—that is, for us to be looking within, looking at our inner mind. The Buddha's innumerable teachings ultimately all take us back to our mind. It is in cultivating the mind that we can access the Dharma and awaken, gaining insight into the truths all around us.

The Dharma is like water that can cleanse away the layers of impurities in our heart and mind. We have afflictions and inner impurities which create turmoil within us, like a restrictive heat that causes us to be restless and bothered, never at peace. But the Dharma has a cooling and refreshing effect. When we take the Dharma into our hearts, it can dispel or dissolve the afflictions, restoring inner peace and tranquility.

The Dharma is also like water that can nourish the wholesome seeds within us. As I often say, the Buddha's mission is to guide living beings to sow wholesome seeds of virtue within their heart and mind. When these seeds have been sown, the Buddha provides the water of Dharma so that they can slowly mature.

We need this water of Dharma just as the land needs water. When the land is afflicted by drought, crops cannot grow. When we are in a spiritual drought and lack the Dharma, our wholesome seeds cannot grow.

As learners of the Buddha's way, we need to water the wholesome seeds within, so that they can begin to grow roots and at the same time, sprout. We need to take good care of these seeds. We therefore need to mindfully take in the Dharma.

The Dharma is deep and profound, but at the same time, it is in fact part of our everyday life. So, we need to be mindful in keeping our hearts always on the Dharma. Then, naturally our actions will always be correct and in line with the Dharma.

This is the way of Buddhist practice—to take the Dharma into our hearts, to understand its meaning, to touch the truth of the teaching not with our intellect but with our own heart and experience, and to live out the teaching in practice. Practicing in this way, we can gradually attain liberation from afflictions and achieve inner freedom and peace.

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