

Real-life Story of Repentance: The Courage to Do What's Right

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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"I used to prepare meat dishes every day for our noodle eatery. When I first learned about the law of karma, I was tormented knowing how our work created negative karma. My husband thought about ending the business, but as we have a family to raise, how were we to support our family if we closed our business? We were in a very difficult position. After learning about the Water Repentance teachings, we have come to understand karma even more deeply. We know that life is short, so if we keep creating negative karma in the little time we have, we must bear the consequences of our actions. That's why we came to the conclusion that we had to end our business as soon as possible." —Chen Chunying, Tzu Chi volunteer

Chen Chunying (陳春英) and her husband opened a beef noodle eatery in 2000. They had very good business, with close to 200 customers per day. However, their lives were not easy. Chunying's father-in-law suffered from long-term illness, while her mother-in-law required long-term kidney dialysis. She and her husband also had two school age daughters. Moreover, Chunying had to help take care of her ill elder brother. Due to their need for money and the steady income the eatery provided, they continued their business.

After they opened their beef noodle eatery, they came into contact with Tzu Chi and became donating members. Gradually they got involved in Tzu Chi activities and became certified Tzu Chi volunteers in 2004.

In 2003, the SARS epidemic broke out and Tzu Chi started to more strongly promote vegetarianism. Chunying was involved in promotion activities in her community. She learned about the need to go vegetarian to respect and protect the life of animals, but she and her husband ran a beef noodle eatery so they were responsible for the killing of animals and prepared meat every day. They were tormented by this. They knew that taking the lives of animals is not good, but they had a family they needed to feed. Since then, running the eatery became a struggle with conscience for them.



Early in 2011, Chunying participated in the sutra adaptation of the Water Repentance text. From this activity, she and her husband learned about the repentance practice and even more about eating vegetarian and the law of karma. They came to understand that killing animals will mean reaping karmic retribution. Moreover, the passing away of both Chunying's father-in-law and her ill brother in the past year and a half made the couple ponder deeply about the law of karma and think more seriously about ending their beef noodle business. Finally, after ten years of business, they decided to close the eatery on February 28, 2011.

Just two days prior to their closing date, Chunying's mother was diagnosed with cancer and

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needed chemotherapy. Yet, this did not change the couple's decision to close their business. Chunying and her husband had finally reached a point where they could stop creating the negative karma of killing and also prevent their customers from creating the negative karma of eating meat.

When their friends and relatives found out about this, they were very worried about them, "You have two school age children; this is a period where you need the money most. How are you going to support your family?" Chunying's husband replied, "We're still young and in good health. As long as we work hard, it won't be hard for us to find work or even to start a new business."

Chunying and her husband are planning to open a vegetarian restaurant. Now that she has turned vegetarian, she smilingly says that if they do open a vegetarian restaurant, they can share their experience eating vegetarian with their customers.

By the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team, based on information from the Tzu Chi website

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