

A Sense of Direction for the New Year

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

At the beginning of a new year, everyone is looking forward in time and considering the future. Knowing this, Dharma Master Cheng Yen took care to give her disciples a sense of direction. Below are excerpts of her key messages:

“So quickly, it is again the beginning of a new year. There is really an air of festivity as everyone sends off the past year and greets the new one with joy and celebration. In the midst of this, may we keep a heart of gratitude and piety. We really need to be grateful for all the circumstances that have allowed us to remain safe and well through each and every day of the past year. As to the future, let us face each coming moment with piety and a heart of discipline and prudence, so we can usher in a future of hope.”

“As members of Tzu Chi, all of you are very active in dedicating yourselves to good works because you care about all the people in the world and what is happening to them. Such caring for all humanity and the problems of the world is the spirit of a Buddha. I’m very grateful to all of you for having this spirit and for all that you do to help better people’s lives and truly create blessings for the community. Every day, you earnestly pray for the peace, safety, and wellbeing of all people, and you give of yourselves to help make this a reality. Indeed, prayer alone cannot bring it about, we need to take actions.”

“However, we need to keep this kind of sincere prayer in our hearts always. We also need to live out each and every second mindfully, to make sure that we stay on the right path. At every moment, our heart and mind need to be governed by ‘precepts, samadhi, and wisdom’. What does this mean? We need to take hold of our every thought and ensure that it is upright and that we are going in the right direction. This is very important because time moves very quickly—should our direction be off in the slightest, very quickly we will be far down the wrong path and find ourselves very off course. That is why we need to be careful and mindful with every single thought, and be disciplined in keeping ourselves on the right path. For this, our minds will need to be very centered and grounded, instead of easily influenced by outside factors and temptations. This kind of strength of mind is ‘samadhi’. As we do this, we can develop wisdom and grow in wisdom-life. Wisdom is very important, for it helps keep us from going down the wrong path. So, at every moment, we need to have such vigilance and sincere piety.”

“For our society to remain peaceful and harmonious, we and all people across society need to have such a heart of sincere piety and self-discipline in watching over our actions, words, and thoughts. When we harbor unwholesome thoughts, speak unkindly or harshly, or do wrong things, it will not only hurt ourselves and injure our character and integrity, but might also cause problems in our family. Depending on the scale of the wrong thoughts, words, and actions, problems can be caused for society which may bring about disorder and unrest. All of these problems originate from having a wrong thought and going astray in one’s heart and mind. That

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is why we truly must carefully guard against wrong thoughts. At the same time, we need to speak to others with a gentle and loving heart; if we can keep a gentle heart, naturally the words we speak will be kind and constructive. We should also make sure that our behavior is always upright. It is by being mindful in watching over our thoughts, words, and actions that we come to enjoy a life of peace and joy. So, whether we can have a year of peace and blessings will depend on our own self-discipline in keeping to the right path.”

“Meanwhile, in our hearts, we need to harbor the great vow to strive for Buddhahood. Since we seek to learn from the Buddha, we should set as our goal the kind of full enlightenment and awakening that the Buddha attained and walk on the path that will enable us to reach it—the Bodhisattva Path. So, we need to maintain this resolve and always make sure we are keeping to the enlightened path of a bodhisattva.”

“The time of the new year isn’t only a transition from the old year to the new. It is really a time of inner renewal. Let us remember to always keep our hearts pure and very broad, and seize each moment, living it with sincere piety and vigilance as well as gratitude, continually growing in our wisdom-life.”

“My sincere best wishes to you for a wonderful new year. With this new beginning, please take care in your thoughts, your words and your actions every day, for this is the way to a future full of blessings, wisdom, and peace. May you always remain safe and well. Best wishes to you.”

Written by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team

Based on Dharma Master Cheng Yen’s conversations with volunteers in Chinese