

Respect Life to Unleash One's Potential

Written by q0729299

Thursday, 22 October 2015 17:08



[[Master's Teachings](#)]

Recently, we often hear in society that many young people are committing suicide and jumping off buildings; just this morning, I received a suicide intent case. Could it be that our society is too wealthy, and the expectations of these young people are too high? So when they cannot achieve what they desire, their state of confusion leads them to such a tragic end?

Suicide is killing, burdening oneself with the crime of unfilial conduct

I often say that we must respect life. The sin of committing suicide is greater than killing another. Our bodies contain the blood and flesh of our parents'. Can we imagine our parents took how much care and attention to give birth to us and raise us? Suicide is not just killing sentient beings, but also burdening oneself with the crime of unfilial conduct.

Human life is hard to attain. With our capacities as human beings, we should devote to our society. No matter how tough it gets, we must endure it because the harder we fight for life, the more precious it becomes. If we seek death due to impermanent romantic love, status or money, we are not respecting life, and we quickly erase our own beneficial qualities as a human being.

A paralyzed man steps out from the pits of life

I remembered a few decades ago, there was a small, healthy family in rural Hualien. The father was a truck driver and everyday he had to transport timber to the lumberyard. One day, as a crane was lowering some timber, it unexpectedly loosened its grip and the timber came crashing down onto his spine. When he was admitted to the hospital, the doctor said that he must be operated on immediately. His family discussed the consequences and thought that a spinal operation was too risky. "If he becomes paralyzed, what is going to happen?" Hence, they decided to take him to an alternative medicine center for massage therapy. After a while, his body was not only paralyzed but was starting to fester.

This young man was not even 30 years old, yet his life took such a turn. After the incident, he became angry and gave up on himself, blaming the gods and other people. He had two sons, 2 and 3 years old at the time. His wife was a naive, innocent housewife who dedicated herself wholeheartedly to taking care of him. However, because of his bad temper, he either threw things or locked himself at home for the whole day, unwilling to go outside. With the burden of taking care of the household and saving up for medicine fees, she had no choice but to leave home and moved to Pingtung, Taiwan to work extra days and nights.

One day, she called home. Her husband told her that his decubitus ulcer had worsened and that he had to be hospitalized. When she heard the news, she fell into depression and committed suicide.

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As her funeral preparations were underway, his friends relayed the situation to Tzu Chi. After a visitation, we identified him as a long-term care recipients. He took up the responsibilities of raising and taking care of his children alone. All the while, he still complained about his own life.

One day, he came to the Jing Si Abode in his wheelchair. When he saw me, he asked with tears rolling down his face: "Master, I feel deep regret. It's painful being a human."

I said to him with much respect, "Do you think you are the only one who is pitiful in this world? There are many people out there who are suffering more than you. Some people have hurt their spine and cannot even move their hands. However, you can still move your two hands perfectly. It's just your legs that don't function. Thus, why should you say that you are the most pitiful soul in this world?" When he heard this, it was as if he was enlightened. Ever since, he gathered a lot of courage and strength, and also stopped blaming people. Once, his child had a high fever; when he took him to the doctor, both father and son fell off the wheelchair. Although life was tough, this family stood up once again to face life bravely.

A few years ago, he visited me in his wheelchair. Behind him were two handsome young teenagers. When he saw me, he immediately said "Master, I have brought Tzu Chi's children for you to see". At that time, I was wondering, which one is Tzu Chi's child? He then said "Your Tzu Chi child has been admitted to medical school". Both of his sons grew up. The elder one was a professional soldier, while the younger one was just admitted into dental school. He was excited to bring the younger one to visit me, and even said that these Tzu Chi children grew up eating Tzu Chi's rice.

These two children grew up under the wings of Tzu Chi commissioners. Every month when it was Tzu Chi Distribution Day, they would accompany their father to the Jing Si Abode. Because they were surrounded by so many loving Tzu Chi mothers, they never felt self-abased. In fact, they became very open-minded, loving and diligent.

Respect life and give to the society

Thus, I often say that one has to respect life. Not only do we need to respect other people's lives, but we should also respect our own. With a healthy mental state and life, we can be independent and step out to contribute to the society.

All in all, a human life embraces numerous and important potentials. We should not only be responsible for and give to people in our community, but should also respect the millions and thousands of sentient beings on this planet. One who understands love will be grateful, and one who knows how to be grateful will know how to give. Thus, the most fortunate life is a life filled with gratitude.

Master Cheng Yen's teachings 1997

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