

Wholesome Media

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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[Master's Teaching]

Today, when we turn on the TV, read the newspaper, or go on the Internet, we see violence, sensational news, scandals, gossip, crimes—the ugly side of our society. Seeing all this worries me a great deal. From these, we see the decline of moral values and ethics in our society.

In the past, moral values, ethics, and principles on the proper way of life were passed on to children from their parents. Children listened to their parents and did as they were taught. Parents taught their children about life's important values as well as proper conduct. The rules of proper attire, good manners and decorum when interacting with people, the proper way to go about taking care of the family and managing the household, etc. were all things that parents taught their children.

Nowadays, however, the media has become the way for people to learn and receive information. As children increasingly turn to the media and listen less to their parents, they are not getting traditional values. When they tune in to the media, what they see is the ugly side of society with all its negative and unwholesome elements. Because young people's minds are malleable, they simply take in what they see and imitate it. When they see violence on TV, they are more likely to carry out the same behavior. With all the unwholesome things the media transmits to our children, it is instilling the wrong values in people. When people act out the wrong behaviors they see in the media, it creates problems for our society.

The Buddha told us that everyone possesses the Buddha-nature. Everyone has innate goodness within and is capable of being kind and good. It saddens me to see that under the negative influences of the media, people's originally good natures are being tainted by the unwholesome aspects of society, leading them to do harmful things.

Since the media is a tool of communication, instead of using to report the negative side of society, which exerts a negative influence on people, it can be used to exert a positive influence on people as well. If people can be guided in the right way, the goodness and kindness in them can be brought out.

This is what we try to do with Tzu Chi's [Da Ai TV](#). The news it broadcasts and the programs it produces strive to inspire selfless Great Love in people and encourage them to do good. An example is the pencil case drive. One time, our production team went to China to do a story on the conditions of children living in Gansu Province. They discovered that the people of Gansu are very impoverished. Parents often cannot afford school supplies for their children. When the team saw a student trying to write with a pencil lead only one centimeter long, they were very saddened. It showcased the scarcity of resources there. When the team returned to Taiwan, they started a pencil case drive on Da Ai TV to help these children in Gansu. They solicited pencil cases, pencils, and stationeries from children in Taiwan and around the world. Originally they were only hoping to collect 3,000 pencil cases. To their surprise, more than 20,000 children in Taiwan responded to the drive and sent in pencil cases filled with pencils, erasers, rulers, and other stationery supplies, as well as a well-wish card to the child who will receive the supplies.

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Besides sending the pencil cases to the children in Gansu, the surplus pencil cases were also sent to needy children in other parts of China and in other countries. In the end, children in six different countries benefited from this pencil case drive.

With the pencil case drive, Da Ai TV was able to inspire the kindness in children and guide them to help needy children in other parts of the world. From this, we can see that the media can influence people to do good. When the media makes this effort, people will respond.

I often say that the media should only report what is true and moreover, guide the public in the right direction. What our society needs is peace and harmony. We should use the media to educate people and teach them the right values by reporting the positive, wholesome elements of society and humanity. I hope that the media can be the means of reviving moral values and ethics, purifying people's hearts and minds, and cleansing away the unwholesomeness in our society.