

No Craving, No Suffering

Written by Master Cheng Yen
Friday, 10 July 2009 00:00



Even though life is short, we can do many good deeds if we know how to use our time wisely. Exercise our right to live a good life and leave behind a legend of benevolence.

Life is impermanent, and it is often beyond man's ability to predict the future. Impermanence cannot be described with words, but ought to be experienced. Doing the right things at the right time is important.

Sixty-two year old Mr. Zhang Qi Xiong and his wife were both retired teachers residing in Tainan. They cherished life and were actively involved in Tzu Chi. Mr. Zhang was a healthy man and used to exercise every morning. It was on one such morning that his wife found him lying motionless on the living room floor. He was rushed to hospital, but sadly, he passed away on the same day due to severe intracranial haemorrhage.

"To be at peace with life and death" is easier said than done for ordinary people. Being Buddhists, the couple had learned and recognized the law of impermanence. They had long ago pledged to donate their bodies to Tzu Chi University. On Feb 12, 2009, Mr. Zhang's family members and Tzu Chi volunteers, brought his body to Hualien to fulfill his wish of becoming the 'Silent Mentor' for the medical students.

When he was alive, Mr Zhang set his life on the right course and served not only with great selfless love but with the virtues of sincerity, integrity, trustworthiness and honesty. At the end of his life, he donated his body for medical studies. He had indeed led a very meaningful life and set a good example for others to emulate and remember.

Life is so short, and is as transient as dew or lightning. But one can do many good deeds in one's very short life. A little kind act can make a great impact; a little evil act can bring great disaster to the world.

Be gentle, be diligent and be frugal

In Japan, Policeman Keisuke has to spend an average of 9 hours daily patrolling a train station in Fukuoka, which caters to almost 35,000 passengers per day. Busy as he is, he always greets the passers-by with a warm smile, regardless of their age and gender.

Previously, there were about 80 crime-related cases lodged by the public each month. However, since Keisuke was stationed there, the number of cases had reduced tremendously. After four months, no crimes were reported.

A gentle smile and a warm greeting had calmed hearts and turned a train station into a peaceful place. The power of love is indeed great!

Lin Zhi Hui, a veteran staff of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, has devoted herself in the nursing work for half a century. She was involved in the procurement of medical equipment during the

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construction phase of the hospital, as well as establishing a centre for the supply of medical equipment. In addition, she has also nurtured a group of young dedicated and jovial colleagues with love and patience.

She is eight-three this year and is still making her contribution to the hospital. We must make good use of our life, and steadily progress on the right path. Only then can we say that we have lived a meaningful life.

One should seize one's right to life and live it efficiently. Help yourself to create a life story of beauty and kindness, and add warmth and goodness to society.

The enlightened ones can live a peaceful life

Some people in this modern world live aimlessly and obtain satisfaction through materialistic gains. A flamboyant life is akin to a flower, which will wither after some time. It is also akin to the colourful soap-bubbles which will burst and disappear after a while.

Different people have different life experiences. Some people have never experienced hardship in their lives but are always discontented. The life of a discontented person is bitter. Some people's lives are very challenging but they are able to endure hardships and live a simple and peaceful life.

In Beigang, Yunlin, environmental volunteer Madam Yuan has had a tough life. She was given away when she was two and her adopted father remarried when she was five. Her stepmother disliked and abused her often. Her life after marriage was also tough. Both husband and wife had to work very hard to earn a living. Despite this, she always told her children to be tolerant.

Madam Yuan is wise. She concluded that one cannot ask for blessings, but can create them. In spite of her difficult life, she is willing to create blessings. The loneliness that haunted Madam Yuan after the demise of her husband, slowly faded away after she followed her daughter into Tzu Chi. She is now actively participating in recycling work, and at the same time, enjoying the company of other volunteers.

She remains optimistic even though her limbs ache. She makes use of every second to perform good deeds, and being very thrifty. She has managed to save enough to become a member of Tzu Chi Honorary Board (those who have donated over NT 1 million within one year) in year 2000.

Many people like to light candles at temples during New Year for a good year ahead. In fact, this gesture has the meaning of borrowing the light from Buddha to light up one's innate Buddha-nature.

Even though Madam Yuan has received little formal education, she is wise enough to be able to practise the Dharma in her daily life. She remains contented; she knows her duties, and fully utilizes her potential to benefit others. Such a lovable and respectable person she is!

Many are feeling anxious during the present economic downturn. Actually, if we adjust our

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mindset and be content and grateful with what we have, and live in frugality, difficult times will soon be over.



Be awoken, cease the bad karma

"The light of a lamp can diminish darkness which has been there for a thousand years." Darkness in a room will immediately disappear once a lamp is lit. Ordinary people have the doors to their hearts closed to the Dharma, thus allowing their hearts to be afflicted by troubles.

The light is always around us. It is only the closed windows and doors that have prevented the rays of sunlight from coming in. By opening the door of the heart, we can see the road ahead clearly.

The Buddha is the one who sees the Way, speaks the Way and practises the Way. He came to the mortal world to open the deluded hearts of the sentient beings and brighten them up. He taught the Way to enlightenment. Whether we can achieve enlightenment and truly absorb the essence of the Dharma, depends solely on ourselves.

Buddha said that there are eight types of sufferings in life. Apart from the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death, the other four types of sufferings are: being apart from loved ones; being together with the despised ones; not getting what one wants and the flourishing of the five aggregates (skandhas).

Everyone has the Buddha nature. The ordinary people are lost because their Buddha nature is overwhelmed by their cravings.

What do ordinary people crave for? They crave for many things for themselves, their spouses and their children; they also crave for better careers, good health and so on. However, can all cravings be granted?

Mere chanting of sutra or reciting of repentance text cannot free us from afflictions or difficulties. Our destiny depends solely on our karma and we should be cautious of our actions and thoughts so that we do not create bad karma.

How to eliminate bad karma? It is done by awakening the conscience. Whatever seeds that we sowed in the past, be they good or bad, shall bear the fruits in the future and should be dealt with calmly. We will not create more bad karma if we face the retributions with a tranquil mind. When our heart is open and the thoughts are pure, no one will be hurt. When we are always grateful and selflessly serve others with love, we are constantly getting rid of our bad karma.

Endless cravings lead to sufferings. Jing-Si disciples, you must embrace a still and clear state of mind, revert to your pure innate nature and ask for nothing as you cultivate the Jing-Si Dharma

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and walk the Path of Tzu Chi.

The World Of Tzu Chi July 2009

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