

## New Beginnings, Every Day

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Monday, 13 February 2012 16:13

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### [ [Master's Teachings](#) ]

*Editor's note:* The following is Master's teaching given during the Chinese New Year. Despite this, the teaching can be meaningful every day of our life.

During Chinese New Year, people wish each other well when they meet. The atmosphere is filled with festivity and joy, and everyone is very happy. Yet, we only celebrate the Chinese New Year once every 365 days. The most important thing is how we live our lives the rest of the year.

### **Setting a good start**

It isn't only at New Year that we should make a new beginning. At every moment, we should be prepared to live out our day well. Each day we need to perform our tasks mindfully and solidly, and each day we should plan ahead our work for tomorrow. When we live out our days like this, it will make every one of them very meaningful and fulfilling.

There are 365 days in a year. When we look at it on a finer level, there are 86,400 seconds in one day. So there are 86,400 seconds that we have to pass through. Yet, to pass through each day, we have to get over our feelings, whether positive or negative, wholesome or unwholesome, generated at every second. Therefore, we need to take good care of our heart and mind at every single moment. Our conduct also needs to be in accord with life's principles. When we follow principles and do things properly, we'll encounter fewer obstacles and things will go more smoothly for us.

### **Daily spiritual cultivation**

Many of us have often heard sayings from Confucius about the bright virtue of our true nature, which is one of goodness. This is something that the Buddha also says. But this bright virtue has been buried under the ignorance, illusion and the impurities in our hearts. So, we need to reflect on ourselves for self-improvement.

The Buddha teaches us to look after our heart and mind and guard against unwholesome thoughts at every second. If we catch ourselves having wrong thoughts, we must quickly repent. If we're doing something wrong, we must quickly stop. We need to clean our hearts every day so it can be free of impurities and prevent it from being tainted by ignorance and illusion. This is most important in cultivation.

We also need to apply the Buddha's teachings in our daily life. Living out the Buddha's teachings is very easy. To do it we can practice the 37 Aids to Awakening to purify our hearts and minds. We should also do good deeds and refrain from doing bad ones. For our inner cultivation, we have to nurture sincerity, integrity, faith and honesty. In interacting with others, we should practice having loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

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If we can practice these in our daily life, we'll be able to shine forth our bright virtue.

Fostering harmony in our family, society, and world

Besides wishing for the peace and wellbeing of all people, we also wish everyone can have a good and harmonious family.

There's a Chinese saying that if our family is united and harmonious, what we do will flourish and prosper. As the family is a basic unit in society, if we can foster harmony in our family and if every family can do this, our society as a whole will be harmonious and peaceful. So, starting now, we should treat our family and relatives respectfully and kindly so that our family will be peaceful.

### **Taking care of Mother Earth**

On the Chinese calendar the New Year marks the end of the winter season and the start of the spring. When spring comes, everything grows and flourishes, bringing vitality and hope to the world. The wellbeing of all living things is closely connected with Mother Nature. She supports and sustains all lives on Earth.

When Mother Nature is in balance, she can provide all that we need. But she is now out of balance. We see frequent disasters happening around the world, such as the snow storm in Pakistan in January, which cut off roads and caused people living in mountain villages to go without material necessities for many days. There's also a drought in Brazil, which will dramatically reduce the harvest for this crop exporting country. This means there will be less food for people in the world to eat.

As Mother Nature goes out of balance, we'll see more abnormal climate conditions and natural disasters. So, at the beginning of a new year, just as all of Nature returns to life with the coming of spring, we must also "awaken" and renew ourselves, taking on a new mindset for the new year. We have to embrace Mother Nature and feel our connection with her, so we can understand how she works and live in harmony with her. As long as we do not disrupt Mother Nature in her orderly patterns, she can function well and continue to provide for us.

I often share with people the idea of respecting Mother Nature and creating blessings. This is something we have to believe in and carry out in our daily lives. To love and care for the Earth, we have to start with cherishing all the things we have, living a simpler life, and not being wasteful. In this way, we'll lower the need to exploit natural resources, and reduce the pollution produced. This will lessen the destruction done to our environment, thereby mitigating global warming.

So, in our daily life, we need to make the resolution to cherish everything, be more frugal, and live a simpler life.

### **Working for the wellbeing of humanity**

We are inhabitants of the Earth. We all live under the same sky, breathe the same air, and stand on the same piece of land—though oceans divide the land into continents, beneath the oceans, the land continues on, uninterrupted. The entire planet is like a one big house, so

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everyone on the Earth is like one big family. Therefore, we should take care of one another, even those who live far away and who seem unrelated to us.

I hope Tzu Chi volunteers around the world can make the resolution to help all living beings and care for all things with Great Love. Throughout the past year, they have already done much to help people in need, and I'm very grateful to them.

At this time of the Chinese New Year, I give my sincerest well-wishes to all. May everyone and their family be safe and well. I hope all Tzu Chi volunteers can have both compassion and wisdom and cultivate diligently. May every day be like spring and every moment be auspicious.

Let us pray for our world—may there be peace and harmony everywhere, may our abnormal climate regain its balance and equilibrium, and may no disasters happen anywhere in our world.

To read Master's New Year teaching for 2011, please click [here](#)

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks  
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