

Independent but Not Self-Righteous with Will Yields No Fear

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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"While aspiring to benefit all beings, if we can be independent without being self-righteous, and free our mind of worries, we will be able to tap into the hidden potential within us that helps us dedicate ourselves for the greater good."

During a conversation with the lay monastic practitioners and volunteers in Guangzhou, Mainland China, Master Cheng Yen pointed out that the Buddha's teaching (Dharma) is impartial. A monastic practitioner does not gain deeper insight simply by leading a monastic life. Similarly, lay practitioners can still solemnly cultivate themselves even though they still live with their families. It is just that the monastic practitioner has given up family life and romantic love, leaving behind worldly attachments and emotions. So they are no longer bound by trivial family affairs and are able to focus on cultivating great love and compassion to all beings.

To open one's heart and be tolerant

Master Cheng Yen said that to have a great aspiration means to remind ourselves: "Doing good, do not leave me out. Doing bad, do not count me in." We should dedicate ourselves with a willing heart, so that we can be an integral part of human existence.

Once a volunteer shared that everything about Tzu Chi is beautiful from the outside. Everyone is friendly. Upon joining Tzu Chi, the volunteer noticed that all the brothers and sisters have their own bad habits. This troubled the volunteer, who decided to leave the group.

Master Cheng Yen said that lay people tend to see the mistakes and shortcomings of others. When others displease them, they turn away easily. "Skillful habits do not come just by hearing a single lecture. The big mistakes are easy to uproot, but not the small ones. This is a common flaw among lay people, Dharma cultivators included. How can one be expected to change immediately the moment they heard and accepted the Dharma?"

"Practicing Dharma involves working with the bad habits. They can be transformed gradually only through listening, studying and applying the Dharma. If we want to cultivate ourselves and work together in a group, we must be open-minded and tolerant in order to attract more like-minded people and sustain our effort to help all beings. Otherwise, we would be like a tree with full branches and leaves but no deep roots, which would be easily blown down by the wind due to the lack of a solid foundation."

We count on everyone to make the world a better place. Master Cheng Yen cautioned that even if we are very capable, diligent and willing to take on hardship, we will still find it hard to maintain sustainable growth in an organization if we are intolerant, narrow-minded, and unable to nurture and see the potential of the next generation. "To do good and benefit all beings, we must foster good affinity with other people. If we can be grateful, we would naturally respect others and love one another."

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Some people are aware of their unskillful habits but still cannot correct these habits even though they want to. Master Cheng Yen urged us to affirm these people that they are still creating good merits despite their unskillful habits. We must work tirelessly to include and motivate them in our activities so that they have a chance to abolish their desires. This way we allow their innate goodness to continue to flourish.

Doing too much or too little is both undesirable. Master Cheng Yen taught us to take the middle path, adopting a gentle attitude and using soft skills to welcome all. With a simple heart, be grateful and respectful to everyone, helping to spread great love. This way, no Dharma will escape us, no pursuit is unachievable.

Master Cheng Yen said: "When we are determined, we are no longer fearful of pressures. I am looking forward to meet mindful practitioners who have undergone trials and tribulations while living among the people, who have gained insight into all Dharma, who understand Tzu Chi and discern my intention, who are willing to give his/ her all for this great universal family and fulfill what I set out to achieve."

Only with Dharma in our hearts can we help liberate beings from suffering

During the conversation, Master Cheng Yen pointed out: "Only with Dharma in our hearts can we help others cross over this flow of Samsara (the repeating cycle of birth, life and death). Those who are involved in the four missions of Tzu Chi (charity, medicine, education and culture) should pay sincere attention to sharing the Dharma, letting everyone understand the spirit and principles of Tzu Chi. Only then are the values and humanistic culture of Tzu Chi reflected in every interaction we have with others.

"The Dharma of Tzu Chi lies within the Jing Si Dharma lineage." Master Cheng Yen said. Regardless of where we are, whether we are carrying out Tzu Chi missions or not, we are all on the path of cultivation. Only when we embodied the Dharma from the Jing Si Dharma lineage can we use the Tzu Chi path to enter the society and help liberate beings from samsara.

"There is rich Dharma to be found in Tzu Chi, one that is able to purify the hearts of all beings. I am hoping that everyone will use sincerity, integrity, faith and honesty to welcome all mindful individuals, to nurture many seeds that will grow into a full tree to benefit all those who suffer and give shade to all beings."

Jing Si Aphorism: Dedicate with a willing heart and help spread great love. Let me be an integral part of human existence.

Master Cheng Yen's Teachings on 09/23/2013
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