



[[Master's Teachings](#)]

With heightened vigilance, people around the world watch as one disaster after another unfolds in Japan. The crisis began with the 9.0-magnitude earthquake, then came the tsunamis, the fires, and the critical situation at the damaged nuclear power plants in Japan. These are not disasters that affect Japan only. The world's nervousness about the most seriously damaged nuclear plant highlights how much all of us in this world are interconnected.

Reflecting on the crisis, [Dharma Master Cheng Yen](#) urges her followers to learn its lessons deeply. "We need to realize that we and all others on this planet are one entity, our own wellbeing inextricably intertwined with that of all. So, we must not close our eyes to others' suffering and focus only on our own peace and wellbeing or even spiritual attainment. We need to work for the greater good."

"To be effective, however, we will need not only compassion, but also wisdom. This wisdom comes from the practice of precepts and learning to have a centered mind unswayed by external conditions; this mind is called samadhi. Given our troubled times, we must truly apply Buddhist insights in daily life and carry out the essential practice of precepts, samadhi, and wisdom."

"The precepts are the teachings for wholesome conduct which Shakyamuni Buddha offered based on his insight into universal truths. The precepts guide us, showing us the correct path in life so we may walk on it and keep away from harm."

"If we can uphold these principles for daily living, then our minds will naturally be grounded and at peace, stable and settled. Our minds can abide in the state of meditative concentration which is samadhi. Because of this, when something unexpected happens, we will be able to remain centered. We will not be thrown into a panic, with our minds chaotic and full of disordered thoughts. Instead, because of our calm and settledness of mind, wisdom can arise."

"With wisdom, we will be able to think things through clearly and know what ought to be done. We will not be consumed by fear, but be able to do what is best for the situation. This comes from everyday practice of the precepts and nurturance of samadhi and wisdom."

"The Buddha tells us very clearly that all living beings have the same capacity for wisdom as a Buddha, an enlightened being. It is just that we have let our hearts and minds become tainted by impurities, so that wisdom cannot be brought forth. This wisdom is still there, buried deep within. If we can purify our hearts and minds, then it can resurface."

"This starts with practicing precepts. If we can practice so that we do not so easily react to outside conditions with greed, anger, hatred and other impure states of mind, we can achieve samadhi. Then, we can have wisdom, insight, and true understanding."

Essential Practices to Benefit the World

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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"To do good for the world, we need both wisdom and compassion. Just as human beings need two feet in order to walk properly, we need both wisdom and compassion if we are to help others. Wisdom comes from samadhi, and is strengthened through practice of precepts. This is an everyday practice. This is why I say that we must bring Buddhism into daily life. This is all the more necessary today, given the state of our world."

Written by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team
Based on Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Conversations in Chinese