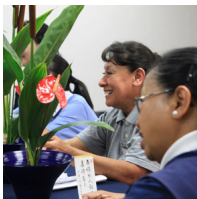


## Connecting to the Dharma Through Master Cheng Yen's Teachings

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Monday, 08 July 2013 15:18

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On June 22, the fourth seminar of 2013 for Tzu Chi Certification Training (in English) was held at Tzu Chi's Northwest Region Office in San Jose. Volunteers arrived before 7:00 AM to set up, and attendees assembled well before the 7:45 AM start time to catch up with one another, as everyone came from all over the San Francisco bay area, some as far as Fresno, a city three hours south of San Jose. There were a total of 45 people in attendance.

With minds pure and tranquil, students of the program entered the classroom in a steady line, taking each step to the rhythm of the same familiar melody used in the Chinese-language program. However, several details and resources unique to the English Certificate program were immediately apparent. After Tzu Chi volunteer Jaclyn Chiew explained the importance of training the mind to focus during the morning service, a Romanized pronunciation guide was projected to allow everyone to recite the sutra in unison. Students also studied from all-English textbooks—"The Thirty Seven Principles of Enlightenment" and "Dharma as Water." Program Coordinator Greg Tylawsky shared with all students that the "Master's Teachings" section on the English Tzu Chi website contained invaluable resources, such as a Ten Precepts article translated into English context by the Jing Si Abode English Team.

"Would you rather end hunger or end hatred?" Tzu Chi volunteer Steve Hsu led an ice breaker game of Would You Rather during the morning break. A mix of lighthearted scenarios and thought provoking questions galvanized participants to look deeply at their own priorities and to participate in friendly debate with fellow volunteers with dissenting opinions.



In the afternoon, flower arrangement met Tzu Chi culture in a hands-on class, The Dharma of Flower Arrangement, where students learned that the mindset of the individual is just as important as the arrangement itself. Flower arrangement instructor Jenny Ding emphasized the importance to showing gratitude toward the flowers.

As a part of the presentation Freedom from Our Afflictions, Tzu Chi volunteer Leon Liu shared his personal story of a conflict in the workplace and how he ultimately arrived at a decision after evaluating his priorities and following his heart. This led to a "fishbowl conversation" activity in which all students identified afflictions in their lives and learned of different approaches to reducing them. "If your load is heavy, then you will walk slowly," reminded Tzu Chi volunteer Valerie Tseng.

At the end of the day, seminar attendees sat in a circle for group sharing. They were joined by the attendees from the English New Volunteer Orientation held that same day. Together, everyone viewed a video essay put together by Tzu Chi volunteer Tai Tran. It was a memorable

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day full of learning, mindfulness, and Dharma-joy!

By Jasmine Huang at Tzu Chi NW Region, San Jose, California USA