

## Considering Irreconcilable Differences

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
Tuesday, 09 February 2010 10:19

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### [Master's Teachings]

A cause for the greater good requires the concerted efforts of many; it is seldom that one individual alone can accomplish it single-handedly. Yet, when a group of people are working together, there will almost always be differing views as well as different personalities and habits. What to do when the differences seem irreconcilable?

### Recognizing and transforming karmic affinities

Master says that human relationships are all based on karmic affinities—the karmic ties we have formed with people in previous lives. Whether we can get along with someone actually depends not on that person's character or personality, but on our karmic affinities with them. "Even if someone is a very good person, if you and he do not share karmic affinities, it will be difficult to see eye to eye. But, if there are positive karmic affinities between you, even if the other person is not a good person or is someone who is hard work to work with, you will be able to be very happy working with him. It is all about karmic affinities."

But, can karmic affinities be changed? Master says, "The Buddha teaches us to see how everything is based on karmic affinities, but at the same time, he taught that everything is created by the mind alone. We may have formed negative karmic affinities with the person in past lives, but in this life we get the chance to dissolve or transform this karmic affinity."

### Being patient with others

Moreover, Master says that when we cannot get along with others, it isn't only because of one party's ways. Just as the other person has his or her personality and habitual ways, so too do we. Cultivation is all about changing one's habitual ways, be it habitual ways of seeing, thinking, or behaving. Once these habits have become ingrained, they will not be easy to alter. That will take time and a process described as "perfuming" in Chinese—where gradually, after a long period of exposure to the new habit, it begins to rub off on the person.

If we can understand this, we will recognize the importance of being patient with people. People do not change overnight; we need to help them by providing them with a good environment or by being a continued good influence. Master says, "You can think of good and evil as being in a tug of war. Therefore, if you don't 'pull' on the side of good, the person will move in the direction of 'less good'."

Master reminds us that to successfully accomplish a good cause, our hearts will need to be very open and broad, full of love for others. This love is called Great Love. Moreover, this love needs to be patient and lasting. We also need to cultivate ourselves and transform our own deeply ingrained habits. Unless we do this, we will in fact impede progress toward our goal.

Teachings from Dharma Master Cheng Yen  
Compiled into English by Shih De Lin\*

\* Shih De Lin is a monastic disciple of Dharma Master Cheng Yen who attends Dharma Master

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Cheng Yen's daily meetings (conducted in Chinese and Taiwanese) and writes and compiles in English the teachings heard firsthand.

Она " [Герои любимых мультиков](#) " была горничной одного из этажей, а это " [Наклей и раскрась № НР 11132 Маша и Медведь](#) " была весьма важная должность.

Председатель Совета " [Хороший Сталин](#) " поблагодарил его, а " [Стража лопухастых островов](#) " затем повернулся к собравшимся.

Сколько лет прошло с " [Вращение силы](#) " тех пор, как ныне " [Звонок](#) " покойный президент приказал ему основать организацию " [Происшествие в рекламном агентстве. Серебрякова](#) " КЮРЕ!

Беспрерывно меняющая свои " [Финансовые риски](#) " очертания клякса.

Все это ушло вместе с " [Сволочи](#) " детством.

Фотографии он нес в небольшой кожаной папке " [Джотто](#) " под мышкой.

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