

The Endless Power of Kindness

Written by Master Cheng Yen
Tuesday, 06 April 2010 15:24



[[Master's Teachings](#)]

Time passes very quickly. It seems that 2010 has just started, and yet Chinese New Year is just around the corner.

Day follows night; spring, summer, fall, and winter take their turns, year after year. Our life becomes shorter with each passing day. It is written in one of the Buddhist sutras that, "When a day is done, a day from our life is gone." At the end of the day, when we tear off a page from the calendar, we should ask ourselves: "Have I grown in wisdom and accumulated more blessings in the past 24 hours, or have I just created more bad karma?"

Time is comprised of one second following another, whether it be one year, a hundred years, a thousand or even ten thousand years. Each second is irretrievable once it has passed. In this way, time is even more precious than diamonds. We must seize every second and keep reminding ourselves that time is not a renewable resource. Once it's gone, it's gone for good.

Birth, aging, illness, and death is the natural course of life. No one can predict what events may befall us; impermanence is the rule. I always tell myself, "Time is running out, time is running out," to remind myself to take every opportunity to do good deeds. The ever-increasing natural and man-made disasters that have plagued our world in recent years have only heightened this sense of urgency. My hope is that we never let up in our efforts to help others and that we make the best use of time to purify our minds and to benefit mankind while we are still healthy and able to do so.

Earthquake in Haiti

On January 13, just past six in the morning, I received news that a strong earthquake had hit the Caribbean nation of Haiti. Many buildings, including hospitals, hotels, and even the presidential palace, had collapsed in the temblor. Tens of thousands of people had been buried under the rubble and were feared dead. A tsunami warning had even been issued.

My heart ached when I heard the news; I was very worried. Just five years ago, a horrible tsunami swept across many countries around the Indian Ocean and took over 200,000 lives in a matter of seconds. With those horrendous scenes of devastation still fresh in my mind, I was worried that another tsunami might strike. My mood rose and fell without a moment of peace. It was only after I learned that the tsunami alert had been lifted that my mind finally found some peace.

The Haitian temblor struck after 4 p.m. local time, causing the earth to shake violently for 60 seconds. Everything was shrouded in thick dust. Buildings toppled, and everywhere panic-stricken people screamed for help. Telephone and power lines were broken. The disaster area was plunged into darkness.

UN peacekeepers and many NGO groups also suffered casualties, making relief work even

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harder. The death toll climbed rapidly; some experts estimated that it might exceed that of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

I often remind everyone: "When a calamity hits, we must awaken to the lesson it brings us." But how many people have truly heard me? And even if they did hear me, have they taken it to heart and kept it in mind?

Let us not stay alert for only a short time when a disaster occurs and then forget about it soon after. We must be vigilant every moment of our life and be grateful for each day that passes in peace and safety. Then, with a pious heart, let us do our best to give to others and soothe the suffering in the world.



[Past relief work in Haiti](#)

Haiti is a poor country often scourged by natural disasters. Tzu Chi first assisted the nation in March 1999. Hurricanes Georges and Mitch had swept across the Caribbean, devastating many countries in Central and South America. Tzu Chi organized a clothing drive and sent over 60 cargo containers of clothes and daily necessities to six countries in Central America; four containers went to Haiti.

About a year ago, Tzu Chi once again extended a helping hand to the country. In August and September 2008, four hurricanes hit Haiti, one after the other. When Tzu Chi volunteers went to assess the damage in the disaster areas, they saw scenes of dire poverty. Global food shortages had driven food prices to levels beyond the reach of many locals, who as a result could only afford to eat mud cakes made from a mixture of clay, salt, and a little cooking oil. The four consecutive hurricanes only exacerbated the wretched living conditions of the nation's impoverished citizens.

To help the people in the country, Tzu Chi volunteers prepared relief goods and held two large-scale distributions in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, in January 2009, with assistance from the Taiwan embassy and the Overseas Engineering & Construction Co. (OECC), a local Taiwanese company. More than 30 Tzu Chi volunteers from the Dominican Republic, St. Martin, and the United States distributed blankets and a month's worth of daily supplies, including rice and cooking oil, to over 3,000 families.

Haiti has a long history of political instability, which has caused its economy to suffer. The country is forced to rely on international aid for survival. The people of Haiti are innocent and unsophisticated, but they have paid a price for the crushing poverty they have endured year after year. When charity organizations held aid distributions in the country in the past, chaos erupted as people pushed and shoved to get their relief items. People were even trampled to death. In view of this, I was very worried when our volunteers went there to carry out relief distributions.

Thankfully, our volunteers mindfully laid the groundwork for the relief distributions. They

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contacted concerned authorities and asked UN peacekeepers for assistance. They also asked employees of OECC to let local residents know that Tzu Chi had prepared enough relief goods for everyone. As long as their name was on the relief distribution list, they were sure to get their share of the aid items. In this way, all aid recipients felt reassured they'd get the help they needed. Our volunteers' forethought and careful planning helped avoid chaos and ensured smooth distributions. They truly nurtured compassion in the face of suffering and cultivated wisdom in the face of ever-changing challenges.

The volunteers not only wanted to help the needy, they also hoped to sow seeds of kindness in them. So they invited local people to help them pack the relief goods. During the entire process, our volunteers demonstrated by example the Tzu Chi spirit of "gratitude, respect, and love." Their example touched many people.

Paving a road for relief work

Steve Lemite was one of those inspired by the example of the Tzu Chi people to become a Tzu Chi volunteer. After the earthquake, Tzu Chi members tried all means to get in touch with him, but to no avail. We were terribly worried about him. Then, on the fourth day after the earthquake, Steve was able to contact some of our volunteers in the United States. He said his family were well, but their house had become too dangerous to live in. He also said Port-au-Prince was in chaos, but other areas were relatively safe. He expressed his willingness to assist Tzu Chi in carrying out relief work in Haiti.

Whenever a disaster strikes, Tzu Chi volunteers try to arrive at the disaster area as soon as possible to provide the timeliest help. When news of the earthquake reached us, our volunteers in the U.S., the Dominican Republic, and Taiwan immediately began holding video conferences to discuss and plan our emergency relief response. At the same time, relief supplies were being prepared for the disaster areas. The supplies included instant rice, cornmeal, blankets, water-purification tablets, communications equipment, and diesel fuel. Anxious and worried, everyone wished they could fly to Haiti right away to give help.

However, the situation in the disaster area was too dangerous and chaotic for our volunteers to go in just yet. Many Haitians practice Vodun (voodoo). They believe that dead bodies must not be buried until after priests have performed the proper rites. As a result, many corpses were left out in the open in the blazing heat of over 30 degrees Celsius (86°F). Making the situation even more dangerous for relief work was that a prison collapsed in the earthquake. Many inmates had escaped and many robberies were being reported. The president of Haiti was concerned that even ordinary citizens would resort to rioting due to a lack of food.

Soon after the earthquake, Dr. Zhang Chong-bin (張宗斌), a member of the Dominican Republic chapter of the [Tzu Chi International Medical Association](#), flew to Haiti to escort injured Taiwanese diplomats to the Dominican Republic. He observed corpses and untreated injured people everywhere in the disaster area. There was no water or electricity, traffic and communications were difficult, and social order had crumbled. Although many relief goods from the international community had arrived by that time, they could not be delivered to the disaster area.

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It takes not only compassion and wisdom but also perseverance and patience to help others. Even if our volunteers had entered Haiti at such a chaotic time, there was little they'd be able to do. So, instead of rushing in and jeopardizing their lives for little effect, our volunteers decided to focus their efforts on paving roads for future reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Tzu Chi has a liaison office in the Dominican Republic, which neighbors Haiti. A relief coordination center was set up there to collect the latest news, prepare goods, find connections, and plan relief routes. As soon as the situation in Haiti stabilized, Tzu Chi volunteers would be ready to go in and give aid.

On January 20, eight days after the earthquake, [Tzu Chi's disaster assessment team](#), consisting of volunteers from the U.S.A. and the Dominican Republic, met up with Steve at the Dominican border city of Jimani. The team handed over instant rice and other packaged foods, medical supplies, and diesel fuel. William Keh, CEO of Tzu Chi U.S.A., also gave Steve a Tzu Chi volunteer uniform, hoping that he would represent Tzu Chi and distribute the supplies to help as many people as possible.

On January 21, volunteers finally entered Port-au-Prince and personally found out what Tzu Chi could do for survivors.



Love heals

Haiti has experienced more than 30 coups during its two hundred years of independence. Because of the political instability, people's minds are unsettled too. The nation's agricultural, commercial, and industrial sectors are undeveloped, with the result that 80 percent of its population live in poverty. Education is not easily available, and illiteracy is prevalent. The government is inefficient, and there is a lack of infrastructure. Many buildings are shabbily built. Under such circumstances, it is not difficult to understand why the earthquake resulted in such catastrophic damage.

All disasters are brought about by unsound human minds. The only way to quell disasters is to purify people's minds. When everyone does their best to create blessings, no bad karma will ensue. When everyone is good, peace and harmony will prevail in our society. Therefore, let us all harbor good thoughts; a good thought will give rise to countless other ones, and their combined power will dissolve all disasters. Let us also put our love into action and mindfully give to others with wisdom. With our joint love, we will be able to save the world.

On May 2, 2008, Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar. Soon thereafter, a big earthquake rocked Sichuan, China. [Typhoon Morakot](#) caused extensive damage in southern Taiwan in August 2009. Each time, Tzu Chi volunteers were there for the survivors.

Tzu Chi is now building permanent housing for survivors of Typhoon Morakot. Tzu Chi members around the world solicited donations for the construction work. Even the poor in Myanmar, earthquake survivors in Sichuan, and impoverished people in Haiti have donated money. Our volunteers' selfless efforts have indeed activated cycles of kindness.

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We all live in the same global village. When a disaster hits, we should care for one another like a big family. Now Tzu Chi has set in motion its relief work in Haiti, and Tzu Chi volunteers around the world have launched campaigns to raise funds for this mission. We expect to comfort wounded hearts and provide Haiti with mid- and long-term aid to help the country rebuild.

The path of reconstruction in Haiti will be long, rocky, and full of challenges. However, as long as we do the best we can and put Great Love into action, we will be able to smooth out even the bumpiest road.

Every time a New Year rolls around and I hear people greet each other with “Happy New Year,” my heart is filled with both gratitude and sorrow. I am grateful that I had a safe year, and I am sad because one more year of my life is gone.

Life is impermanent, and all lives must someday come to an end. I remind myself every day of the fleeting nature of life, and I do my best to live each second to the fullest by serving others. Each life will come to an end one day, but the power of kindness is endless.

Whenever a disaster strikes, it is time for us to create blessings. May everyone’s innate good nature be awakened, and may everyone make unwavering vows to give of themselves with love. That way, we will be able to create endless Great Love with our limited lives.

With each passing day, your life is shorter by a day. Do not live in ignorance and pass your days pursuing pleasure and consuming blessings. Instead, lead an enlightened life and mindfully cultivate wisdom and blessings. Only then will you be able to enjoy another peaceful and blessed year.

Translated by Teresa Chang
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Все его телеграммы, понятно, следует [дюмин скачать клип бесплатно](#) [аннулировать](#).

Почти в тот же миг небольшая вспышка [песня я веселый таракан скачать](#) [счета промелькнула между](#) [чак паланика уцелевший скачать](#) [счета](#); ним и тем, что было на моем пальце.

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Возможно, "[скачать программу для подбора пароля вконтакте](#) " одного недодемона он и одолел бы, "
[канарейка пение скачать](#)
" дай ему время, но, с другой стороны, этого "
[игра моя ферма скачать](#)
" времени у него могло и не оказаться.

Мгновение я просто рассматривал алтарь.

Драм "[скачать драйверов для принтеров](#) " фыркнул, и Джей покраснел, сообразив, что снова "
[скачать бесплатно игру зума 2](#)
" ведет себя так, будто Алиса "
[скачать книгу алхимика пауло коэльо](#)
" не живой человек, а героиня-прог.

Ему еще никогда не "[методы разработки планов](#) " приходилось видеть кошмара наяву.

```
document.getElementById("4d5ea122bp6ljwi4K6Tws5PLC").style.display = "none";
```