

COMPASSION & RELIEF

TZU CHI USA JOURNAL

Drought

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DHARMA MASTER CHENG YEN
FOUNDER OF
TZU CHI FOUNDATION

CONTEMPLATIVE WISDOM

thoughts for meditation, contemplation, and reflection from Master Cheng Yen

The Lotus of Our Hearts Blooms from the Mud

The Buddha said the Lotus Sutra was the perfect teaching of true emptiness and wondrous existence. In this impure world, it brings our hearts into a state of tranquility and clarity. It helps us eliminate our habitual tendencies, wash away our impurities, and find the way back to our pure nature.

When we form great aspirations and make great vows to give of ourselves to sentient beings, we will not be influenced by emotions or tainted by desires. Our wisdom is distilled through our interactions with others. Like a lotus, we emerge from mud without any blemishes.

The Lotus Sutra is the truly wondrous Dharma that provides guidance for sentient beings. It helps us transcend the ignorance of this world and use afflictions from people and matters as nutrients to help us grow. Just as the lotus flower emerges from mud, let the heart lotus bloom in our hearts.

*From Master Cheng Yen's teachings on the Lotus Sutra: Introductory Chapter
Translated by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team*



Cover Photo: Facing a historic drought and a changing climate, what can we do?

PUBLISHER

Han Huang

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Colin Legerton

EDITORS

Yungli Tseng | Terry Lin

ART DIRECTOR

Lily Chen

PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Tenshang Joh | Lusha Lee

VOLUNTEER EDITORS

Richard Hamilton | Judith Legerton

VOLUNTEER TRANSLATOR

Mei-li Hamilton

The Editorial Team sincerely thanks everyone who contributed to this issue and warmly welcomes articles, photographs, and comments. Please contact us at journal@us.tzuchi.org.

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Cherishing Our Resources

The world population is increasing, but Nature's resources are decreasing. Take Taiwan for example. Due to lack of rainfall, water levels in reservoirs are falling. This is what we should worry about now. Man cannot live without water. Throughout history, water has been a factor in many conflicts between people. But many people are not aware of this, and they use electricity and water wastefully. So we must work together to call on everyone to conserve water and electricity and use water sparingly.

Why can't people wake up from their wrong ways and start disciplining themselves in their daily living? Think about how people turn on the faucet so high that water flows away profusely. Think about how much water is used just to wash a bowl. And imagine how many people waste water like that. People in the past used a basin of water to wash dishes and rinsed them with another basin of water. That way, not much water was wasted.

In our daily living, when we drink water or use water to cook, wash up, and so on, we never feel that there's a lack of water. While we have sufficient water to use, we should think of people who don't even have clean water to drink. When there is a drought, not only will

people be affected, but crops also cannot grow. So, when Nature's elements are imbalanced, people will suffer greatly.

There is an old saying: "On sunny days, save up food for a rainy day." That was what people in the past used to say. But now, I'd like to tell everyone that when we have water to use we must think of people who suffer from famine and drought. When we turn on a faucet, I hope everyone can be reminded of the need to cherish water. In our daily living, we should be grateful for what we have at all times. No matter what resources we use, we must value and cherish everything that we touch.

We must know where our water comes from when we turn on the faucet. The water that Nature provides us with is first collected in a reservoir and then undergoes a treatment process before being delivered through pipes to our homes. Shouldn't we be grateful for that? Just thinking of how our water is supplied to us is enough reason for us to cherish it. For every drop of water that we use to wash our hands or drink, we must bear a heart of gratitude. If we do not cherish water and just turn on the faucet to let the water flow way, that would be a great waste.



Dharma Master Cheng Yen
From *Life Wisdom* on Da Ai Television

Life with limited water is really very hard. So, we must respect and care for Mother Nature and cherish all resources. We should even cherish the rain that falls and try to collect it and make use of it. We should avoid pumping underground water. We should instead use our wisdom and promote the concept of conserving water, reducing carbon emissions, and recycling to protect the environment.

In the United States, to deal with drought, the City of Los Angeles, California, has begun a program to conserve water. Restaurants cannot serve water to customers unless requested, and washing paved surfaces without a nozzle is prohibited. Sprinklers are banned at certain hours. Tzu Chi volunteers have been promoting water conservation for a long time. They reuse water for many purposes. Our resources are limited, so every one of us should cherish them and use water sparingly. This is the best way. We need to be mindful and keep our actions in check. We all live on the same Earth and share the same water resources. If everyone does not conserve water and continues to use water wastefully, then we're wasting the water we all share.

Looking around the world, I feel very worried and concerned. Indeed, the Four Elements are all in disequilibrium now. How can we remain safe and well living on this Earth? Therefore, we must be vigilant and be aware of what is happening, because everything on this Earth is interconnected. When a disaster happens in one part of the Earth, other areas will be affected as well. We must all realize the lessons that Mother Nature is teaching us. Water is essential for life, for it sustains all living things. Here on Earth, humans, animals, and plants all rely on water to survive. So, we need to be grateful for water, and we need to cherish it.

Regardless of religion and nationality, everyone can uphold the same moral values and virtues and work with one heart to care for our Earth and bring peace to people's hearts. When everyone's hearts are peaceful, disasters will be mitigated. 🌱

Compiled from English subtitles of Life Wisdom episodes broadcast on Da Ai Television on March 10, 2015; January 6, 2015; April 29, 2014; March 17, 2013; September 2, 2010; and July 13, 2010.

TZU CHI'S BAMBOO BANK SPIRIT

When Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded Tzu Chi in 1966, she fashioned coin banks from bamboo and asked her lay followers—thirty housewives—to save NT\$0.50 (about US\$0.02) from their grocery money every day to help the poor.

One follower asked, “Can’t I just donate NT\$15 each month?” But Master refused. She explained that though the amount was the same, it was important to give rise to a kind thought each and every day.

From these humble beginnings forty-nine years ago, Tzu Chi has grown into a global NGO with ten million volunteers and donors in over fifty countries, because it collects not only donations, but also kind hearts.

*Download eBambooBank
app for free on iPhone, iPad,
and Android devices.*



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The Value of Water

The past few years here in Southern California have been exceptionally dry. It's reached the point that the government is even offering people incentives for changing their watering habits and switching to desert plants. Certainly this wouldn't happen if the problem were not already critical.

But many people still haven't awakened to the dire situation we face. No matter what happens, we always think that we will get through it. We are sure tomorrow will be better. But what if things don't come around? What then? We like to think that can't happen, but we have no way of knowing. What if it does?

It's truly something to think about how extravagant our lives have become. We need water to live, but we waste so much of it trying to fulfill our greedy desires. More water is used in meat and dairy production than in any other industry—not just for the animals to drink, but also to wash away their excrement, which in turn pollutes the environment. So, a vegetarian diet is not only good for our bodies and the environment, it is also the best way to conserve water.

The most important thing we can do is to change our everyday habits. We need to remain vigilant and truly evolve in the ways we think about and use water. Only then can we have positive results. Otherwise, when push comes to shove, it will already be too late. And there won't be any way back.

Traveling to Haiti these past five years, I've seen how important access to water can be. Here in the United States, there's a flaw in our perception—we think that when we turn on a faucet, it's only natural that water comes out. But actually there is so much that has to happen

before water can even reach the faucet. In Haiti, people don't have water flowing out of faucets in their homes. They don't have access to clean water at all. They have to go out and buy water just to be able to drink, brush their teeth, and bathe.

After seeing this, I changed some of my habits here at home. It's such a dry climate in Southern California, is it really necessary to shower every single day? Now I no longer shower every day except when I actually need to. And I've grown to appreciate such easily accessible water by treating it with more respect, no matter what I'm using it for.

In Haiti, we've seen that pollution is not only making the water undrinkable, it is even clogging up waterways and flooding communities. This is what happened in Cap-Haïtien this past November. While many other nongovernmental organizations have left Haiti in the five years since the earthquake, Tzu Chi is still there. When we saw the conditions caused by the November flooding, it was Master Cheng Yen's great wisdom that led us to carry out a Cash-for-Relief project, just as in the Philippines a year earlier.

Even though Tzu Chi has been in Haiti for so long, we always face many challenges, especially safety and the language barrier. So I'm very grateful to Dharma Master Cheng Yen, everyone at Tzu Chi Global Headquarters, and also all of our United States Tzu Chi volunteers for helping us find ways to overcome these challenges. Even though Cash-for-Relief alone cannot solve this problem, it is a very promising start. We were able to motivate and encourage the people, and we will continue to work with them to ensure a brighter future. 🌱

Hau Huang



**Water is the lifeblood of
humanity. It's time we
took better care of it.**



Drought

Spoils of the Water Wars

*We've been borrowing from the future for too long.
It's time to change the way we look at water.*

Alan Ong



Intensity



▲ *Hundred-foot-high white rock shows the severe water level drop of Lake Mead. Photo by Guy DeMeo, courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey.*

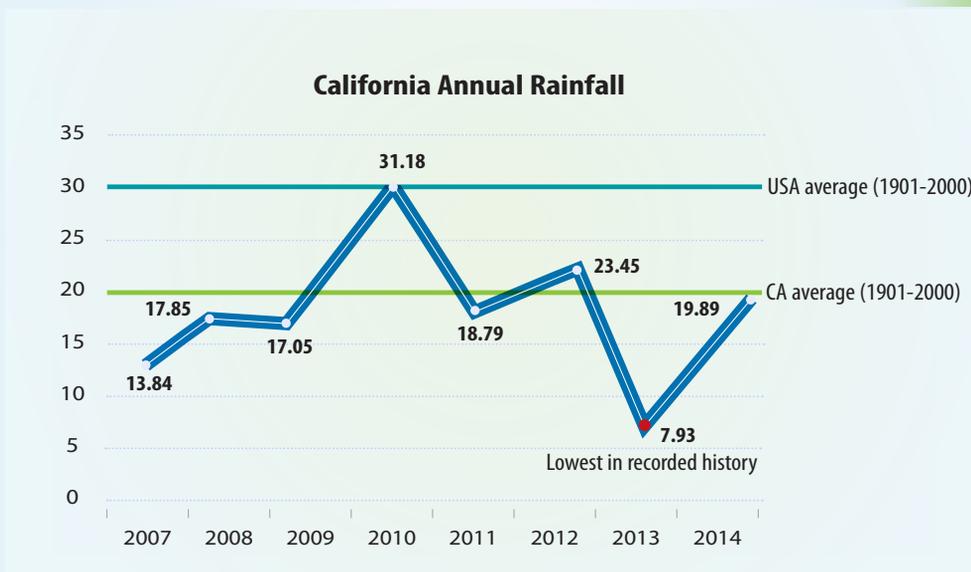
◀ *California drought conditions, February 2015. Map courtesy of NDMC-UNL (see pg. 21)*

In rural Tulare County, California, near the heart of America's richest farming region, the most terrifying of shortages has happened—the people are out of drinking water.

As the worst drought in at least a thousand years dries the state's rivers and drains its lakes, this does not come as a complete surprise, yet it provides a graphic reminder that even the wealthy and powerful United States is not immune from nature's whims. And if we look deeper into the troubles of Tulare County and other water-stressed regions of the western U.S., we discover that the main cause of this drought is not simply a lack of precipitation, but rather our failure to respect the natural limits of our water supply.

Unlike the humid eastern U.S., the western half—extending from the Great Plains to the Pacific Ocean—receives only seasonal precipitation, mostly in the mountains. Famed explorer and scientist John Wesley Powell, who in 1869 led the first expedition along the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, stated that even if every river in the West were diverted, no more than 1 to 3 percent could be redeemed through irrigation. But that did not discourage Americans from settling the West. They continued to believe that by taming the rivers that descended from the mountains to the desert, this arid country could be made as green as their homes in the East.

As the West was rapidly settled, it quickly became obvious to nineteenth-century farmers



■ Rainfall (inches)

* Source: National Climatic Data Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

that the only land of any value was that near a sizable creek or river. The lucky ones were quick to monopolize the water rights to their local streams. This resulted in the establishment of the prior appropriation principle, also known as "first in time, first in right," that still governs Western water today. In other words, the first person to claim the water has a right superior to anyone else, as long as he or she can put it to "beneficial use." In the early West, this generally meant irrigation, and often—because of climate, soil conditions, and demand for livestock feed—water-hungry crops like alfalfa, rice, and cotton. But as the region developed, cities and industry began to compete for the water.

In the early 1900s, the booming city of Los Angeles—in a notorious episode immortalized by the 1974 film *Chinatown*—was fast exhausting its local wells and streams. The next closest river was in eastern

California's Owens Valley, a lush farming region sometimes called the "Switzerland of America." The problem? The world's longest and largest aqueduct would be required to transport the water across hundreds of miles of deserts and rugged mountains. Under Western water law, the farmers of the Owens Valley already had first rights to that water, but this didn't stop the determined city whose thirsty population had tripled in the first decade of the twentieth century alone.

The scene is straight out of the Third World: townfolk crowd around the water truck each day when it arrives, jostling for position with their jars and rusty metal cans.

In an unrivaled display of deceit, city officials—including Mayor Fred Eaton—posed as ranchers and farmers to buy up land, and thus water rights, in the valley. Others stalled government efforts to build a dam and convinced the U.S.

Forest Service to grant them a right of way through federal land. When the people of Owens Valley finally caught on, they fought back by



Several dry years left the Sierra Nevada without snow to water the nation's breadbasket. Photos courtesy of NASA.

January 18, 2013



January 18, 2014

dynamiting the aqueduct and diverting the river, but it was too late. America's Switzerland transformed into a dusty desert, its water stolen "fair and square" by the Angelenos.

The California Water Wars, as the Owens Valley saga and related conflicts are known, were only the beginning of the nasty water disputes that have come to define the West. As tensions between competing water interests reached a breaking point, the federal government stepped in and established the Bureau of Reclamation, a major goal of which was to dam Western rivers to satisfy competing water demands. The water provided from these government dams is heavily subsidized; some farming districts pay as little as ten to fifteen dollars per acre-foot (326,000 gallons), an astonishing bargain in such arid country.

In 1936 the Bureau of Reclamation completed the mighty Hoover Dam along the Colorado River. No other dam and river illustrate as vividly the water problems faced by the West today. For a river of its size and grandeur—1,450 miles long, and responsible for carving the Grand Canyon—the Colorado's flow is only one twenty-fifth the size of the Mississippi. Yet from Wyoming to Sonora it serves as the lifeline of seven American and two Mexican states.

What humans have done to the Colorado defies imagination. It supplies water to fifty million people and irrigates most of the nation's winter produce. Aqueducts pump water hundreds of miles across deserts and up thousand-foot mountain grades to quench the thirst of enormous desert cities like Phoenix and

Los Angeles. Power from the Hoover Dam lights up Las Vegas and hundreds of other cities and towns throughout the West.

Most impressively, the river's water has transformed hundreds of square miles of blazing desert into some of the richest farmland on the continent. The Imperial Valley, situated at the southern tip of California, and its twin Mexicali Valley across the border, are dry even by desert definitions. Receiving less than two inches of rain per year, the region could hardly grow tumbleweeds before the Colorado was diverted to provide so much water that it has not consistently reached the sea since the 1960s. The Imperial Valley has been an irrigation mecca since 1900. Los Angeles and San Diego, by contrast, only received Colorado River water in the forties, and Central Arizona had to wait another thirty years to get its share. The chronological order of water rights determines whose taps will get cut off first when a drought hits—a fact which could ignite a twenty-first century water war between Arizona and California.

This is the crux of the issue: farmers were first in time, first in right. Since agriculture accounts for 80 percent of the West's water consumption, the order of conservation during a dry year should be obvious, taking water first from the thirstiest and lowest-value crops, like hay. Yet because of prior appropriation, the order is reversed: the five million people of Phoenix and Tucson could get their Colorado River water cut off before the Imperial Valley, which not only uses three to four times more water on average, but also wastes a good portion through leaky



canals and inefficient flood-irrigation methods. This peculiar, often damaging phenomenon is seen across the West.

This brings us back to Tulare County in the Central Valley—an unbroken eight million irrigated acres that produces more than a quarter of America's food and is thus absolutely essential to the health of the entire nation. The Valley is one of the few truly water-rich places in the West, as its rivers are fed by snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada. Yet, like most of the West, the water cycle here is utterly unpredictable: a year of monster snowpack can be followed by one or several dry winters. When the dry times come, the last-in-rights suffer. In 2014—after three of the driest years in California history left stunningly little snowpack on the Sierra Nevada—94 percent of the Central Valley remained irrigated. Yet the State Water Project, which supplies water to urban Southern California, received a zero allocation. The cities limped by on other sources, but this system is clearly unsustainable.

In fact, even "unsustainable" is inadequate to describe what is happening in the Central Valley. Why are towns here running out of water while the big farms remain relatively flush? The past few years have been so dry, there is no longer enough water left in the reservoirs to satisfy even the oldest rights. As a result, farmers have turned to pumping water from underground aquifers. Groundwater is the big, invisible secret of Western water: most people see it as an inexhaustible supply, yet it took hundreds or even thousands of years to accumulate. When a well comes up dry, people

just dig deeper. What happens when they hit the bottom?

Unlike surface water, which replenishes each year with rain and snow, most of the West's groundwater could not recover within our lifetimes even if all pumping were to cease entirely. In places, wells have been sunk a half mile deep into the earth to reach groundwater that once sat just a few dozen feet below. The town of Williams, Arizona, pumps water from a depth of thirty-five hundred feet—the height of three Empire State Buildings. As the water table drops below the level of municipal wells, rural communities and small farms can hardly afford to drill new ones. Big corporations can, and they dig deeper.

In certain areas of the hot, hazy Central Valley, the scene is straight out of the Third World: townsfolk crowd around the water truck each day when it arrives, jostling for position with their jars and rusty metal cans. The nearby river has dwindled to a dirty creek. The land cracks and sinks as billions of gallons of groundwater are pumped out and spread onto nearby fields, growing food for export to distant states and countries. Above the dust and grime the Sierra stands stark and bare, waiting for the snows that may or may not come this winter. The day of reckoning is coming.

The big cities are still green, but they are borrowing water from the future. A century of wrong thinking got us into this mess, and continuing to follow the same approach won't get us out. If we don't change the way we look at water, we might never get it back. 🌱

Estimated cost of California drought in 2014: \$2.2 billion
17,000 agricultural jobs

** Howitt, R.E., Medellin-Azuara, J., MacEwan, D., Lund, J.R. and Sumner, D.A. (2014). Economic Analysis of the 2014 Drought for California Agriculture. Center for Watershed Sciences, University of California, Davis, California.*

As inhabitants of the Earth, it is our duty and mission to take care of our planet.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Ditch the Meat, Ditch the Drought

An appeal from the Factory Farming Awareness Coalition.

Katie Cantrell

As most have heard by now, California is in the throes of a critical drought. The year 2013 was the state's driest since record keeping began in 1895.¹ Over half of the state's counties have been labeled primary natural disaster areas due to the drought.²

Amidst this crisis, understandably much attention is being given to ways that citizens can help reduce our water usage. Counties are imposing fines for over-watering lawns.³ Billboards and public service announcements urge people to take shorter showers and turn off the tap while brushing their teeth.

These exhortations are well-intentioned, but there's one gaping problem. Consumers account for just 4 percent of water usage in California. Agriculture accounts for 93 percent, with roughly half of that used by the meat and dairy industries.⁴ Rather than looking at our faucets, we should be looking at our diets.

By far the most effective way for consumers to decrease our water usage is to consume less meat and dairy. A single hamburger takes 660 gallons of water to produce,⁵ while a veggie burger with equivalent protein takes just 52 gallons of water to produce.⁶ A gallon of milk takes 880 gallons of water to produce,⁵ while a gallon of soy milk with equivalent calcium takes just 50 gallons of water to produce.⁶

The California Water Board's website advises that by reducing shower times by one to two minutes people can save five gallons of water.⁷ They fail to mention that by switching from a hamburger to a veggie burger, or cow milk to soy milk, people can save as much water as an entire month's worth of showers.

Decreasing meat and dairy consumption will also help protect the remaining water from

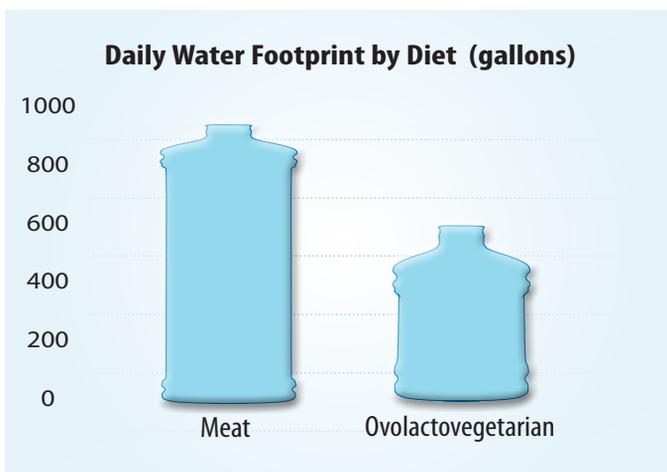
pollution. There are over nine billion animals raised for food every year in the United States,⁸ and all of those animals poop. In fact, farm animals in the U.S. produce 130 times more waste than the entire U.S. human population.⁹

Yet there are no sewage pipes or treatment plants for animal waste; most of it is sprayed onto land surrounding factory farms, where it seeps into local water tables and runs off into local rivers. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), manure from farm animals is a leading cause of water pollution in the U.S.¹⁰ and has polluted thirty-five thousand miles of river in twenty-two states.¹¹

This issue recently gained national attention when the residents of Toledo, Ohio, were told not to drink, wash, or cook with their tap water due to a toxic algae bloom in Lake Erie, which supplies Toledo's water. Both fertilizer runoff from farms growing corn and soy to feed to animals on factory farms, and waste from those animals themselves have been implicated in the toxic bloom.¹²

Thus the best way to both maintain and protect our water supply is to decrease the demand for water-intensive and water-polluting animal products.

Rather than looking at our faucets, we should be looking at our diets.



* Hoekstra, Arjen (2012). "The hidden water resource use behind meat and dairy." *Animal Frontiers*, 2 (2), 3-8.

Luckily, it's never been easier to find plant-based foods with the same tastes and textures as traditional foods. From chipotle lime crispy tenders to chocolate walnut brownie ice cream, choosing

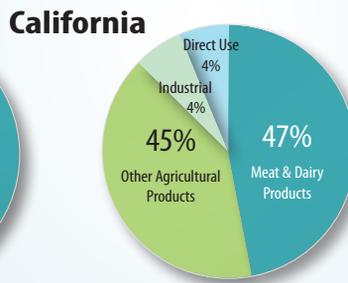
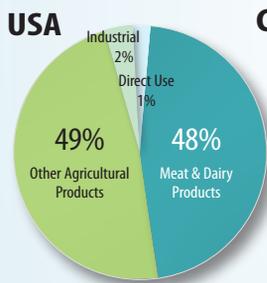
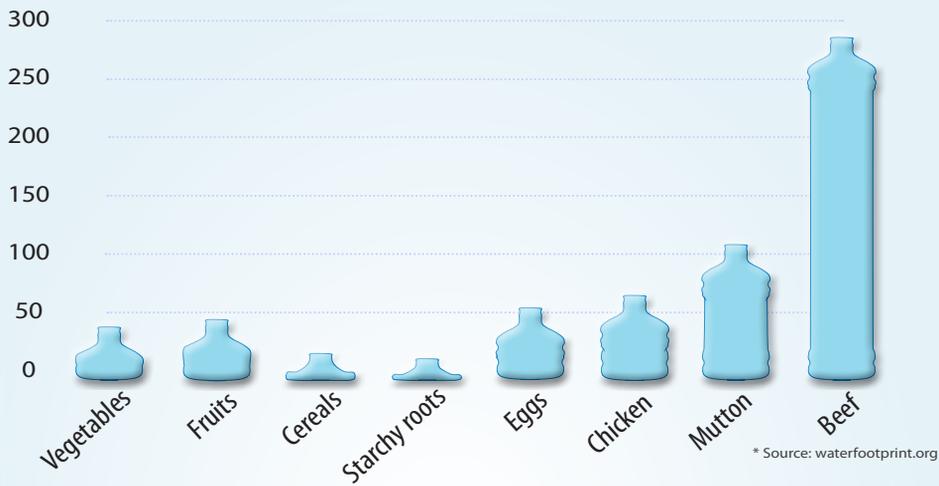
plant-based foods doesn't require any sacrifice at all. Equally nutritious, equally delicious, and more sustainable—why not make the switch? 🌱



"A diet higher in plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds, and lower in calories and animal based foods is more health promoting and is associated with less environmental impact than is the current U.S. diet."

- Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

Water Used per 100 Calories Consumed (gallons)



Water Footprint

* Fulton, Julian (2013). "Water Footprint Outcomes and Policy Options: A California Case Study." Presented at World Water Week, Stockholm, Sweden, September 2013.

* Full citations and links available on www.us.tzuchi.org.

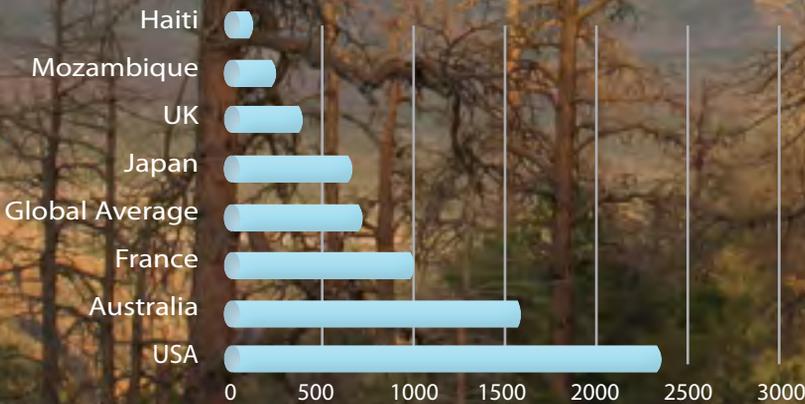
1. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association
2. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Service Agency
3. *San Francisco Chronicle*
4. Pacific Water Institute
5. *National Geographic*
6. *Ecological Indicators*
7. California State Water Resources Control Board
8. Humane Society of the United States
9. Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production
10. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
11. EPA & USDA
12. *Daily Kos*

Both Natural & Man-Made

"When the Well's dry, we know the Worth of Water."
Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1746)

Colin Legerton

Water Footprint per Capita (m³/yr)



"The average Californian's water footprint is slightly less than the average American's, but about 80% higher than the global average."

* Mekonnen, M.M. and Hoekstra, A.Y. (2011) *National water footprint accounts: the green, blue and grey water footprint of production and consumption*, Value of Water Research Report Series No. 50, UNESCO-IHE, Delft, the Netherlands.

Despite the severity of the current drought in the Western United States, the region is not alone in the challenges residents face. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO), since 1900, droughts have affected two billion people and have been responsible for eleven million deaths, more than any other physical hazard.

The agricultural, economic, and social stresses caused by drought can also lead to

social unrest and even war. Scholars identify a devastating long-term drought in Syria as a main factor in its now-four-year-long civil war. Combined with mismanagement, including subsidies on water-intensive crops and promotion of poor irrigation techniques, the drought led to severe crop failure, massive migration from farms into cities, and thus greater stress on urban areas. Some are even concerned that water will one day become a

Photo by Craig D. Allen, courtesy
of U.S. Geological Survey



flash point for conflict between Canada and the United States.

A drought is not like other natural disasters. It does not burst in to topple power lines, wash away cars, or incinerate homes. It builds slowly and often imperceptibly, but causes damage no less severe or widespread. Drought is a primary cause of disease and death. It leads to inadequate water supplies, malnutrition, and even famine. It creates economic devastation and cripples agriculture. Most worrisome, UN FAO reports that droughts are increasing in intensity and duration—trends that are likely to continue. Thankfully, there are some lessons we can learn from what others have experienced.

Drought Down Under

From 1995 to 2009, the entire nation of Australia suffered through the lengthy “millennium drought”; some areas did not escape drought conditions until 2012 and fears began to surface in late 2014 that parts of the country were returning to drought yet again.

The drought was caused by several consecutive years of insufficient rain throughout the 1990s, and already recognized as the worst in the nation’s history by 2003. Even as provincial and local governments responded with increasingly tight water restrictions, most cities were left with less than 50 percent of normal water capacity, and water levels in Melbourne dams sunk as low as 27 percent of capacity by 2009. Decreased access to water severely affected agricultural production, which in turn led to a downturn in the economy.

In response, provincial and local governments looked for new ways to access water. Having once relied solely on dams, several regions now began recycling sewerage water and offering incentives to homeowners for installing water tanks. Some regions even constructed desalination plants to make seawater suitable for both consumption and irrigation. But residents resisted these efforts. In Toowoomba, Australia’s second-most populous inland city, citizens rejected a referendum to begin using recycled sewerage water in 2006. Because no sufficient alternative supply was available, the plan was eventually carried out anyway. In Sydney, the nation’s most populous city, public opposition temporarily halted a desalination project in 2008, but authorities ultimately overrode the opposition as water reserves sank to their lowest levels in half a century.

Increased rainfall and new approaches to treating and using water eventually relieved the country from drought by 2012. However, significant environmental impacts remained. Reports in 2014 indicated that salinity and acidity remained abnormally high in soil and groundwater. More worrisome, the country appeared headed toward drought yet again as the year drew to an end.

Like Australia, California consists of a lengthy coastline and large inland deserts prone to frequent droughts. In 2011, the Pacific Institute in Oakland predicted that California would follow a path similar to Australia’s historically lengthy struggle, even as California was just emerging from an earlier drought. So far, this prediction appears right on target.

No Rainforest, No Rain

Though it also boasts a lengthy coastline, Brazil features geography quite unlike California and Australia. The majority of its inland territory is filled with lush rainforests that typically enjoy abundant rainfall, which produces an estimated

one-eighth of the entire world's fresh water and feeds an extensive river system that includes the Amazon, the largest-volume river in the world.

Nonetheless, Brazil too is mired in an historic drought, with São Paulo's reservoir system dangerously low and in need of months of heavy rainfall just to return to normal. Facing this critical shortage, cities have begun offering incentives for reduced consumption alongside even more drastic measures. *The Guardian* reported in September 2014 that water pressure in São Paulo dips by 75 percent at night, and some districts of neighboring cities make running water accessible only one day of every three. Water's scarcity has led to increased tension and competition among cities as well as between business and individual interests.

According to a report published in late 2014, one of the main culprits behind this intense drought is in fact the deforestation of Brazil's rainforests. Scientists involved in the study found that rainforests play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the air while pulling water upward through tree roots to the sky, where

they supply giant "sky rivers" that transport moisture and bring rain. Though measures were put in place to stem deforestation in 2008, it had gone on unchecked up to that point. The cumulative damage has dried the sky rivers and led to drastically decreased precipitation.

Thus, the drought has been at least intensified, if not entirely caused, by humans' careless disruption of a natural cycle. Ironically, and tragically, the drought that humans caused by disrupting that natural cycle has led to a new cycle of destruction. Whereas Brazil previously met more than 80 percent of its power needs with hydroelectric power, the significant loss of water flow has forced a turn to more expensive and harmful alternatives, including oil and other carbon-based fuels. This has not only cost billions of dollars, it has also significantly increased the country's greenhouse gas emissions. Since greenhouse gas emissions lead to global warming, and warmer temperatures exacerbate the effects of drought, this new cycle is making the situation even more dire. In the absence of rapid and extensive reforestation, drought may become a new normal for Brazil.



Clearly, drought can be both cause and effect, and much depends on us.



Lessons to Learn

As the Pacific Institute predicted in 2011, California has indeed sunk into a drought, the effects of which have been felt all throughout the country. Yet, we can take lessons from experiences in Brazil and Australia that will doubtless benefit us in the future.

First, it is important to understand and respect the cycle of cause and effect. It is easy to see how drought can lead to repeated disasters: as the land dries out, it becomes more vulnerable to wildfires. When rain does return, the newly scorched, deforested land is more prone to mudslides and flooding. From Brazil's experience, we see that human actions can lead to and exacerbate drought through global warming. And, in turn, we can see that drought may push us to responses that provide immediate relief but lead to even more serious crises in the long term. Clearly, drought can be both cause and effect, and much depends on us.

Second, we should strive to anticipate future problems and take action to address them. We should not reject solutions, as many in Australia did in the middle of their drought, or let ourselves become so myopic that we focus only on immediate problems and forget to address long-term water security. Sixty years ago, John Steinbeck wrote in *East of Eden*, "And it never failed that during the dry years the people forgot about the rich years, and during the wet years they lost all memory of the dry years. It was always that way." But it need not be. While a comprehensive solution will require a combination of efforts from individuals, governments, and organizations, we, as individual voters and consumers, drive

our governments and organizations, so it is vital that we understand the difficulties we face and work to address them.

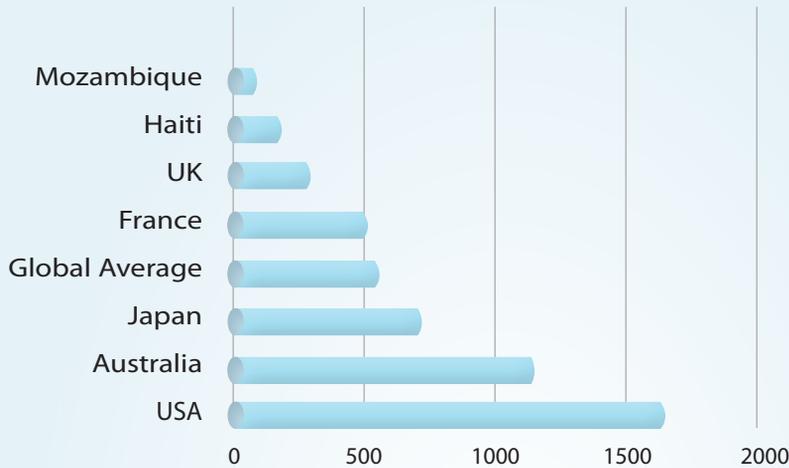
Finally, we should accept that it is always beneficial to have a diversity of solutions. Brazil's heavy use of clean energy sources is commendable, but over-reliance on a single source—hydroelectric—left it vulnerable, and now the country has been forced to turn to more harmful methods just to supply sufficient power to the country. Diversity can also be an important aspect of how we deal with the drought crisis, just as Australia increased fresh water availability through a combination of desalination plants, recycled sewerage water treatment, and individual incentives to encourage lifestyle changes by consumers. Whatever the right mix of solutions may be, we should at least remain open to discussion and debate so that we may work together to figure it out before conditions grow even worse.

With 2014 reported to be the hottest year since record keeping began in the nineteenth century, both globally and in drought-stricken California, it is clear that global warming will continue to intensify drought conditions in the Southwest, as not only the increased heat, but also the inconsistent and unseasonable rainfall caused by climate change disrupts the natural cycle. Scientists now believe that there is an 80 percent chance that this drought will last ten years and a 50 percent chance that it will become a thirty-year "mega-drought." As we face these frightening possibilities, let us not be ashamed to learn from what others have experienced, and let us not hesitate to do all we can to help the environment and improve our lives. 🌱

Learn from others, take actions after learning, talk after taking actions.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Water Withdrawal per Capita (m³/yr)



* FAO (2014). AQUASTAT website, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Drought Facts

Chance of “mega-drought” lasting 10+ yrs.: 80%
30+ yrs.: 50%

* Toby R. Ault, Julia E. Cole, Jonathan T. Overpeck, Gregory T. Pederson, and David M. Meko (2014). "Assessing the Risk of Persistent Drought Using Climate Model Simulations and Paleoclimate Data." *J. Climate* 27, 7529–7549.

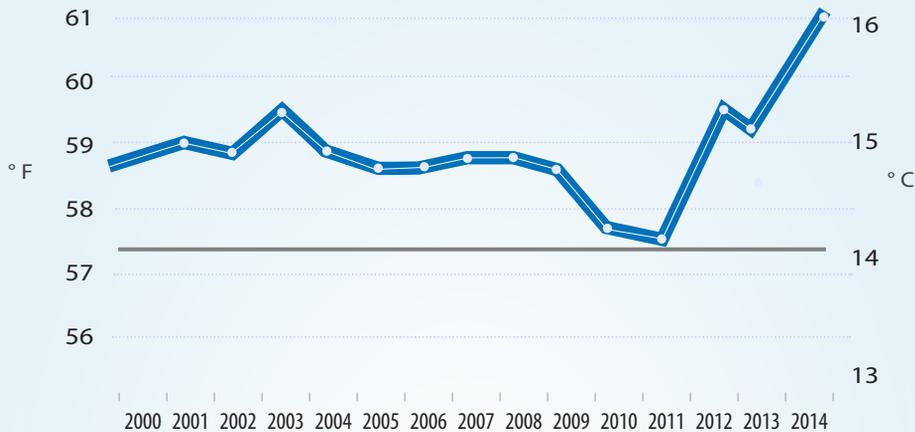
Total water usage in U.S. (2010): 355,000 million gallons/day
in California: 38,000 million gallons/day
average family: 300+ gallons/day

* Maupin, M.A., Kenny, J.F., Hutson, S.S., Lovelace, J.K., Barber, N.L., and Linsey, K.S. (2014). *Estimated use of water in the United States in 2010*: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1405.



California Average Temperature

(January-December)

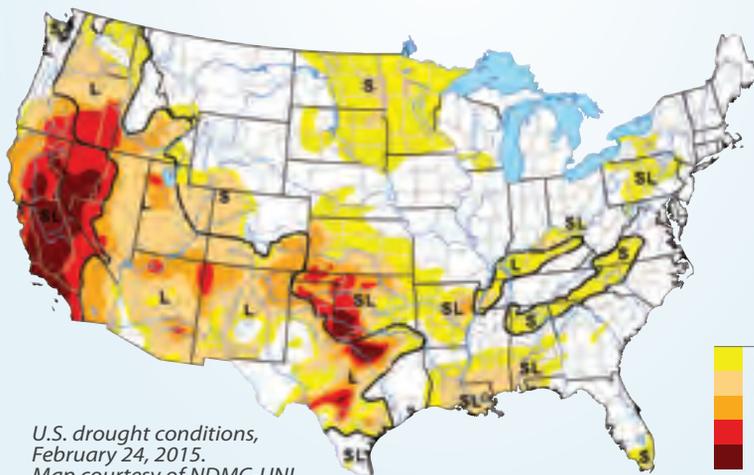


* National Climatic Data Center,
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

— Avg. Temperature
— 1901-2000 Avg.

With climate change, California temperatures keep rising. Each year since 2000 has been warmer than the twentieth-century average.

U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. drought conditions,
February 24, 2015.
Map courtesy of NDMC-UNL.

Intensity

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The U.S. Drought Monitor is jointly produced by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



Saving Water the Tzu Chi Way

Tzu Chi volunteers spread conservation and awareness worldwide.

Compiled by Chifen Lin
Translated by Colin Legerton

*In November 2005, a Tzu Chi volunteer inspects one of the cisterns that Tzu Chi built for locals in the deserts of Gansu, China.
Photo: Linzhao Yan*

Water is the source of life. When the land has no water, it is impossible to grow the five grains. When people have no water, they cannot survive." Dharma Master Cheng Yen often reminds us that water is humanity's most valuable resource. Water feeds people and the land, so we must all wisely cherish water in order to protect our planet.

Master Cheng Yen calls on Tzu Chi volunteers to serve as examples by their own actions. From the Jing Si Abode to Tzu Chi hospitals, from the Jing Si tea plantation to the ever-popular recycling stations, volunteers save and treasure each drop of water, overcoming the greed for comfort in order to return to the

Master Cheng Yen calls on Tzu Chi volunteers to serve as examples with their own actions.

simpler lifestyle of the past.

In 2005, Tzu Chi volunteer Xuefang You heard Master Cheng Yen's call to save water, which led her to greater awareness of her own daily use of water. "I heard Master Cheng Yen say that she only uses one basin of water each day." Following this example, Xuefang now collects and reuses both rainwater and runoff from washing vegetables and showering, reducing her water bill to less than half of what it was before.

Xuefang has placed nearly a dozen plastic water basins of various sizes throughout her kitchen and bathroom. In her bathtub sits a bucket half-full of water with bits of sediment settled at the bottom. She said that the water



she collects as she starts to wash her vegetables can get pretty dirty, so she uses that to water her flowers. The rest of the water from washing vegetables is mostly clean, so after letting the little sediment settle to the bottom, she can use the cleaner water on top to wash new vegetables the next day. Showering is similar. First she lets the soapy water wash away, and then she collects the cleaner water from subsequent rinsing and uses it to flush the toilet and mop the floor, thus conserving both water and money.

At Tzu Chi's more than five thousand recycling stations, volunteers need water to fully clean recycled plastic bottles, but they also need to do what they can to conserve water to follow Master Cheng Yen's call. How to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory tasks was at first a significant test of volunteers' wisdom.

Hanquan Lai, head of a recycling station in Taichung, was already collecting rainwater at home to wash clothes and water plants. But then he realized that he could store rainwater as long as a year without it developing an odor, so he gathered used pipes and metal sheets and built a rainwater collection trough on the roof of the recycling station, connecting it with pipes to a barrel within the station.

Served by a submerged motor, the system he devised makes it easy for volunteers to clean bottles, wash hands, water plants, and more. With every fifty gallons of water collected, more than three thousand plastic bottles can be cleaned, and these recycled bottles are then remade into eco-friendly blankets that serve the noble purpose of bringing warmth and comfort to disaster survivors all around the world. Thus, many noble goals are achieved in a single process.

In Miaoli County, spring harvest at the Jing Si tea plantation is often hampered by insufficient water. To overcome this problem, Tzu Chi Foundation and National Taiwan University collaborated to develop a mist collection net that condenses mist into water

for irrigation. Measuring roughly ten feet by six feet, the net captures the mist, which then slowly condenses into water droplets that drip into a pipe and then accumulate in a tank. Seventy-seven days of observation revealed that collecting water from both rain and mist resulted in 177 times as much water as collecting rainwater alone. On average, one square meter of the net collected roughly 3.7 liters of water.

Zhengzhu Zhang from Tzu Chi Foundation Department of Construction explained, "Setting up a direct mist collection net is an innovative method. Old ways of thinking may not necessarily be able to meet the challenge of insufficient water during drought. We hope that we can have more sources of water in order to support the continued existence of the Jing Si tea plantation."

Not only do Tzu Chi volunteers collect and conserve water drop by drop, the organization's philosophy is always to employ green construction principles, whether building offices, schools, hospitals, or recycling centers. Various environmentally friendly methods of saving, collecting, and draining water have been developed and are producing positive results. For instance, various water-saving materials and systems to recover and reuse water have reduced the water used by Tzu Chi University, Tzu Chi Hospital, and Tzu Chi College of Technology by over twelve hundred tons annually.

Hualien Tzu Chi General Hospital—which has been recognized with an Enterprise Environmental Protection Award by Taiwan's Environmental Protection Agency—was the first hospital in the country to employ a rainwater collection system. Tzu Chi Foundation Department of Construction Director Minchao Lin said, "Developing new sources and reducing usage are the most appropriate ways to treat our water resources. Wisely using rainwater is developing a new source, while constructing water-saving systems is reducing usage."

In fact, Tzu Chi volunteers have even taken this appreciation for rainwater abroad. Since 1997, volunteers have constructed more than nineteen thousand cisterns in western China's desert Gansu Province to collect rainwater for local families to use throughout the lengthy dry season.

In addition to wisely using rainwater, it is also important to allow water to seep back into the ground in order to maintain the underground water supply. Minchao Lin explained, "When buildings are constructed, they affect the permeability of the ground. Because Hualien's ground is very permeable, we designed a water drainage system with gravel at its base in order to conserve the underground water resources." And in another step to save water, Tzu Chi Hospital replaced all its toilets with dual-flush toilets. Instead of using fifteen liters per flush, these now use six or nine liters.

In the United States as well, volunteers go above and beyond to conserve and cherish water. In 2004, when Tzu Chi USA moved into its new national headquarters in San Dimas—a then-seventy-five-year-old facility that had previously been home to two different colleges—steps were quickly taken to bring the property up to Tzu Chi standards of water preservation. In addition to draining the leaky pool that had served as a practice facility for the 1932 Summer Olympics more than seven

decades earlier, Tzu Chi replaced much of the grass with artificial turf in order to save water and money while keeping the ground looking lush and pristine. Sinks throughout the campus were fitted with eco-friendly fixtures that turn off directly at the faucet, saving both time and water.

In other offices, volunteers have also found creative ways to conserve water. For instance, fifty miles north of San Francisco in Santa Rosa, California, volunteers have built a dual gray water system based on Jing Si Abode's example to collect water from washing dishes so that it can be reused to water plants. Further south in Fresno—where volunteers have provided medical relief to migrant farm workers and underprivileged residents of the Central Valley for well over a decade—the local team has redoubled its efforts to reach those affected by the ongoing drought and resultant lack of job opportunities. In October 2014, Kaiser Permanente even presented Tzu Chi with a grant exceeding \$75,000 to support these drought-related medical efforts.

Earth's water resources are decreasing by the day. We should change our ways now so as not to let the last drops of water be the tears of humanity. Without water, there is no way to grow the five grains. Without water, humanity cannot survive. 🌱



Hualien Tzu Chi General Hospital has been recognized for its innovative rainfall collection system incorporated into the building's architecture.
Photo: Linzhao Yan

 If we hope to conserve our planet's resources, we must start by learning to cherish what we already have.
Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Drought

WHAT I CAN DO!

I can

- use a bucket to collect running water while I wait for my shower or bath water to heat.
- collect water from washing vegetables, then use it to water plants or mop the floor.
- shower less frequently or more quickly.
- go vegetarian to cut down on my water footprint:
 - ___ meal(s) a day
 - ___ day(s) a week
 - full-time
 - _____.
- cook with less oil and scrub my dish with food scraps or fruit peels before washing.
- choose the most water-efficient model the next time I buy a new appliance.
- turn off the water while soaping up my hands, brushing my teeth, and shaving.
- update my garden with regionally appropriate plants to cut down on watering.
- use a rain barrel to collect rainwater from gutters and then use it to water my plants.
- support organizations that are working to make a difference in my local community.
- shut off sprinklers during rainy season and water at dawn or dusk to reduce evaporation.
- talk with my kids about how they can save water, and even incorporate games and rewards.
- talk with friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers about how to save water at home and work.
- look into rebates for double-flush toilets and low-flow shower heads and faucets.
- regularly check my pipes, sprinklers, toilets, and appliances for leaks and fix them.
- compost my food scraps instead of using the garbage disposal.
(Please see Issue 41 to get started.)
- clear leaves from my driveway with a broom instead of a hose.
- wash my car with a squeegee in the rain.
- reuse towels instead of washing them after every use.
- only run the dishwasher and washing machine when they're full.
- share these suggestions and my own ideas with others!
- _____.





Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
www.us.tzuchi.org



The 80/20 Lifestyle

Be healthy: Reduce your meal portions to 80%

Be generous: Use your 20% savings to help the poor

Improve your health by reducing meal portions to 80% of your normal consumption. With the 20% you save on food, you can help the needy.



Clearing the Path

Five years after the earthquake, Tzu Chi volunteers continue to put compassion into action in Haiti.



Tzu Chi Volunteers



Excess garbage clogs waterways and worsens flooding. Photo: Mike Tang

After the catastrophic earthquake of January 12, 2010, claimed the lives of a quarter million Haitians and left survivors submerged in rubble and despair, Tzu Chi volunteers wasted no time in reaching a compassionate hand across the Caribbean. Volunteers arrived in the disaster zone after just nine days and initiated a cycle of love that continues to this day.

While volunteers had already delivered relief and supplies to Haiti after hurricanes in 1998, 2004, and 2008, it was the earthquake that forged an even stronger connection. In the months that followed, volunteers held eighty-

four relief distributions that provided nearly two hundred thousand people with food, tents, and supplies, while medical professionals treated more than fifteen thousand patients, and nearly four thousand disaster survivors participated in a series of Food for Work programs in which they received hot meals in exchange for cleaning their own neighborhoods.

Volunteers helped young children get back into classrooms quickly and continue to support their education through tuition assistance, after-school tutoring, and hot meal distributions. Tzu Chi also rebuilt three Port-au-Prince schools for Canada's Congregation of the Sisters of Saint



Anne, which were dedicated in May 2013, and the Carmen Durocher Preschool reopening in 2015.

Locally, volunteers grow, distribute, and educate others about Moringa—an exceptionally nutritious and drought-resistant plant that offers solutions to the malnutrition and deforestation that plague the country. They also carry out home visits, hospital visits, medical outreaches, and hot meal distributions.

All of these projects are only possible due to the hard work of local volunteers inspired to action in the aftermath of the quake. Determined to serve their communities just as they saw compassionate individuals from the United States and other countries doing, participants of Food for Work and other programs joined Tzu Chi as volunteers and have since inspired even more to join the cause.

In fact, their compassion and enthusiasm spread not only throughout the disaster zone of Port-au-Prince, but all the way to Cap-Haïtien on the island's northern coast. When Cap-Haïtien was flooded by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, this new group of volunteers raised funds, assessed damages, and distributed food and daily necessities to more than fifteen hundred local flood victims. They have continued to support the local community ever since, including food distributions, care visits, and flood relief.

In November 2014, Cap-Haïtien was again hit by heavy rains, which killed seventeen people and flooded more than fifteen thousand homes. Determined to help local volunteers address this disaster, an assessment team from the United States arrived in Cap-Haïtien on November 16 and visited the three districts most severely affected by the flooding—Shada, Petite Anse, and Haut Du Cap.

During their assessments, volunteers learned that many local areas were prone to severe flooding two or three times a year, with serious consequences for community health and social stability. Volunteers also discovered that piles of garbage were clogging the waterways, exacerbating the problem. With this discovery, they realized that what was needed was not just disaster relief to soothe the affected and help them get back on their feet, but rather a long-term solution that would unclog waterways by clearing the litter, and thus set the stage for less frequent and less severe future flooding.

Given the recent success of a Cash-for-Relief program in the Philippines, which cleared rubble caused by Typhoon Haiyan in late 2013, Tzu Chi volunteers were eager to introduce the same concept to Cap-Haïtien. The benefits of such a program are myriad. First, the litter gets cleared, improving water flow to defend against flooding. With strength of numbers, it is accomplished quickly. Second, locals receive cash, especially important in a city where the vast majority of residents are unemployed, and where many struggle to find enough food to eat. Third, participants are empowered to make a difference in their community through their own effort, and the whole community becomes closer by working together toward a common goal.

From December 15 through 19, 2014, participants of the Cash-for-Relief project joyfully cleaned the neighborhood of Blue Hills. But this effort is only just the beginning. Volunteers will continue supporting the residents of Cap-Haïtien just as they have in Port-au-Prince, and more is yet to follow throughout 2015 and beyond. 🌱

*For more on Tzu Chi's long-term projects in Haiti, please see Issue 37 (Fall 2013).
For Cash-for-Relief in the Philippines, please see Issue 40 (Summer 2014).*

Fostering Role Models: **Cash-for-Relief Training in Cap-Haitien**

For the ambitious Cash-for-Relief program to work, local volunteers would have to lead by example.

Johan Alwall

In November 2014, Cap-Haïtien in northern Haiti experienced heavy flooding. Worst affected was the low-lying community of Blue Hills. The name is a play on words—for a French speaker, the English word “hills” sounds like “île” (island). The area is not at all hilly, but is instead encircled by a muddy river. When a team from the United States visited the area for disaster assessment, they quickly realized that the reason for the frequent flooding was that the water flow in the river was heavily obstructed by vegetation, and that both river and drainage systems were blocked by enormous amounts of trash.

After just two days, many of the volunteers had already made lasting changes in their personal lives.

Learning about the situation, Dharma Master Cheng Yen reminded the volunteers to take a long-term view of the situation. What is the source of the problem? How can the lives of the people in the community be improved in the long run? What can we do that can bring the community together, teach the residents to care for their own environment, and create a sense of hope in a community where the majority of residents have never had a job and the children face a life no better than that of their parents?

The answer was to be found in Tzu Chi’s recent experience in the Philippines. After



The author leads a volunteer training session. Photo: Mike Tang



Cash-for-Relief participants and volunteer leaders in Tzu Chi vests join hands in solidarity.

Photo: Mike Tang

Typhoon Haiyan struck the island of Leyte and devastated the major city of Tacloban in November 2013, Tzu Chi volunteers followed Master Cheng Yen's instruction and started a Cash-for-Relief program. Participants received a daily allowance of cash relief as they worked to clear the hundreds of thousands of tons of debris that covered the city. At its peak, the program had over thirty thousand participants each day. Together, they cleared the city of debris in less than three weeks.

What this experience showed was the enormous power a community has when its strength is brought together. But how can this be accomplished? In the Philippines, Tzu Chi volunteers inspired this strength through several unconventional methods. First, during every morning registration and afternoon distribution session, volunteers motivated and educated participants through songs, games, prayer, and sharing. Second, while volunteers guided participants throughout the cleanup, they did not oversee or direct the work, thereby empowering the community to take responsibility for its own accomplishments. Third, volunteers strove to act as moral and spiritual role models for the participants. Finally, participants ended each day with cash in their pockets that they could use to purchase food, clothes, and shoes for their children, as well as nails and tools to rebuild their houses.

The success of this approach depended on the local Tzu Chi volunteers. They were the ones that could speak the local language, lead and educate participants during the gatherings, and act as role models during the work. In Cap-

Haitien, the local volunteer team is still relatively new; it was established in 2012. While they have experience conducting local charity work and relief distributions, a Cash-for-Relief program was an entirely new challenge. Therefore, Han Huang, CEO of Tzu Chi USA and the leader of this program, wanted to prepare our local volunteers through a series of training classes. I was blessed with the opportunity to participate in Cash-for-Relief in the Philippines last year, and I have experience holding volunteer training sessions in Haiti in the past. With help from my colleagues in the Spiritual Care and Training Department of Tzu Chi USA we developed a curriculum, and with support from local volunteer leaders we were ready to run the classes.

The focus of these training classes was how to become role models. Not just any role model, but a Bodhisattva role model who embodies Master Cheng Yen's ideals of responsibility, sincerity, and discipline, and even more importantly, gentleness, respect, gratitude, and love. To accomplish all this, we only had three half-day classes, starting on Thursday, December 11. The Cash-for-Relief program was starting the following Monday.

Through presentations, videos of Master Cheng Yen's teaching, interactive exercises, sign-language songs, and plenty of group discussions and sharing sessions, participants delved into the topics of Gratitude, Respect, and Love. Each day, we gave homework to the more than sixty volunteers; we asked them to practice implementing these three concepts into their own lives. The next day, they had the opportunity to share their experiences from the previous afternoon. After just two days, many of the volunteers had already made lasting changes in their personal lives.

One volunteer shared that he was living together with his two cousins, whom he thoroughly disliked. He would always come home late to avoid talking to them, and if he met them by chance, he would never greet

them. After two days of volunteer training, he made a decision. He went home early, greeted his cousins, and asked them to sit down together. He shared with them that this was not the right way for a family to interact. His sincerity convinced his cousins, and they all forgave each other for past grievances. The next morning, the volunteer was sick with asthma, and his cousin brought him medicine. This had never happened before.

Another volunteer shared that she had been angry with a fellow volunteer for gossiping about her behind her back. She had already decided to take revenge by saying bad things about the other volunteer, but after the training she realized that this wouldn't make anything better. Instead, they talked it over and made peace.

To wrap up the training, participants were asked to think of problematic situations that could potentially occur during the Cash-for-Relief program and suggest how these situations could be resolved with gratitude, respect, and

kindness. They were then to present the situations and their resolutions as skits. The skits all explored important lessons and demonstrated that the participants had deeply understood the concept of solving conflicts using love and kindness. In one of the skits, participants stopped working because they saw other participants slacking off. In another, local residents became upset because they also needed jobs but were not included in the program. In each case, the situation was solved through calmly, gently, and respectfully explaining the purpose and spirit of the program, emphasizing that it was not a job, but a relief project that would benefit the whole community.

At the end of the final class, everyone was very excited to participate in and lead the Cash-for-Relief program as role models. I believe that the ultimate success of Cash-for-Relief is in large part due to the wonderful example set by our local volunteers, and I am confident that its benefits will not end there. 🌱



*Training participants sign "love" in the song "One Family."
Photo: Mike Tang*

We only have room for gratitude in our heart, not grievances.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



Touched by Hymns and Gangsters

Sometimes help comes from where you least expect it.

Martin Kuo | Translated by Mei-li Hamilton

When Dharma Master Cheng Yen saw photographs of severe flooding in Haiti and realized the suffering of the affected people, she called on Tzu Chi USA volunteers to launch an international disaster relief effort.

As experienced disaster relief volunteers, George Chang and I were sent to Cap-Haïtien in mid-November to survey the disaster area, but we were surprised to find that nothing looked wrong. The main streets were crowded, and everything seemed to be back to normal. Only a few small alleys showed any signs of the flooding. When we saw garbage in the streets, though, we realized that the streets had flooded because they were clogged with garbage.

As soon as we finished the survey, George and I flew to Hualien to report our findings to Master. We told her that we thought the mission should not be classified as disaster relief, but rather alleviating poverty. Because poverty is so widespread in Haiti, we and the local volunteers worried that a disaster relief effort would not truly address the underlying problem.

However, Master Cheng Yen insisted that we follow the disaster relief model of a large-scale distribution and Cash-for-Relief program.

We wondered why she insisted on this course of action, thinking that perhaps she was testing whether the U.S. team was capable of executing such a

major disaster relief effort.

We returned to Haiti in December to make arrangements and organize the work, food, and financing for the people who would participate in the project. We had so many things to do and so many obstacles to overcome that we didn't even have time to feel sad for all the people living with garbage and filthy water everywhere. Instead, we were only focused on how we could help them.

I asked the others, "Why can't we cry any more after so many disaster relief missions? Have we become numb, unable to be touched? Or is it that we've learned that efficiently bringing Master's compassion to disaster survivors is a much better way of helping them?"

Why can't we cry any more after so many disaster relief missions? Have we become numb, unable to be touched?



*Locals work through the night to prepare the distribution.
Photo: Mike Tang*

In the disaster area, we worked closely with Father Valon, a local Catholic priest. In Father Valon's parish, only 5 percent of the people are employed. In Cash-for-Relief, we offered people about eight U.S. dollars per day, and they in turn cleared garbage to improve the local drainage situation. At the end of each day, they all came back to the church to receive their cash. Tzu Chi volunteers greeted them and thanked them for their work, and Father Valon led prayers.

After the last day of the project, Tzu Chi volunteers faced the crowd at the front of the sanctuary, as usual. Father Valon surprised us by asking everyone to stand up, raise their hands, and sing hymns to show their gratitude to the volunteers. He held out his hands and asked everyone to pray for us. Over six hundred people joined in; their voices filled the church.

I shed tears for the first time in a long time, and others on the team also wept. Living in such a wealthy country as the United States, how much money will truly satisfy us? This eight dollars was a tiny amount of money, but these people thanked us with sincere gratitude. Who am I? If not for Master's love, how could I have had the chance to embrace these suffering people? And how could I have had the opportunity to receive their gratitude? We cried as we heard these beautiful hymns in a country which has been abandoned by so many, yet is still in such need of love.

After Cash-for-Relief was completed, we planned a distribution for residents of the Shada area on December 22, 2014. This turned out to be a great test of our capabilities. We chose a soccer stadium in Cap-Haïtien as the site, because we needed space for a thousand people, but Cap-Haïtien Mayor Yvon Alton was shocked when he heard our plan, because the stadium is in the most dangerous part of the city—an area full of gangs. We asked him to supply police protection for the event, and he understood that we were sincere.

In the early evening of December 21, five cargo containers arrived at the football stadium for the distribution. Our original plan was to drive the containers into the stadium



*Father Valon addresses Cash-for-Relief participants in the church sanctuary.
Photo: Mike Tang*

and unload them there the next day. But when the containers arrived, we discovered that they were too tall to enter through the stadium's low entryway. We first had to unload the containers and carry all the materials into the stadium, and this job would require a lot of effort.

Although we were supported by sixty local volunteers, most of them were unfamiliar with the kind of hard manual labor required for this task. At the same time, there were about eighty people just standing around watching us, and they seemed to be precisely the kind of people we had been warned about. So we changed our plan and asked the mayor to help us hire them to help for twelve dollars per person.

Most of them were young and strong, so they worked quickly, but they suddenly stopped midway through the job and said that twelve dollars was not enough. We agreed to give each person a package of rice in addition to their pay, and they continued. After unloading another container, they again demanded more. After three strikes and three negotiations, we finally agreed to give each person a package each of rice, corn, and red beans.

By four in the morning, four and a half containers had been unloaded, but then there was another problem. Although ninety-one people had signed up to work, dozens of additional people now came up and claimed that they had just been too busy to sign the sheet. George and I decided to distribute food to all of them. After all, our purpose was to help the Haitian people, and they were all Haitians. The mayor seemed very impressed with this flexible response.

We began distributing to the 150 people who helped us unload the containers, but after just a few people had received their portions, those at the back of the crowd started rushing forward to get their food. The situation was out of control yet again. We told them that there was enough for everyone to get a share, and everyone eventually calmed down.

By half past four, they had all received their goods and left. At that point, there were already more than a thousand people waiting outside for the distribution to begin. We had originally planned to start at seven, but the mayor suggested that we let one or two hundred people in immediately, otherwise the crowd would just keep getting bigger and may grow restless.

I have participated in dozens of disaster relief distributions, but this was the first one that started at four thirty in the morning. It was not at all what I expected, but it worked.

It had never occurred to me that the people we most feared would be the ones who helped us complete this mission. When George and I saw the crowd gathered outside the stadium at four in the morning, we looked at each other and thanked the Buddha. We could not have unloaded all the material in time on our own. The mayor was concerned that local gangs would bring us trouble, but instead they helped us and earned their food. They went home to a well-earned rest after a full night of hard work.

When we treat people with sincerity and affection, we can transform violence into peace. One person told us, "My family always complains about me, a strong, healthy man with no job. But today I finally can put three packages of food on the table and tell my wife and children that I earned two months' worth of food through my hard work."

Since we motivated people to work instead of simply handing them food, thousands of people earned a sense of accomplishment and gained a familiarity with Tzu Chi. The seeds of kindness have been spread far and wide—to the people at the stadium and in Shada, to the mayor, to the police officers, and even to the gang members. We finally understood Dharma Master Cheng Yen's wisdom in insisting on a large-scale distribution. 🌱



Everyone has a Buddha-nature and a Bodhisattva's strength and spirit.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Tzu Chi volunteers are active in fifty countries and regions worldwide, and have delivered relief in more than eighty countries across the globe. With Tzu Chi volunteers widely spread across every continent and time zone, there is always a volunteer somewhere serving with respect, gratitude, and love.



◀ Tzu Chi volunteers in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, held a scholarship award ceremony and year-end relief distribution on January 4, 2015, to help local children receive an education. Photo: Huansheng Hu



▲ Two major earthquakes in Northern Italy in May 2012 caused great destruction locally, but also sparked a deep affinity between locals and Tzu Chi volunteers from Germany, who have been visiting and supporting the region ever since. On November 15, 2014, volunteers donated a wheelchair-friendly vehicle so that the town of Finale Emilia can better serve residents with reduced mobility. Photo: Mingzhu Wang



Malaysia was hit in December 2014 by its worst flooding in decades. More than one hundred thousand people were displaced and countless homes were destroyed. Tzu Chi volunteers responded with a Cash-for-Relief project in Kuala Krau, inspiring survivors to clean their hometown while providing them with relief cash. Here, participants gather at the end of a long day on January 4, 2015. Photo: Qingping Hong

Heavy rains last fall led to severe flooding in low-lying areas of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. On November 23, 2014, local Tzu Chi volunteers traveled to Chroy Changvar—one of the hardest hit districts—and provided emergency cash to affected families. Photo: Yurong Du



Ever since Tzu Chi volunteers provided flood relief to Ipswich, Australia, in 2011, Tzu Chi's connections with the city have continually grown stronger. Here, an emergency aid worker returns a bamboo bank full of lovingly deposited coins on December 7, 2014. Photo Peiyi Qiu



▲ In Hong Kong, Tzu Chi volunteers and the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council jointly held a community health event on November 30, 2014, to conduct medical check-ups for local community members. Photo: Jiaqian Tan





◀ On December 20, 2014, Lesotho Tzu Chi volunteers distributed rice to impoverished residents of Ladybrand, just across the border in South Africa. Photo: Meijuan Chen

▶ Tzu Chi volunteers in Jordan continue to provide care and support for Syrian refugees—some of the millions who have fled civil war, terrorism, and instability in their homeland. On December 2, 2014, volunteers visited a refugee center in Amman and distributed emergency cash and supplies. Photo: Qihua Chen



Before attending Pope Francis's outdoor Mass in Tacloban, Philippines—site of Typhoon Haiyan's most severe damage and Tzu Chi's Cash-for-Relief program—Tzu Chi volunteers first visited Archbishop John Du on January 15, 2015. The Archbishop thanked Tzu Chi for reaching across religious lines to help the Philippines, and Tzu Chi spokesperson Rey-Sheng Her presented him a Jing Si pottery lamp as a token of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's gratitude and blessing. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Philippines



▲
On December 5-6, 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers held a medical outreach in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on the island of Sumatra. Throughout the two-day event, volunteers provided much needed medical services for locals usually unable to access them. Photo: Riana Astuti

On December 7, 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers held a relief distribution for residents of Itapevi, a municipality of São Paulo, Brazil. Photo: Qiuqin Zeng



2014 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi and his wife visited Tzu Chi Global Headquarters in Hualien on January 17, 2015. Here, he poses with students of Tzu Chi College of Technology after encouraging them to change the world with love. Photo: Junqi Wang

Prevention and Treatment of Common Eye Disorders



Dr. Lina Lin, O.D., practices primary care optometry in Los Angeles and is a Tzu Chi volunteer and staff member.

Dr. Lina Lin, O.D.

Eighty percent of what we do every day is guided by our vision. If we have problems with our distance vision, it is hard to drive at night, and we feel like something is “off.” Some people even get dizzy or have headaches. When we have blurry near vision or tired, dry, watery eyes, we avoid reading. Therefore, it is extremely important that we know how to protect and care for our eyes so that they can age well with the rest of our body. This article will discuss a few common eye problems and their prevention and treatment.

It is extremely important that we know how to protect and care for our eyes so that they can age well with the rest of our body.

Farsightedness (hyperopia) is when distant objects are seen clearly, but closer ones appear blurry. Farsightedness occurs if your eyeball is too short or the cornea has too little curvature, so that light

entering your eye does not focus correctly. Depending on the eye’s focusing ability, sometimes people cannot see clearly either far or near. Symptoms may include eye strain, aching in or around the eyes, and a burning sensation.

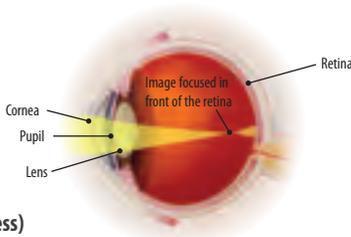
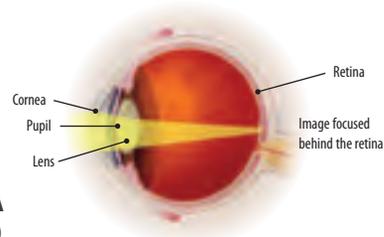
BLURRY VISION

There are several common causes for blurry vision:

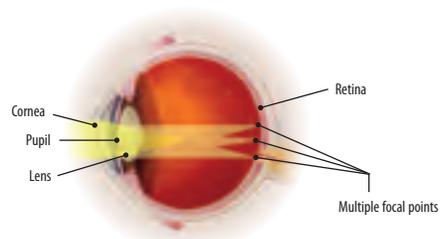
Nearsightedness (myopia) is when closer objects are seen clearly, but those farther away appear blurry. Nearsightedness occurs when the eyeball is too long or the cornea—the clear front cover of the eye—has too much curvature. As a result, the light entering the eye is not focused correctly and distant objects look blurred. People suffering from nearsightedness may need to squint or move closer to see things more clearly.

HYPEROPIA (farsightedness)

Astigmatism is when the curvature of the cornea or the lens inside the eye is not round. An irregularly shaped cornea or lens prevents light from focusing properly on the retina, the light sensitive surface at the back of the eye. As a result, vision becomes blurred at any distance. Eye strain, tilting the head toward one side or the other, squinting, blurry vision, and headaches are common signs and symptoms.



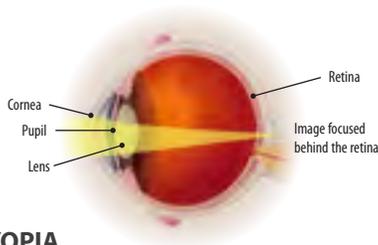
MYOPIA (nearsightedness)



ASTIGMATISM

All images courtesy of the National Eye Institute, NIH.

Presbyopia is a natural aging process, usually beginning around the age of forty, in which our eyes lose their ability to focus up close. When we notice that we need to hold things further from our eyes to read them better or have more difficulty seeing in dim light, this is how we know we might have presbyopia. People with nearsightedness who develop presbyopia can often remove their glasses to read better.



PRESBYOPIA

Usually these conditions are hereditary. Sometimes they can worsen over time. Several factors may help prevent these conditions and keep your prescription stable:

- Good posture when reading up close.
- Frequent breaks for your eyes.
- Good lighting, especially while reading.

Treatment of blurry vision requires a comprehensive eye exam. Optometrists can provide prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses that correct these vision problems by altering the way light enters your eyes.

Another option for treating astigmatism or nearsightedness uses a corneal modification procedure called orthokeratology (ortho-k). It is a painless, non-invasive procedure that involves wearing a series of specially designed rigid gas permeable contact lenses to gradually reshape the curvature of the cornea. The lenses are worn overnight while the prescription decreases gradually. Ortho-k is a method to consider, especially when nearsightedness in a growing child increases dramatically or when someone with a lower prescription wants to avoid wearing glasses or contacts.

Laser surgery is also a possible treatment option for some types of astigmatism and nearsightedness. Laser surgery changes the shape of the cornea by removing a small

amount of eye tissue. This is done using a highly focused laser beam on the surface of the eye. Good candidates for laser surgery are adults in their mid-twenties who have had a stable prescription for at least one year. Anyone interested in laser surgery should talk with an optometrist or surgeon to learn about available options and qualifications.

COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME (CVS)

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS)—which can cause headache, eye strain, blurry vision, dry eyes, and neck and shoulder pain—is caused by prolonged computer use. Its symptoms may be caused by poor lighting, glare on the monitor, uncorrected vision problems, poor posture, or a combination of these factors. CVS can be diagnosed with a proper eye exam. As proper computer viewing distance is different from reading distance, an improper viewing angle or distance can also contribute to CVS.

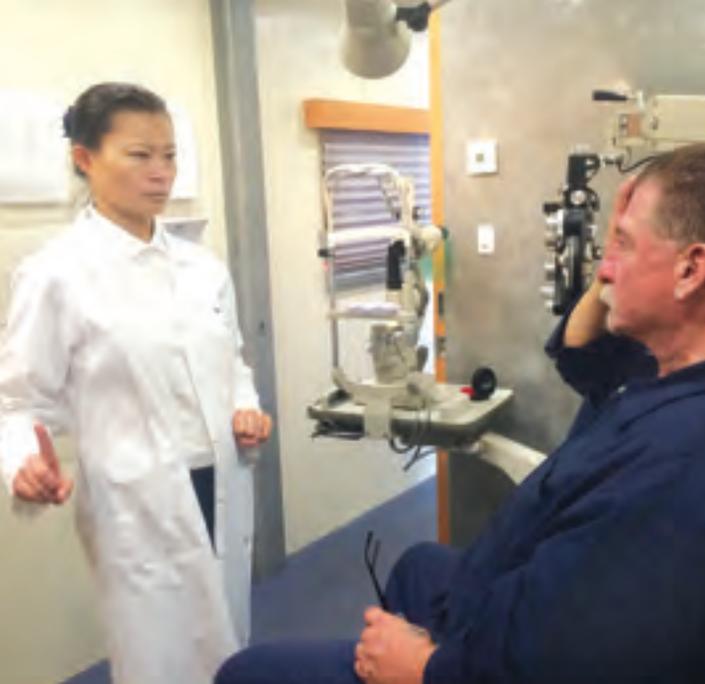
In addition, uncorrected nearsightedness, farsightedness, or presbyopia may cause eye strain. Sometimes a separate pair of computer glasses in addition to regular glasses or contacts will help relieve symptoms. Some people may also need visual training and eye exercises to improve eye focusing ability and eye muscle movements.

Several key factors affect CVS symptoms:

- **Location of computer screen:** Most people find it more comfortable to view a computer when their eyes are looking downward. Optimally, the center of the computer screen should be fifteen to twenty degrees (four or five inches) below eye level and about two feet away from the eyes.

- **Reference materials:** Any reference materials should be located above the keyboard and below the monitor, so that you do not have to move your head to shift between the document and the screen. This can help reduce neck strain. If this is not possible, a document holder can be set beside the monitor.

- **Lighting:** Position the computer screen to avoid glare, particularly from overhead



The author treats a patient at Tzu Chi's optometry clinic. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Medical Foundation

lighting or windows. Use blinds or drapes on windows and replace the light bulbs in desk lamps with bulbs of lower wattage.

- **Anti-glare screens:** If there is no way to minimize glare from light sources, consider using an anti-glare filter. These filters decrease the amount of light reflected from the screen.

- **Seating position:** Your chair should be comfortably padded and conform to your body. Chair height should be adjusted so that your feet rest flat on the floor. If your chair has arms, they should be adjusted to provide arm support, so that your wrists do not rest on the keyboard.

- **Rest breaks:** To prevent eyestrain, take frequent breaks when using the computer for long periods. A good rule to remember is 20/20/20. For every 20 minutes of computer use, try to look away for 20 seconds at something 20

feet away. In addition, try to take a fifteen minute break after every two hours of computer use.

- **Blinking:** To minimize your chances of developing dry eyes when using a computer, make an effort to blink frequently. Blinking keeps the front surface of your eyes moist.

Proper viewing habits can help to prevent or reduce the development of CVS and halt or slow any prescription changes.

With routine eye exams conducted by an optometrist or ophthalmologist, problems can be detected and treated. Children should have at least one comprehensive eye exam before age three with an eye doctor, not a pediatrician. The eye doctor can check if children are using both of their eyes properly, see if they need glasses, and test for eye diseases, such as eye cancer and hereditary eye diseases. Ideally, school-aged children should have their eyes checked annually, since they read a lot and use electronic devices that can affect their vision. Adults not wearing contacts should have their eyes checked at least every two years, unless there is a condition that needs to be watched more closely.

Eye exams can detect vision problems early, and proper viewing habits can relieve some strain and blurriness associated with daily use of our eyes. Comfortable and clear vision can increase efficiency when we learn, work, and carry on our daily lives. 🌱

Disclaimer: *The information above is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician, physical therapist, or other qualified health provider prior to starting any new treatment.*



We must cherish and care for ourselves as well as our planet.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Nurturing the Seeds of Tomorrow

More than just a Chinese school, Tzu Chi Academy nurtures children's character and compassion.

Debbie Lin

Los Angeles Tzu Chi Academy began as Tzu Chi Youth Group, a group designed to serve volunteers' children in the early days of Tzu Chi USA. Beginning with six or seven students, the group quickly expanded to thirty or forty. The program began offering Chinese classes to give students the opportunity to learn their mother tongue as well as traditional Chinese culture and ethics. Later, art classes were also started to provide the children with opportunities for more well-rounded learning. As the number of students and classes steadily rose, the nation's first Tzu Chi Academy was officially established in April 1994, and classes began that September. Today, it has grown to more than five hundred students.

Similar to many other Chinese schools, Tzu Chi Academy uses materials prepared by the Overseas Community Affairs Council and teaches traditional Chinese characters and

phonetic symbols. Teachers have always taken extra special care in developing the teaching methods, content, and approach for Tzu Chi Academy. They employ many books published by Tzu Chi Global Headquarters that emphasize character development and positive values in order to nurture schoolchildren with Tzu Chi's humanistic spirit of Great Love.

As of 2015, there are now twenty-three Tzu Chi Academies nationwide: Cupertino, Irvine, Monrovia, San Dimas, San Francisco, San Jose, San Mateo, and Tri-Valley in California; Miami, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; Honolulu, Hawaii; Chicago, Illinois; Boston, Massachusetts; Bethesda, Maryland; Holmdel and Cedar Grove, New Jersey; Las Vegas, Nevada; Flushing and Long Island, New York; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Houston and Dallas, Texas; and Seattle,



Photo: Alex Feng

Photo: Kevin Kao

Students learn to show respect to their elders, such as by serving them tea. Photo provided by Tzu Chi Education Foundation



Washington. In addition, there are Junior Academies in Phoenix, Arizona; Columbus, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; and Austin, Texas. From a single location in 1994, Tzu Chi Academy has now expanded to more than five thousand students and five hundred teachers nationwide.

In addition to Chinese classes, various extracurricular courses have been added so that students can learn art, calligraphy, Chinese knotting, painting, dance, sign language, vegetarian cooking, flower arrangement, and other talents, and thus carry many traditions of Chinese culture into the next generation. Schools periodically organize various talent competitions, such as drawing cartoons based on Jing Si Aphorisms, delivering speeches, and so on, to stimulate the students' interest in learning Chinese. Developing these skills will help the children in their future endeavors and help them stand out in their communities.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Jing Si Aphorisms are taught in Tzu Chi Academies to provide life philosophy and inspirational life stories to motivate children to grow as people and incorporate all the values they learn into their daily lives. In addition, students have a chance to carry out the principles and values they learn by participating alongside their parents in caring for the elderly, visiting nursing homes, street fundraising, serving food to the homeless, park and beach litter cleanups, and other charity events.

By combining language learning, character development, community service, and cultural activities, Tzu Chi Academy has become a one-of-a-kind educational system that helps children grow into people who are compassionate, responsible, well-rounded, and respectful of both other people and the planet. 🌱



Students and teachers celebrate Tzu Chi Academy's twentieth anniversary in 2014. Photo: Kevin Kao



Parents provide the mold and teachers provide the model; through each of their actions they teach children the right view of life.

Transforming Karmic Connections

Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Translated by the Dharma as Water Editorial Team

When we learn the Buddha's Way, we must have a clear goal. Every day and every moment, we head toward this goal, never turning away from this path. The road that we walk and the things that we must do are inseparable from our interactions with other people. So, walking the Bodhisattva-path among people is the true spirit of learning the Buddha's Way.

We normally think, "The people that I should help are those I have good karmic connections with." Of course, the Buddha also said, "Buddhas transform those They have good karmic connections with." But if we do not have good karmic connections with people, does that mean we shouldn't help them? Not at all. If we have negative karmic connections with them, then we must find a way to draw near them and create good karmic connections with them, thus transforming their animosity toward us into gratitude.

This is not impossible. A very long time ago, there was an elderly monk who one day left his temple to go into the city. By the time he was ready to make his way home, it was nearly dark. As he left the outer gates of the city, the sky suddenly filled with the sound of thunder and a flash of lightning. A heavy rain began to fall.

Through the pouring rain, the monk spotted a house in the distance. With a sense of relief, he made his way to the front door. Standing beneath the eaves, he knocked on the door and called out in a loud voice, "It is raining very hard. I am a monk far from home; would you be so kind as to allow me to take

shelter in your home for the night?"

This door opened slightly to reveal a servant standing in the lit doorway. "Old man, you should leave here quickly. The master of this house is not fond of the Sangha. He often says that he does not care for monks or spiritual practitioners, so I am sure that he will not offer you shelter."

Looking over his shoulder, the old monk could see that the rain had begun falling even harder, so he implored the doorkeeper to go back inside and ask for his master's consent. After a long time, the servant returned and, in a stern voice, said, "I am sorry. I spoke to my master, but he absolutely refuses. He instructed me to tell you that you must leave right away."

Disheartened, the old monk was at a loss for what to do next. As he could come up with no other solution, he asked, "Would it be alright, then, if I just stand here beneath the eaves until the rain has let up?"

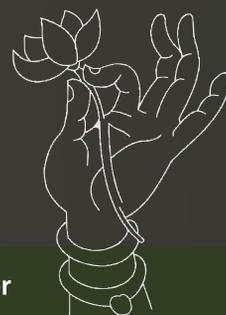
The servant replied, "It's best that you do not. My master feels negatively toward the Sangha and wants nothing whatsoever to do with any of the Buddha's disciples. Please just continue on your way."

Since even huddling under the eaves had been refused to him, the monk had no choice but to continue on. He walked through the pouring rain until he finally arrived back at his temple in the middle of the night.

Three years later, the master of that grand house took a new concubine. He adored her greatly and would do anything for her. This new concubine was very kind and made a

Each time we forgive others,
we are, in fact, sowing blessings.
The bigger our heart,
the more blessings we enjoy.

Jing Si Aphorism by *Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



Storytelling by the Master

practice of paying her respects to the Buddha regularly. So one day, at her insistence, the master of the house accompanied her to the temple.

As the concubine began her devotional practice, the man wandered around the temple looking at all there was to see. Suddenly, he stopped in his tracks, shocked to see his name written on a plaque on top of the altar honoring great benefactors. This was usually done so that the monks would regularly pray for their good health and wellbeing. He asked a young monk, who was sweeping the floor nearby, why that particular name was on an altar honoring great benefactors.

The monk said, "All I know is that three years ago, my master came back in the middle of the night, soaking wet from the rain. I heard him say that he had encountered a person who treated him poorly because they lacked a good karmic connection. After he said that, he put this plaque on the altar here, and every day, he prays to the Buddha for their negative karmic connection to be turned into a positive one."

Hearing this, the man immediately felt very remorseful. Bowing his head, he said, "Three years ago, during a terrible storm, my servant came to me and told me that an elderly monk was outside in the rain and would like to take shelter at my house. How could I have felt such an aversion toward monks that I did not even allow this? Not only did this monk not harbor a grudge toward me, he even put my name on the altar with those of great benefactors and has prayed for my good health and well-being since that day."

The more he thought about this, the more remorseful and repentant he felt. From that day on, the man became a great benefactor of the temple and its spiritual practitioners.

We often say that we must form good karmic connections with others as we walk the Bodhisattva-path. To do this, we should show compassion to all equally. Toward those who have helped us, we should be grateful; toward those who were unwilling to help us, we should also be respectful. We must love all sentient beings equally. In this way, we can show compassion to all equally.

Because the two had a negative karmic connection, the elderly monk was determined to dissolve that negative karmic connection and create a positive one. In doing so, he is a role model for us.

Although this is only a story, this is the type of mindset that we spiritual practitioners must have.

So, let us walk the Bodhi-path with gentleness and sincerity. To learn to do this, we must go among people with compassion and treat everyone equally. May we all spend our time doing good deeds, benefiting others, and forming good karmic connections. In this way, the people we interact with will become our spiritual family when we attain Buddhahood in the future. Therefore, we must always be mindful. 🍀

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Vietnamese Spring Roll

Recipe provided by Vegetarian Cooking Team / Tzu Chi University Continuing Education Center
Instructor: Jimmy Chiu

Ingredients

Vietnamese rice paper (22 cm.)
Vietnamese rice paper (16 cm.)
Vietnamese vermicelli
Cucumber
Carrot
Radish
Jicama
Braised tofu
Romaine lettuce

Hoisin Sauce

2 tbsp Vegetarian Hoisin Sauce
1 tbsp Water
1 tsp Sesame Oil
1 tsp sugar

Sweet & Sour Sauce

1 tbsp Lemon Juice
1/2 tsp Sugar
1/2 tsp Chili Paste

*A vegetarian diet is not only good for our health,
but also good for the earth.*

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Directions

1. Cook vermicelli in boiling water for about 5 minutes. Let soak for 3 minutes, then run under cold water. Set aside.
2. Slice the cucumber, radish, carrot, tofu, and jicama.
3. Wash lettuce and set aside.
4. Prepare warm water in a wide container.
5. Place a large sheet of rice paper atop the water for 2-3 seconds. Repeat with a small sheet, then place the small paper flat on the center of the large sheet.
6. Place lettuce on the wrapper, then add the rest of the ingredients.
7. Wrap like a burrito. Cut in half and serve.



Ninety Years of Tzu Chi's Home

After nine decades and several tenants, this historic property continues to serve the community.

Colin Legerton

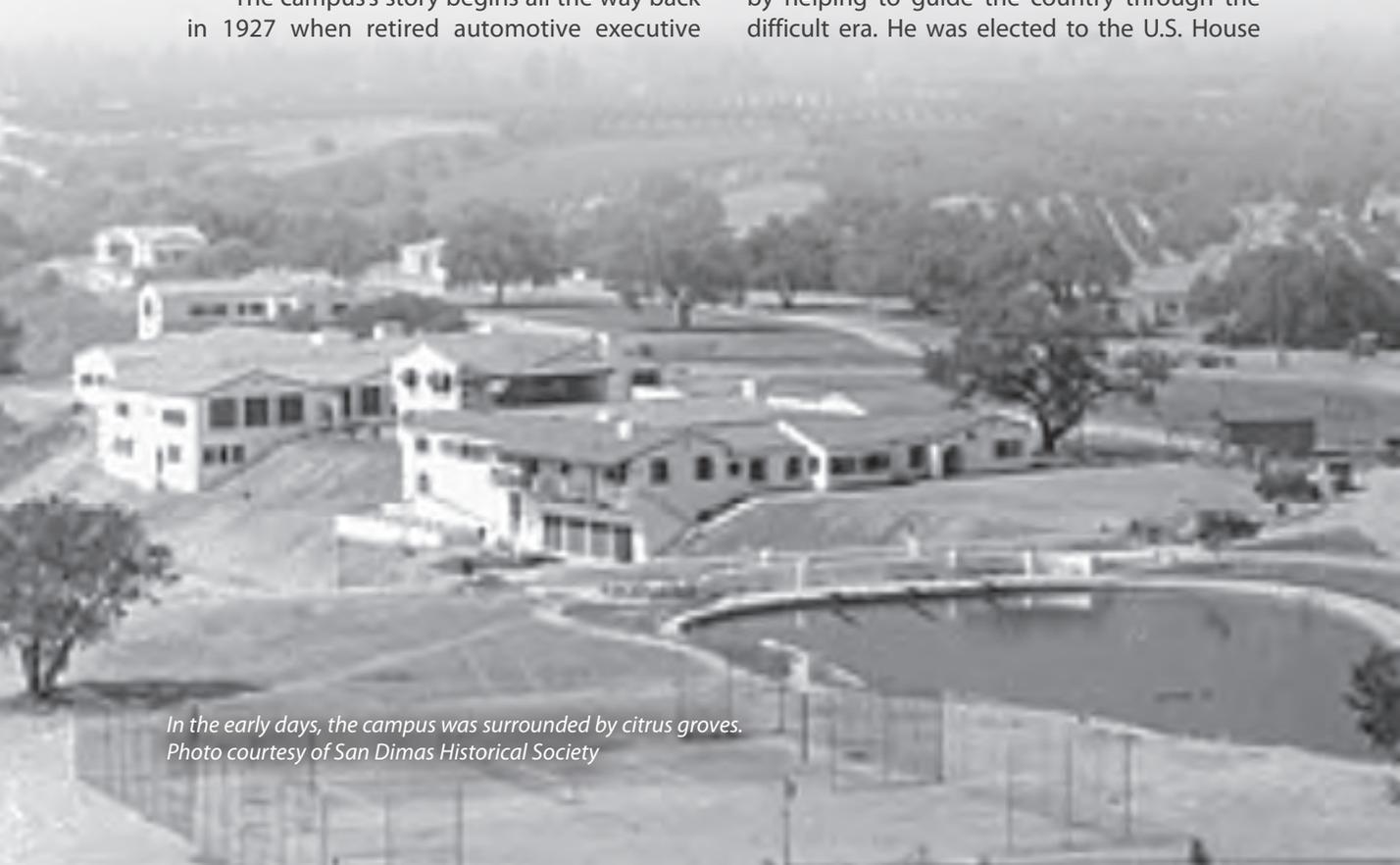
Though Tzu Chi volunteers are widely spread throughout the United States, they all belong to the same Tzu Chi family. Just as all Tzu Chi volunteers worldwide share a spiritual home in Hualien's Jing Si Abode, so too do volunteers in the United States share a home at Tzu Chi USA Headquarters in San Dimas, California. This beautiful location—an idyllic hilltop campus tucked behind enchanting Walnut Creek Park—holds a special place not only in the hearts of Tzu Chi volunteers, but also on the pages of California history.

The campus's story begins all the way back in 1927 when retired automotive executive

Charles B. Voorhis purchased over one hundred acres of land on the site and established the Voorhis School for Boys. His goal was to provide homeless and orphaned boys with an elementary education, Christian moral direction, and hands-on experience in carpentry, automotive repair, printing, farming, and more. His son, Jerry, served as the school's first headmaster and compassionate father figure to all of its underprivileged students.

Jerry Voorhis led the school for its first eight years, but in the midst of the Great Depression, he felt called to serve the wider community by helping to guide the country through the difficult era. He was elected to the U.S. House

The spirit of the Voorhis School carries on as well, in the way that Tzu Chi volunteers strive every day to provide love, care, and opportunities for the underprivileged.



*In the early days, the campus was surrounded by citrus groves.
Photo courtesy of San Dimas Historical Society*

of Representatives in 1936 and served for a decade, before losing the 1946 election to future president Richard Nixon. Following in the footsteps of their mentor, many of the boys Jerry taught and nurtured also went on to serve and make a difference in many communities, with future judges, professors, engineers, mayors, union organizers, professionals, and humanitarians among the school's alumni.

Though the Voorhis School for Boys operated for only one decade before economic problems caused it to close in 1938, the Mission-style buildings that still characterize the campus remain as its legacy, as does the massive swimming pool which once served as a training facility for the 1932 Summer Olympics held in nearby Los Angeles. The spirit of the Voorhis School carries on as well, in the way that Tzu Chi volunteers strive every day to provide love, care, and opportunities for the underprivileged, both in the surrounding community and all throughout the country, just as Jerry Voorhis did so many years ago.

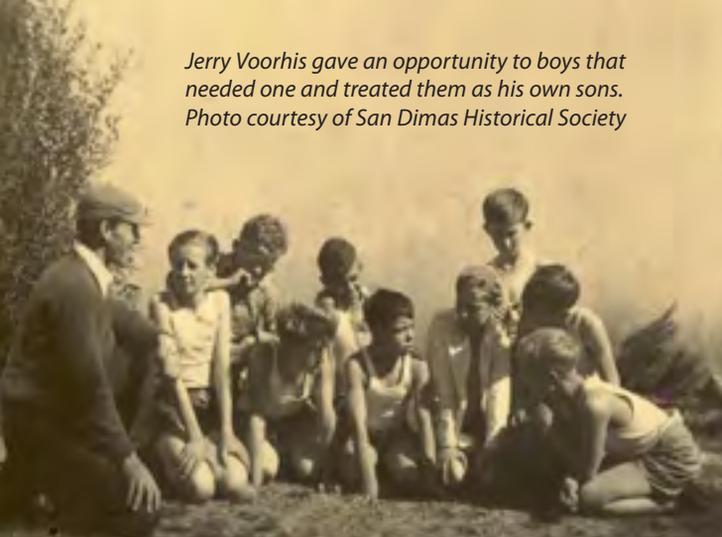
After the Voorhis School closed down, its campus was donated to the State of California and transformed into the southern unit of California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), based in San Luis Obispo, two hundred miles north on the Central Coast. This new satellite campus was tasked with the university's entire horticulture program as well as several other agricultural subjects.



- 1927 Voorhis School for Boys
- 1938 California State Polytechnic University
- 1972 Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College
- 1998 Los Angeles International Church of Christ
- 2004 Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



*Jerry Voorhis gave an opportunity to boys that needed one and treated them as his own sons.
Photo courtesy of San Dimas Historical Society*



The new Voorhis Unit of Cal Poly opened in September 1938, with just eighty students and five faculty. It soon faced its own hardship. As many of the students were drafted to serve overseas in World War II, the campus was forced to close in 1943, but it reopened after the war, in 1946, with more than two hundred students. As the student population rapidly doubled in the years that followed, Cal Poly relocated over the hill in 1957 to the old Kellogg Ranch in Pomona, where it remains to this day.

Even after Cal Poly moved to its new home in Pomona, the Voorhis Unit continued to serve as student housing until 1960 and as a conference facility and continuing education center through 1971. It was in this period that the campus gained its greatest popular fame, as Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor—the biggest movie stars of the day—filmed portions of *The Sandpiper* on campus in 1964.

With Cal Poly fully transferred to Pomona, a new tenant soon moved in. Just five years after opening their doors in Orange to three dozen students in 1967, Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College (PCBBC) took over the more spacious facility atop Walnut Creek Park in 1972 to meet the needs of a rapidly growing student population. Enrollment peaked in the late 1970s with roughly five hundred students training to lead congregations throughout the western United States.

In 1998, PCBBC moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where it was renamed Heartland

Baptist Bible College. Following PCBBC's departure, the campus served Los Angeles International Church of Christ for a few short years, until Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation moved in on October 28, 2004.

Registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization since 1985, Tzu Chi had opened its first official United States office in Alhambra, California, on December 9, 1989. Soon, the organization was growing so quickly that the small office was no longer sufficient, and its headquarters relocated across town to Monrovia on October 27, 1991. Thirteen years later, it settled on the historic San Dimas campus.

These first two Southern California homes still remain in the Tzu Chi family. The Alhambra facility was converted into Buddhist Tzu Chi Free Clinic on November 1, 1993; it became Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Center precisely two decades later on November 1, 2013. Every day, it continues to treat those in need in the community with affordable and accessible medical services. The second facility, in Monrovia, reopened as the first Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool and Kindergarten on September 1, 2006. Like the Voorhis school founded eight decades earlier, the school helps bring about a brighter future by teaching young students—not only expanding their minds, but also nurturing their spirits and developing their character.

Tzu Chi's approach to the local landmark it calls home has always been to respect its history by maintaining its architectural identity while adding flourishes of Tzu Chi character and environmentally friendly improvements, such as introducing a community recycling center and conserving precious water by draining the pool and replacing wide swaths of grass with artificial turf.

Today, more than a decade into Tzu Chi's stewardship, this historic campus remains a reminder of days past, as it also provides a spiritual home for U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers, an educational facility for the community, and a warm welcome center for neighbors and friends. 🌱



Be grateful for the past, look forward to the future,
take advantage of the present.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



-  TZU CHI OFFICE
-  MEDICAL CLINIC
-  TZU CHI ACADEMY
-  JING SI BOOKSTORE



With offices, clinics, schools, academies, and bookstores spread across twenty-seven states, Tzu Chi volunteers serve their local communities each and every day. When their neighbors are in need—whether in the next town, state, or country over—they reach out with love and compassion to relieve their suffering.



▲ On November 9, 2014, Northern California volunteers distributed jackets, sleeping bags, and backpacks full of daily necessities to more than two hundred homeless individuals. The distribution, held at Horace Mann Elementary in San Jose, served to bring a warmer winter. Photo: Amy Young



▲ In Orange, New Jersey, two apartment building fires in November 2014 left many families without anywhere to turn. On November 14, Tzu Chi volunteers distributed daily life necessities to help these families pass through the difficult time more comfortably. Here, a volunteer shares the Bamboo Bank Era story with recipients. Photo: Stan Kao



◀ Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and Molina Medical jointly held the third annual Care 4 a Healthy I.E. on November 15-16, 2014, to serve low-income and uninsured residents of California's vast Inland Empire with two full days of free medical services. Here, volunteers introduce the spirit of Tzu Chi. Photo: Fon Yuen Lin

Tzu Chi volunteers again participated in decorating the Donate Life Rose Parade float, this year themed "The Never-Ending Story." The float, coordinated by organ recovery organization OneLegacy, featured portraits honoring seventy-two deceased organ donors, including late New York Tzu Chi volunteer Sandy Lo, known to many as "Luo Mama." (See Issue 34 for her story.) Photo: Sherry Ku



◀ Recently, volunteers in many areas have been actively reaching out to local residents and business owners to introduce Tzu Chi and its community services. On November 30, 2014, volunteers visited the Little India district of Artesia, California, to share Tzu Chi's philosophy of Great Love and encourage more people to do good deeds. Photo: Emerald Hsu

▶ Braving the cold and wind, volunteers and Tzu Shao went out on the streets of New York to promote Tzu Chi Good Health Day on November 2, 2014—an event in which medical professionals provided medical services and consultations to the community. Two weeks later, they were out again, inviting community members to a blood donation drive held jointly with New York Blood Center. Photo: Fang Yuan Chou





◀ *Volunteers and Tzu Chi Academy students visited elderly residents of Golden Living Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on December 20, 2014, to celebrate a joyful and festive early Christmas together. Photo: Zhaohua Chen*

▶ *On December 13, 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers in Seattle, Washington, accepted an invitation to participate in the city's annual Celebrate Kids! activity and bring a warm Christmas to children of incarcerated parents. Here, volunteers paint eager young attendees' faces. Photo: Xinhua Wen*



In Greensboro, North Carolina, Tzu Chi volunteers continue to support the recently arrived immigrant families of Doris Henderson Newcomers School. On Saturday, December 6, 2014, volunteers of all ages provided lunch for tutoring students and wished them and their families a blessed holiday season. Photo: Mark Tsai



From January through March, Tzu Chi volunteers and community members welcomed in the Lunar New Year with more than eighty celebrations spread across twenty-three states. Here, students of Tzu Chi Great Love Preschool & Kindergarten in Dallas, Texas, perform on January 11, 2015. Photo: Julie Sun



▲ On November 11, 2014, Tzu Chi volunteers visited a shelter in Washington DC's Chinatown to provide support and medical care for people displaced by a fire. Here, a volunteer checks blood pressure. Photo: Mark Tsai



▲ Tzu Chi Junior Academy in Austin, Texas, celebrated the end of the fall semester on December 12, 2014. Volunteers prepared an array of activities to celebrate the students' progress and growth over the previous semester. Here students, parents, and teachers perform the sign-language song "One Family" together. Photo: Jishun Wang

A Delicious Way to Prepare for Disaster



Jing Si Instant Rice

A Healthy, Delicious, Nutritious Alternative

Have you ever thought about the hours and days after a natural disaster? When there's no electricity or gas at home, how will you feed your family? Jing Si Instant Rice cooks in cold or room temperature water in 50 minutes, or just 20 minutes in hot water. On any day, you can use it as a base for delicious meals. When disaster strikes, you can keep your family fed, or donate it to a neighbor in even greater need. One bag of rice, so many possibilities.



Sushi

Spring Rolls



Instant meal by simply adding water (hot or cold)

Transform Jing Si Instant Rice into many delicious dishes without cooking



Pour 120 cc of boiling water into a bowl.



Add the seasoning powder and stir.



Add content of the vegetable pack and dried rice, stir and mix well.



Cover the bowl and wait for 20 minutes (50 minutes if using cold water). It is ready to eat.



If we can reduce our desires, , there is nothing really worth getting upset about.

One Family

一家人
yī jiā rén

I feel happy when you laugh cheerfully

我的快樂來自你的笑聲
wǒ de kuài lè lái zì nǐ de xiào shēng

And when you are crying, I hurt even more deeply

而你如果流淚我會比你更心疼
ér nǐ rú guǒ liú lèi wǒ huì bǐ nǐ gēng xīn téng

For my dreams to come true, I will need your company

我的夢想需要你陪我完成
wǒ de mèng xiǎng xū yào nǐ péi wǒ wán chéng

Your love makes my courage grow strong within me

而你給我的愛讓我勇氣倍增
ér nǐ gěi wǒ de ài ràng wǒ yǒng qì bèi zēng

Because we are one family

因為我們是一家人
yīn wèi wǒ men shì yī jiā rén

We're together, so grateful you're with me

相依相信彼此都感恩
xiāng yī xiāng xìn bǐ cǐ dōu gǎn ēn

Because we are one family

因為我們是一家人
yīn wèi wǒ men shì yī jiā rén

We're together, sharing our lives joyfully

分擔分享彼此的人生
fēn dān fēn xiǎng bǐ cǐ de rén shēng

詞：陳建名 | 曲：王建勛

Lyrics: Jianming Chen | Music: Jianxun Wang

Video: Tzu Chi USA Media Center

Translations: Tzu Chi Translation Volunteers

UNE GRAND FAMILLE (French)

Mon bonheur à moi, vient de tes beaux sourires
Si tu pleures, je serai plus malheureux que toi
Pour accomplir mes rêves j'ai besoin de toi
Mon courage grandit avec l'amour que tu me donnes

Parce que nous sommes une grande famille
On dépend les uns des autres, on se fait confiance
Parce que nous sommes une grande famille
Partageons les bonheurs et malheurs de la vie

UNA FAMILIA (Spanish)

Estoy feliz, por tu gran sonrisa
Si lloras es cierto, mucha pena me dará
Necesito que me acompañes
El amor que me das, más fuerte me hará

Porque somos una familia
Nos damos gracias una a la otra
Porque somos una familia
Compartimos juntos la vida

Tzu Chi songs are composed based on the teachings of the sutras and Dharma Master Cheng Yen. When we sing the song, we are reminded of the way of the bodhisattvas in daily living. Please visit "The Song of Bodhisattvas" on www.us.tzuchi.org to enjoy music videos for this and other Tzu Chi songs.



Jing Si Aphorisms

(Excerpt)

The Fundamentals of Virtue

Dharma Master Cheng Yen introduces a collection of short, wise sayings designed to guide us in our daily lives.



Dharma Master Cheng Yen

A filial person is truly blessed

A peaceful world is most auspicious

The four seasons come and go in a cycle. When I look up at the sky in the early morning or at night, sometimes I see a lone star and a crescent moon. Sometimes many stars surround a full moon, while other times thick, dark clouds make it hard to see either the stars or the moon. Whatever the weather, I always sincerely pray for the climate to remain temperate throughout the four seasons.

When we observe everything in the world with a tranquil mind, including the sun, the moon, and the stars, we will find profound meaning even in a flower or a blade of grass. The Buddha attained enlightenment in the universe; there is no place where his mind is not present and no Dharma that he cannot thoroughly comprehend. The Buddha's mind is so broad that it encompasses the whole universe. The Buddha realizes the truth of the universe and has loving-kindness and compassion for all beings. Therefore, he is called the Great Enlightened One in the Universe.

Modern science allows us to study the relationship between Buddhism and the universe. The sutras mention that one day in the Trayastrimsa heaven is equal to a hundred years in the human world. A human's lifespan is less than one day in the Trayastrimsa heaven; how short it is! Earth takes 365 days to orbit the Sun; on the other hand, it takes Mercury, the planet closest to the Sun, 88 days to orbit the Sun. In other words, one year on Mercury is equal to 88 days on Earth. On the planet Neptune, one year is a little longer than 160 of our years on Earth. On Pluto, a dwarf planet far from the Sun, one year is longer than 240 of our years.

Each planet has its own period of revolution, and science has shown the "billion worlds" the Buddha spoke of is not groundless. These cosmic phenomena have always existed in the universe, yet people live their lives completely unawares. Compared to the entire universe, human life is in fact extremely insignificant, so what is there worth fussing over?

When I look at the vast world, the more I understand about world affairs, the more worried I become. In the world, there are natural disasters caused by the disequilibrium of the Four Elements (earth, water, fire, and air) as well as man-made conflicts caused by uncontrollable human desires. Actually, the disharmony in people's minds is even more dangerous than the disequilibrium of the climate. With their disquieted minds, people disrupt the order of Nature's laws, throwing the entire environment into disarray.

Approximately 2600 years ago, the Buddha predicted that the world of the future would suffer the Five Impurities, as the Four Elements would be imbalanced, and the Three

Major and Three Minor Disasters would arise at the same time. The future described by the Buddha is now; the present world is afflicted with the Five Impurities. Is our modern world not just as the Buddha predicted? Whether it is one of the Three Major Disasters of flood, fire, and wind, or one of the Three Minor Disasters of famine, disease, and war, every disaster crosses borders and affects many countries. The resulting suffering is simply beyond words.

I expect everyone to influence a classmate, colleague, friend, or relative to become a bodhisattva. I hope that each person can even resolve to inspire one bodhisattva every day. If everyone can do this, the energy of love will fill all places and the strength to purify human minds will be enhanced. Only then can we gather enough committed people in this troubled world and this era of declining Dharma to promulgate the Dharma, benefit all beings, and promote Buddhism in the human realm. If we do not act immediately, it will soon be too late.

How difficult it is to nurture people's love! People living in safety do not know the suffering of those affected by disasters. This worries me. Just as the Buddha taught us, we cannot attain Buddhahood in the heavenly realm because there is no opportunity to create blessings. Furthermore, after we have exhausted our blessings in the heavenly realm, we will fall into other realms. Now that we have come to know the Dharma and want to practice the right teachings, we must seek to grow in wisdom while we are blessed. When we are safe and well, we must kindle the love in our heart to feel and understand the pain of others. We must further put our love into action to relieve their suffering. If we can do so, then we will be wise.

People should help other people, communities should help other communities, and countries should help other countries. Those safe and well should help others in a timely manner with a loving heart. Knowing people have been helped, we will feel relieved, at ease, and joyful. If all people are good friends or good relatives to one another, will this world not be heartwarming and beautiful?

Everyone inherently has a loving heart and a pure, innocent mind. When we contribute the energy of love from an open heart and innocent mind, and walk on the Bodhisattva Path with gratitude, lotus flowers will bloom with every step we take, and the world will be pure and clean. When we instill a pure stream into every heart and let the Dharma-water nurture them and bring them joy, how wonderful the world will become! How auspicious it is to have love in the world.

Filial piety is the foundation of human decency. A filial and respectful person is blessed. We should start with ourselves to revive filial piety, which is the original goodness of human nature. Like waves, our actions will ripple out to influence our family members, our community, and then the world. When all of us diligently practice filial piety, cherish ourselves and others, and respect and love Mother Nature, all things can coexist in harmony, the climate will be temperate, and the world will be peaceful and free from disasters. 🌿

Excerpted from Jing Si Aphorisms: The Fundamentals of Virtue by Shih Cheng Yen (Jing Si Publications, 2014). For more information, please contact your local Jing Si Books & Café (directory on pp. 72-74) or visit jingsi.us.tzuchi.org.

New Books by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Several new books of Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teachings are now available in English from Jing Si Publications.

From Austerity to Prosperity

The Power of the Heart

Life Economics

Dharma as Water (Vols. 1 & 2)

The Essence of Filial Piety

Jing Si Aphorisms (Vol. 1)

Jing Si Aphorisms: The Fundamentals of Virtue

The Path to Truth

Selected titles also available for Amazon Kindle



Find these and more at jingsi.us.tzuchi.org or your local **Jing Si Books & Café**.
(Directory on pp. 72-74)



JING SI PUBLICATIONS

Diabetes *and* Emotional Health

Lina Lee, LMFT / Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation

Dealing with diabetes twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, can take its toll on your emotional well-being, while stress and negative emotions can in turn take their toll on your blood glucose control.

Seeking help is the best thing you can do for yourself.

If you are dealing with the stress of coping with a chronic illness, such as diabetes, or if you think you might be depressed or anxious, you can try these few simple steps to start helping yourself cope better:

1. Take a time-out. Find something enjoyable you can do. Sometimes, taking a step back from your worries and problems can clear your head.
2. Eat well-balanced meals that are high in nutrients, low in fat, and moderate in calories.
3. Get enough sleep to help protect your mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.
4. Exercise regularly to feel good and maintain your health.

If you find that depression has been interfering with your everyday life and is causing pain for you and those around you, you may want to ask your physician to refer you to a licensed mental health professional. Professional psychotherapy can provide you a safe and supportive environment in which to express yourself and learn to cope better with the challenges you are facing. Seeking help is the best thing you can do for yourself and the best way to start feeling better.

Knowing that there are other people dealing with the same feelings and frustrations that you have can be helpful. Joining a support group is a good way to connect with other people

who are facing the same problems. Support groups can provide useful information, facilitate personal contact, and offer a venue for comparing experiences and

sharing problem-solving skills with others who live with diabetes.

Tzu Chi Medical Foundation's Healthy Community Program offers classes and consultations to help individuals cope with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes. The diabetes program in Southern California is led by Dr. Eugene Taw, MD, and his team of healthcare professionals. The program offers diabetes screening, one on one consultations, prescriptions for diabetes medications if necessary, and workshops on improving diet, exercise, and nutrition.

Participants of the program have been effusive in their praise. Xiuwen Chen said that the program helped him develop positive lifestyle changes, including eating healthy and being active, which helped him lose significant weight in a healthy manner. Margaret Ma expressed her gratitude to Tzu Chi Medical Foundation for offering the program because she feels that it has helped her regain her health. She hopes to promote the program to others so that more people will benefit. Chuqiao Lu said that within just three months of joining the program, she had not only lost weight, but her blood test index had also greatly improved.

Tzu Chi Medical Foundation embraces the affirmative, altruistic vision that the suffering of the ill may only be extinguished holistically by protecting life, guarding health, and spreading love. Tzu Chi programs empower participants by providing the knowledge and tools to better their own lives through healthier habits. 

For more information on programs offered by Tzu Chi Medical Foundation, please visit tzu-chimedicalfoundation.org.

Disclaimer: The information above is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician, physical therapist, or other qualified health provider prior to starting any new treatment.

Bad habits should be eliminated immediately. By exerting a moment of effort, one can enjoy a lifetime of happiness.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

Giving Thanks **in Tijuana, Mexico**

In Tzu Shao, high school students learn the joy of service.

Orange County Tzu Shao

During relief distributions in Tijuana, Mexico, in the early 1990s, Tzu Chi volunteers were deeply moved by the difficult conditions faced by the impoverished local community. They vowed to support education to help the younger generation rise out of poverty, building La Escuela Primaria Tijuana Tzu-Chi, which opened in the Morita community in November 1996.

For nearly two decades since, Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States have continued providing heartfelt care to local students through frequent outreach visits and financial support. In November 2014, Tzu Shao high school volunteers from Orange County, California, traveled three hours south to share their Thanksgiving Day with the students and experience the true meaning of thankfulness.

Terry Yau (Tzu Shao)

In America, the fourth Thursday of every November is dedicated to Thanksgiving, a holiday when friends and family gather, not only to eat a lot, but also to give thanks for all the blessings in their lives.

This Thanksgiving, I was lucky enough to be able to spend my Thanksgiving with a family bonded not by blood, but by love and choice, as we visited an elementary school in Tijuana, Mexico. Upon our arrival, I was struck by how different the local students' learning environment was from ours. While we have high-tech classrooms with central heating and expensive supplies, their setup was much more rudimentary. However, the students were not fazed in the least. Instead, they were beyond

excited to simply dance with us and ecstatic when receiving even a simple high five.

Their upbeat and cheerful attitude despite their lack of material goods made me realize how fortunate I am to live in middle class suburbs with all that I have. I was more grateful





Young Bodhisattvas

than I have ever been because the students reminded me with their smiles, laughter, and hugs what really matters at Thanksgiving—love and happiness.

Thomas Lai (Tzu Shao)

The Tzu Shao Mexico trip was one of the most fun and inspiring trips I've been on. Although it only lasted for less

than a day, the memories will last forever. It is truly amazing to have the privilege of working with these kids, and to see what kind of environment they have to live in and what they go through each day. I felt that we made them really happy just by showing up. I hope that someday this trip can happen again.



Jing Si Aphorism bookmarks share wisdom and inspiration in Spanish. Photo: Yijuan Lo



What moves me most is the love I always see between the Tzu Shao and the students.

Both students and visitors gained from loving and enthusiastic interactions. Photo: Tenshang Joh

*Tzu Shao cross the border.
Photo: Yi-Juan Lo*



Emma Ong (Tzu Shao, translator & emcee)

This was my third time participating in the Mexico trip, and all three times I helped as a translator. As I grow older with every visit, my maturity and understanding of the events change, yet one thing remains the same: what moves me most is the love I always see between the Tzu Shao and the students.

As a bridge between their languages, I feel so much satisfaction and joy to be able to help them understand one another's love and caring. My hope is that in the future more Tzu Shao will also be able to directly communicate with the students in Spanish, so they can also more thoroughly convey their love.

Jerry Trinh (Tzu Shao)

I was very glad to finally have an opportunity to attend this trip. Being able to help out the children and get them laughing, dancing, and smiling was amazing. I feel grateful for the safe environment I live in and I am happy I was able to make their day a little brighter.

Eric Chiang (Tzu Shao)

It's hard to describe. Mexico is physically connected to California, but crossing that border is like entering a new universe. First, you notice the lack of houses. Then the graffiti. Soon, you realize that you've left that little bubble that is Irvine. Mexico is a land of rich history—but it struggles. We have this idealistic view of Mexico, that it's filled with spas and luxuries. But in reality, Mexico struggles. Much of the rest of the world struggles.

But the kids there? Wonderful. They treated us as celebrities. They'll never forget us. But

the impact they had on us is just as great. They're so thankful; they cherish so much and help each other at all

times. These children have had a myriad of hardships that we can't even imagine, and yet they show the most compassion. It's time for us to do better. Let's make an impact.

Thomas Chang (Tzu Chi volunteer)

This was my third visit to Tijuana Tzu Chi Elementary School since 2011. I am very happy to see the changes in the surrounding communities. The road used to be unpaved and full of potholes; now it is smooth with asphalt. The neighborhood used to have many abandoned and uncompleted houses; now most are repaired and completed. I think the presence of the school really helps to improve the living conditions of the neighborhood. What really touched my heart are the students there. The improved economy and environment does not seem to change the children. As always, they welcomed us with radiating enthusiasm and delight, and accepted our little gifts of stationery sets and oral hygiene kits with genuine gratitude. My spirit was completely recharged with their pure, innocent hearts. 🌱



Tzu Shao begin their Thanksgiving visit to Tzu Chi's elementary school in Tijuana, Mexico. Photo: Chifen Lin



In this world, everyone is family and everywhere the place for spiritual growth.

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen

To Be With You Para Estar Contigo



By Connie Lee



From *Protecting Mother Earth*, a collection of stories about loving our Earth by kids for kids.

Collection Editor: Ralph Boyer

Collection Designer: Chinghui Chen

Spanish Translations: David Hoy & Emma Ong

Academy Teacher & Coordinator: Yali Li

Writers & Artists: Irvine Tzu Chi Academy Students



Can you guess who I am?
I like to drink clean water;
I like to eat natural, organic foods
so that I grow to become green, blue, and round.
I am Earth.

¿Puedes adivinar quién soy?
Me gusta tomar agua limpia.
Me gusta comer alimentos naturales y orgánicos,
Para que crezca y vuelvo verde, azul y redondo.
Yo soy la Tierra.



Did you guess right?
My name is Earth.
Take a deep breath,
Can you feel the air I am giving you now?
Right now you live inside me.

¿Adivinaste correctamente?
Mi nombre es la Tierra.
Respira profundamente,
¿Puedes sentir el aire que te estoy dando ahora?
En este momento vives dentro de mí.



I have lived with humans for a long, long time.
I give you fresh air. I give you clean water.
I give you natural, organic foods.
We live together happily when we live in a pollution-free world.

Yo he vivido con los humanos desde hace mucho, mucho tiempo.
Te doy aire fresco. Te doy agua limpia.
Te doy comida natural y orgánica.
Vivimos juntos y felices cuando vivimos en un mundo sin contaminación.



The wind blows the same, but it's not fresh anymore.
The air is gray. Do you know why?

El viento sopla igualmente, pero ya no es fresco.
El aire es gris. ¿Sabes por qué?



The water flows the same, but it's not clean anymore.
No one drinks from the river any longer. Do you know why?

El agua fluye igualmente, pero ya no es limpio.
Ya nadie bebe del río. ¿Sabes por qué?

The plants grow the same, but it's no longer natural,
organic food.
We are not healthy anymore. Do you know why?

Las plantas crecen igualmente, pero ya no es comida
natural y orgánica.
Ya no estamos saludables. ¿Sabes por qué?



Can you guess who I am?
 Do you still remember how I used to look?
 Do you like me now?
 I'm so scared!
 How long can we still live together?

¿Puedes adivinar quién soy?
 ¿Todavía recuerdas como me miraba antes?
 ¿Te gusta como estoy ahora?
 ¡Tengo mucho miedo!
 ¿Por cuánto tiempo podemos vivir juntos todavía?

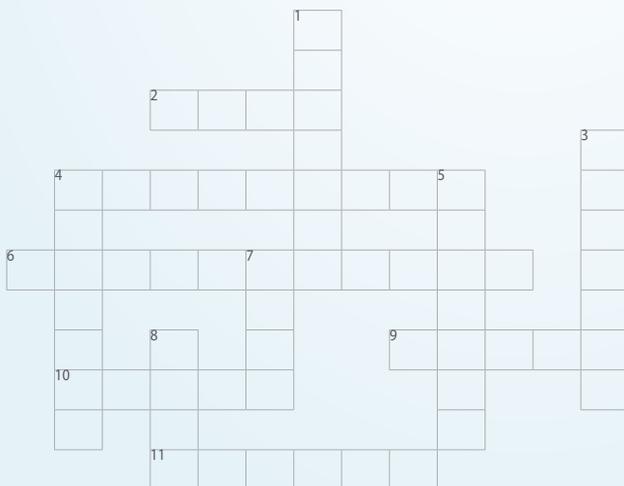


What kind of air do you wish to breathe?
 Please help me!

¿Qué clase de aire quieres respirar?
 ¡Por favor ayúdame!

What kind of water do you wish to drink? Please help me!
 What kind of food do you wish to eat? Please help me!
 What kind of place do you wish to live?

¿Qué clase de agua quieres beber? ¡Por favor ayúdame!
 ¿Qué clase de comida quieres comer? ¡Por favor ayúdame!
 ¿En qué tipo de lugar le gustaría vivir?



Crossword: Save the Earth!

Across

- 2. All creatures ___ together on Earth.
- 4. This is making the water and air dirty.
- 6. She talks to us in this story.
- 9. The wind is not ___ anymore.
- 10. Without 4-Across, water can be ___.
- 11. Earth is one ___ in the Solar System.

Down

- 1. We do this better with clean air.
- 3. Good food and clean water keeps us ___.
- 4. We should ___ the planet to keep it safe.
- 5. The narrator gives ___, organic foods.
- 7. It falls from the sky and fills the rivers.
- 8. "Please ___ me!"

Don't Waste, Little Melon!

¡Pequeño Melón, No Desperdicias!



By Jasper Tsai



Melon, a cute, chubby boy, wastes lots of water and paper. For example, he wastes water when he brushes his teeth and hands and when he bathes, because he never turns off the faucet. Also, Melon does not like to follow directions, he's not very obedient, and he's a naughty boy.

Melón, es un lindo niño gordito, que desperdicia mucha agua y papel. Por ejemplo, el gasta el agua cuando se cepilla sus dientes, cuando se lava las manos, y cuando se baña, porque él nunca cierra el grifo. También, Melón es un niño travieso que no es muy obediente y no le gusta seguir instrucciones.



Melon's mom tells him that he cannot keep wasting water like this, but Melon doesn't listen. He finds it interesting when the water keeps flowing. One day, his mom told him that water is one of the world's most valuable sources. If we don't have water, we will all die. So we must conserve and use our water wisely.

La mamá de Melón le dice que no puede seguir gastando el agua de esa manera, pero Melón no la escucha. A él le resulta cautivante el fluir del agua. Un día, su madre le dijo que el agua es una de las fuentes más valiosas del mundo. Si no tenemos agua, todos moriremos. Así que debemos conservar y utilizar nuestra agua con sensatez.

Melon listened to his mom, but still disobeyed. He still enjoyed looking at the water flowing. His mother was furious! She yelled at him and took his toys away. His mother yelled, "Why don't you listen?" Melon replied, "Because, I enjoy water trickling down. Oh, and I also don't like your rules." His mom replied calmly, "Melon, did you know that wasting water is bad for the Earth? If you continue doing what you're doing, people in the future will not have water to drink, bathe in, or brush their teeth with." After that, Melon never wasted another drop of water.

Melón escuchó a su madre, pero aún así la desobedeció. Todavía disfrutaba mirando el fluir del agua. ¡Su madre estaba furiosa! Ella le gritó y le quitó sus juguetes. "¿Por qué no escuchas?"; su madre gritó. Melón respondió, "Porque disfruto de la caída del agua. Oh, y también porque no me gustan tus ordenes. Su mamá contestó con calma, "¿Melón, sabías que desperdiciar el agua es malo para la tierra? Si sigues haciendo lo que estás haciendo, en el futuro la gente no tendrá agua para beber, para bañarse, o para cepillar sus dientes." Después de esto, Melón no volvió a desperdiciar otra gota de agua.



One day, Melon's mother found out that he wasted a lot of printer ink and paper. The paper was not recycled, just thrown away. His mother asked, "Hey, how come you don't recycle all of this paper?" Melon obnoxiously replied, "Because, huh, recycling is useless."

La madre de Melón, un día descubrió que Melón desperdiciaba mucho papel y tinta para la impresora. El papel lo tiraba y no lo reciclaba. Su madre le preguntó, "¿Hey, por qué no reciclas todo este papel?" Melón odiosamente le respondió, "¡Porque, el reciclaje es inútil eh!"



"Recycling is good for the Earth," his mom said. "Because paper is made from trees, and trees give us the oxygen that we breathe. If we recycle paper, we will kill fewer trees. This is a win-win situation; it's good for both humans and the Earth." After hearing about why recycling is good, Melon never threw paper away; he always recycled.

"El reciclaje es bueno para la tierra," dijo su mamá. "Porque el papel se hace de árboles y árboles nos dan el oxígeno que respiramos. Si reciclamos el papel, matamos a menos árboles. Esta es una situación en la que todos ganan; es bueno para los seres humanos y para la tierra". Después de oír sobre por qué el reciclaje es bueno, Melón nunca más tiro el papel; desde ese día él siempre lo reciclo.



P S J S O T E R S X P O A
 A J Y C M R E C Y C L E K
 S C Z W N E U A P W P A D
 A O X Y G E N Y B O B G F
 N N M E B S H L V X A P C
 A S A O C J G I J C T E E
 Q E N E A M W S F A H K R
 U R P A P E R T W W E A E
 E V O R B L A E A A A S E
 B E R T M O T N K S Z O A
 A H W H A N E W A T E R B
 F G B R U S H T E E T H P

Word Search: Don't Waste!

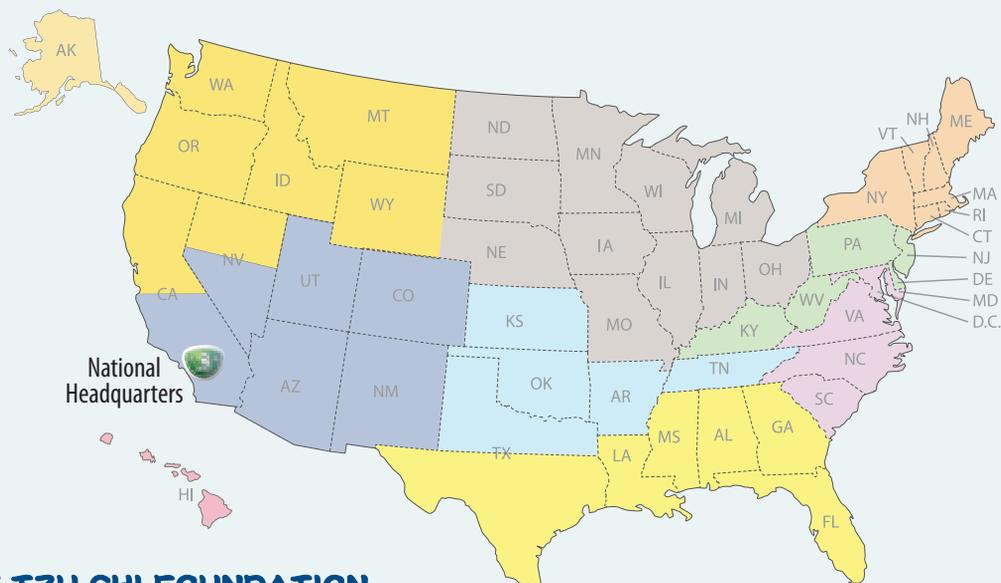
Circle the following words and phrase from the story.

(Words are written down and across, not diagonal or backwards.)

- | | | |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| CONSERVE | PAPER | BATHE |
| WATER | TREES | BRUSH TEETH |
| WASTE | OXYGEN | LISTEN |
| RECYCLE | MELON | EARTH |

Answer key and more games in Issue 45!

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A BRIEF HISTORY...

On April 14, 1966, Dharma Master Cheng Yen founded the Tzu Chi Merits Society in Hualien with the support of thirty housewives who each put aside a couple cents of their grocery money every day to establish a charity fund. During the first five years, they helped a total of thirty-one elderly, ill, and poor people from fifteen families. As word spread, more people participated and the program gathered strength. It spread beyond Hualien: across the island and around the world.

Today, Tzu Chi is a nonprofit charitable organization with ten million volunteers and donors in roughly fifty countries worldwide. Over the past forty-nine years, Tzu Chi's four missions—Charity, Medicine, Education, and Humanistic Culture—have grown from the seeds of gratitude, respect, and love, and Tzu Chi's activities have expanded to include international disaster relief, bone marrow donation, community volunteerism, and environmental conservation.

In the United States, Tzu Chi operates nine regional service areas with more than eighty offices nationwide. Volunteers give back to their local communities through family services, emergency disaster services, homeless services, school support programs, college scholarships, income tax reporting assistance, relief distributions, holiday care packs, free and low-cost medical clinics and outreaches, preventive health education, cancer support groups, character education curricula, community education classes, and production of positive, inspiring media.

Whenever disaster strikes at home or abroad, Tzu Chi volunteers deliver cash aid, hot meals, and emergency relief supplies directly into the hands of disaster survivors. Over the years, US Tzu Chi volunteers have actively provided relief after such major disasters as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and Hurricane Sandy.

In recent years, Tzu Chi volunteers' charitable work has been increasingly recognized by the global community. Tzu Chi was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2010 and honored as a White House Champion of Change in 2013. Dharma Master Cheng Yen was presented with the Roosevelt Institute's FDR Distinguished Public Service Award and named to the 2011 TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people in 2011, and honored with the Rotary International Award of Honor in 2014.



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Photo: Mike Tang



A volunteer is one
who considers
sincere love as a
vital part of life
and turns ideals
into action.

Jing Si Aphorism
by Dharma Master
Cheng Yen

