

慈濟基金會 2015 年靜思語英語朗讀選文

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5-1 : Excerpt from Article "**Love Transcends Distance**" from the book "*Life Economics*"

The Buddha treated all sentient beings as his own children and showed compassion for all. We should learn to be as big-hearted as the Buddha, take the Buddha's heart as our heart, and care for all suffering beings in the world regardless of race, religion or nationality. We should love all the Earth's creatures.

I saw a news report that said that the rate of ice melt and glacier collapse in the North and South Poles was faster and much more serious than previously thought. The arctic and Antarctic regions are so far away from us, do these happenings really have anything to do with Taiwan? Yea, they do. In fact, they are closely linked with us. Since the island of Taiwan is small, it will be greatly affected by climate change and rising sea levels.

Actually, everything in the world coexists with the earth. Therefore, we need continuous great love in this world. When everyone in the world has a heart so big as to encompass all, the distance between people will be decreased and heart will become fonder toward one another.

Love is the secret to wealth. How can we possess everything in life? By opening our hearts and not insisting on possessing things. We should learn to embrace the mentality that "when others are well-off, I feel rich." In other words, when other own wealth, it is as satisfying as when we own it ourselves.

Many years ago, when we were raising funds to build the first Tzu Chi hospital, I met with many rich ladies. I would often hear them comparing the size of the diamonds on their hands and the value of the their jewelry. I asked them, "Why do you demand that your husband buy you a large diamond when you see that someone else has a bigger one? There is no end to comparison. If you simply admire the diamond ring on someone else's finger, you will feel no burden at not having one yourself."

The pursuit of material things is endless. We should learn how to become rich with compassion. Da Ai TV reporters once produced a feature on students in Gansu Province, China. Although they were lacking in material things, these students were very content. Though they had but a primitive school to attend, they felt they were richer than others; they were grateful and satisfied even if they had to walk several hours to school each day. At the school, the reporters saw a student tightly grabbing a one-centimeter pencil with her fingertips. Even though she could write only with great difficulty, she was happy to have the lead to write with because materials were so scarce there.

The reporters were deeply moved. After returning to Taiwan, they initiated the "Blessings from a Pencil Case" campaign, which was enthusiastically received. In a short period of time, people donated more than twenty thousand pencil cases filled with pencils, ballpoint pens, and colored pencils. Twenty thousand loving hearts were like ripples spreading out to create a cycle of love. The donated stationery was delivered not only to Gansu, but also to Afghanistan, Nepal, and other countries short of supplies.

A child's tiny pencil brought forth the love of more than twenty thousand people. It shortened the distance between Taiwan and Gansu, and even between Taiwan and Afghanistan and Nepal.

How much of a ripple effect can stem from a single good thought? No one knows.

5-2 : Excerpt from Article ***“Confidence in Doing Good Deeds”*** from the book *“Life Economics”*

In life, there are things we must do and things we must not do. We should actively do the things that must be done. When we take hold of the moment to make contributions, we will learn a great deal, and we will be happy and at ease. So when we are sure of the direction we have chosen, we should maintain our faith. We should have selfless faith in our family, our society, and our country; we must believe that no matter how tough the situation, it will change some day.

There is a primary school in San Francisco in which more than ninety percent of the students are from poor immigrant families. These families seriously lack food and supplies. Tzu Chi volunteers started caring for the students with book donations at first, then followed with frequent distributions of food and uniforms.

Ms. Huang often went with Tzu Chi volunteers to visit the school, and one day she brought her daughter along. A girl who was about the same age as her daughter approached them and asked, “Can you please adopt me? I have no food to eat.” Ms. Huang was shocked.

On another occasion, Ms. Huang witnessed a student stealing packets of ketchup, then saw her mix the ketchup with water to drink. She also saw a girl steal a handful of uncooked rice and put it into her mouth. She asked this girl why she did that, and the girl replied that she was hungry. These children were not stealing because they were bad. They were driven to it by starvation.

Ms. Huang felt that she should rearrange her life so that she could devote more time to Tzu Chi and take care of children in need. At that time, she was a senior executive at an international pharmaceutical company/ When she presented her letter of resignation, her boss was stunned and tried to convince her to stay.

“Which company is trying to hire you? What salary are they offering? We will give you a raise!”

“None of these,” she answered. “My salary is high enough here. I am grateful and satisfied. I just wish to devote myself fully to Tzu Chi.”

“What is Tzu Chi?” her boss asked.

Ms. Huang then told him about Tzu Chi's relief efforts, and described the poor living conditions of those who suffer. Her boss still could not understand. He wondered whether doing good deeds really makes a person happy and whether it is more valuable than having a high-paying job.

Nonetheless, Ms. Huang had already made up her mind to resign and become a full-time Tzu Chi volunteer. Since then, she has gone to the school every day with another Tzu Chi volunteer to help provide a better learning environment for the students. Tzu Chi volunteers pass out food backpacks for the students every Friday so that they will have food to eat at home over the weekend. At school, they teach the students Tzu Chi's humanistic culture and help them with their schoolwork. They not only help the students improve their grades, they also emphasize character

education by teaching the students to follow rules and regulations, have good manners, cherish the earth, and recycle. That particular elementary school has now become a very good school in its district.

It is commendable that Ms. Huang gave up her personal profits and comforts to devote herself joyfully. Life is short and impermanent. When we see suffering in the world, we should bring forth our love and take action to help the needy. When everyone's strength is combined, we can truly improve our environment. This is the ecology of love.

5-3 : Excerpt from Article ***"Raising Children: Asking for Nothing in Return"*** from the book *"The Essence of Filial Piety"*

When we were little, we always hoped that our parents' big hands would hold our small hands. And you parents would also think, "No matter how long I have to hold this child's hand, I will not let go." In Tzu Chi's musical adaptation of the Sutra of Profound Gratitude toward Parents, one line in the lyrics says, "The love of parents is unchanging over eons; it lasts forever and ever." Even if the parent is one hundred years old and the child eighty, in the eyes of the parent, the child is still a child. No words can adequately describe a parent's love, even if you were to use up all the ink in the world.

If you must describe the love that parents hold for their children, it would be this: "A father's love is like sun, shining on the family, filling the children with hope. A mother's love is as vast as the sky and as endless as the sea, as she gives her all to the family."

In Taiwan, each time school starts we can see parents coaxing their small children to go to school or bringing them home after school. When the children are in high school, their parents drive them to and from the school so they do not have to suffer the sunlight or train. When they go off to college in another city, their parents accompany them to their new school to familiarize themselves with the place.

The love of a parent is unconditional and transcends ethnicity. For example, there is a remarkable woman in Hualien known as "Mama Uruguay." This woman's husband was a Taiwanese seaman. They met and got married in Uruguay when his ship fared there. Then they came back to Taiwan, settled down, and had a child. Five years later, the husband was gone, leaving the woman by herself in Hualien.

Some people advised her, "Now that your husband has left you, you can take off, too. Why don't you go back to Uruguay?" She said, "I can't do that. Who's going to take care of my child?" For the sake of her child, she worked at odd jobs for over ten years and finally raised her child to adulthood.

Now many working women need to go to work every day while also taking care of household chores as well as their children. Often they are burning the candle at both ends. Fathers also have to toil. They work hard to support their families. Some have businesses to run and must go out socializing all the time. They shoulder even more responsibility as their business grows. Some work in physical labor, sweating and struggling under the hot sun or in the wind and rain.

Mr. Mai is a Chinese Filipino. In order to earn a living to support his family, he came to Taiwan when he was in his forties and became one of Taiwan's hundreds of thousands of foreign laborers. Now over sixty years old, Mr. Mai spent more than a decade in Taiwan sending money home every month to support his family. He successfully brought up his children and even sent them to college. However, he did not go back to the Philippines too often because of high travel expenses.

Due to economic recession, he lost his job and underwent a lot of hardship. Once, he had a myocardial infarction. Even though he survived the heart attack thanks to an emergency operation, he had no funds to pay the hospital bills. Luckily he had help from Tzu Chi, so he was able to return safely to the Philippines.

Leaving his hometown in his prime and returning in his old age, he worked hard to raise his children. Such is a father's love.

5-4 : Excerpt from Article ***"Teaching Children with Wisdom and Compassion"*** from the book *"The Essence of Filial Piety"*

When faced with mentally challenged children, some parents educate them wisely in addition to caring for them. A woman in Kaohsiung is a good example. When her daughter was young, the doctors diagnosed her with a severe mental disorder. At that moment, the mother felt like a mountain crumbling. Ever since then, she and her husband fought constantly, deeply straining their marriage. Her own emotional state has risen and fallen with the mood swings of her child.

Although she loved her child very much, whenever the daughter made a big mess of their house, she would become angry and spank her. However, she was always the one who hurt more. After the corporal punishment, she would hug her daughter and say, "I'm so sorry! I should not have become angry at you. I repent for my actions."

This kind of life lasted for more than fifty years. She kept her daughter by her side and cared for her personally. She never even considered putting her in a sanatorium or a nursing home. Sometimes she would sink into self-pity and wonder why her life was so hard. Her only wish was that one day her daughter's condition would improve. Over ten years ago she chanced upon a Jing Si Aphorism at a Tzu Chi branch office that said, "Do not be led by ignorance." She suddenly felt free from cares. She no longer spent all day worrying about her daughter's condition.

Since then, she often led her daughter by the hand to a Tzu Chi recycling station ten minutes or so from their home to participate in recycling work. She let her daughter sit beside her and gave her a basin of water to play with. Her daughter sat there quietly, but she sometimes would scream, especially when the recycling truck pulled into the station. This used to embarrass her greatly. But the volunteers at the recycling station said to her, "It doesn't matter, let her scream and yell, she must be feeling happy." So the mother gradually felt at ease and was no longer embarrassed because this group of volunteers accepted and loved her daughter. One day, her daughter suddenly picked up some plastic bottles and started to sort them by color. Even though it was only a simple act, the mother was very happy. For the first time in more than fifty years, she saw her daughter does not ask much; as long as her daughter utilized her potential, it is her best reward.

What a blessing it is to have an able body and sound mind! Yet it is often not up to us now our life turns out. We are helpless when our physical or mental disabilities keep us from living a carefree life, whether the disability comes with birth or is caused by illness later. Not only do we suffer, so do our parents. However, they are strong because they are parents. They possess the compassion, courage, and perseverance to face difficulties and shoulder responsibilities

Seeing parents like these, we understand that it is truly difficult to repay the grace of parents. Let us quietly ponder these questions: "Where do I come from?" "My mother gave me birth, and my father worked hard to raise me; how much of this profound grace can I repay?" The Buddha says, "Carry your father on the left shoulder and carry your mother on the right shoulder. Even if you wear your shoulders' flesh to the bones from carrying them, you still cannot repay your parents." Therefore, we must repay the grace of our parents while there is still time.

5-5 : *Excerpt from Masters Letter to Typhoon Morakot Survivors from Global Tzu Chi Website at*
http://tw.tzuchi.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=259%3Amasters-letter-to-typhoon-morakot-survivors&catid=96%3Aletters-from-master-cheng-yen-&Itemid=302&lang=en

To dear friends affected by Typhoon Morakot,

I offer my deepest condolences for survivors of Typhoon Morakot. For those who have lost their family, friends, and communities, I offer most sincere prayers that the lost ones may peacefully transition to the next stage. For those whose houses and things have been swept away, damaged, or ruined, let us be grateful that we are still alive and well, and offer an extra hand to help those less fortunate to quickly rebuild our communities. With mutual love and support, we shall overcome these difficulties together. May we emerge awakened to Mother Nature's needs and vigilant of our individual and collective responsibility to each other and to our Earth in challenging times.

In truth, we all shared a sense of joy as well as worry from the formation of Typhoon Morakot. Before the typhoon made landfall there was hopeful anticipation that the typhoon would end the drought, yet I had prayed that people would make necessary safety preparations if the typhoon upgraded in intensity. I am deeply grateful to Tzu Chi volunteers who reminded their local community to make necessary preparations for sufficient draining and disaster prevention, including ensuring that vulnerable families had sufficient supplies, in the hopes that such preparedness would minimize suffering for potential victims. We also established a center for coordination of disaster preparedness and aid, for real-time monitoring of the typhoon conditions and disaster situation and timely relief for those affected.

On the evening of August 7, Typhoon Morakot arrived in Taiwan with severe winds and rains, followed by much destruction in the regions of Taitung, Pingtung, Kaohsiung, Tainan, Miaoli, and Hsinchu, from mudslides, bursting rivers, flooded streets, interrupted electricity, etc. Several village communities also had to evacuate their homes to reach safety amidst the constantly pouring rainfall. To those communities, I offer my deepest sympathies and concerns on behalf of all Tzu Chi people around the world. Keeping a heart of great love and great compassion, Tzu Chi volunteers have made constant relief efforts to soothe the suffering of our fellow village communities. On behalf of Tzu Chi people around the world, with a heart of utmost sincerity and

faith I offer their immeasurable blessings to quickly emerge from the suffering of Typhoon Morakot.

For more than forty years, Tzu Chi Foundation has upheld the maxim of "Great love for those who bear no relation to us; great compassion as though we share the same body" and followed the simple spirit of "Overcoming difficulty through diligence and frugality". It is the mission of Tzu Chi people around the world to accompany our fellow citizens and village communities without resentment or regret and keep a heart of gratitude, respect, and love as we protect our local communities. Indeed, these have been our prayers and hopes ever since I founded Tzu Chi Foundation more than forty years ago. In this era of degenerate teachings, amidst persisting global warming, climate change and extreme weather patterns, we shall see human disasters continually occur as human hearts stubbornly wander in this ocean of suffering. I pray that every person can raise their vigilant mindfulness and together pray for all awakened beings (Buddhas) to hear, and may we also at the same time protect all of earth's beings. With mindfulness and with love, let us protect Mother Earth, the great nurturer of life, and let only virtuous thoughts stay in human hearts. Together, let us combine our efforts and collect our good thoughts to extend blessed connections. May Taiwan keep love and goodness as its treasures, and let blessings of virtue infinitely spread forth.