



Prevention of Epidemics through Vegetarian Diets, Repentance, Prayers, and the Divine Power of Love

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently the issue of greatest concern to the whole world. The rapid spread of the virus has led to fear and panic and imposition of lockdowns by numerous countries worldwide. It is heart-wrenching to see people engage in panic buying in an atmosphere characterized by great tension and anxiety.

As stated in the Buddhist Scriptures, public repentance is the panacea for all epidemics. Over 70 billion terrestrial animals are sacrificed each year to satisfy our oral cravings. This is the collective karma of all sentient beings. Tzu Chi therefore promotes vegetarian diets and fasting to give every human a chance for repentance.

In the face of this pandemic, we are at a loss of words to express the pain and sorrow in our hearts. We can only constantly appeal to all citizens to adopt vegetarian diets which purify our bodies and minds. After eliminating our desires, we should increase our piety so we can live together in peace and calm our minds. As a result, we won't panic and turn pale in horror as the epidemic keeps spreading.

Numerous countries have announced bans to limit mobility and human interaction to control the epidemic. However, we can rely on online videoconferencing technologies to simultaneously communicate with Tzu Chi members in countries all over the world without obstacles, which is nothing short of amazing!



For instance, Chen Chiou-Hwa, a Buddhist layperson and Tzu Chi volunteer stationed in Jordan, has provided care and concern for refugees from Iraq and Syria over many years. Refugee camps only feature simple medical stations. If camp residents contract serious illnesses, local Tzu Chi members assist in the transport to a hospital for medical treatment and bear all surgery and medical expenses. Thousands of refugees have received such emergency aid within the past few years.

Among the special cases was a little boy named Osama, who suffered from Crohn's Disease, a chronic inflammatory bowel disease. Feces would leak through the skin if his leg was gently pressed. He was in pitiful condition since he was unable to walk and had been bedridden over many years. Free medical services provided by the Tzu Chi International Medical Association in Jordan were therefore a godsend. The volunteers took pity on this little boy who was tormented by this terrible disease and arranged surgery to relieve his pain.

We were deeply concerned about this poor little boy until we saw in a recently received image that he was recovering well. We were filled with joy and delight when we noticed that he had gained weight and was finally able to walk. The tenacity of life is truly miraculous. Despite the long distance between Taiwan and Jordan, love and compassion that transcends all boundaries have enabled this little boy to explore new realms and brought back vitality, happiness, and hope to his life. We will continue to watch him grow up.

If we are deeply devoted and seize every opportunity to spread love and compassion, all sentient beings are delivered through the divine power of love pervading infinite realms. We are profoundly grateful to all Tzu Chi members who grasp every opportunity to accomplish good deeds and great achievements irrespective of race and ethnicity.

This epidemic teaches us an important lesson. It reminds all of us of the importance of cultivating prudence, piety, and compassion and showing respect and love for all living creatures by adopting vegetarian diets and thereby restore our deep-rooted benevolent nature. We strive to motivate a rising number of people to join us in our prayers and fasting to ensure that this epidemic will subside soon so that we can resume our normal lives with restored vitality.