

# The Innumerable Meanings Sutra and Dharma Master Cheng Yen

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## ABSTRACT:

The core teaching of Innumerable Meanings Sutra, to my understanding has ascribed to two concepts: “*Intrinsic Mind of Omni-emptiness*” and “*Compassion Relief to all Beings.*” Venerable Yin-Shun of the Humanistic Buddhist Movement had said: “purifying our mind is the first priority; altruistic practice is the ultimate goal”. Dharma Master Cheng Yen, the founder of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, has transformed the meanings to her own words: *Selfless Great Love*, in which “*Selfless*” is the pivotal step to reach “*the Intrinsic Mind of Omni-emptiness*” and “*Great Love*” is the prerequisite spirit to provide “*Compassion Relief to all Beings.*” Thus, devoting this selfless great love to all living creatures is how Dharma Master Cheng Yen establishes the secular practice and belief of modern Buddhism.

The School of Tzu Chi follows the teaching of traditional Buddhism and yet its practice transcends religious boundary. Many Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, Jewish and Atheist have joined Tzu Chi as volunteers, and devoted themselves to be disciples of Dharma Master Cheng Yen. The teaching of Innumerable Meanings Sutra ensures not only Buddhists to cultivate their faith through altruistic practice, but also non-Buddhists to reach their awakening through the common conviction — The Selfless Great Love.

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Innumerable Meanings Sutra teaches that “enlighten compassion conveys sincere, concrete wisdom that in all circumstances can eradicate suffering of all beings, comfort their pains, moreover ignite their wisdom, and eventually bring them to the state of ultimate happiness.” This Omni-compassion shall be the common foundation of all religions and schools of philosophy, and it is also the foundation on which the philosophy and practices of Tzu Chi’s charity have been built.

The ultimate ideal of Tzu Chi School of Buddhism aims to bring all beings to realize that the intrinsic minds are pure, non-tenacious on neither existence nor nothingness, and through continuous helping others to actualize the eternal existence of one’s true self. “Sailing Masters and Great Sailing Masters carry all beings across the river of live and death to reach the eternal awakening (the Innumerable Meanings Sutra).” Hence, to enlighten all beings to learn the Intrinsic Mind of Omni-emptiness is like the Sailing Masters carry their passengers. Accordingly, to reach the state of Nirvana is to accomplish the awakening of eternal wisdom.

While eternal awakening is the ultimate goal, Innumerable Meanings Sutra also gives all beings chances to cultivation. “Even if a sailing master has illness, the unyielding boat may still carry the passengers across the river.” Therefore, everyone has the ability to enlighten others, as long as he or she relies on the teaching of Innumerable Meanings Sutra—the unyielding boat. People may carry different temperaments, convey different shortcomings, and hold diverse beliefs, but as long as they rely on the teaching of the Sutra, “one may inspire others even before one enlightens oneself.”

The Tzu Chi School of Buddhism following the philosophy of the Sutra and guided by the wisdom and compassion of the founder, Dharma Master Cheng Yen, has developed a new Buddhist movement and inspired millions of people. In this new movement people believe that one may purify oneself through helping others and eventually to reach the intrinsic pure mind of Omni-emptiness and the eternal existence of wisdom.

**Keywords:** selfless great love, *Intrinsic Mind of Omni-emptiness*, pure, non-appearance, teacher without being asked, equal love, Reverse Globalization