

## Over 500 Volunteers Make First Performance of Buddhist Sutra

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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On May 19, 532 volunteers joined professional performers in the first musical performance of "Water Repentance", a famous Buddhist sutra from the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD). They held the performance in the Jing Si Hall in Hualien, the home of Tzu Chi, in front of an audience of more than 2,000 people.

The sutra teaches people to repent and cleanse their souls. [Master Cheng Yen](#) chose it as the theme of the 45th year of Tzu Chi this year. At the start of 2011, she appealed to all volunteers to practice the Buddhist dharma in their daily life, respect all living things and eat only vegetarian food. She asked her followers to join book clubs and study the "Water Repentance" sutra and, by doing so, understand their karma and repent from their bad habits. Natural disasters are going on around the world, seemingly unabated; the only way to reduce them is to purify the human mind and reduce greed.

The volunteers decided to take their study a step further – not only to read it but also to learn and perform it through sign language on stage. As they did, they clearly felt a change in themselves over the course of a few months.

Master Cheng Yen believes that this is a spiritual cultivation for the performers: by enacting the sutra, they will gain enlightenment and realize the error of their ways.

On the stage, the volunteers performed and sang from their inner beauty; they hoped that they would form a stream of clear water that would flow through society and create harmony in the world. The musical began with "Lu xiang zha re, fa jie meng xun (香赞, 忏悔)" – chanting of the "Praise for Incense". The echo filled the Jing Si Hall and calmed the hearts of the audience. Then the bell and drum led everyone to the Dharma of repentance.

