

Celebrating Buddha's Day with 1,000,000 Vegetarian Meals

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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May 8, 2011, the second Sunday of May, was Buddha's Day, Mother's Day and Tzu Chi's Day. Tzu Chi Selangor & Kuala Lumpur held two sessions of Buddha's Day Ceremony at Stadium Petaling Jaya. Approximately 10,000 people joined the celebration.

The morning and evening sessions of Buddha's Day Ceremony held by Tzu Chi Selangor & Kuala Lumpur attracted appropriately 10,000 participants, who came to pay their respect to the Buddha at Stadium Petaling Jaya.

This year, their Entrepreneur Group (volunteers who are corporate leaders) launched a "Corporate Go Vegetarian Campaign". It is hoped that through this campaign more people will go vegetarian. The campaign was first implemented in their respective companies to encourage their employees to go vegetarian at least one day per week. They also approached their business partners to do the same. Chen Chun Xiu is one of the members who has implemented the vegetarianism campaign in her company. Her 14 staff came with her on this day.

One of the staff, Liu Zhi Xiang said, "The ceremony was grand and solemn. Everyone's movements were so uniform. I am surprised that so many people were willing to get up so early to join the ceremony." Zhi Xiang, whose skin problem improved after going vegetarian, added that it was easy for him to switch to a vegetarian diet. To him, it is just a swallowing process.



Xie Shu Feng, colleague of Zhi Xiang said, "I could feel Buddha's presence when I was performing the act of "touching the Buddha's feet".

Fasting for Buddha's birthday

By 6 am, the 5,400 people had already lined up in their allocated area and were waiting quietly and solemnly for the commencement of the Buddha's Day Ceremony. There was an image of six "Bodhi leaves", formed by 2,790 participants, which represented the Six Paramitas – the six actions that will lead us on the Path to Enlightenment. In the middle was a display of 256 crystal Liuli Buddha statues on a long altar to represent the "Path to Enlightenment".

Sister Liu Hui Qing said emotionally, "It was such a joyful feeling to have the birds watching us from the sky as we performed the ceremony."

This year, members of the public who wished to join the ceremony, had to learn the full ceremonial movements through a series of rehearsals, as well as, observe 100 vegetarian meals. They also had to purchase a light green PET shirt which they had to wear for their formation of the "Bodhi leaves" image.

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It was not an easy task but with determination and perseverance, the volunteers managed to achieve their mission of soliciting 10,000 people to observe 1,000,000 vegetarian meals through this activity.

This year has been designated the "Great Repentance Year". With reverence, Tzu Chi volunteers celebrated Buddha's Birthday by observing vegetarian fasting and upholding precepts. In addition, they must also do three good deeds - say good words, do good deeds, and think good thoughts - to collect blessings for themselves, their parents and family, as well as, all living beings.

Zheng Dai Di from Serdang proudly announced, "I have observed the 100 vegetarian meals." Dai Di promised to continue being a vegetarian.



Master Cheng Yen opened the Repentance Dharma-Door in Tzu Chi's 45th Year because it is the most effective way of saving the ailing Earth, and minimizing the onslaught of natural or man-made disasters. It is time for everyone to know about the Law of Cause and Effect (Karma), and to understand that doing good deeds will help to reduce the collective force of negative karma, a force that creates the many disasters that had occurred. We must observe vegetarian fasting with reverence as a way to show our repentance.

Getting close to the Buddha's heart

"Every religion has its own festivals and ceremonies." Master Cheng Yen hopes that through such ceremony, Buddha's Day will be as widely known as Christmas Day.

The ceremony began with the song, "Praise the Triple Gems", and participants were seen marching into the site orderly in steady steps. This was followed by the offering team making their offer of lights, fragrant water and flowers. After that, participants went forward to the altar to pay their respect to the Buddha by "touching the Buddha's feet" and "picking up a piece of flower".

The act of touching the Buddha's feet is meant to remind us to rid ourselves of arrogance and to be humble; and the act of picking up a piece of flower, signifies that we have picked up the Buddha's virtues.

The song "Our Earnest Prayer" was sang towards the end of the ceremony, hoping for minds to be purified, society to attain harmony and the world to be free from disasters.

Best present for the mothers



Engineer Hou You Quan, who started observing vegetarianism six months ago, had eagerly

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waited for this day. He said, "I am not lonely anymore because here I saw the unity of many people who had made this ceremony a great success." You Quan, who visited Tzu Chi in Hualien recently, said, "In the past, I practiced Buddhism for my own benefit; in Tzu Chi, I have learnt that I must work for others and I must practice it in my daily life."

"This is an effective way for reflection. I have repented for my past wrongdoings when I prayed."

You Quan would occasionally join the Volunteers' Assembly held in Hualien Jing-Si Abode via video conferencing at Puchong Community Centre before going to work. He considers the assembly as his morning Dharma class, and in the evening, he does self-reflection as his evening Dharma-class.

Sister Lin Chia Hua's two children thought that attending the ceremony was the best way to celebrate Mother's Day with their mother, who was the ceremony's Coordinator.

May 8 was also the birthday of Brother Lee Kok Keong's 73-year old mother. Since his whole family, his parents, his sister and brother-in-law are all volunteers, they chose to celebrate their mother's birthday after the ceremony.

Eighty-six year old Liang Bi Zhen came with her sister, Liang Jing Zhen. Though she looked very fragile, her fervent prayers were truly touching. She said she prayed for no rain that day, for world peace and good health for everyone.