

Tzu Chi Celebrates Buddha Day Around the World

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On May 12, Tzu Chi volunteers in 36 countries around the world celebrated Buddha Day. A total of 317,000 people took part in 355 ceremonies of bathing the Buddha, in a spirit of gratitude toward society. They also celebrated Mother's Day and Tzu Chi Day, the 47th anniversary of the foundation. The three celebrations were combined into a single event.

The first ceremony was held at 7.00 a.m. at the Jing Si Hall in Hualien, home of the foundation, under the leadership of Master Cheng Yen and 94 Dharma Masters from the Jing Si Abode. It was attended by more than 3,000 people, including representatives from the foundation, the Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center, Tzu Chi University, Tzu Chi College of Technology, Tzu Chi's middle and primary Schools and Da Ai Television. Also present were those who lead the four missions of the foundation, teachers and students, volunteers from Hualien and members of the public. In addition, representatives came from the Hualien County Government, Police Bureau and Fire Brigade and local companies.

During the previous seven days, rain had been falling continuously in Hualien. As people gathered for the event, the sky was grey and a light rain was falling. Volunteer Chen Ji-dai said: "Although it has been raining all the time, we have no time to worry. Everyone is concentrating on finding their right position. Today this kind of light rain makes us very grateful. On this day, when we combine these three anniversaries, my heart is full of sincerity to bath the Buddha."



The ceremony began to the rhythmic sound of bell. Everyone joined together to chant 'Praise for Incense'. Miraculously, the rain that had been falling since the early morning stopped and gave way to a sky full of fleeting clouds.

The 94 Dharma Masters walked in perfect step from the door of the Jing Si Hall, chanting a song of prayer. They passed through a forest of green bamboo and walked down the slippery steps; solemnly, they came forward and took their places in the square, a symbol of bringing the teaching of the Jing Si doctrine to the public.

Lu Ci-yue said: "This is the year of 'the Spirit of the Lotus Sutra'. From March 15, Da Ai Television began to broadcast the 'Wisdom at Dawn' program, which contains the expounding of Lotus Sutra. This is based on the exposition of the Lotus Sutra by Master Cheng Yen. After the Buddha Day ceremony, the study meetings of 'Innumerable Sutras' will begin. This is one of the three parts of the Lotus Sutra."

Among them was a team of students from the Tzu Chi Technical College wearing Aboriginal costume and members of the Hualien County Fire Brigade; the red color on their uniform was a

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bright star among those at the ceremony.

*“Oh, Buddha
With millions upon millions of our prayers
Let us offer our hearts with mercy
And the Master's love in mind”*

As everyone sang ‘Our Earnest Prayer’, they raised their lotus lamps and shone a light on the world. The thick clouds in the sky were driven away by the wind. Three thousand people came together to sing with a single voice and pray to the heavens. Like the flying Bodhisattvas, everyone vowed to spread the blessings of gratitude among people.

