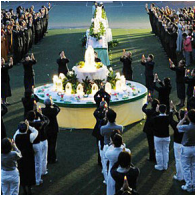


Tzu Chi Celebrates Buddha Day in United States

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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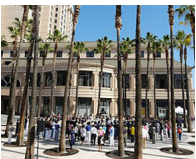
Members of several chapters of the foundation in North America held ceremonies on May 9 to mark the birthday of the Buddha.

New York

In New York, the event was held in Columbus Park, at the same time as the main event in the foundation's headquarters in Hualien, and was attended by 820 people. It was an exhausting day for the volunteers who had worked for 12 hours non-stop in the park to have everything ready; in the morning they faced winds and heavy rain. But everything was in place by 1930 U.S. Eastern time, the same moment that the Hualien ceremony began.

The event attracted people of different races and languages, including a mother and her two daughters from Haiti. For them, the event had a special significance. "[Master Cheng Yen](#) is like a mother to me," the mother said. "She helped our people in Haiti a great deal and her volunteers assisted us with everything. We are truly thankful to her." The participants were outside in the cold, but their hearts and prayers lit up the night sky over Manhattan.

San Francisco



Other ceremonies were held in San Francisco, where volunteers took a statue of the Buddha to the Yee Hong Center for Geriatric Care, so that the residents could take part and share the experience. Most of the residents are not Buddhist and may not understand the ritual but their prayers were very sincere. While some are bed-ridden or confined to a wheelchair, their faces lit up when they saw the statue. One lady bowed three times, as she made her offering. One lady resident, Ms Wang, will be 90 years old next month. The volunteers also held a ceremony at the Dr Martin Luther King Jr Academic Middle School, in an area with a large Asian community. It is close to the Tzu Chi Academy.

San Jose

In San Jose, the volunteers held the event outdoors in a beautiful natural setting, suitable for honoring the Buddha's birthday. "This year we will be singing on stage for the first time," said volunteer Zhang Fuying. "It is definitely a new experience." Children as well as adults joined the choir. In Chicago, the volunteers held a press conference, to spread the world about the importance of the birthday to a wide American audience.