

Buddha Day: Repaying Kindness

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Thursday, 12 May 2016 16:15



Every year, we celebrate the three occasions of Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Tzu Chi Day all together on the 2nd Sunday in May. In celebrating the three occasions as one, we hope to achieve a harmonious society by educating the general public to do good, be filial to their parents, and repay the Buddha's kindness.

This year, around the world on May 8th, Tzu Chi volunteers celebrated Buddha Day. They worked mindfully and very hard to prepare for the Buddha Day Ceremony. They participated in the ceremony with sincerity and treated the whole event as spiritual cultivation. This year, our large-scale Buddha Day Ceremony in Taipei, Taiwan was held simultaneously at two locations: the Taipei City Hall Plaza and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall Plaza. Thanks to the convenience of modern technology, the emcee of the ceremony was able to synchronize the activities at the two locations through satellite transmission from the Da Ai TV station building several kilometers away. Although the ceremony was held at two different locations, it was very beautiful and solemn.

However, the purpose of the annual Buddha Day Ceremony is not only to present a beautiful and solemn formation for people to see. It embodies important values that we wish to share with the public. The Buddha came to our world to expound the Dharma and to relieve all living beings from suffering by nurturing everyone's compassion and love, so that people can awaken to life's truth and be living bodhisattvas who can feel others' pain as their own and reach out to help those in need. We're very grateful to the Buddha for this.

On this occasion, we also take this opportunity to inspire people to be grateful to their parents. Mother's Day is also Parents' Day, since raising a child takes both the mother and father's hard work, love, and dedication. So, we work hard to raise people's awareness of what it means to be filial and to encourage them to act out their compassion and do good. For example, right after the Buddha Day Ceremony, volunteers in many places held feet-washing activities for children to wash their parents' feet or tea serving ceremonies as a way for participants to show their appreciation to their parents.



In many parts of Taiwan, Tzu Chi volunteers brought the concept of repaying parents' kindness into prisons. During the visiting hours for Mother's Day, we created a program for prisoners who had defied their parents and hurt them deeply to participate in a sign language presentation of *The Sutra of Profound Gratitude to Parents*

. In rehearsing and presenting this sutra adaptation, many inmates were touched, repented deeply from the bottom of their hearts, and expressed their regret to their parents for the wrongs they had done.

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This is a skillful means to guide people to learn the Buddha's teachings. If we speak only profound principles to people, they'll think of the Dharma as religious dogma. However, if we express the teachings in a gentle way through a presentation and give of ourselves with genuine love and sincerity, people will be touched. Once the seeds of love have been sown in people's hearts, they will be able to serve their local communities with love.

On the occasions of Mother's Day, Buddha Day, and Tzu Chi Day, we hope everyone will carry out the spirit of filial piety to their parents and do good deeds. Through the Buddha's teachings, we hope to purify people's hearts, achieve a harmonious society, and bring about a world free of disaster.

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