

In Penang, 30,000 Watch Tzu Chi Performance of Sutra

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On February 16, in the city of Penang in western Malaysia, 30,000 spectators watched a performance of the sutra that is the essence of Tzu Chi philosophy. It was the climax of a tour over four years in nine states in peninsula Malaysia, during which more than 70,000 people saw the presentation.

The Penang event was the highlight of the 2013 New Year Grand Blessing Ceremony. With real life story as the background, 1,690 performers participating in sign language performance, choir singing, stage drama, dharma drum and verses of incense praise, to expound this doctrine of “The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings”, to transpire people innate nature and for people to appreciate the true essence of Buddha’s Teachings.

It was an inspiring evening for the spectators who saw a dramatization of the teachings of the Dharma. It presented a three-dimensional rendering of the Dharma ship. It was a fulfillment of the ideal that tens of thousands of people come together. When one eye sees, thousands of eyes will see together, when one hand moves, thousands of hands move together.

“The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings” is the heart of the Dharma of Tzu Chi and the essence of the Jing Si Dharma Lineage. It was first turned into a sign language concert set to music and performed in 2007, with the theme “Purity, Great Love and Innumerable Meaning”, in Taiwan. Volunteers from Malaysia saw the performance and were deeply moved; they decided to perform the concert themselves at home.

After three years of preparation, they started a tour in 2009, with 24 performances in 10 locations in peninsula Malaysia. This not only showed the spectators their mission of Great Love for humanity but also changed the conduct and thinking of the performers themselves.



This is how the volunteers explained the meaning. Lim Ci-xuan said: “because we have real life examples that bear witness to the dharma teachings, it makes it easy for the audience to understand the profound meaning of the doctrine. Through such modern adaptation and presentation, it is a simplified way to enable the audience to have a deep insight into the spirit of Tzu Chi’s dharma lineage.” Goh Ci-hui said: “It is unlike the past. This time the dharma ship could move slightly. Its purpose is to liberate sentient beings and deliver them to the shore of deliverance. Everyone on board the dharma ship must stay united, because, with one wrong step, the entire ship will head to the wrong direction.”

To create this dharma ship with 500 performers on 21 levels of staircases in an orderly manner required 20 assistant instructors from different localities. They guided the volunteers to practice diligently in their respective places, so that they were well versed with the hand gestures during

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normal practice. Then, during the group rehearsals, they focused their attention on the movements. This is a way to comprehend the doctrine fully through physical action and inner cultivation. Goh Ci-hui said: “physically what we see is their talent in performing. But actually walking on the staircases to form the shape of a ship is a way of spiritual enhancement through mental concentration and constant practice.”

Emulating Guan Yin Bodhisattva’s 1,000 eyes and 1,000 hands, a congregation of hundred performers embodied three Guan Yin Bodhisattvas. During the 2013 Auspicious New Year Blessing Ceremony, Tzu Chi volunteers in Penang brought together innumerable thoughts of kindness, to pray for a world free of disasters and sufferings.