

Volunteers Prepare Year-End Red Envelopes of Wisdom and Blessing

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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On October 2, Tzu Chi volunteers began to prepare the red envelopes of Wisdom and Blessing which the foundation gives out at ceremonies at the end of the year. The design this year was inspired by the Water Repentance sutra which members performed in August, 2011; at the centre of the envelope is a statue of the Buddha and next to it a memorial coin and a drop of water.

The work began in the Jing Si Hall in Hualien, where 45 volunteers gathered under the guidance of Dharma Master De Ying and two other masters who live in the Jing Si Abode. It was Master De Ying who designed this year's envelope. She was inspired by the performers of the adaptation of the Water Repentance sutra, a text more than 1,000 years old, that was brought to life in a stage adaptation. She saw how each performer sang the song of 'Incense Praise' and made a journey together to the spiritual mountain; each learnt the sutra. They were like small ants who climbed the sacred mountain of Sumeru in Buddhist cosmology. Master De Ying was amazed by what she saw and wanted to put her feeling into the design of this year's envelope. It is the foundation's custom to design such red envelopes and distribute them at the end of each year to members and friends.



At the beginning, Master De Ying played a video of how to make the envelopes and what is the meaning of them. In a soft voice, she explained: "this year, the envelope contains an envelope, an earth-shape card, a memorial coin, three ears of rice and a gold string." In the centre is the Buddha, the 'Enlightened One of the Cosmos', a symbol of how Tzu Chi people walk on the middle path; behind the Buddha is the orbital path of planets in our solar system with reference to the date when Tzu Chi was founded – March 24, 1966 according to the lunar calendar. The three ears of rice stand for precepts, meditation and wisdom; they also mean 'listen, contemplate and practice'. The Buddha statue sits above a two-storey platform that represent that the dharma assembly will never end; when the envelope is folded, the head of the Buddha appears in the center of the water drop. The design this year is more complicated than that of last year; it is three-dimensional and more solemn.

Master De Ying urged everyone not to work in a hurry but carefully fold and put the pieces together. "The higher the degree of difficulty, the greater the fulfillment," she said. In the beginning, the volunteers found it very difficult to follow the instructions and make the three-dimensional spiritual platform. The three Dharma Masters showed them again and again how to do it. It was a moment of great joy for each volunteer when he or she completed their first 2012 Red Envelope of Wisdom and Blessing.

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By hand, they made 10,000 red envelopes for the year-end. Each envelope is a beautiful work of art, filled with wisdom and blessing for the new year. A little waste of paper is a big waste of paper.