

Tzu Chi Celebrates Buddha's Birthday Around the World

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On Sunday, the Tzu Chi foundation celebrated the birthday of the Buddha and its own anniversary at ceremonies around the world. More than 260,000 people took part in 285 events in 32 countries and regions. “We remember that, over 2,500 years ago, Sakyamuni Buddha was born,” said [Master Cheng Yen](#) in a speech to mark the day. “It was because such a being came into this world that the world’s suffering beings are able to find the path to awakening, so that we can now walk correctly in this direction.”

In Hualien, the headquarters of the foundation, the ceremony was held early in the morning. At five o'clock, while the sky was still dark, people began to wait outside the imposing Jing Si Hall. At seven, its large doors swung open. Nuns who live with Master Cheng Yen conducted the Buddha day ceremony, with the Master herself watching the proceedings from the fourth floor. The ceremony was held in an atmosphere of reverence and solemnity.

The biggest event was held at the Chiang Kai-shek memorial in central Taipei, where nearly 40,000 people participated; they included President Ma Ying-jeou, Prime Minister Wu Den-yih, foreign diplomats, heads of major Taiwan companies, senior monks and nuns and people from all walks of life, including the military, police officers, firemen, taxi drivers and those who make cosmetics. The main event was held after dark, creating a dramatic visual effect; the blackness of the sky contrasted with the blue and white uniforms of the volunteers and the sparkling white pools which contained small statues of the Buddha. The participants took turns to bow and dip fingers in the water, taking hold a small bud of the flower and holding their palms together. The dipping of the fingers in the water symbolized touching the feet of the Buddha; the fragrance of the water, a symbol of the virtue of the Buddha remained with the participant, in the same way that he hopes the virtue of the Buddha will rest in his heart. The ceremony was meticulously arranged and also conducted with solemnity and reverence.

Other ceremonies to wash the Buddha were held by volunteers around the world, including Hong Kong, mainland China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, the United States and Bolivia.



The Second Sunday in May

The second Sunday in May marks the birthday of the Buddha, the Tzu Chi foundation and Mother's Day. The foundation was founded on March 24, 1966, according to the lunar calendar; but, on its 30th birthday in 1996, this anniversary was changed to the second Sunday in May, so that Global Tzu Chi Day would fall on the same day as the other two important dates. In 2000, the government of Taiwan designed the second Sunday in May as Buddha Day in Taiwan.

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[05/09/2010 Celebrating Buddha Day, Mothers Day, and Tzu Chi Day](#)