

Preparation for "Dharma As Water" Performance by Children

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Since the start of the "Dharma As Water" performance activity in August, the children of Melaka Da Ai Educare have become more aware of their behaviour. They admit their misbehaviour and beg for forgiveness readily; and they also remind each other to be good.

We had bade farewell to the 20th century, only to usher in a new century that is filled with more natural and man-made disasters. Master Cheng Yen has earnestly advised that the only way to slow down the destruction rate of our planet Earth is for all human beings to repent for mistreating it.

In August 2011, Tzu Chi Taiwan staged 24 performances of the "Dharma As Water: Great Repentance" Sutra Adaptation. It is their fervent hope that the Repentance Dharma will spread from Taiwan to the rest of the world.

Tzu Chi Melaka's kindergarten, Da Ai Educare, will also stage a mini Sutra Adaptation for their upcoming graduation ceremony for 6-year old students in November, 2011. The selected songs are "Spread the Practice of Repentance Dharma Door (chan hui fa men guang yan)", "To Repent Wrongdoing One After Another (yi yi chan hui)" and "To Make Vows with Utmost Sincerity (zhi cheng fa yuan)". These songs will be performed by the 4, 5 and 6 years olds respectively.



Teacher Bee Yong Chin was assigned to explain to the children the songs' lyrics at their weekly assembly. She used many daily life examples to explain to the children and make them understand the profound verses in the songs. When asked, many children realized their wrongdoings and begged for forgiveness.

As an example, when explaining the meaning of: "Repent for not being able to get out from deep-rooted passionate desires", she asked the children, "Do you like to buy new toys?" and "Do you fight with your siblings for attention from your parents?"

Besides Teacher Yong Chin's explanations at the weekly assembly, the class teachers also allocated their time to provide further explanations in their classes.

Since the start of this activity in August, the children have become more aware of their behaviour; and they also remind each other to be good. One day, 4-year old Peng Yi Lin walked to the front of the classroom and begged for forgiveness from her teacher and classmates because she was obstinate and had talked too loud earlier.

On one occasion, three students from Teacher Koh Siew Tin's class were seen playing at the

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back of the classroom and teasing other classmates. Later, Teacher Siew Tin told the class, "Those who disturbed others just now, please stand up to admit your mistake and I will forgive you." Shamefully, the three students stood up and repented to their fellow classmates, who replied in unison, "We forgive you!"



To test the children's honesty, a teacher told her students not to cover their answers during their English spelling test. The teacher saw two students peeping at the next table's answers during the test. Later, she gave the class a chance to repent. To her surprise, two other students, who were not the ones she spotted, stood up to confess and agreed to erase the answers they had copied. The teacher forgave them. The two guilty students spotted by the teacher also felt ashamed and asked for forgiveness.

Five-year old Li Ji Rong cannot converse well with the other students in the school. He used to be bad tempered and stubborn. For this reason, the teacher constantly reminded him of the story about Dharma Master Wu Da and the seriousness of karmic retribution. Slowly, he began to change; and one day, he told the teacher, "Teacher, I want to repent for accidentally eating a piece of meat yesterday!" After repentance, he has become more careful with his food.

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For more than three months now, the 114 students and all the teachers have gone vegetarian, observed precepts and studied the Dharma. It is sincerely hoped that the little Bodhi seeds will influence many more people.

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