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## Buddha's Light New York



[www.fgsny.org](http://www.fgsny.org)

Edition #2

January — February 2022

## Welcome to the 2nd issue of Buddha's Light New York Bimonthly Magazine!

With the start of the new year, January and February were busy months for Buddha's Light International Association! To celebrate the Lunar New Year, BLIA decorated New York's Fo Guang Shan Temple with lanterns and a vegetarian window display. BLIA was also invited to Mayor Eric Adams' first ever Lunar New Year celebration at Gracie Mansion!

BLIA also promoted interfaith collaboration by leading a prayer at Mayor Eric Adam's first Interfaith Breakfast and sponsoring the 10th anniversary of "World Interfaith Harmony Week," bringing together faith leaders to inspire people around the world to advance the cause of developing a culture of peace.



Fo Guang Shan New York Temple

# BLIA in the Community



Packing Auspicious New Year bags to distribute to the community



Donating supplies to former Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams



Donating masks to New York City Health and Hospitals



Hosting a COVID-19 Vaccine Drive

## Executive Board

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**Design:** Angelina Sun

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*“Let The Dharma Water Flow Across All Five Continents”*



Fo Guang Shan Monastery in Kaohsiung, Taiwan

**Fo Guang Shan** (or Buddha's Light Mountain) is an international Chinese Mahayana Buddhist organization and monastic order based in Taiwan. Founded in 1967 by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the order promotes Humanistic Buddhism and works to unite all Buddhist schools and sects.

The objectives of Fo Guang Shan are to foster talents through education, to propagate Buddhist teachings through cultural activities, to benefit society through charitable programs, and to purify human hearts and minds through Buddhist practice.

To date, it has established over 300 temple branches worldwide. More than 1,300 monastics serve in the Fo Guang Shan Order.



Fo Guang Shan Museum

## Did You Know?

Fo Guang Shan's headquarters is located in Kaohsiung, Taiwan and is the country's largest Buddhist monastery, encompassing over 600 acres. It is also one of the largest charity organizations in Taiwan.

# Lunar New Year Promotes Healthy Vegetarian Culture



Fo Guang Shan New York Temple celebrates every Chinese New Year with a new first-floor window display. This year's theme is "Vegetarian Culture," introducing vegetarian versions of must-have Chinese New Year dishes and popular Fo Guang Shan vegetarian recipes.



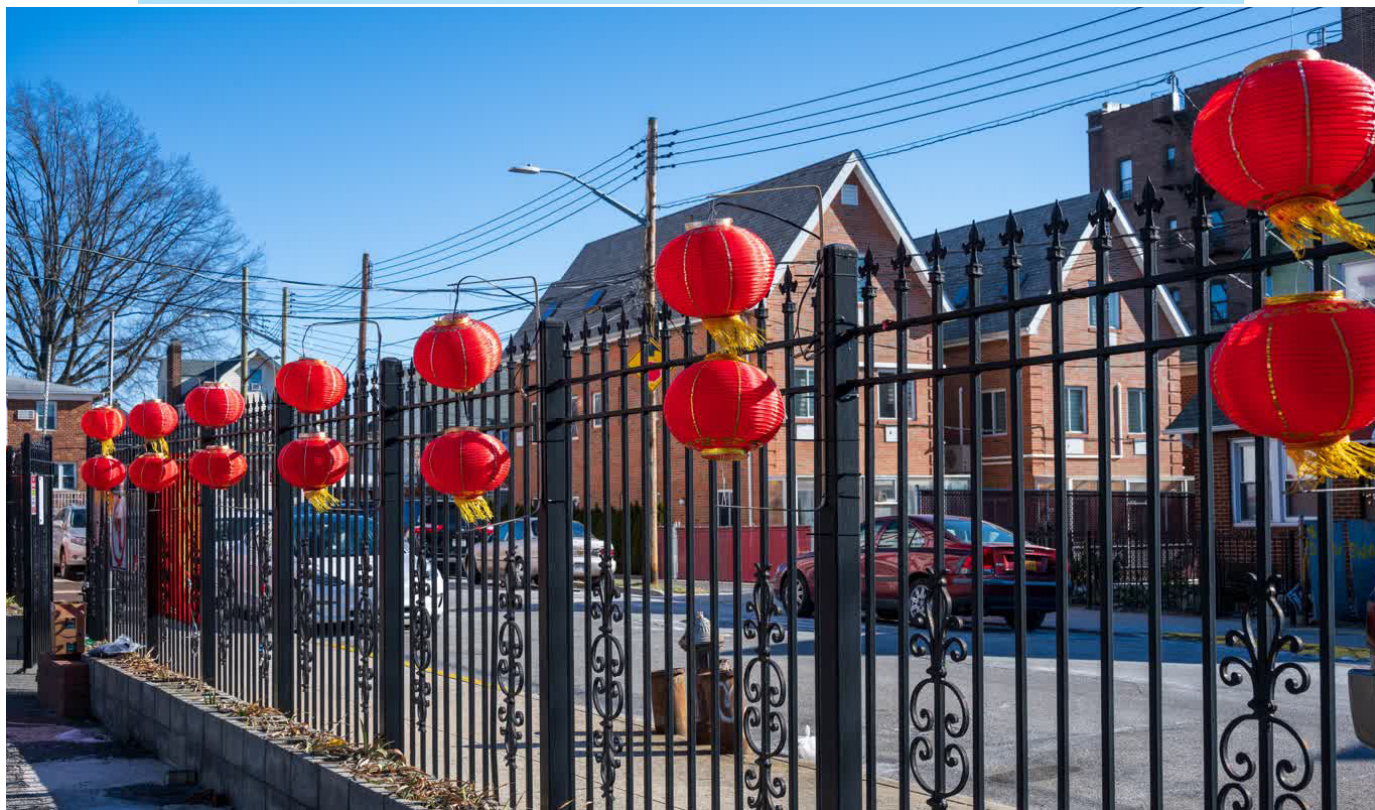


Venerable Master Hsing Yun has stated that vegetarian food contributes toward saving the planet and cultivating compassion. The cooking of Fo Guang Shan vegetarian food is simple, healthy, and convenient.

BLIA's Vege Plan is a movement towards promoting zero hunger, combating climate change and global warming, and achieving sustainable consumption and production. Since the United Nations reported that a global transition to vegan food is the key to reducing climate change, everyone is invited to visit [www.vegdays.org](http://www.vegdays.org) and pledge to join the vegetarian movement!



# The Buddha's Light Radiates From Within Our Hearts



Fo Guang Shan's "2022 Spring Lantern Festival" kicked off on February 1st with a display of beautiful lanterns throughout the temple. The lighting of lanterns symbolizes the Buddha's light, radiating a bright energy from the heart, supporting one another, building confidence, and uniting the community. Due to the pandemic, Venerable Yung Ku, Abbott of Fo Guang Shan New York Temple, believes that lighting up the New Year lanterns are particularly meaningful at this time.

This lantern festival is based on the New Year's message written by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, "Faith is power. Let us no longer be afraid. Living in peace with all beings is the way to happiness." This year, Fo Guang Shan Temple invited people to come together online and pray for humanity to be free from disasters, the country to be full of prosperity, and the people to remain in safety.





# Religious Leaders Inspire Others to Live a Life of Compassion and Love



Buddha's Light International Association and United African Congress celebrated the 10th anniversary of "World Interfaith Harmony Week" with a virtual forum on "Faith and Spiritual Leadership to Combat Stigma and Conflict During Pandemic Recovery." The February 3rd event invited many distinguished civil society partners and leaders from various religious organizations.

Given that the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges on a global scale, this year's theme brings together faith leaders to inspire people around the world to advance the cause of developing a culture of peace.

Dr. Judy Kuriansky, of the International Association of Applied Psychology, welcomed speakers and participants to the forum. UNSRC Enlightenment Society's Rev. Zoe Chang led a

prayer for faith leaders to be empowered with the strength, wisdom, and courage to be the bridges between all faiths and build a more just and peaceful world.

Felipe Queipo, Communications Officer at the UN Department of Global Communications, stated that the challenges in 2022 are more ideological and geopolitical. It is necessary to engage in international relations and the spirit of cooperation, dialogue, and diplomacy with different religious organizations.

COVID-19 has not only threatened the lives of people around the world, but also claimed over 6 million lives. As a result, some Asian groups have suffered from discrimination and stigma of spreading the virus. BLIA's Venerable Hui Dong stressed that no group of people is more likely to spread the coronavirus than others.

## Build a Beautiful World with Mutual Respect and Love



To combat the pandemic and promote well-being, it is crucial to eliminate stigma and conflict. Religious leaders can play an important role in building an interfaith bridge. Kindness comes from the depths of the heart and mind, through compassion, love, respect, and fairness.

For many years, in order to promote harmony among different religions, Venerable Hui Dong has held various interfaith activities, such as praying for world peace and planting trees to save the earth. It is hoped that through the concrete actions of working together, people can cultivate compassion and fairness in their hearts, eventually eliminating stigma and conflicts in

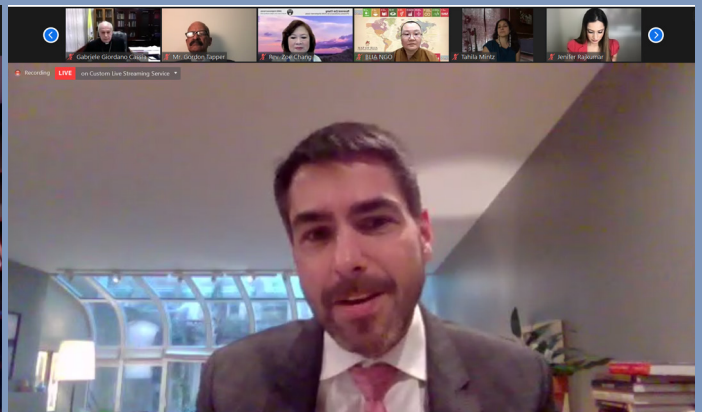


life, and jointly building a beautiful world of mutual respect and love.

Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiei, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has not only caused loss of life and devastating health and economic destruction, but it has also led to an increase in hatred and xenophobia. It has highlighted existing inequalities, particularly access to education, public health, and technology. Member States must work together to promote the values of tolerance, as well as interreligious and intellectual dialogue and coexistence.



H.E. Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiei



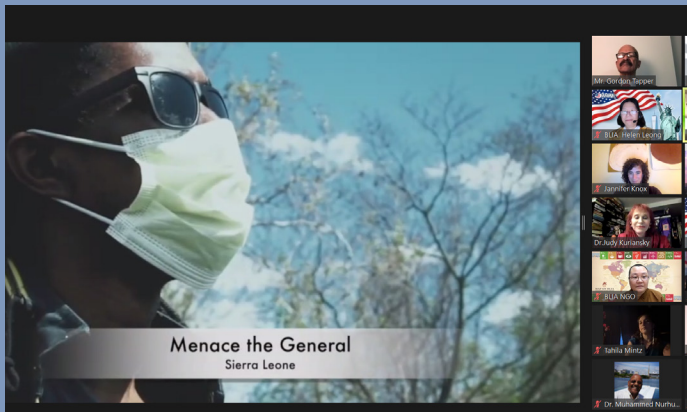
H.E. Ambassador Richard Arbeiter



H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia



H.E. Mr. Sidique Wai



Menace the General's Music Video "One Love"



Indonesian Music Award Winners Ungu and Lesti's Music Video



Composer Russell Daisey



Husband and Wife Duo Angelo and Veronica

Ambassador Richard Arbeiter, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, raised the concern that religiously motivated hate crimes are increasing rapidly. Leaders and community members must continually reflect on what an inclusive approach to international pandemic response looks like.

Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, pointed out that so much conflict stems from materialist ideology and the dangerous policy of unbridled greed and indifference, which is the reason why World Interfaith Harmony Week is so important.

Mr. Sidique Wai, Ambassador of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United States, stated no one is immune to Covid-19, but when we come together, we can fight it.

Other religious leaders of Member States who participated were Dr. Mohammed Nurhussein of the United African Congress, Dr. Imam Shamsi Ali

of the Nusantara Foundation of New York, Tahila Mintz of the Yaqui Nation, Rabbi Jill Hausman of the Actors' Temple, Swami Tyagananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, Reverend Dr. Craig Rubano of the Unitarian Universalists, NYS Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, Sepideh Behzadpour of the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is, and Gordon Tapper of United African Congress and Give Them a Hand Foundation.

The event also had performances, featuring Menace the General, a Sierra Leonean Musician, and his music video of "One Love." Husband and wife duo Angelo and Veronica sang a contemporary gospel song "The Prayer." Internationally renowned composer Russell Daisey performed "One in Faith," expressing our wish to be united as one family. Indonesian Music Award winners Ungu and Lesti presented a Muslim song of happiness and long-distance love for those welcoming Ramadan.

Gordon Tapper, President of United African Congress and Give Them a Hand Foundation,

emphasized the theme of “World Interfaith Harmony Week” as we slowly emerge from the pandemic. He stressed that human beings across all faiths need to act collectively and cooperate with one another. It is hoped that this type of cooperation and solidarity will begin the development of projects to strengthen relationships between communities and work towards the goal of peace.

Distinct acknowledgements were given to the Permanent Missions of Sierra Leone, Canada, Morocco, the Holy See, and the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations for their sponsorship, as well as to NGOs such as Buddha’s Light International Association, Nusantara Foundation, Give Them A Hand Foundation, International Association of Applied Psychology, United African Congress, and the United Nations Staff Recreation Committee Enlightenment Association.

Special thanks to the United Nations Office of the Buddha’s Light International Association, under the leadership of Venerable You Wang and volunteers Angelina Sun, Helen Leong, Judy Chiang, and Peter Hsu, for their efforts in event planning, conference discussions, registration, poster design, and technical assistance. The event was a success, inspiring and promoting the social and human good through interfaith advocacy, realigning the compassion compass of those who attended.



# Venerable You Wang Attends Mayor's First Lunar New Year Celebration

Venerable You Wang, along with other members of the Asian community, were invited to attend the Mayor's first-ever Lunar New Year Celebration hosted in New York City history. The February 8th ceremony was the first social event held at Gracie Mansion by Mayor Eric Adams. To celebrate the year of the Tiger, guests were treated to a Lion Dance performance and vegetarian food.

Special guests in attendance were Sandra Ung, Councilwoman for District 20, Commissioner Kevin D. Kim of NYC Department of Small Business Services, and Commissioner Penny Abeywardena of the Mayor's Office of International Affairs



Lion Dance Performance at Gracie Mansion



Venerable You Wang and Mayor Eric Adams



Venerable You Wang at the Mayor's Lunar New Year Celebration



Venerable You Wang presenting Master Hsing Yun's Calligraphy

# Cub Scouts Explore Fundamental Buddhist Concepts



Fo Guang Shan's Cub Scouts attended a "Three Good Children's Class." The class explored topics of "mercy and joy," "fortune cherishing and bond forming," and "repentance and gratitude." Illustrations, videos, and games further explained the three acts of goodness. Many children shared that they can speak good words when they have good thoughts in their hearts, and good words lead to good deeds.

Parents of the Cub Scouts said their children have improved their Buddhist knowledge after taking the Three Good Children's Class, and sometimes the whole family joins their children in front of the computer to learn more about Buddhism. Although the temple is currently closed, the parents feel comfort in seeing their children study the three good deeds. The parents are grateful to Fo Guang Shan Temple for presenting a course that helps develop their children's personalities and morals.

## Be Humble like Rice

- When rice is grows, it starts out straight and tall, strong and unbendable, with confidence and some arrogance.
- Once it's ready for harvest, the rice bends over and lowers itself to the ground, maturing and finding its humility.



## Learn Humility

1. Why did the Security know a lady was still inside and didn't go home yet?
2. What is the importance of learning humility from story?



# Venerable You Wang Leads Prayer of Success for Mayor Eric Adams



Mayor Eric Adams

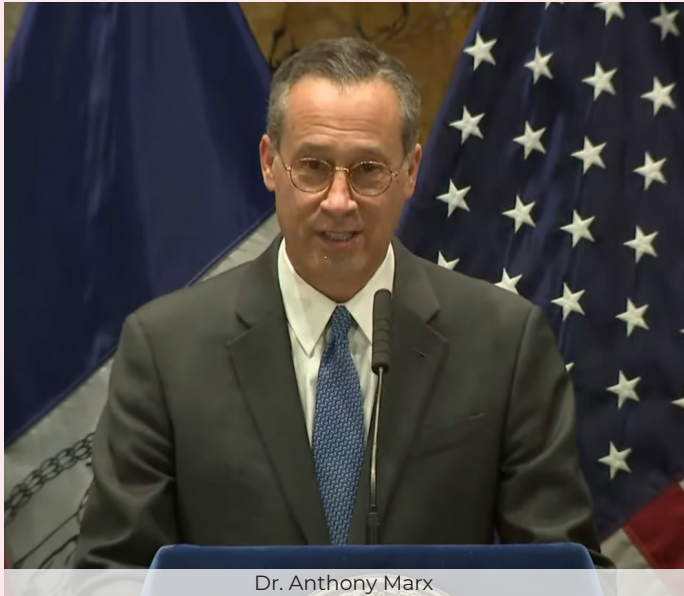
On February 10th, 200 faith leaders gathered at the New York Public Library for Mayor Eric Adams' first Interfaith Breakfast. Venerable You Wang, Director of the Fo Guang Shan New York Temple, was invited to represent the Buddhist faith.

Dr. Anthony Marx, CEO of the New York Public Library, kicked off the breakfast with a welcome speech, encouraging everyone to come together again at the library following 2 years of the pandemic. Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York also welcomed the diverse group of religious representatives. Dr. Ingrid Lewis-Martin of the New York City Mayor's Office shared a passionate welcome prayer on faith and community. The program provided a vegan breakfast to introduce new healthy options for all attendees.

Prayers were offered by seven religious representatives of different faiths. The first was Venerable You Wang presenting a prayer for the success of Eric Adams' new role as mayor. She also shared Venerable Master Hsing Yun's message for the Year of the Tiger, "In the year 2022, faith will be the strength needed to free us from fear and encourage all to coexist in peace. This is the true path to happiness and peace."

Other faith leaders offering prayers were:

Rabbi Baruch Yehudah, B'nai Adath Kol Beth Yisrael;  
Pastora Kenia Sabino, Heavenly Vision Christian Center;  
Vijah Ramjattan, The United Madrassi Association;  
Dr. Tahir Kukaj, Albanian Islamic Cultural Center;  
Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, Congregation B'nei Yitzchak;  
Marilynn Johnson, New York City Baha'i Community;  
Jatinder Singh, Gurdwara, The Sikh Cultural Society, Inc.



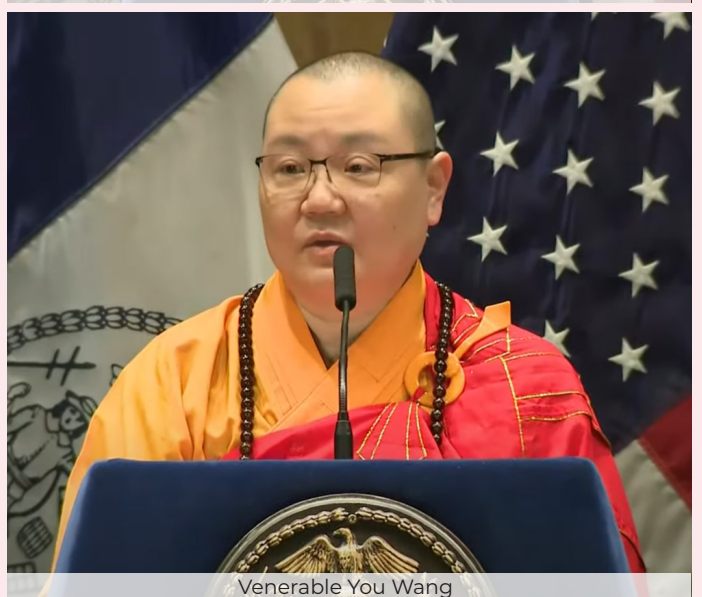
Dr. Anthony Marx



Cardinal Timothy Dolan



Dr. Ingrid Lewis-Martin



Venerable You Wang

Mayor Adams shared his appreciation for all that faith leaders have done to support the people in their communities during the pandemic. He emphasized his understanding of the struggles and challenges people are facing. He asked faith leaders to “reabsorb the hope, the opportunities, the prosperity that makes who we are” focusing on “finding common grounds.” He aspired to be mayor of the city so he can do something to alleviate people’s suffering. He said that faith leaders should not just preach but be the change makers going into the communities, reaching out to the homeless youth and families, praying with them, and understanding ways to help improve their lives.

To better serve the people of the city, Mayor Adams announced the establishment of the “Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships,” a bridge for faith leaders across communities and cities. Pastor Gilford Monroe was invited to serve as the Executive Director due to his talent for bringing people together.

In his closing remarks, Pastor Monroe said this historic event welcomes faith leaders to connect and work together for the communities they serve. Rabbi Angela Buchdahl of Central Synagogue shared a song of hope to conclude the event.



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Fo Guang Shan New York Temple



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