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Buddha's Light New York

ETERNAL STAR

Sounds of the Human World

A Chamber Concert with
performances by Met Opera
Musicians and Friends



Edition #10

May-June 2023

Welcome to the 10th issue of Buddha's Light New York Bimonthly Magazine!

Every two months, we'll be giving you a glimpse into what *Buddha's Light International Association* has been working on!

From May to June, BLIA has been contributing towards a mission of equality and social progress around the world and the local community.

We held the baby blessing ceremony, the "Eternal Star" concert, and more activity that made our connection with people stronger.



BLIA in the Community



FGSNY holding Baby Blessing Ceremony



Transcription of the Heart Sutra on NYC Day of Prayer



Scouts conducting food drive event



BLIA presenting Eternal Star Concert

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佛光菜根譚



不計較「吃虧」，才能享有一個自在的生活；
不吝於「布施」，才能擁有一個富有的人生。

— 星雲大師 《佛光菜根譚》

If you don't mind being exploited, you are free.
If you aren't stingy, you are rich.

- Humble Table, Wise Fare
by Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Children Blessing Ceremony: A Joyful Celebration for Families



Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin giving words to parents and their children

On April 30th, Fo Guang Shan New York Temple held its first “Children Blessing Ceremony” after the pandemic. Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin led the ceremony, attracting nearly 50 families from Eastern and Western backgrounds to attend. The children attending the ceremony took part of the Refuge Ceremony, becoming godchildren of Guanyin Bodhisattva and representing the future and hope of Buddhism.

During the ceremony, Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin led the service with the “Heart Sutra” and the “A Prayer for a Child” and the “Taking Refuge in the Triple Gem” written by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. In Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s prayer, it was emphasized that Guanyin’s protection is sought for the babies: “May they find confidence and courage in times of setbacks and wisdom and strength in times of difficulties.” Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin adorned the children with peace beads, praying for their blessings and wisdom to flourish under Guanyin’s protection. Certificates were also presented to the children, and everyone prayed for the blessings and compassion of Guanyin.



Children playing games and gaining knowledge of the Three Jewels

BLIA's Radiance NY Chapter and the BLIA Young Adult Division organized games for Children and their parents to introduce the Three Jewels. The event aimed to foster family bonding, enhance children's wisdom, and create precious parent-child moments. President Jenny Chen highlighted the significance of becoming a godchild of Guanyin and taking refuge in the Three Jewels for Buddhists. She hoped that children would listen to their parents' teachings and lead wise, happy, and fulfilled lives. Preparations for the event were eagerly made after a four-year suspension due to the pandemic, said Karen Chao, the president of BLIA's Radiance NY Chapter. Through the blessings bestowed upon the children, the organizers aimed to bring families closer to Buddhism and foster proper parenting concepts.



Children and parents bringing happiness and blessing to home

Unfazed by the Rain: BLIA members Celebrated the Vesak at Columbia University



Venerable Youlin and BLIANY President Jenny Chen leading people from FGSNY attending the VESAK celebration

On April 29th, Venerable Youlin and Jenny Chen led ten people from the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York to attend the Vesak Day celebration organized by the Buddhist Council of New York (BCNY) and the Columbia University Buddhist Association (CUBA). This significant Buddhist festival united leaders and followers from various traditions, including Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, at Columbia University's Low Memorial Library.

The event was popular. The event commenced with Ven. Mingyu, President of the Buddhist Association of the United States (BAUS), led the chanting of the Heart Sutra. Rev. Doyeon Park, the president of the BCNY, delivered a warm welcome speech, extending her enthusiastic greetings to the attendees. Mohsen Mahdawi, President of the Columbia University Buddhist Association (CUBA), also welcomed everyone to the event. Various Buddhist groups presented captivating performances. The BLIA NY Chapter brought a choir performance of "Ode to the Triple Gem," with lyrics by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. President Jenny Chen and Jeremy, a young member from Buddha's Light International Association Young Adult Division, provided live accompaniment.



Venerable Youlin bathing the Buddha

The highlight of the event was the bathing of the Buddha ceremony, where attendees respectfully bathed the Buddha statue while Khensur Rinpoche chanted. Afterward, everyone moved to the exhibition hall for further interaction. Fo Guang Shan New York Temple had prepared Venerable Master Hsing Yun's works for participants to connect with.

Venerable Youlin expressed, "The enthusiasm of everyone cannot be dampened by heavy rain. I am delighted to see young people from various Buddhist organizations participating in the event. It signifies the continuity of Buddhism. If we do not differentiate between "you" and "me," there is hope for Buddhist unity." This event emphasized the core values of Buddhism, which are compassion, wisdom, and inner peace.



The BLIA NY members bringing a choir performance of "Triple Gem Chant" at Low Library, Columbia University

Light Offering and Blessings: New York City Mayor Initiates NYC Day of Prayer



Winnie Greco representing The New York City government presenting a certificate to FGSNY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, in partnership with religious groups in the greater New York area, recently launched the “NYC Day of Prayer” on May 4th. This special event aimed to unite diverse communities in praying for the well-being of New York City. Led by Venerable Chueh Lin, the Abbess of Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York, representatives from the New York City government participated in a light offering and sutra calligraphy, offering prayers for world peace and the safety and joy of the city.

During the event, four government representatives, including Winnie Greco, visited the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York to engage in spiritual activities. They were warmly welcomed by Venerable Chueh Lin, Jenny, president of the BLIA NY Chapter, and members of BLIA NY Chapter. Winnie Greco highlighted that this was Mayor Adams’ first “NYC Day of Prayer” initiative, which lasted from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mayor Adams encouraged leaders of religious organizations to draw upon the power of faith and belief, praying together within their respective traditions and practices. The aim was to foster coexistence and bring peace and happiness to New York City through the collective strength of religious



Abbess Venerable Chueh Lih giving words to the attendants

Winnie Greco, on behalf of the New York City government, expressed gratitude to Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York for its involvement in the NYC Day of Prayer. She emphasized the significance of religious groups and non-profit organizations working together as a unified family to better serve all New Yorkers. The event concluded with Winnie Greco presenting a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Mayor Adams to acknowledge and thank Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York for its contributions.



NYC officials and BLIA members transcribing the Heart Sutra

The Cub Scouts and Junior Girl Scouts: Unleashing the Potential of Team Collaboration



BLIA members, scouts, and parents gathering at Alley Pond Park for the annual New York Fo Guang Pack 754 Mini Olympics

On the occasion of the Lixia solar term in 2023, nearly 80 enthusiastic leaders, scouts, and parents from the New York Fo Guang Youth Scouts gathered at Alley Pond Park for the annual New York Fo Guang Pack 754 Mini Olympics.



Scouts in the bag playing the "Kangaroo Jump"



Children are participating in a tug-of-war competition

The event commenced with Jackie Wang, leader of the New York Fo Guang Cub Scouts, and Anna Zhuang, leader of the Junior Girl Scouts, reciting the Scout oath. Venerable Youlin from Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York warmly engaged with the children, offering blessings for the successful Mini Olympics. Activities included the “Kangaroo Jump” where scouts hopped in bags resembling kangaroos. The “Parent-Child Three-Legged Race” showcased parents and scout babies participating together. A relay race followed, with seamless baton exchanges. In the “Balanced Ping Pong,” children skillfully carried plates with ten ping pong balls. The atmosphere grew intense during the dodgeball game as players diminished. A lively water balloon fight ensued, and the Purple Team emerged as tug-of-war champions in the final event.

In the afternoon, Frank Yao, Vice President of the BLIA NY Chapter, delivered a speech summarizing the event and awarded medals to the winning teams. After the successful conclusion of the games, everyone followed the “Three Acts of Goodness” principle advocated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun by cleaning up the venue. Participants learned concepts such as cooperation, environmental protection, and taking good care of all creatures throughout the Mini Olympics.

Prominent Musicians Gather Together to Record the Buddhist Hymn “Ode to the Triple Gem”



Kathery Forng, Wen Qian, Dov Scheindlin, and Alberto Pattini recording the “Triple Gem Chant”

In April 2023, Buddha’s Light International Association World Headquarters (BLIA World) launched the project of recording a multilingual version of the “Ode to the Triple Gem.” The project was led by Jenny Chen, President of BLIA NY Chapter. On May 13th, President Jenny Chen gathered musicians from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, including Kathery Forng, Wen Qian, Dov Scheindlin, Alberto Pattini, as well as pianist Dr. Ling Leng from the Juilliard School and baritone Hao Jiang, winner of the Met Opera Laffont Competition, to record the accompaniment for the “Ode to the Triple Gem” at Flux Studios. The song, with lyrics by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, praises the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) and currently has versions in Chinese, English, Portuguese, and German.



Abbess Ven. Chueh Lin (6th one from right), Ven. Youlin (4th one from right), BLIANY President Jenny Chen (8th one from right), and the famous musicians

During the recording, Dov Scheindlin expressed his honor to be involved in recording such an important song. Hao Jiang proudly stated that he love this piece, and it reminds him of his grandmother who reveres the Triple Gem. Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin and Venerable Youlin from Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York also visited the recording site to greet the musicians. Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin described the “Triple Gem Chant” as a moving and spiritually purifying Buddhist hymn. Venerable Youlin mentioned that musicians from around the world gathering to record the chant made one feel the universality of music and confirmed Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s vision of “May kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity pervade all Dharma realms,” leaving a profound impression. President Jenny Chen joyfully expressed that having renowned musicians record the “Ode to the Triple Gem” elevated the artistic quality of humanistic music and introduced Fo Guang Shan to a broader audience. Finally, Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin presented the musicians with BLIA’s 30th-anniversary bookmarks as a gift.

Consecration and Inauguration Service of the Relic and Memorial Statue of Venerable Master Hsing Yun



Fo Guang Shan New York Temple participated in the ceremony through online live streaming

On May 14th, Fo Guang Shan held the Consecration and Inauguration Service of the Relic and Memorial Statue of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the Founding Master of Fo Guang Shan. The ceremony took place at the Patriarch's Shrine, Fo Guang Shan Sutra Repository, where the Master's relic and memorial statue were enshrined. Thousands of monastic disciples and followers escorted the Master on his final journey with devout hearts. During the ritual, Most Venerable Hsin Pau reverently held the Tower of Nirvana, which contained the Master's relic, while Most Venerable Hsin Ting held the Seat of Lotus, symbolizing the Master's awakened spirit. Over ten thousand people from around the world witnessed the solemn ceremony. Fo Guang Shan New York Temple participated in the ceremony through online live streaming and chanted "Praising the Master", praying for Venerable Master Hsing Yun's return in the future according to his vow.

Most Venerable Hsin Pau expressed that the Master's spirit is with us, and people can communicate with the Master and learn about his kind and compassionate heart through the 395 volumes of "The Complete Works of Venerable Master Hsing Yun." It is crucial to seize the present moment, strives to practice Humanistic Buddhism, and carry forward the faith. This is the greatest way to repay the Master's kindness.



Participants praying for Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Venerable Xinliang from Fo Guang Shan New York Temple said, “This ceremony touched me deeply. When I saw Most Venerable Hsin Pau holding the Master’s relic from Longevity Memorial Park to the Patriarch’s Shrine, I knew the Master had reached the other shore! I recalled a song I heard in 2017: ‘Who transformed my life? Who gave me wings to fly? Who let me roam the world? Who made my life colorful?’ Tears flowed involuntarily. It was the Master who gave me the opportunity to become a monastic, transforming my life and broadening my vision. It is Venerable Master Hsing Yun who gave me wings to fly and made my life colorful. I will continue the Master’s aspirations and continue to benefit sentient beings.”

Jenny Chen, President of the BLIA NY Chapter, said that the great Master has always been in her heart and has never left. The ceremony was solemn and gave a sense of bidding farewell to a loved one, which was very heartwarming. When She saw the Master’s relic arrive at the Sutra Repository, her tears fell uncontrollably, and her heart cried out, “Master,



Praying for Venerable Master Hsing Yun through transcribing the Heart Sutra

The Cub Scouts and Junior Girl Scouts food drive: Practicing “Three Acts of Goodness”



Children gathering and conducting the food drive event

The Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York Scout Troop hosted a “Scout Charity Food Drive” event on June 3rd and 4th. A group of 20 leaders, scouts, and parents gathered at Windsor Park for the event. Despite their young age, the scouts demonstrated their commitment to kindness, embodying the spirit of the Fo Guang Shan Scouts’ “Three Acts of Goodness” principles and fostering a sense of faith. Through the food drive, they aimed to spread love and compassion.

The scout parents set up tents and tables early in front of supermarkets, putting up posters and more. The young scouts held up the prepared posters and approached passersby to collect food donations. Everyone worked tirelessly, even when their voices grew hoarse, the children remained polite as they requested food donations from pedestrians. Children were enthusiastic about this activity because they knew they could help the needy, the sick in need of food, and the homeless. Many kind-hearted individuals generously contributed and showed their support. Some went to supermarkets specifically to purchase and donate various types of canned food, while others brought food from their homes. The table was filled with an abundance of food, a fruitful outcome indeed.



Children holding up the prepared posters and approached passersby to collect food donations

As the founder of Fo Guang Shan, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, once said, “Involvement leads to depth, dedication leads to excellence, the ordinary leads to extraordinariness, and practice leads to proficiency.” The charity food drive event exemplifies the practice of the “Three Acts of Goodness” principles advocated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun in daily life.



The table filling with an abundance of food

Scout Camping: Challenging Oneself



Scouts exploring Wildwood State Park

Over a hundred members including the scouts, parents, and volunteers embarked on a three-day, two-night camping trip to Wildwood State Park on May 27th. The purpose of this annual event was to learn basic wilderness survival skills such as fire building, knot tying, and hiking while promoting the concept of 'Leave No Trace' and environmental consciousness.

Cub Scouts leader Jackie Wang led the opening ceremony, emphasizing the importance of safety guidelines, environmental protection, and caring for the Earth with minimal impact. Leader Michael Chen demonstrated knot tying, patiently explaining each step to the scouts who then practiced in groups, acquiring essential survival skills.

Venerable Youlin of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York, and experienced scout leader Chen Liwen visited the campsite to provide a lecture on hiking. Venerable Youlin assigned a task to the scouts, challenging them to carry water while protecting an egg from breaking. She expressed that if one believes in their abilities, they can achieve anything. In life, everyone faces different challenges, and only by accepting them with courage can one become stronger. Chen Liwen hoped that the scouts would learn to live in the present moment, experiencing the harmony between their senses and body, attentively perceiving distant bird calls and the rustle of leaves beneath their feet.



Venerable Youlin visiting the campsite to provide a lecture on hiking and playing with the Scouts

During the campfire evening, the scouts performed a theatrical program. Venerable Youlin praised eight scouts who successfully completed their tasks. She emphasized that the egg represents life, urging everyone to respect life and others and to develop an attitude and sense of responsibility in their actions.



Scouts gathering together to listen to the class

“Global VEGRUN” Warms Up: Respond to Zero Carbon Emissions



BLIA NY's Flushing 1st Branch and Flushing 2nd Branch holding the “Global VEGRUN” at Kissena Park

To promote vegetarianism and environmental awareness, BLIA NY Chapter, Long Island Subchapter, Flushing 1st subchapter and Flushing 2nd Subchapter, held a pre-warm-up event for the “Global VEGRUN” on May 13th and June 3rd. The event took place at Kissena Park in Queens and included activities such as walking, light exercises, and meditation.

Despite the cool breeze in the air, the members remained enthusiastic and gathered early at the entrance of Kissena Park. The trail at the park was flat and suitable for elderly participants. The park walk aimed to continue the philosophy of VEGRUN, which promotes energy-saving and carbon reduction through walking, towards the goal of zero carbon emissions and making efforts for environmental protection.

Venerable Jue Rang combined yoga and Tai Chi exercises to lead the “light exercises,” effectively stretching the meridians and warming up the participants. The key point was that the light exercises were simple and easy to follow, even for elderly practitioners. After the light exercises, the members sat on the grass for meditation, facing the lake and accompanied by gentle music. They engaged in “mindful meditation” for 30 minutes, purifying their hearts and transforming their outward behaviors.



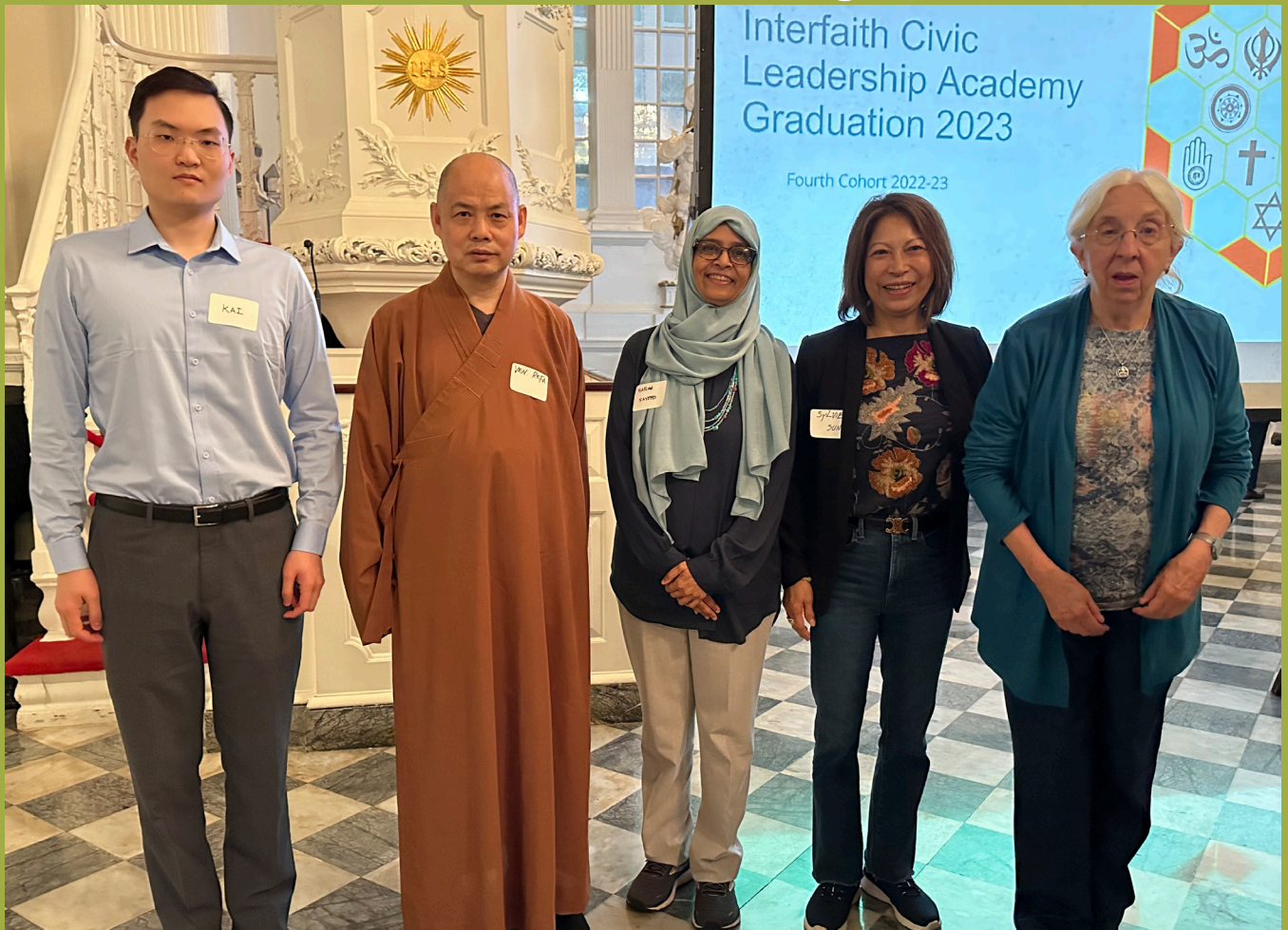
Venerable Jue Rang teaching the "light exercises"

With purified minds, the members walked around the beautiful lakeside scenery, following the path around the lake. Some preferred jogging, while others enjoyed walking. With mutual understanding and care, they made efforts to persevere and pursue the goal of using sports for charity. Following the principle of giving imparted by the founder of Fo Guang Shan, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, they exerted their strength together in the Vegerun charity run.



Members sitting on the grass conducting meditation

New York City: Embracing Diversity, Respecting Beliefs, and Helping the Community



Kai representing FGSNY to attend the Graduation and taking photo with (left-right) Ven. Refa, Sarah Sayeed, Sylvie Sun, Dr. Kusumita

The Interfaith Center of New York hosted the Interfaith Civic Leadership Academy Graduation on June 6th at St. Paul's Chapel. Kai Lee, representing the localization team of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York, attended the event. Around 40 participants, including New York City Council Member Shekar Krishnan and representatives from religious communities, were present.

Shekar Krishnan shared his personal journey of faith and how he draws strength from it in his keynote speech. Dr. Kusumita, Chair of the Interfaith Center of New York, highlighted the commonality among various faiths in guiding individuals to discover their goodness and brilliance.



Graduates of the Interfaith Civic Leadership Academy

Graduates of the academy expressed gratitude to the Interfaith Center of New York for offering this program, believing that through their learnings at the academy, they have gained a better understanding of how to use the power of faith to serve their communities. Representatives from different sectors shared their thoughts on the power of faith and New York's multiculturalism. The event emphasized the irreplaceable role of faith in civil society, emphasizing its power and aspiring for attendees to use this power to make New York a better place.

Kai Lee believes that it is this inclusive and embracing nature that has made New York a global city. People from all over the world come to New York, bringing their faith with them. In New York, people from diverse backgrounds respect one another because they share a common dream of living a better life. The faiths from around the world also engage in dialogue, as they share a common language of promoting goodness. This is the power of faith and a source of comfort for countless individuals who dream of a better life in a foreign land.

The Harmonious Collaboration Between Eastern Buddhist Chants and Western Musicians: “Eternal Star Concert”



NYC Mayor Eric Adams taking photo with famous musicians and FGSNY, BLIA NY members

In commemoration of the founder of Fo Guang Shan, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York and the BLIA NY Chapter organized the “Eternal Star” charity concert on June 9. The event featured a joint performance by the New York Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and various music artists. Through the healing power of music, the concert paid tribute to Venerable Master Hsing Yun, making it a remarkable and awe-inspiring musical feast. Approximately 500 audiences attended this grand event.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams attended the concert despite his busy schedule. He praised the wholehearted efforts of Fo Guang Shan in engaging in various charitable activities in New York City. Mayor Adams emphasized that through art, culture, and music, the power of music brings people together, transcending racial boundaries and national borders.

Renowned international musicians participated in the concert, including Raymond Riccomini, the Second Trumpet of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Erik Ralske, Principal Horn of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Broadway vocalist Christina Maxwell and Xiaoqing Zhang. With a strong lineup of musicians, they performed traditional “Humanistic Music” and world-famous compositions using organ, brass ensemble, and chamber music, providing a refreshing experience for the audience.



Renowned international musicians presenting at the concert

Venerable Master Hsing Yun once said, "Music can express the emotions of the human soul. A sacred melody or a devout Buddhist chant often elevates one's spirit to a pure and holy state." The "Eternal Star" concert aimed to uplift the audience's spirits while enjoying the music, embodying the true significance of the event."



Renowned international musicians telling Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Story through Music

Celebrating Father's Day: FGSNY Makes Cards and Cakes



Father's Day cards preparing by FGSNY and BLIA NY

On June 18th, the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple of New York held a Dharma service on Father's Day. Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin led the attendees in chanting the Diamond Sutra, celebrating Father's Day with nearly a hundred participants.

Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin mentioned that the Chinese nation values filial piety. She cited the five ways of being filial to parents taught by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan, and highlighted the hardships and difficulties faced by mothers during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as the challenges of raising children, as described in the Sutra of Filial Piety. This emphasized the importance of filial piety in Buddhism, with the Buddha himself being an exemplar of filial piety. Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin encouraged everyone to continuously and constantly practice filial piety.

After the Dharma service, a video created by Venerable Youlin, featuring the process of making cards and cakes by monastics and laypeople, was shown, creating a warm atmosphere. Subsequently, the attendees received the cards, cakes, gifts, and blessings one by one, bringing great joy to the fathers present. BLIA NY Chapter Elder Advisor Wang Qiaorong, shared that the Father's Day gifts offered in front of the Buddha were heartwarming. The personally signed congratulatory cards and exquisitely handcrafted and packaged cakes made by the monastics and volunteers truly reflected their heartfelt dedication.



Abbess Venerable Chueh Lin giving the card to the attendants



Attendants gathering at FGSNY to celebrate Father's Day



佛光山紐約道場

Fo Guang Shan New York Temple



國際佛光會紐約協會

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