

疫情中的敬老節

Honoring Elders Day Celebrated during the Pandemic

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2021年10月24日下午，萬佛聖城培德中學主辦了疫情中的第一次現場敬老節，向福居樓的長者們祝賀過節快樂。

從9月份起，培德中學男校和女校12年級的學生們就開始籌備敬老節。基於防疫考慮，中小學師生和福居樓的長者，自疫情以來，是分別處在不同的泡泡（活動範圍）內，彼此不能接觸。因此，舉辦這次的現場敬老節要考慮的因素特別多，包括觀眾人數、天氣、觀眾席的安排，還有場地的佈置。其後決定最保險的辦法，就是學生在室外表演，年長法師和照護者從落地玻璃門窗向外觀賞。變幻多端的氣候使得若干節目無法上場演出，由於考慮到安全問題和樂器的保護，因而取消的節目有女校的中國民樂，鋼琴合奏，和樂團。

經過老師們和12年級同學們的慎重考慮，女校最終決定推出中國民俗舞，琵琶古箏雙重奏、和女聲獨唱。男校保留了傳統的二十四節氣鼓，中國民樂和舞龍。回想去年線上的敬老節，男校因為疫情的關係，無法參加節目表演。因此，今年的小規模慶祝，給予男校主辦和繼續演出的機會。再者，去年線上的敬老節雖然邀請了許多不同地方的觀眾一起觀賞，但他們只能透過電腦屏幕觀看我們的演出。今年現場演出的熱鬧氣氛，帶給在場每一個人感恩和歡喜之心。

雖然當天飄著細雨，但我們還是

On the afternoon of October 24, 2021, Developing Virtue Secondary School hosted its first in-person Honoring Elders Day since the pandemic began to dedicate gratitude to the elderly nuns residing in the Tower of Blessings at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB).

Both the girls' and the boys' divisions started preparing for the event in early September. The planning posed more challenges for the organizers this year than in prior years due to COVID precautions and the resulting strict requirements with regard to safe interactions between the quarantine bubbles as required by CTTB. The school divisions are in different safety bubbles than those residing in the Tower of Blessing. Generally, as a result of these precautions, interactions between bubbles are kept to minimum. After deliberations with teachers, we carefully considered critical factors such as the number of attendees, weather, audience seating arrangements, and the stage set-up in relation to the audience. It was finally determined that it would be most prudent for the students to perform outdoors while the elderly nuns and their caregivers watched from behind the full length glass windows and doors in the entryway. Due to rain, some performances that involved many musical instruments had to be canceled, due to both the necessity to maintain safe distancing and to protect the musical instruments during the inclement outdoor weather. As a result, the Girls' Chinese Orchestra, the piano ensemble, and Girls' School band performances were canceled.

After careful discussion, the teachers and the high school seniors finally decided that the girls would offer a traditional Chinese dance, a pipa and guzheng duet, and a vocal solo performance. In their portion of the program, the boys offered the traditional 24 Seasons Drum, Chinese Orchestra, and dragon dance. For the celebration of Honoring Elders Day streamed online last year, the boys' school could not participate in the performance due to the pandemic. Thus, this year's small-scale in-person celebration gave them the opportunity to rejoin in the tradition. Moreover, although people were able to watch the performances through an online platform last year, their experiences were limited to viewing the screens from which the pre-recorded videos were streamed. Whereas this year, the in-person performances enlivened every participant, and evoked in them sincere gratitude and shared joy.

Even though it was drizzling during the event, the performers put

認真的在事前搭好的遮陽防雨棚下，表演我們準備的節目。女校的中國民俗舞和男校的舞龍，因為需要較大的演出空間，因此我們是到棚外，在細雨中盡情舞動，別有滋味。表演者和觀賞者都非常享受這個過程，法師們和聖城義工們在每一個表演項目後的熱烈掌聲，鼓舞了每一位表演者。我們除了自己娛樂，致敬長者之外，在我們的人生裡，又增添了美麗的篇章和難忘的回憶。

在表演的過程中，我們都很欣慰的看到，越來越多的老法師們都慢慢坐到了福居樓大廳室內觀眾席，隔著玻璃門觀賞我們的表演。到節目結束時，觀眾人數比我們期待的多了一兩三倍。自疫情爆發以來，福居樓的長者已不再接受晚輩的探訪。以前我們女校學生大家輪流，每週一次去陪同年長法師們鍛煉身體；每逢佳節我們也會準備小型節目，為年長法師們帶來節慶的歡樂氣氛；但新冠疫情改變了這一切。這次的敬老節，雖然以玻璃門相隔，但我們由衷希望，為年長法師們在疫情中的隔離生活，再度帶來額外的色彩。

這確實是一次特別的敬老節。但是與過去不同的是，這次慶典不是在大齋堂舉辦，也沒有邀請聖城外的長者一起參加，不像疫情前那樣的盛大。這次敬老節的規劃和實際的過程，是老師和同學們共同努力的結果，其中無數的考驗都在時時刻刻提醒我們要保持初心，用現有的條件去創造最大的可能性。雖然形式相對新穎，但所有參與策劃和演出的同學，都在為長輩們慶祝的過程中，學到了許多溝通的技巧，也有許多心得。我會永遠記得我們是秉承尊敬長輩的初衷，藉著表演的節目，來表達我們的敬意和感激。

這次因為天候因素不能上場演出的同學們，雖然感到很失望，因為練習了很久，卻沒有發揮的機會。但學校已經安排一場「線上敬老節」，將當天現場演出以及無法演出的節目，全部都搬到網上，讓更多人一起上線觀賞。有興趣的讀者，請到萬佛聖城培德育良中小學的網站，和我們同慶2021年敬老節：<https://igdvs.org>。🌀

on their best show under the performance tent. In particular, Chinese dance and Dragon dance took stage in the midst of the light rains. The Dharma Masters and volunteers cheered for each and every performance with great enthusiasm and appreciation. As for us, the performers, in addition to paying respect to our elders and offering entertainment to each other, we made an unforgettable memory.

As the performances progressed, we were delighted to see more and more elderly nuns gather in the audience which was seated in the lobby of the Tower of Blessings. As the show ended, we realized that the number in the audience doubled or even tripled our initial expectations.

Prior to the pandemic, girls' school students used to assist the elderly nuns with many activities and projects; we would also put on small performances for them during the holiday season. However, COVID-19 has changed all of this. Therefore, we hope that the in-person celebration honoring elders this year will bring renewed joy to them during this global pandemic and time of continued quarantine isolation.

Indeed, it was a special Honoring Elders Day. It was quite different from its traditional form. The celebration was carried out on a much smaller scale, because it was not hosted, as it usually has been, in the big dining hall. There also weren't any other guests invited, except for the elderly nuns and volunteers. Nevertheless, the teachers and students cooperating in the planning and production of the event. All of the issues we faced reminded us of our original intent, which was to honor our elders, and to create the best event we could in the current conditions. Despite the many challenges and changes in the staging of this event, all of the participants gained improved communication skills and insights through this experience. We will always remember that celebrations like Honoring Elders Day are external forms that we use to express our internal gratitude and respect towards our elders.

Some students were disappointed because they had practiced and prepared for a long time to give their performances at the in-person event, but then their performances were canceled due to the weather conditions. However, our schools have also planned an online Honoring Elders Day again this year. All of the performances will be included in the online event, and many more will be able to virtually attend. To join us for the Honoring Elders Virtual Celebration, please visit our school's website <http://igdvs.org>. 🌀