

Wang Ye sent off to heaven in Pingtung King Boat burning

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Spectators watch as a King Boat is prepared to be burned on a beach in Pingtung County's Donggang Township at the end of the Wang Ye Worshipping Ceremony yesterday.

Photo: CNA

The Wang Ye Worshipping Ceremony in Pingtung County culminated early yesterday with the burning of a purpose-built King Boat on a beach in Donggang Township (東港), signifying the deity being sent off.

The festival — held once every three years with the aim to prevent the spread of plagues — is one of the biggest Wang Ye festivals in Taiwan and dates back 300 years.

However, due to COVID-19 concerns, this year's edition was held with pandemic prevention measures in place and in front of a limited audience.

The festival, hosted by Donglong Temple, comprised events over eight days, from Oct. 24 until yesterday.

At noon on Saturday, the giant King Boat, more than 4m in height and almost 14m in length, set off on a “royal tour” to “catch” the evil spirits of diseases and disasters along the way.

The tour was welcomed by thousands of worshipers, wishing to stave off bad luck and receive blessings.

Up to 10,000 pilgrims from outside the township joined the procession, the local police precinct estimated.

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Some households prepared paper dolls, representing themselves, as well as sacrifices and incense, to ask the deity to stave off bad luck when the boat passed their homes, while others set off firecrackers.

The King Boat, which cost about NT\$10 million (US \$359,453) to build, was transported to the beach at midnight and set on fire at 5:30am yesterday, symbolizing the “casting out” of plagues and the celestial lord returning to heaven.

This year’s King Boat was also a work of art, decorated with detailed paintings of dragons and phoenixes, as well as depictions of traditional stories and figures from Chinese mythology.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2021/11/01](#)