

Cleanse the Heart, Love and Medicine Cure the Sick

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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‘The light of the moon shines in the middle of the dark night, towering in the sky. It brings to us on the black earth a beacon of light. In our life, there are moments of deepest pain and suffering, when we have no hope and it is hard not to be frightened by the fear of death. This terror of the spirit and pain of the body, isn’t that great suffering? That is why in this world people need doctors, nurses, pharmacists, medical technicians and all the others in the medical team who work together to save mankind in his pain and suffering.’

The compassion of a doctor is like the light of the moon, shining radiantly over the darkness of the earth. Today, September 7, the Volunteer Morning Assembly was connected to Jing Si Hall via internet, so that the volunteers taking part in the 2014 Tzu Chi International Medical Annual Conference could hear the words of Master Cheng Yen at the Assembly. The first thing she said was to thank the doctors and nurses for their compassion in giving hope and life to the sick and the weak.

Sickness afflicts young and old without distinction; those lives depend on doctors and nurses.

“In truth, among the sufferings of man, sickness is the gravest. It is not restricted to young or old, like a baby who has just been born with his body incomplete or an old person who is hanging onto his life by a thread.”

The Master recalled that the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital once received a premature baby. The tiny child came into the world extremely weak and with a condition of abdominal fissure. He was lying in an incubator, relying on doctors and nurses to care for him.

“I asked the doctor: ‘how do you look after him? Is there any hope for the baby?’ He replied: ‘we must do all within our power to care for him’. I also asked: ‘when can his exposed stomach and intestines be restored into his body?’ The doctor said: ‘day by day, we do a little more (to push it inside).’ I said: ‘how long?’ He said: ‘it could be two or three months.’ To care for the baby was no simple matter; it needed injections on the surface of the skin; the blood vessels are thin like hair on the head. The demands on the skills of the doctors and nurses are very high; they must be very patient. For him to go on living was no simple matter.”

Not only provided with medical care, but the nurses also patiently wrote a diary for him that they posted on the bed and took photographs. The life of this child was recorded each day. I frequently asked how he was, until he left the hospital in good health. That day the nurses could not hold back their tears – an expression of their deep feelings.

“This child lived in the hospital for several months before finally going home. All the nurses cried. This was their feelings. A life comes to this earth and lives healthily – this is not a given. He needs his father and mother to give birth to him; then he needs people to take care of him. So many people must work together. Even a tube must be researched and manufactured by a

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company making medical equipment and so on. One simple tube arrives – no simple matter, not to speak of other equipment.”

Master Cheng Yen went on to say: “Let us think deeply, our lives have to use all the resources of society. How can we not cherish our lives, be thankful and give back to society? To live peacefully and calmly is to give thanks and pay gratitude, to give thanks to your parents, to society – this is the attitude we all should have.”

The Mission of the TIMA Volunteers – to Guard the Sick and Suffering

Man cannot live without going to hospital if he is to maintain good health. It is especially at the start and end of our life we need them. The TIMA annual conference this year has 480 doctors, nurses and volunteers from 19 countries and regions all over the world, who have come together to study and exchange views and deepen their understanding of medical humanism. They must build between them a common mission – to contribute with love.

In Singapore, the members of TIMA look after a grandfather named Lin, who is 81, impaired hearing and blind in one eye. Because they care for his health, they patiently spend 20 minutes waiting at the doorway while they call him; then they enter the room to explain to him how to take his medicine. How thoughtful and caring they are.

“This really requires love and patience. They must communicate with him and teach him how to take medicine. After seeing a doctor, he takes the prescription with him but does not know how to take pills. Volunteers use drawings and speak very close to his ear. They paste the drawings on the wall, in order to remind him. This is the beauty of humans – doctors, nurses and pharmacists work ceaselessly for the patient. They enter patients’ lives. Especially in the ageing society of today, we need to inspire more people to show this kind of concern.”

Master Cheng Yen said that the old people have served society and made their contribution. We should show them love and respect and thank them for all they have given to society through their hard work and wisdom.

In addition to giving thanks to the elderly, we must give thanks for peace on earth. In today’s world, the elements are out of harmony. In Zhangjiakou in Hebei province on September 6, there occurred an earthquake that measured 4.3 on the Richter scale close to the surface; fortunately, there are no reports of death or injury so far. On the large island in Hawaii, there are several volcanoes; from July this year, each day 247 inches of lava has flowed out at high speed, causing terror to local villagers.

In addition to these imbalances in the earth, there are also fires and tempests. “In California, the forest fires are still burning, with more than 700 people forced to flee their homes. We can summarize by saying that wind, fire and rain are not in harmony. In the central and western regions of the U.S. have occurred tornadoes without warning; they have influenced many states and cut power to more than 100,000 people. Because they arrive without warning, many people have suffered damage.”

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Master Cheng Yen is very anxious where she hears news of these disasters. She said that the external world is like this. She also said that we must be careful of our own world. As well as paying attention to our own health.

“Mother Nature is really out of balance, such as when our lung is infected. The infection has entered and we cannot find a way to expel it; this is due to the greenhouse effect and other causes. This is a result of the major elements being out of kilter. So we must inspire love and encourage the love between people and peace in happiness so that everyone lives peacefully. At the same time, why do we not choose to interact peacefully with each other? Let us work hard to bring love to cleanse the hearts of people and expel this kind of infected air. Let us hope that these greenhouse effects will be reduced. Time passes so quickly, let us seize the moment!”

Speech of Master Cheng Yen at the Volunteers' Meeting September 7, 2014