

The Path of Bodhisattva

In Memory of an Elderly Volunteer

Text and Photo/ Dr. Wu Chih-Hao, Director of Department of Family Dentistry, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital

Old, worn, pace slowed.

A leg, and a stick.

A leg.

Then, a leg and a stick.

Ear deafened, but listens;

Voice hindered, yet spoken.

Ask/ask not, a greeting genuine.

*Reach out the warmth of a palm,
and play a song.*

Concealed, revealed,

Fingers tremble, Burdens, saddled.

The heart grow old,

*Yet resolute to depart from one's own path,
and walk with strangers' soul*



Postscript

On the connecting walkway from the operating room to the outpatient clinic, I saw an elderly volunteer, walking with a crutch, towards the light at the end of the walkway, slowly and silently. The scene reminded me of all the elderly volunteers I have witnessed cross the walkway. As I reached the so called middle age, something was revealed to me, and my heart, in sync with my finger, pressed the shutter...



Note: The person in the photo is Tzu Chi Volunteer Chang Kuo-An. He was acquainted with Tzu Chi 25 years ago when his son was hospitalized due to an automobile accident. Aside from caring for his paralyzed son, he also spent time in the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital's geriatric day care center as a volunteer. Chang Kuo-An passed away on Sept. 5, 2014. His cadaver was donated to the Tzu Chi University Medical School to mentor the future doctors.



About the Author

Dr. Wu Chih-Hao is the Director of Family Dentistry at Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center, Fourth Chairman of the Kuroshio Ocean Educational Foundation.

At the age of 17, he was inspired by the master photographer Ruan Yi-Zhong's "Lost" published on the Renjian Magazine and has been deeply influenced by the magazine's photojournalism ever since. At the age of 30, he apprenticed under Baugu Anao to learn black-and-white photography and darkroom print processing.

Dr. Wu moved to Hualien and has served at Hualien Tzu Chi Medical Center for 17 years. In recent years, he focuses his effort on establishing dental treatment and early intervention for children with physical and mental disability.

