



Carrying Forward the Essence of Chinese Medicine

Since the founding of the Tzu Chi hospitals, I have been encouraging the departments of Chinese medicine from all the hospitals to collaborate in parallel with the western medicine. In 2012, the Tzu Chi University (TCU) established the School of Post-Baccalaureate Chinese Medicine to train new medical talents in the field. Our traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) doctors have been participating in the international disaster relief efforts in the recent years. A particular scene from the relief effort made a lasting impression on me.

In Jan. 2010, Haiti was devastated by a major earthquake. Tzu Chi chapters from the United States, Canada, and Central America soon initiated disaster relief operations and medical services. A patient, who had endured severe pain caused by unknown disease for over 14 years and could only walk with assistance, received a 4-day acupuncture therapy at the hands of TIMA member Dr. Liao Ming-Huang. On the 4th day, while Dr. Liao was occupied with treating other patients, a burst of cheer from the crowd caught his attention. He turned and saw that patient standing on his feet and ran a short distance. The two were so jubilant that they embraced each other in tears. The genuine emotion that flows between the doctor and the patient were more than apparent.



Everything between heaven and earth, whether it is plants or minerals, have medicinal properties. The westerners use scientific methods to extract and purify herbs, trees, and minerals into drugs, conducted countless experiments, and diagnose diseases with apparatuses. They are referred to as western medicine because they come from the west. As a matter of fact, the pharmacology and physiology of Chinese medicine may not be that different from the west. All the medicines are extracted from within heaven and earth, the east and the west alike, only the diagnoses and treatments are different.

As of now, both the TCU and Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital have medicinal botanical gardens, which offer profound insights into medicinal herbs and their applications. The achievements of Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital in their scientization of Chinese medicine and the facilitation of collaboration between Chinese medicine and Western medicine have not only astonished me, but fortified my trust in Chinese medicine. From the empirical testing on a drop of blood, TCM doctors can analyze the patient's psychological, physiological, and pathological conditions. If Chinese medicine can treat a patient, herbal medicine can be prescribed; if further examination by the Western medicine is required, referral to other departments can be arranged. No time will be wasted.

Aside from acute trauma and disease that demands surgery or chemotherapy, people nowadays would choose TCM. The therapeutic orientation of TCM is the balance of the four elements and the restoration of mind and body to their natural alignment. Let us work hand in hand in carrying forward the essence of Chinese medicine.