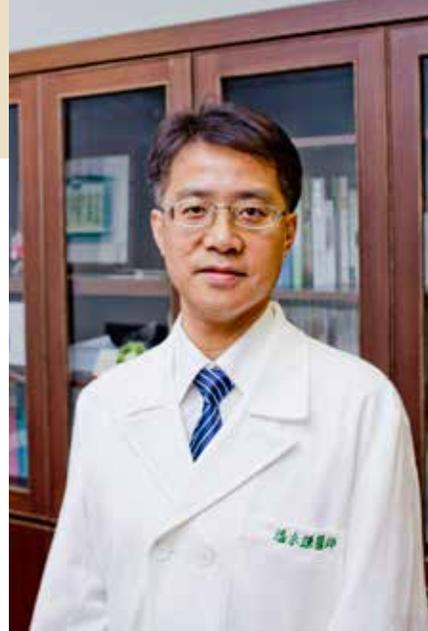


# The Guardian of Kuanshan

**Dr. Poon Win-Him**  
**Superintendent of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital**



“The most practical thing in life is to use all our might today and engage in something that benefit others and the society.” This is a line from the Jing Si Aphorisms that acted as the source of encouragement for the medical staff of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital to station here safeguarding the health of this desolate township.

Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital was founded in 2000 and has been providing medical services to this day. As a hospital with only 50 beds, Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital is by no means inferior in facility and functionality. It has X-ray equipment, CT scan, endoscopy, and blood biochemical lab. Its presence effectively reduced the distance the locals have to travel to a general hospital by 90 km, which can be translated to a precious gain of 30 min life-saving time.

Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital was the first among its peers to provide 24-hour emergency service in Taitung County (all other emergency services are available in Taitung City only), resolving the predicament of inadequate emergency medical services in northern Taitung County. Not only be it convenient for the local residents, accidents and acute illnesses involving tourists can receive immediate medical attention. Patients in critical condition can receive treatment in Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital, stabilize condition, before transferring to other major hospitals to increase the rate of survival.

Still, some residents find healthcare inaccessible. They are the tribal members living on the mountains of Haiduan Township. With the one-way Taiwan Route 9 as the only mean of access in-and-out and only one scheduled bus per day to-and-from, elderlies who are ill may find themselves isolated from the outside world without the company of the young ones. To address the issue, Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital launched a series of medical outreaches at Haiduan in 2002, three days a week, doctors and nurses carry medications in person, station in villages like Xiama, Wulu, and Lidao via the southern cross-island highway to provide accessible medical services to the villagers. Our warm

friendly attitudes have won the satisfaction of over 90% of the local residents.

Settlements along the southern cross-island highway and its surroundings enjoy a undisturbed natural sceneries and fresh air. There are several hostels in Lidao that are popular among tourists. Running parallel to the highway is Hsin-Wu-Lu river. The locals can be seen playing in the river that is crystal clear throughout most of the year. The serenity is not permanent, though. After a torrential rain or a typhoon, the peaceful river would suddenly roar in rage and rampages throughout the area.

In Sept. 2016, typhoon Meranti, Malakas, and Megi swept across Taiwan one after another. Kuanshan had been raining for weeks, causing massive landslide on the east entrance of Liukou open tunnel. A villager was in time to film the landslide as it unfolded, and the sight was beyond frightening. Unfortunately, another landslide that occurred on the same day killed the village head of Wulu.

The southern cross-island highway is closed several times a year due to natural disaster, blocking access into the mountain. To grant healthcare access to the villagers,



After Typhoon Nepartak in July 2016, Supt. Poon Win-Him cleaned the campus of Kung-Yung Technical Senior High School with the hospital staff.



**During traditional holidays and new year vacation, Supt. Poon Win-Him and staff of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital and Tzu Chi volunteers would pay home visits to the disadvantaged families to bring them warmth and healthcare.**



the hospital staff would travel on foot, carry medications and supplies on their back, wear helmets, and take the Tianlong Trail into the mountains. The Tianlong Trail is a narrow and steep trail, 1.1 km in length, ascending 240 m, and takes approximately 60 min round-trip. Without regular maintenance and falling debris and tree trunks after heavy rain blocking the way, travelers have to climb and squat through the obstacles.

During traditional holidays and new year vacation, we would always pay home visits to the disadvantaged families to bring them warmth and healthcare. For example, 65-year-old Mr. Lin and his wife have seven children, but only one child, who is visually impaired, living with them. Their other children rarely return. They boil water by burning wood. For a variety of concerns, they hoped that we could install a water heater. Our colleagues answered the request by installing the heater for them, which brought them a great deal of joy.

There is another family where the daughter and son-in-law of our care recipient passed away in a car accident, leaving five children behind. The old man was about to retire at the age of 60, now with five grandchildren to feed, the family was suddenly in a financial crisis. The social worker in our hospital immediately intervened, the Tzu Chi Foundation also subsidized their living expenses, while we took care of tuitions and other expenses. Fortunately, the old man is in excellent health.

Then there is a patient of mine whom I have seen for many years. He was bothered by lumbar spur. I recommended against surgery, but he did not listen, and had an operation done in another hospital. Three surgeries later, he did not recover, but instead paralyzed and bedridden. Half a year later, without family care and support, there was a large surface of pressure ulcer developed on his back. We went to visit him the other day and realized that the condition was critical. We hospitalized him immediately at Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital. Even though his condition gradually recovered, but I am worried that without family care, his pressure ulcer would relapse.

Master Cheng Yen always encourages us, “to proceed forward even in the face of hardship”. The staffs of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital have been providing routine outreach service to remote areas uninterrupted. Their dedication deserves respect and admiration. They have integrated the provision of healthcare with charity, hoping to end the vicious spiral of poverty and illness. Although sustainable operation runs against “regardless of cost”, the love from the Master and the support from global Tzu Chi members allow the operation of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital to be an embodiment of the Tzu Chi spirit and its altruistic devotion.