

Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia

2017.03.10~12

First free clinic with Health Professionals from 5 Countries

"I am really moved by the volunteers from five countries who gathered in Cambodia," said Hsieh Ming-Hsuan, head of Tzu Chi Cambodia, carrying a traffic baton. From 6:30 pm to 8:00 am at the 7 Markara Hotel, Hsieh greeted the arrival of medical professionals and volunteers from Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia. Even though it was not as hot as the daytime temperature of 32 degrees Celsius, the perspiration on his forehead and on his back was still clearly visible.

Singaporean Team Arrived First and Test Run with the Malaysia Team

From August 27th to the 29th of 2016, a two-day free medical clinic was held in Pokhara Province from the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) from Cambodia and Malaysia, Pestech Inc, and the Power Authority of Cambodia (EDC). From March 10th to the 17th, 2017, Tzu Chi, in collaboration with TYDA (Samdech Techo Voluntary Youth Doctor Association, TYDA), a Cambodian-based voluntary medical organization, held a joint five-nation first large-scale foreign clinic in Kampong Cham Province at the CKR Hospital (Chamkarleu Referral Hospital) and Bosknor Primary School.

On March 7th, volunteers from

Opening ceremony of the free clinic, TIMA CEO Lin Chin-Lon(center), expressed to everyone the goal of Tzu Chi International Medical Association; local volunteer Hu Mei-Ling(left 1) served as the ceremony host.





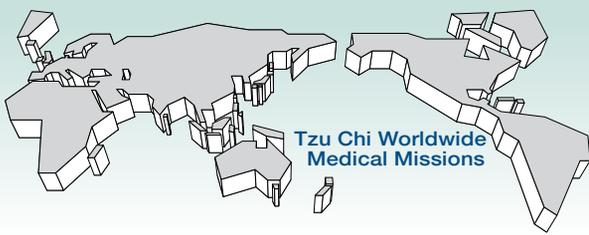
The hallway of the free clinic has poor lighting system. Volunteers work diligently to install the lights.

Singapore arrived early and worked collaboratively with the locals to take advantage of the two days to assist with the on-site preparation so once the teams from Taiwan, Malaysia, and Vietnam arrived, they would be able to serve the local community immediately.

Hsieh Ming-Hsuan and his wife Hu Mei-Ling, had been doing non-stop home visits and preparation work, communicating with Cambodian locals, urgently requesting a large number of volunteer translators. Some were medical and nursing staff themselves and were put on-the-spot as translators to reduce the time spent on medical treatment. Hsieh

Ming-Hsuan's staff not only undertook administrative work but also translated and participated in filming and writing. They were multi-taskers.

On the morning of March 10, 16 Malaysian delegates arrived at Phnom Penh Airport, followed by 27 Taiwan TIMA members, arriving at noon. The Malaysian team went straight to CKR Hospital. In cooperation with Singapore, the team started a half-day voluntary medical trial clinic. In addition, the medical, surgical, dental, ophthalmology and Chinese medicine were all available, and benefited a total of 247 residents.



Dr. Chien Sou-Hsin(right) and Dr. Lin Wei-Yu performed surgery.

Join Forces with Local Communities

At half-past-six in the morning of March 11, Tzu Chi Medical Team in two groups, a total of 15 healthcare workers from Taiwan, Malaysia and Vietnam were led by Chief Executive Lin Chin-Lon of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association to participate in the TYDA's special clinic opening ceremony, located at Bao Ke Na primary school in Kampong Cham Province.

TYDA has more than 4,000 healthcare members and 500 physicians taking part in voluntary clinics in all

provinces each month. They also work with community, schools and factories, in collaboration with charities like Tzu Chi. This joint effort cooperation has provided substantive guidance for future Tzu Chi large-scale clinics in Cambodia. In order to run an effective free clinic, free clinics in Cambodia must have cooperation agreements with official agencies, a certified list of physicians, and clearance of medical equipment.

At around 8 o'clock, the temperature became warmer. Residents from nearby areas gathered, oxcart and motorcycles crisscrossed through the rough and yellow muddy land. Dust filled the air. Vendors started selling ice water and

sugar cane juice as the crowd gathered. The scene was orderly and the crowd followed directions in accordance with pre-arranged sitting plan, and patiently waiting.

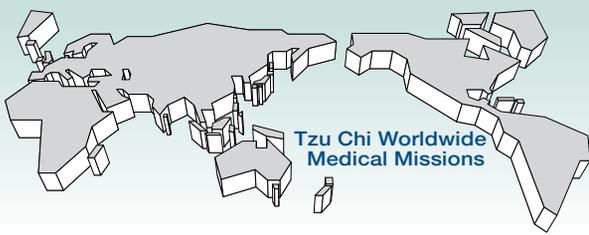
The ceremony officially began with remarks from the Secretary of the Cambodian National Security Minister, EL Vansarath. It was their first partnership with Tzu Chi for a three-day free medical clinic in two different locations, benefiting

about 6,000 people. Afterward, reports and information for future cooperation were posted on Facebook.

At the ceremony, CEO Lin Chin-Lon said that the purpose of TIMA and Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation, is to “respect life and put patients first,” which is similar to TYDA’s aim to serve patients. Therefore health care volunteers are bringing blessing and happiness to the patients while tackling difficulties,



Eugene Tang(left 3), a dentist from the Singapore, helped to treat young children. Young patients held balloons made of surgical gloves.



problems, and responsibilities on their own.

After the ceremony, TIMA's physicians immediately gathered at the Surgical Department where patients were waiting. There was a shortage of medical equipment. Curtains were put up as an operation room, an old vinyl bed was used as operating table. Dr. Yeh Tian-Hao of Taiwan TIMA conducted two operations, one of which was skin cancer. Dr. Chien Sou-Hsin, Supt. of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, shared: "Because of inadequate medical equipment and medication, operations can only be done in partial-anesthesia, but we must also pay

attention to inject anesthetics in the most appropriate place to prevent hemorrhage." In three hours, Dr. Chien Sou-Hsin completed three skin tumor operations. For the poor who can't afford to see the physicians, this is simply a blessing from the sky.

Inside the rundown classrooms, dripping walls and sometimes looming yellow dusts, dental treatment room equipment was placed right outside the classroom. A pressure cooker was heated on a five kilograms gas stove to disinfect the equipment. Dr. Sreng Heng, a dentist, was patrolling on sandals to ensure equipment was properly disinfected.



returned to his birthplace to help the villagers. Photo depicts Zheng Long (left 1), Director of Tzu Chi France, accompanying Lisa to complete her treatment.



Two Tzu Chi volunteers, one in the front and the other in the back, helped disabled patients to the clinic.

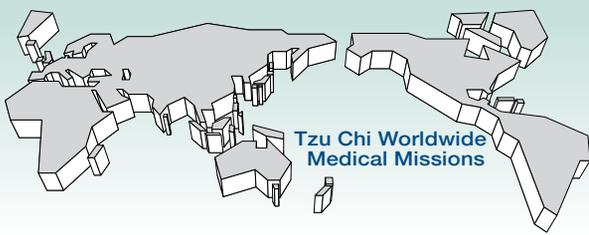
There were 45 dental students from the University of Health and Science, participated as dental assistants. At the beginning of the clinic, six treatment chairs were full while Dr. Sreng Heng was busy teaching students. Chen Yan-rong, fluent in Chinese and a fourth-year medical student at the University of Health and Science, volunteered as a translator. She said there are many areas in Cambodia that lack dental care because people cannot afford dental hygiene and checkup. Medical students or newly graduated doctors join the TYDA to serve local communities wherever they are needed.

A French Volunteer Came Home to Serve the Community

After yesterday afternoon's clinic tryout, the Singaporean team arrived early to begin at 6:30 AM, approaching CKR hospital to finalize the setup and greet the local patients who arrived early.

Seven-year-old Lisa held closely to her grandmother; she had cried all night due to toothache. Her grandmother brought her to the clinic.

"Baek meat robsa anak (Open your mouth)," Brother Cheng Lung understood



her pain but still wanted Lisa to open her mouth wider.

“It doesn’t hurt. No pain,” once again using Khmer to comfort the child.

“Very good,” Malaysian nurse, Wu Jin-Lian, assuring the child in English. Grandmother comforted her granddaughter while thanking the medical staff and volunteers.

As the Director of Tzu Chi France, Zheng Long, was born in Cambodia; he helped at the clinic all day. He left his hometown when he was twenty. His parents were victims of the Khmer Rouge regime; after leaving their hometown to relocate to France, they never returned

home. After joining Tzu Chi, he is able to join the free clinic to serve his community. He had “returning home” sentiment. The little girl was younger than his grandson; as a result, he not only entertained the child at the clinic often but also accompanied her throughout the treatment.

Lisa held on to the doll given by the volunteers and said, “Saum arkoun (Thank you)” to Zheng Long and all the medical staff. Grandma and granddaughter happily left the clinic. She was today’s first dental patient. Her smiles were the best rewards for the clinic.



Dr. Chang Heng-Chia (right 2) and Dr. Liao Kuan-Fu used the portable ultrasound to examine the patients. Left 3 is TIMA CEO Lin Chin-Lon.

Surgeons and Chinese Medicine Doctors Relieve Body and Soul Suffering

At the waiting room of each station, there were many patients. In order to cheer-up patients waiting, Singaporean volunteer Lin Yang-Bao led the local Cambodian volunteers to provide entertainment to improve the atmosphere.

In the surgical station, a fourteen year old boy, Non Vanna, and his mother took an hour car ride to the clinic. He had a congenital tumor in his right ear. With localized anesthesia, it was removed. Meanwhile, a forty-six year old policeman, Bun Sothy, had tumors on his left hand and back shoulder. With his monthly salary of \$250 USD providing for a family of four, he could not afford treatment. After Tzu Chi doctors took out his tumors, he was extremely grateful and speechless. In the end, he wrote a letter to thank Tzu Chi for all their help.

Since the opening, patients kept coming for Chinese medicine treatment. Some were muscle spasms while others with chronic bone and muscle pain. After acupuncture and massage were applied, patients felt immediate relief. A sixty-seven year old patient, Phung Lung, arrived on a gurney; his family said his symptoms resembled a stroke. He had been bed bound for two years

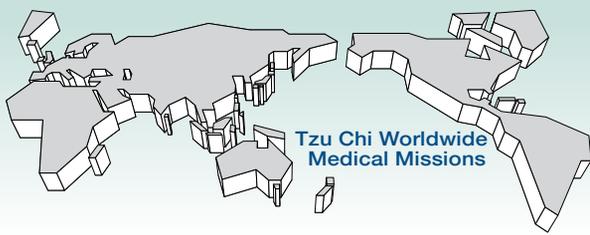
now. Malaysian doctor, Lai Kim-Ho, examined Phung and did not think that he had a stroke but rather depression. Dr. Lai asked, "Do you want retirement yet worry about the financial consequence at home?" Immediately Phung cried; Dr. Lai allowed him to vent. Once stabilized, Dr. Lai responded, "I'm going to insert this needle. If you feel pain, there's hope. If not, you will have no hope." Dr. Lai deliberately inserted the needle deeper, in hope of encouraging Phung to know he is healthy; there is hope in life. After a session of acupuncture and massage, Phung was able to stand and walk. His facial expression was clearly brightened.

Dr. Lai Kim-Ho said, "According to his practice for many years, in fact, with many patients with physical pain, a large part of the disease comes from the mind." He rarely immediately applies a remedy but to alleviate their worries. Once the stress is released, the illness naturally dissipates.

Closing Ceremony - Giving Is Better than Receiving

Today at the CKR Hospital in Pikachang province, a total of 972 villagers were served by 243 volunteers. Everyone shared their experiences from the past days during dinner time.

Brother Ming-Hsuan Hsieh and Sister Hu Mei-Ling first thanked everyone. Brother Hsieh gratefully said, "Today we



held a joint five-nation clinic to provide a different perspective to the villagers. They said our services are more thorough and mindful than ordinary doctors whom they pay to see. This is because of the kind of care delivered by our medical staffs and volunteers!” He hoped that there will be more opportunities in the future to host clinics and expressed thanks to the volunteers who had taken their time to provide translation. He hoped that everyone will leave their contact information and join Tzu Chi organization as volunteers.

Unable to Provide; Thus Unable to Seek Medical Assistance but Folklore Remedies

On the third day of the free medical clinic in Cambodia, Singaporean and Cambodian volunteers arrived at 6:30 at the CKR hospital to prepare. At first glance, there were many people with families, young and old. Regardless of which division, every department was filled with people, waiting patiently and orderly. There were no panic or breaking the line. Despite the language barrier, the villagers happily regard and smiled at the volunteers. One could tell their excitement of being able to see a doctor. “Able to see a doctor and being treated” for the poor malnourished Cambodians, especially in Kampong Cham province, is a luxury.

Most of them have not even visited a doctor or a hospital in their lifetime.

Internists, Chinese physicians, and massage therapists all gathered under a large tent. Today was so hot that all the air conditioners were broken, but relied on the large whirring blowing industrial fans located on both sides. The villagers looked calm while the physicians labored in perspiration. Cambodian doctor, Thay Uireth, sat next to Dr. Liao Kuan-Fu. He said, “I am very excited to be working with my fellow physicians from Taiwan to serve the community. I can see that the villagers are equally excited and happy.” Today TYDA had nine participating physicians, which included 5 internists. They were from Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore. When they came across any problems, they would consult with physicians from TIMA.

This time a hand-held ultrasound machine from Taiwan was put to work, but for Dr. Liao Kuan-Fu, Chief of Hepatobiliary and Gastrology at Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, there was a lot of contradictions. He said, “Should we examine it or not? It would be too painful for us if we find something and not treat it.” The villagers were so poor that they do not even have enough food, let alone travel to the metropolitan cities for medical treatment. Most just casually self prescribe medication or folk remedy. Brother Hsieh Ming-Hsuan said, “Medical knowledge

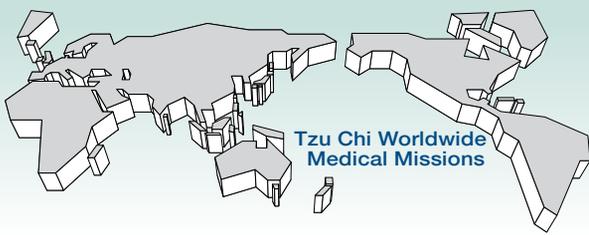


Dr. Soo Lin (right 1), Malaysian TIMA doctor, assisted patients for examination.

is clearly inadequate. Therefore, shops carrying medicines are particularly popular, even more crowded than a department store.” Dr. Thay Uireth said, “You have excellent diagnostic equipment for us to examine the villager’s physical condition. In the future, TYDA will care more about our people in this respect.”

Sun Heak, a 48-year-old man with white powder on his crippled feet, hoped to heal his feet that had been in pain for more than a month. He attempted native Cambodian folk remedy; however, after a few days, the pain resumed. After washing the white powder off with careful examination, the initial diagnosis was

pain resulted from hypertension and high blood pressure. However, we did not have such medication. Then he commented that he felt discomfort in his heart. After Sun’s examination from volunteer Hsu Ya-Ling, along with Dr. Chang Heng-Chia, Vice Supt. and a Cardiologist of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital; Chang diagnosed that his feet and heart require different treatment according to the ECG test. However, Sun’s heart problem was unable to be precisely diagnosed with limited instrument. Therefore, he borrowed Dr. Liao Kuan-Fu’s portable ultrasound to observe the heart condition.



Eliminate Cataract and Free Eyeglasses to See Again

Tumor removal was the most common required procedure in the surgical department. Under harsh environment, wooden tables covered with tarp served as operating tables. During surgeries, there were flies flying around, along with poor lighting from the weak table lamps. Surgical procedures were made under limited instruments and tools. Most patients suffered ganglion cyst, atheroma, ganglion, warts, and lymphoid hyperplasia. Dr. Lin Wei-Yu, first

time participant, of Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital said, "I watched Dr. Chien remaining steadfast during the chaos and yet able to respond quickly like water, adopting to the environment to successfully perform under pressure with limited blood supply. When I saw the patients' happy faces, my tiredness from the whole day evaporated."

Although the operation room was simple, we had to be thankful to the Singapore team. They arrived at the venue to prepare two days in advance; air conditioners were installed to control the room temperature and reduce the possibility of infections and unsanitary conditions like flies and dusts. With limited



Volunteers helped the patients with their prescribed eyeglasses.



surgical equipment, a total of 80 surgeries were performed.

Many patients were also found in ophthalmology. Villagers' eyes, due to hard work in farming and under harsh sunlight, were constantly exposed to ultraviolet light which causes cataract. Even some people with severe myopia did not know to seek medical treatment. At the free clinic, optometry examination and free eyeglasses were provided. When the patients saw the faces of their family members clearly, expressions of joy brightened and provided the medical team a great sense of accomplishment.

Patients continued to come despite the long day. Pharmacists tired from retrieving and dispensing medications. The original estimated number of 1,600 was exceeded. Sister Hung Hsiu-Mei (wife to Dr. Lin, CEO) came to round up the number tags for new patients in line. What surprised the medical staff was the medication most people received - antacid

and vitamins. Because of the local hot weather, most villagers grew up drinking ice water. Coupled with the poor nutrition, teenagers resembled five or six year's olds with poor digestive systems affecting health.

Under the warm atmosphere, the number of patients in the free clinic rose to 1,660 people. For the next two days, a total of 2,880 villagers came, which made the medical staffs happy and commented that hopefully in the future that they can continue to provide service in this poor country. In this barren desert, young TYDA doctors saw young volunteers wearing Tzu Chi vests helping to translate, guide, and explain. Just as TIMA CEO Dr. Lin had said, "The number of Tzu Chi volunteers in Cambodia is steadily increasing. Everywhere you look are young volunteers. If the collaboration with TYDA continues in the future to care for the health of the villagers, there is hope for this country."