2017 TIMA Conference, Malaysia – The Name Says It All

Welcome To

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The 2017 TIMA Conference marked a significant milestone with notable beginning from March 17 to 19, 2017, at KL Tzu-Chi Jing Si Hall. Themed "Healthcare beyond Medicine", the Conference received encouraging participation from 918 healthcare professionals from across Malaysia and 11 other countries, namely Singapore, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Nepal, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Netherlands, US, UK and Philippines.

Malaysia TIMA CONFERENCE re Beyond Medicine



Representatives from the 12 countries waved their respective national flags to greet the audience.

Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) was officially established in 1998. It is an organized global medical service network, with the vision of "treating illnesses, curing people and healing minds" and making medical care more accessible to the sick and needy. In addition to the TIMA Convention, which is held annually in Taiwan, a TIMA Conference with English as the medium was initiated in 2015. The purpose of organizing the annual TIMA Conference, which is hosted by TIMA members worldwide in their respective country of residence on a rotational basis, is to introduce Tzu Chi's humanistic medicine approach to the local healthcare professionals.

This year, the TIMA Conference was finally held here in Malaysia, from March 17 to 19. At the Opening Ceremony, the CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Mission, Dr Lin Chin-Lon, and the medical team from Taiwan – Dr Chien Sou-Hsin, Dr Lin Ming Nan, Dr Lee Yi and Dr Lee Yi-Pang, were treated to a traditional Malaysian form of welcome in the enlivening sound of kompang. It was followed by the entrance of the Secretary-General and official representatives from the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), and distinguished guests from various medical associations, such as, Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), Malaysian Chinese Medical Association (MCMA), and Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS). Lastly, the kompang troupe ushered in the CEO of Tzu Chi KL & Selangor, Echo Chien, along with CEOs and Heads of Tzu Chi Chapters from Malaysia and abroad.

The sounding of the bell by Dr Lin Chin-Lon marked the official opening of the Conference. The participants then immersed themselves in a graceful sign language interpretation of the song, "Ode to the Doctors", with these inspiring and beautiful lyrics: "Great Love knows no borders. Doctors come from everywhere to build a world of love, where the sun will never set. Great Love flows forever selflessly and without regrets. Every doctor is a light, shining hope and love on those in need..."

Dato' Seri Dr Chen Chaw Min, MOH Secretary-General, delivered an uplifting speech. He said, "This conference is unique, in that it is dedicated to the practice and delivery of humanistic healthcare towards a harmonious society. And we are talking about a global society, which is evident from the number of participants hailing from so many countries. Being able to host this event is no mean feat, and it shows the significance of what TIMA is doing in the



TIMA members presented a drum performance with a zest of energy. [Photograph by Lim Chin Shein]



Close to a hundred Muslim participants attended the TIMA Conference. Picture shows the participants having exchanges during tea-break. [Photograph by Lim Su Nguan]

area of humanistic medicine."

He acknowledged Tzu Chi for its speedy mobilization of volunteers to extend humanitarian aid in time of disasters. He had witnessed for himself Tzu Chi's relief work during the East Coast floods, Ranau earthquake, and the Sultanah Aminah Hospital fire tragedy in Johor last year, and was moved by the assistance provided by Tzu Chi to the MOH. Alongside this vision, he was touched by the way TIMA has moved forward to serve the less fortunate and to practise humanitarianism. He also called upon the participants to contribute their efforts in humanitarian work.

Dr Lin Chin-Lon was glad to see the large number of participants. He urged everyone to experience for themselves the joy of giving, and hoped that they could adopt and implement what they would gain in the Conference in their respective countries.

Echo Chien expressed her joy for the opportunity to host the Conference in Malaysia, after Singapore and the Philippines Chapters. She also extended her gratitude to the local volunteers, who had put in a great effort in the past few months; the honourable speakers from various places, and Master Cheng Yen for her support. She spoke of her wish to the audience, "We hope that this conference will inspire more loving medical professionals to treat patients with genuine love, and to offer them the best care."

A Humanistic Approach in Medicine

The Conference began with the first topic, "Working towards Sustainable Development Goals in Healthcare" by Dr Lin Chin-Lon. He mentioned that Tzu Chi's Missions of Charity, Medicine, International Disaster Relief and Humanistic Cultures are in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

He had made an informed decision on healthcare. His inspirational and invigorating talk provided the most relevant learning and a great insight into quality improvement and humanistic medicine. He highlighted that medical care is a process. A medical professional's tender and loving care, as well as, manner and spirit, are as important as medical skills.

He also shared the pledge of medical professionals serving at Tzu Chi Hospitals: "Not only will all the people who come to Tzu Chi get comforted in their body, mind and spirit, just like coming home, but they will also learn and grow steadily with gratitude, thereby realizing happiness for the whole family and achieving eternal peace of mind."

He said, "The most beautiful smile in the world is a patient's smile," and encouraged the audience to derive happiness through serving because there is more happiness in giving than receiving.



Dr Lin Chin-Lon, CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Mission, delivered the first talk in the Conference, on the topic, "Working towards Sustainable Development Goals in Healthcare". [Photograph by Lim Chin Shein]

The Passion to Safeguard Lives

This was President of MMA, Dr John Chew Chee Ming's first visit to the Jing Si Hall. He had some knowledge about the Foundation, and learnt from the footages and sharing on the humanitarian work carried out by Tzu Chi volunteers to meet the needs of the world. Faced with an aging population and increasing medical costs, many patients, especially those who suffer from chronic diseases and require long-term treatments, are struggling to cope with the financial burden. Dr Chew hopes that Tzu Chi and other organizations could help to alleviate their burdens.

He felt that the messages conveyed at the Conference, such as, "Get involved in serving the community and the world", "It is more blessed to give than to receive", and "Show respect for lives", are very good. He added, "Medicine is not just about the diagnosis and treatment. The caring part of it, and the compassion shown, will help in the patients' recovery."

He hopes that the medical professionals could go beyond what they should be doing to look after the patients with love and compassion, and that the young doctors could adopt a positive attitude in serving their patients.

Tzu Chi's systematic and wellorganized relief work left a deep impression on him. He was happy that some of his students were also there at the Conference, and hoped that they could appreciate the learning experience and emulate the humanistic approach promoted by Tzu Chi.

He found the theme of the Conference very relevant because as far as medical care is concerned, we do not only talk about the medications that are used to treat diseases, but also the humanistic aspect. He shared, "Today's conference offers a lot of information on volunteerism, in healthcare especially, where many people are involved and



Prof Dato' Dr Marzukhi Md Isa from Lincoln University College was full of praise for the Conference. [Photograph by Lim Chin Shein]

have provided good services, especially to the poor." He added that disease prevention should be given more emphasis, more so to people living in rural areas, who often receive delayed treatment due to poor accessibility to medical resources and facilities. He believed that one will be rewarded with joy when one does good deeds to benefit the needy.

Brig Jen Dr Zulkifli bin Zainal Abidin, Head of Dental Department, Hospital Angkatan Tentera Tuanku Mizan, remarked that it was a worthwhile trip to the Jing Si Hall. He commended, "The coordination you have within your volunteers is very good. I think it is almost a military standard."

Dr Zulkifli observed through the

speakers' sharing that there is something common between Tzu Chi's medical mission and the military ideals as both delve into humanitarian aspect. He mentioned that while both Tzu Chi and the military are quick to arrive at a disaster-hit site, to some extent, the NGOs have some advantage in terms of time efficiency because the military needs to abide by some protocols and seek approval before they could act. He looked forward to attend more of Tzu Chi's activities and to have more exchanges between the two organizations.

It is hoped that the three-day Conference could ignite the passion to safeguard health and lives with love and respect, and inspire healthcare professionals to go beyond medicine to incorporate human touch in their profession.



Besides honourable guests and participants from various countries, government officials and representatives from local medical associations were also in attendance to show their support. [Photograph by Kevin Tan Kok Sieong]

Multimedia in Medicine, "All about Health"

Speaker: Dr Chien Sou-Hsin

Dr Chien Sou-Hsin, Superintendent of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, delivered a speech on the topic, "Multimedia in Medicine". With his vast knowledge and humour, he explained to the audience how he translates medical knowledge into comprehensible contents using multimedia.



[Photograph by Lee Wei Kean]

Nowadays, besides TV programs, we can also find health facts presented using interesting films on the websites of some well-known healthcare institutions. Likewise, Tzu Chi Hospitals have developed informed consent, or Shared Decision Making (SDM) films, to communicate to the patients the purposes of performing the surgery and what other options are available. This helps the patients to understand the situations clearly before making their choices.

Dr. Chien highlighted that, "Skills and professionalism are basic requirements. Other than that, humanistic care is also very important. These two, when put together, will make medical care a little different."

Dr Chien has also been a media volunteer to pass on correct medical information through the program, "All about Health", which he hosts on Da Ai TV. To ignite and hold the interest of the general audience, who are non-medical professionals, he uses art and stories to transfer his knowledge.

Dr Chien revealed, "I don't have a very strong team. All the ideas, the paintings, and the supporting data like the X-rays, are from me. I have to prepare them myself, and I do this without taking a penny from Da Ai TV. I even have to spend a lot of my money to buy references, including the paintings, and so on. I have been hosting this TV program for 16 years and 7 months (4,417 episodes), all by myself."The persistence and hard work was recognized with Dr. Chien being nominated for the "Best Host for Educational and Cultural Program" in the Golden Bell Awards for five times, and finally, emerged the winner in 2014.

What motivated Dr. Chien to continue with the "All about Health" TV series for 16 years? He shared the story of a cancer patient to depict his perseverance.

In the video, the patient visited other patients during her stay in the hospital, she gave them hope, energy and spirit, and even organized a team to get the cancer patients to sing together and encourage one another. That cheered up the atmosphere at the oncology ward.

This lady was actually an advanced breast cancer patient with multiple lung metastases, and there was not much the doctors could do to treat her. Dr. Chien recounted, "She passed away at the age of 43," "Why did we let this happen? We had the technique to do mastectomy perfectly, but why did we let this patient die of advanced breast cancer at that young age, leaving two kids without a mother? Who is responsible for that? I think we are, because we did not provide enough medical knowledge.

Dr. Chien ended his presentation with a painting. In the painting, a patient was lying on a bed. On her right side was a physician (interpreted as using modern techniques to diagnose and treat the patients), and on her left stood a priest (signified religious or spiritual aspect). It sent a strong message that medical care is only balanced if we focus on both skills and spiritual aspect, and that everyone knows how to take care of their own health.

Speakers' highlights



Dr Lee Yi

Medical Secretary & Director General of Quality Control Department, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, Taiwan

The government and consortiums would not build a big hospital at such sparsely-populated area (Hualien, Taiwan) because it would certainly incur a big loss. But Master Cheng Yen, having seen many people falling into the vicious circle of poverty and ill health, decided to build a large hospital in this small city. In 2016, the Superior Council of Scientific Investigations reported Tzu Chi Hospital as the highest rated hospital in Asia and number 13 in the world, because it has brought forth "humanistic medicine with reverence for life", taken on some of the most complex cases on the continent, focused on removing pain from illness, and taken in poor patients without the need for pay and ran primarily through grants.

Vice Superintendent, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, Taiwan

Our hospital has been a health promoting hospital (HPH) for more than a decade. It is implemented for the patients and families, executed by the staff on the hospital premises and extended to the community. We have a HPH Committee chaired by the Superintendent and comprised of four groups, each in charge of environment, hospital staff, patients and families, and community respectively.



Dr Lin Ming Nan



Dr Shen Yi-Ying

Chief of Department of Chinese Medicine, Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital, Taiwan

A frown and a smile are both possible. So, why don't you smile? Smile relaxes your body, and when you laugh, you are massaging your heart meridian. This is because based on the theories of traditional Chinese medicine, your face is connected to your heart. When you smile or laugh, your heart will feel it. So, joy and happiness are essential to a healthy heart.



Dr Kenneth Liao

Deputy CEO of Tzu Chi New York, USA

I spent my last Christmas in Jordan. It was very cold and the refugees were living in a very poor condition. In one of the camp sites, there was only one toilet shared among the 100 families... I have been doing international relief for the past 20 years, but never had I been so emotionally touched, because we were treating people whose parents and countries had been displaced. It was a completely tragic and devastating situation unfolding before a major human race catastrophe due to greed and power struggles, where the most innocent people bear these grieve consequences. Human dignity was lost, and basic rights and needs surfaced with bare-minimum calls for greater love, understanding, tolerance and forgiveness. This is what our Master has been teaching us all along and is very much needed to restore humanity.

Dean, Yayasan Al Ashriyyah Nurul Iman Islamic Boarding School, Indonesia

You know why Tzu Chi is very important to me? My husband passed away six years ago, leaving me with 23,000 orphans (now 15,000) in Nurul Iman. "Always remember these children, they must always be well-fed. Those were his last words." I have had to provide food, lodging, education and health benefits to these children. An extreme religious group contacted me and offered to settle my debts in exchange for these children. But I could not accept that, as these children will end up as suicide bombers or terrorists. I tried to survive without help from anyone, except Tzu Chi. I got help, assistance and love from Tzu Chi. We may be different in colours, religions, races and countries, but our mission is the same – for humanity.



Mdm Umi Waheeda binti Abdul Rahman



Dr Ng Poh Yin

Head Unit & Consultant Urogynaecologist, Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

When I first started to collect recyclables in the hospital, people called me "the garbage woman" and thought that I was a bit crazy. I did hear a lot of comments but I just did not care because it is not enough to just serve the sick, we have to save the world. I knew I am doing a good cause and it is what I want to do. Even though it is 0.000001 percent, it is still more than zero percent and still makes a small difference. In doing recycling, you save the Earth and yourself. The moment your hands touch the ground, your ego goes down.

Participants' feedbacks



Prof Dato' Dr Abdul Rahim bin Mohamad

Prof Dato' Dr Abdul Rahim bin Mohamad joined Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS) as the Dean of Faculty of Medicine, upon his retirement from his 30-plus years of service with the MOH. He was also the former President of the Islamic Medical Association Malaysia (IMAM).

He was deeply moved to see the humanitarian work carried out by Tzu Chi volunteers worldwide, including reaching out to the Muslims. He hopes to impart the values of caring and impartial love in his students. "Religion never disturbs (social harmony), it is always for peace and togetherness," he said.



Prof Dr Arun Kumar

Prof Dr Arun Kumar from Lincoln University College (LUC) was impressed with Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital's successful treatment on Chen Tuan Zhi, a patient with severe congenital genu recurvatum. He remarked, "Tzu Chi's medical team has been serving the poor, relieving them of their pain, and showing them compassion and affection. I am inspired and I hope to become a Tzu Chi member."



Yuslina Yusof

YuslinaYusof, Chief Nurse from Universiti Malaya Medical Centre, remarked that being a Kelantanese, she did not notice any images of the "angels in blue-and-white uniform" (Tzu Chi volunteers) in the media in the aftermath of the 2014 East Coast flood. However, through the Conference, she came to realize that the volunteers were actually there, acting as the back bone of the relief work.

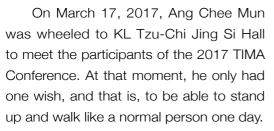
She has also learnt that Tzu Chi is not merely a charitable organization, but is also involved in other missions, such as, medicine and education. She held admiration for the elderly volunteers, who are as energetic and strong as the young despite their age. "They are role models for the young generations," she said.

Besides, she found the vegetarian food served at the Conference very tasty and expressed her intention to continue taking vegetarian food after the Conference.

Adieu to 24 Years of Crawling

By Tan Kim Hion Translated by Wong Mun Heng

A thank-you card plus a "Thank you, Dr Chua" summed up the profound gratitude that lay deep in the heart of Ang Chee Mun. With his harmonica, Dr Chua played the song, "Give Love", and won thunderous applause from the audience. About a thousand people witnessed how Chee Mun moved from his wheelchair and stood on his own feet, and many were moved to tears when the two hugged each other.



To most people, standing up and walking is a natural thing; and just like drinking and eating, it is effortless. However, to 24-year-old Chee Mun, standing and walking were impossible due to his deformities. He thought he would not be able to stand and walk in his life.

Born with deformities in his lower limbs, Chee Mun had never experienced walking and he could only move around by crawling.

Going to school or outing, Chee Mun would rely on a wheelchair; and at home,

[Photograph by Yong Mun Fei] he had to crawl on all fours to move around. Crawling around had become a norm and he is not embarrassed or considered it difficult. But then, he still had a wish: To be able to stand up and walk

One day, volunteer Kua Lian Huat brought him some good news. Dr Eddie Chan of TIMA saw the "Diary of My Crawling Days", a documentary video on Chee Mun's life struggle, and it occurred to him that Chee Mun's deformities could be corrected. On September 25, 2016, Dr Chan invited a physiotherapist to assess Chee Mun's muscle tones and the outcome was that Chee Mun's muscles were strong and normal.

like a normal person. That must be great!

"The first thing that strikes me after viewing your video is to help you to stand



up and walk, Chee Mun." Dr Chan's affirmative statement gave Chee Mun a ray of hope.

Dr Chan then spoke to Dr Chua Yeok Pin, a Foot & Ankle Orthopaedic in Sunway Medical Centre, who is also a TIMA member, about Chee Mun's case. On October 6, 2016, volunteers brought Chee Mun to see Dr Chua and after detailed examination, the latter recommended that with corrective surgery and post-operative physiotherapy, Chee Mun could stand up and walk again.

Although Dr Chua mentioned that the treatment may come with a lot of pain, Chee Mun would not want to miss this golden opportunity. He was determined to endure and face the challenges ahead, saying, "So long as I can stand up and walk, no matter how painful it is, I will bear with it."

December 2, 2016, is the day Chee Mun would never forget in his life. This is the day of his corrective surgery.

As shown in the video clip (at the Conference), after the surgery, both Chee Mun's legs were supported by the external fixation frames. The audience was shocked by the sight of numerous screws attached on Chee Mun. Every night, Chee Mun's aunt would adjust the screws to return the angle of the ankle to the desired positions. The tremendous pain Chee Mun experienced was clearly written on his face and only he would know how painful it was.

Being a cheerful and positive person, Chee Mun would not cry when faced with any challenges. But the corrective treatment had him crying, each time his wounds had to be cleaned and when the screws on the fixation frames had to be adjusted by his aunt.

Dr Chua had also cautioned Chee Mun that in order to prevent infection, he must take good care of the wound. "The treatment would fail if infection sets in; and worse still if it requires amputation." This is what Chee Mun was most concerned about.

Due to the pain, Chee Mun had sleepless nights. However, he was very appreciative of Dr Chua's efforts in viewing with care the wound dressing process recorded on the phone by his aunt on a daily basis. This is to detect any possible wound infection and for Dr Chua's advice regarding the adjustment of screws on the external frames.

At the follow-up visits, Dr Chua noticed that Chee Mun had struggled to bear the pain and advised him, "Well, no one could help you but yourself."

Chee Mun knew that giving up was never an option. In January 2017, the fixation frames were removed and replaced with a cast to stabilize the corrected position of his ankles. The worst was finally over. Chee Mun could see that his feet had straightened and could touch the floor. This joy gave him the confidence that the day of him standing up and walking was getting closer. He vowed that the moment he could walk out, he would go to a Tzu Chi recycling centre and use both his hands and legs in contributing towards environmental protection. At the same time, he could repay the love and support others have given him.

Pillar of Strength from Family and Team

Dr Chua, who has done 20 similar cases with success said, "I could not bear to see a young man crawling on the floor. I must help him. As a doctor, I wish to contribute whatever little I could to help him to stand up, to walk and get a job to support himself; and hopefully, he can help others in the future too. "

He was confident of Chee Mun's case, as his muscle tones were good, and this is a crucial factor in determining whether he could walk or not, coupled with the post-operative physiotherapy programme.

At that time, Dr Chua estimated the total cost for the whole medical treatment would be around RM50,000. When he knew that Chee Mun would not be able to cope with it financially, he decided to seek gratis treatment for him.

"With great humility, I asked the hospital to exempt him from hospitalization charges, including my own surgical fees. Thankfully, the hospital approved without a fuss. Likewise, the anaesthetist, when told of Chee Mun's background, also readily agreed to waive his fee."

Despite his hectic schedules, Dr Chua still found time to share Chee Mun's case with others, in an attempt to get him the gratis treatment. Some of his friends disagreed with his actions. But Dr Chua firmly believes that compassion does exist in everyone's heart. It is just a matter of whether opportunity is given or not to do kind deeds.

With regard to Chee Mun's treatment, Dr Chua humbly said that his contribution was rather minor. He felt that Chee Mun's family members have been his driving and motivating force. He knew Chee Mun needs to endure extreme pain. Without the mindful care and support from his family, he would not be able to get through the treatment successfully.

Another driving force for Chee Mun is the volunteers who had accompanied him in and out of hospital for follow-up visits and also visiting him at home. TIMA members' visits and sharing of tips on some simple exercises, as well as, words of encouragement from volunteers, such as, "Chee Mun, you must persevere and never give up," have boosted Chee Mun's courage.

Dr Chua was grateful for the great efforts of Chee Mun's family members, TIMA members and Tzu Chi volunteers in making the impossible possible. Whenever he saw Chee Mun's previously deformed legs stepping flat onto the ground, he felt a great sense of relief and joy. When dealing with Chee Mun, he likes to crack some jokes to cheer him up. For instance, when inviting him to share at the TIMA Conference, he said to Chee Mun, "If you are sharing, then I will share. If you don't, then I won't!"

In fact, to give a pleasant surprise

to Chee Mun, he promised to play a harmonica musical piece for Chee Mun during the latter's sharing at the Conference. Dr Chua's unconditional love for Chee Mun touched him dearly. His sincere care has helped Chee Mun to cope with the pain and suffering.

Road to Recovery Is Long

Lian Huat, who has been accompanying Chee Mun, was overwhelmed when he saw the latter trying his best to stand up and give Dr Chua a hug when presenting a thank-you card to the doctor.

It has been a long nine years since Lian Huat first started giving Chee Mun care and support. They have treated each other like father and son. Lian Huat said, "Chee Mun is a brave and strong boy, and he is willing to learn. No matter how tough life has been, he would never complain and instead, he would work harder to learn more. Over the years, I have always seen him smiling radiantly. I know his wish is to be able to walk and get a job, so that he can be independent and take care of his grandmother, who is getting old."

Over the years, a total of 30 volunteers have been taking turns to send Chee Mun to see a doctor, for outings or to visit him at home. This is especially so during the treatment period, where they would carry Chee Mun up and down the car, send him for follow-up consultations



With the external fixation frames removed and replaced with a cast to stabilize the corrected position of his ankles, Ang Chee Mun is a step closer to his dream of standing up. [Photograph by Yong Mun Fei]

Ang Chee Mun tried his best to stand up to offer Dr Chua Yeok Pin a thank-you card and a hug. [Photograph by Chan Tuck Meng]

> and arrange custom-made shoes for him. So long as the need is there, everyone would take turns to keep him company. Chee Mun has never been left alone.

> "Doctor said the road to full recovery for Chee Mun is still a long way. After this corrective surgery and the removal of external fixation frames, we need to bring him to have special shoes custom-made for him. Currently, he has to undergo physiotherapy regularly."

> Lian Huat is aware that the next one year would be a big challenge for Chee Mun. For one who has never walked in his life, he is like a child learning to stand, make his first stride and then walk. Fortunately, Chee Mun is mentally prepared to turn his dreams into reality. Every day, he follows the physiotherapist's instructions to learn to stand up and he is diligent in doing physiotherapy exercises too. The earnest wish of Lian

Huat and other volunteers who have been accompanying Chee Mun on this road to recovery is to see him walking properly one day.

As Dr Chua played the song, "Give Love" with his harmonica on stage, he was looking towards Chee Mun's direction as if dedicating his best wishes and blessing to the latter, while at the same time, making his call to all medical personnel present: "Hopefully everyone, while treating the patients, do not forget to spread love to the corners of the world and because of your love, the lives of many more people are changed for the better."

This love beyond medical treatment has opened up a new horizon where healthcare professionals could feel the pain and suffering of a patient with empathy. That is the true essence of "curing people, treating illnesses and healing minds"!

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