

Cure the Physical Heart and the Spiritual Self

Chang Heng-Chia,
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In the blink of an eye, the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is reaching its fifteenth anniversary. I still remember back in 2005 before its grand opening, my family and friends kept asking me, “Why do you want to go to Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital? Don’t you already have a successful career now?”

They were indeed right about my success at the time.

I Only Know How to Save a Heart

I am a cardiologist. Before the opening of the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital, I had been a doctor for over twenty years. I was lucky enough that my residency training period in the 1990s was the time that the art of Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) was beginning to flourish. After I became an attending physician, I had opportunities to go abroad to learn cutting-edge medical treatments in cardiology. When I returned to the hospital, many patients were waiting for PCI procedures, and I



became sophisticated in the field and challenged myself with many difficult cases. I even established a “heart attack” group on standby year-round, 24 hours a day. I put all of my effort into interventional cardiology. With an endless amount of surgeries on hand and money coming in, it was hard for my family and friends to comprehend why I wanted to leave my job.

Back then, I was basked in the glory of success. My father told me, “Actually,

you only know how to save the heart.” I refused to listen at first, but I definitely had the feeling that some of the patients that I rescued from death were not happy at all.

Although a patient saved from a near-death experience is a blessing, his/her life may be full of suffering. I only know how to fix the heart but leave everything else to social workers and psychologists to follow-up. I do my job, and other members of the medical team do theirs. My job is to cure the disease! How do I treat not only the physical and the soul at the same time? I heard of it, but I did not know how

to do it.

In April of 2005, I went to work at the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital. Through participation at the humanity camps, commissioner’s training, dharma study group, Sutra performances, winter distributions, disaster relief, and many other Tzu Chi events, I finally understand the narrow life I had. I finally understand the meaning of “feeling blessed after seeing the suffering.” This simple meaning is a lifelong learning process.

Participating in these activities outside of my medical profession helps me realize



In November 2013, as Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines, Tzu Chi Medical Volunteers in Taiwan and the Philippines held a free clinic in Tacloban. The picture shows Dr. Chang Heng-Chia treating a disaster victim.

how many people do not even have food or shelter and that illness tends to coexist with poverty. Warren Buffett once said, “There’s no use to try hard if you’re on the wrong path.” Similarly, a doctor who only knows how to treat diseases without empathy for pain, sorrow, and suffering will never be able to help a patient achieve happiness. Dharma Master Cheng Yen once said, “One should not fear a long journey as long as one is on the right path.” I am filled with dharma joy, taking one step at a time.

The Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is a safe and sound hospital filled with humanistic culture. It is Taiwan’s first earthquake-reinforced building, and the entire hospital is a green building. It has won a hospital architecture award from the American Institute of Architects for its advanced equipment, low carbon emission architecture, and an oriental garden design. Ever since its establishment, it has received a continuous support by medical volunteers and musical volunteers. As described in The Sutra of



April 2015: After the deadly earthquake in Nepal, the Tzu Chi disaster clinic group traveled to Chittapol to host a free clinic. The pictures shows Dr. Chang Heng-Chia (right) giving blessings to the citizens.

Infinite Meanings, “After relieving one from suffering, one must expound the Dharma for them to end all suffering.” This is not just a hospital but also a sanctuary for cultivation and practice.

I have been in the Tzu Chi world for 15 years, which is quite a long period of time. I would like to thank Dharma Master Cheng Yen, her disciples at the Jing Si Abode, and the Tzu Chi volunteers all over the world for their love and support so we can continue to save lives and nurture our wisdom souls. Not only can I save

the heart, but learn the true meaning of healing the spiritual soul.



As a cardiologist, Dr. Chang Heng-Chia joined Tzu Chi and realized that he may have a chance to save a heart and in the meantime cure that soul.