

# Coexisting with the Virus, Reflecting & Giving

## Nurse Cindy Yeh, Australia

By Chen Minru, Xu Huiwen

Cindy Yeh is a graduate from the fifth class of Tzu Chi College of Nursing in Hualien. She went to Melbourne, Australia for further study and stayed there to work as a nurse after her family also immigrated there. She is currently a clinical nursing specialist(CNS) at St. Vincent's Hospital.

The year 2020 was a very different year for many. For Cindy, it was a very unique journey.

At the beginning of 2020, Australia was not heavily affected by COVID-19 yet. Since she worked at a hospital, many of her friends and family in Asia had been reminding her to be careful and protect herself. However, because she was in Australia, she did not have to care for any of the infected, so everyone was treating the virus with some basic protection while other countries were fighting for their lives. She was always very careful, disinfecting surfaces and objects every day and following the hospital guidelines, but the misfortune still happened!

At the end of her third consecutive night shift of taking care of a non-diagnosed patient, the patient told her,

"I had a massive headache last night; it might have been a fever." Cindy began to fear that the patient had been infected.

After exchanging shifts with the morning shift nurse, the patient's test results came back positive. Cindy was immediately notified to quarantine, and she tested positive two days later. She experienced the same symptoms as the patient: severe headaches, fever, sore and weak limbs, and more. When she



**After coexisting with the virus, nurse Cindy Yeh(front) became even more motivated to improve herself and continue to serve the public.**



**In May of 2020, Australia had a shortage of virus prevention supplies. Melbourne volunteers donated medical masks and blankets to homeless shelters. Cindy Yeh is on the far left.**

was barred from all in-person interaction and had to bear all difficulties alone at home, her heart was definitely in a state of turmoil.

Although she was not feeling well, she recorded all of her experiences. She also had her family to thank for their care. Everyone was using different methods to send their love: sending Chinese medicine, hand-cooked soup, vitamins and other health products, and she no longer felt alone.

During six-week of quarantine, Cindy was most grateful for the presence of

Master Cheng Yen's teachings in her life. Whenever she did not feel well and began to panic, she tuned in to the Daai TV or radio; when she felt slightly better, she copied lines of scripture to keep her heart calm instead of wandering on thoughts like "Why me?"

After three months of rest, she recovered fully physically and mentally and was able to return to the COVID-19 ward as a nurse. Although several of her coworkers also tested positive, everyone exchanged encouraging words, saying that this was a very different experience.



**Cindy Yeh (left) participated in a free clinic in Mozambique in 2019.**

Her ordeal also allowed her to relate even more to the patients who were helplessly lying in bed, seeking comfort and care.

She was also thankful that she started participating in Tzu Chi activities at a young age and that she could use her healthy self to help others. After recovering, Cindy became more knowledgeable in what types of protective gear frontline workers needed to stay safe. Under the encouragement of Melbourne Tzu Chi volunteers, she began to connect with more hospitals, giving N95 masks, medical masks, and face shields made by the volunteers.

In the words of Master Cheng Yen, “Know your blessings, cherish them, then sow more blessings,” “Collect to accumulate, not to mend.” Cindy’s experience with COVID-19 helped her realize that she could always do more to give. After being quarantined for three months, she can relate to the suffocating feeling of animals trapped in cages, unable to move freely and maybe on the brink of losing their lives. As a vegetarian for eighteen years, this experience motivated her to move forward with a heart of gratitude and continue to promote vegetarianism.





# Just Doing What Is Needed

Dr. Josefino Qua, Philippine

By Li Fengyue



In April of 2020, the Philippine branch gave priority to donating medical protective gears to six hospitals in Manila, and held a donation signing ceremony in front of the Philippine Jingsi Hall. Representatives from East Main Street Medical Center, Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, and Philippine National Hospital accepted respectively. The first from the left is Dr. Josefino Qua, the third from the left is Dr. Robert Sy, the fourth from the left is Henry Yunez, and the first from the right is Dr. Antonio Say. Photo/Provided by the Philippine Chapter

“I will seize this opportunity and give my best.” Dr. Josefino Qua thanked Master Cheng Yen for her teaching, and the brothers and sisters of the Manila Tzuchi branch, who provided him a lot of encouragement. As the Master said, “When we encounter adversity, we have to be grateful since this is a rare opportunity.”

On January 30, 2020, the first COVID confirmed case in the Philippines was a 38-year-old woman. Her 44-year-old husband was the first casualty on February 1. Three additional confirmed cases were added on March 1 of the same year, and community infection was discovered six days later. As a result, community quarantine began on March 15.

The entire Philippines population was in turmoil, anxious, confused and chaotic. The government required everyone to wear masks, and the demand for masks exploded. As a result, the price [of a mask] rose from 0.5 pesos to 15 to 18 pesos. Doctors and nurses were forced to recycle and reuse masks. Tzu Chi volunteers Henry Yunez, Yang Bifen, and Dr. Josefino Qua sent medical surgical masks and N95 masks to different hospitals. Because of Josefino Qua's status as a doctor, it was easier for him to enter testing stations during the city closure. Masks were dispatched to as many as twelve hospitals a day.

Sadly, when the Philippines began vaccinating the public, a second wave of the pandemic arrived fiercely and the number of COVID cases surged. Dr. Qua received a COVID screen during this time, and unfortunately, he too was diagnosed. “Don't think that your protection was enough and that you won't contract the virus. Just like what the Master often says that life is impermanent.” Despite the diagnosis, Dr. Qua remained optimistic. “Fortunately, our whole family did not need to be quarantined, and we had no serious symptoms.”

Currently the epidemic situation in the Philippines remains very serious. Tzu Chi volunteers in the Philippines continue to assist the government in providing high-flow nasal cannulae so that patients who are isolated at home can use them. “As a follower of Master Cheng Yen, I continue to say good words, do good deeds, and then follow the Master's teachings.” Dr. Josefino Qua also helped those brothers and sisters who were diagnosed with hospitalization over the phone. The brothers and sisters who were helped felt very grateful. Dr. Qua simply responded, “We were just doing what is needed.”



# Promoting Vegetarian Movement to Abstain from Illnesses

Sheena Chen, Physical Therapist, USA

By Tsai Fenlan



Sheena Chen is a Physical Therapist who has been practicing in the United States for 25 years. She is currently working as a clinical physical therapist in a hospital in Long Island, New York. Over the past year, she has also faced many challenges, because she was diagnosed

with the new coronavirus pneumonia. At that time, the situation was unknown, and there were no doctors or any medical guidelines to follow. She deeply felt the patients' sentiment of lack of help.

Sheena Chen thought that since it was pneumonia, she needed to maintain

her lungs' capacity. So she made use of the experience she learned and put herself in a prone position to improve drainage while lying on the bed; in addition, lying in bed would debilitate bodily functions. Thus, she forced herself out of bed and tried to maintain a normal daily routine. With her self-treatment and rehabilitation, she gained more understanding and knowledge of the new coronavirus. After her body recovered slowly, she returned to work in the hospital. When faced with patients with new coronary pneumonia, she uses her own journey to encourage patients to fight against the disease.

In addition to preventive work and vaccinations against the virus, your body's immunity is the most important line of defense. Therefore, being a vegetarian, non-smoker, non-alcohol drinker, and strengthening exercise and fitness are the simplest and clearest methods. Patients with high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancer are all at severely high risk for new coronary pneumonia, and highly obese patients are more likely to need intubation. Therefore, "healthy weight loss" has become the goal of Sheena Chen's education/promotion.

During the pandemic, everyone is at home; therefore, how to promote healthy weight loss? Sheena Chen hoped that it would be better for the family to move together, so she arranged a parent-child



yoga class at the Tzu Chi Youth Mother's Day event. In addition, she also launched a "Vegetarian Movement to abstain from Illnesses" activity. In addition to sharing vegetarian food, she also has half an hour of online exercise time every Monday night to strengthen everyone's cardiorespiratory endurance, and muscle strength, and make everyone develop the habit of exercising and enhancing immunity.