

Southern Nepal

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Love in the Buddha Land – a Kidney Dialysis Center in Operation

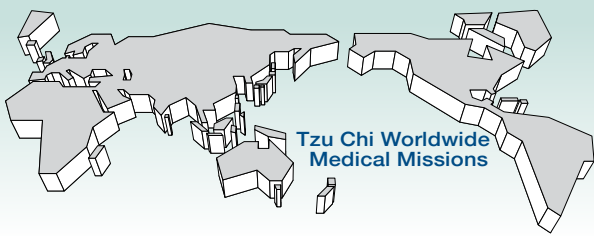
Nepal's Lumbini is the birthplace of Buddha, but it remains poor and backward, with scarce medical resources. In 1993, Nepal experienced a severe flood, and Tzu Chi went to the Buddha's hometown to provide aid. In 1995, Tzu Chi helped build four "Da Ai Villages" in three counties. In 2015, Nepal was hit by a strong earthquake and Tzu Chi again sent a medical team to provide disaster relief. Tzu Chi has continued its

mission to Nepal since then.

In 2018, the founder of the Nepal International Buddhist Association, Bhikkhu Maitri, saw the needs of the residents and hoped to add kidney dialysis to the existing clinical services. After Tzu Chi Foundation carefully considered the request, it decided to help build a dialysis center. In August of the same year, Dr. Jimin Chen, Deputy Executive Director of the Malaysia Branch (Dharma name: Jilian) led a medical team to Lumbini to survey the site. In September 2019 construction began on a dialysis center to improve the medical environment. The dialysis center in the Lumbini Buddhist clinic was approved by



Tzu Chi's dialysis center in Lumbini, Nepal was officially put into operation, and Dr. Jimin Chen (third from right), Deputy Executive Director of the Malaysia Branch, and Tzu Chi team went to the dialysis center to care and send blessings. The third from the left is Dr. Kafei, the head of the dialysis center.



the Ministry of Health to operate in March 2022, providing dialysis for patients. Dr. Jimin Chen and the Tzu Chi team went to Nepal to express their gratitude to everyone involved in the project. They visited vulnerable kidney patients and their families during house visits.

Sajruddin , the newly appointed mayor of Lumbini , said during his visit to the center: “During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tzu Chi and Bhikkhu Maitri

distributed food to impoverished people on multiple occasions. Tzu Chi has helped us when we were in need so we are grateful to the Tzu Chi Foundation and all the volunteers.”

The head of the dialysis center, Dr. Kafai, stated that there are currently six machines serving kidney patients and, with improved equipment, they will be able to actively promote the kidney disease prevention program in



Dr. Jimin Chen (third from right in the front row) and Dr. Zhuang Wanjia (third from left in the back row) visit a village in Lumbini with Tzu Chi volunteers to show their concern.

the countryside. Solemnly accepting the white uniforms of the international Tzu Chi Medical Association, the medical staff of the dialysis center took on the responsibility of caring for the people of the Buddha Land so the seeds of love take root.

After the dialysis center officially opened in May, Amu (pseudonym) was the first patient. Dr. Zhuang Wanjia of the Malaysian Tzu Chi Medical Association (Dharma name: Luchang) explained, "Amu is the first kidney patient at the Lumbini dialysis center. Before, she needed to travel about three hours by car to another place for dialysis, and dialysis usually takes another four hours. When she was tired, she had to stay overnight and return the next day. Her son was unable to work because he had to accompany the mother back and forth."

Amu's son, Ferro, has an unstable job, and the family's livelihood has been greatly affected. In order to treat his mother's kidney disease, the family sold all their valuables and part of the fields, and even went into huge debt. Fortunately, their neighbors, who are also Ferro's boss, often bring them food and hot meals.

Dr. Zhuang Wanjia said, "During the period when Ferro was not working, his boss saw that they were in trouble and had been supporting them with food. The boss also allowed him to halt working

temporarily, and when he was able to return to work, he would work for a day or two. The boss is very understanding and also takes care of Ferro's family."

Now, when Amu comes to the free clinic for dialysis, she only needs a 20-minute drive, saving time and money from her reduced traveling. Her son can work with peace of mind and just ride a motorcycle back and forth to pick up his mother.

Ferro has returned to normal work, but his income largely goes to paying off debts, so the family livelihood remains unstable. Volunteers decided to provide the family with regular food assistance, and they thoughtfully prepared a big bag of rice so Ferro can deliver it to his neighbor to thank them for their ongoing help.

Dr. Zhuang Wangjia felt that it was unbearable to see a family in poverty due to illness. Tzu Chi's team brought medicine and loving care to help Amu's family improve their livelihood.

"I hope the family will keep their only remaining piece of land. We will evaluate whether we can help them to replant and fertilize so as to grow vegetables and fruits. Maybe when her health recovers a little better, she can be self-reliant. I sincerely hope that the good energy brought by Tzu Chi will help Amu through the life challenges and turn her fate around," said Dr. Zhuang.