

# Kuanshan

## Nun Returns to Serve the Elderly after Joint Replacement

December 5, 2023

Sister Jao Pei Te is a nun of the Holy Cross Nursing Home in Kuanshan Township, Taitung County. She came to Taiwan when she was 28 years old following a priest from Switzerland. Upon arrival, she became a dedicated volunteer in the operating room at the Provincial Taitung Hospital. She learned Mandarin during her first three years in Eastern Taiwan. After mastering the

language, she worked as a home care specialist for the native tribes. She served along the eastern villages such as Cheng Kung, Shan Wu, and Shen Jun.

In 1983, the Taipei Mackay Memorial Hospital planned to build a branch in Taitung and convert the Kuanshan Catholic Hospital into a nursing home to care for the poor and sick. The Kuanshan Holy Cross Nursing Home was established and Sister Jao has been quietly serving in the nursing home to take care of the seniors, many of whom are younger than her. As part of her additional chores, she also maintains and repairs many of the old hospital equipment. At the age of eighty-seven,



**Sister Jao appreciates the care provided by Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital medical team and trusts Superintendent Poon Win-Him (2nd from right) to perform the operation.**



**Physical therapist guiding Sister Jao in walk training. When postural hypotension was detected, the therapist inquired if her dizziness was improving.**

she stepped down from any front-line tasks but she still continues to care for the old medical equipment. She worries about those antique stainless-steel hospital beds, old but not useless, in need of repairs.

Lately, Sister Jao was battling severe pain on her degenerated left hip-joint. Doctors prescribed pain-relieving drugs but the level of pain increased and got worse while she climbed up and down the stairs. After careful evaluation, Dr. Poon Win-Him, orthopedic surgeon & Superintendent of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital, recommended a hip-joint replacement. An artificial hip replacement surgery was conducted on November 23, 2023.

Sister Jao said: “I have full confidence with Doctor Poon’s surgical skills. He did the surgery when I had car accident twenty some years ago. It was beautifully done. I am not worried, not afraid. He has my trust.”

Considering Sister Jao’s age and her heart condition, Dr. Poon conducted the surgery with regional anesthesia, meaning the patient remains conscious during the procedure. Jao recalled the busy conditions in the operation room when she was an intern. She thanked the Superintendent for the operation and said: “I am sorry that you must do this with partial anesthesia that involves so many people. Thank you all for the job well done.”

Sister Jao stayed in Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital for five days, receiving excellent care and blessings from the medical staff. While in the operation room, an anesthesiologist constantly inquired about her condition. Back to the ward, the nurses would adjust everything to fit her post-surgery conditions. The physical therapist would carefully guide her in walk training. When there were symptoms of postural hypotension, the staff would inquired her experience with dizziness or anything they could do to make her comfortable.

Sister Jao’s Mandarin skill is not perfect. However, every time she said “Shieh Shieh” (thank you), one can sense

her sincerity and trust.

Sister Jao was discharged smoothly on the morning of November 27. Prior to her release, specialist nurse Lai Chiu Yin applied medicine to her surgical wounds and Sister Pei Tsai Yun praised the beautiful stitches on her wounds. Sister Jao jokingly said that the wounds were sewn prettier than herself.

Sister Pei later said that when Sister Jao learned that Dr. Poon performing the surgery, she didn't want to go anywhere and just waited in Kuanshan Town. Superintendent Poon certainly appreciated her sincere trust. Sister Jao said to Dr. Poon that she liked his style, "You never brag about your skills, you didn't say that the operation was nothing, everything you said was the truth. I like it."

On December 5, Sister Jao returned to the orthopedic clinic for suture removal. After the examination, Dr. Poon said, "This is what an artificial joint replacement should look like. The angle and everything else all look good. The ideal angle is supposed to be 38 degrees, and we achieved 37 degrees. We were lucky." Superintendent Poon humbly attributed the success to luck and the blessing of Christ. Dr. Poon carefully reminded Sister Jao that she should not carry anything heavy within the next month and should walk carefully to avoid falling.

Superintendent Poon gave Sister Jao his blessings and best wishes. Sister Jao was very happy that she would soon return to her job.

Words by: Chen Hui Fang



**Ms. Chiu suffered for many years and visited many hospitals without identifying the culprit of her symptoms, until Superintendent Chien Jui-Teng of Douliou Tzu Chi Hospital (first from left) solved her problems.**



# Taipei

## Make Your Own Decision Prior to Dementia - Advance Medical Directive

**December 12, 2023**

Taiwan's "Patient Right to Autonomy Act (PRAA)" has been in effect for nearly five years; however, according to statistics from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, only 67,000 people have signed an Advance Medical Directive. Therefore, government has decided to incorporate

out-of-pocket fees for advance care consultation into health insurance starting in 2024, with priority given to three categories of people: terminally ill patients, people with dementia, and twelve types of announced rare diseases. Dr. Chang You-Kang from Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital's Advance Care Consultation Clinic pointed out: "Because patients with dementia will continue to degenerate, it is urgent to receive advance care consultation and sign an advance directive while they still have the ability to make decisions. But most people are not aware of its importance.



**Dr. Chang You-Kang from Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital's Advance Care Consultation Clinic encourages patients with dementia to make early medical decisions.**



I recommend to seize the opportunity to include outpatient consultation in health insurance and participate as early as possible to make decisions for your own life.”

Taiwan will enter an elderly society in 2025. The population with dementia is increasing rapidly, reaching more than 300,000 people. The prevalence of dementia among those over 65 years old will double with an increase in age. Therefore, it is urgent to confront the issue of dementia. To allow patients with dementia to live a dignified life, without being bedridden all day long due to terminal symptoms, having a nasogastric tube and restrained, and to relieve their family members from the

pressure of decision-making, dementia care is included as one of the five clinical conditions in the PRRA. In the case of advanced dementia, one can die naturally according to a signed will. Dr. Chang You-Kang explained that during the final stage of dementia, cognitive and behavioral abilities are completely lost, appetite diminishes, and patients may not feel hungry and eventually stop eating. However, many family members choose to have nasogastric tube (NGT) or force-feeding to sustain life because they are reluctant to let the patient die. According to medical literature, patients with severe dementia can live an average of ten years longer when force-fed through a nasogastric



Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital produced a promotional video "The Way Home" in the hope of awakening public attention to advance medical decisions for patients with dementia.

tube, but they continue to degenerate into incontinence. These patients are restrained to avoid extubating of the NGT, resulting in long-term bed rest, bedsores, and limb contractures. In addition, aspiration pneumonia cannot be completely avoided, causing a huge burden on the family's physical and mental care. Signing an Advanced Directive early allows one to live a more dignified life in their remaining days.

However, even though the law has been in place for many years, not many patients with dementia actually signed the Advanced Directive. Take Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital as an example, less than 5% of all patients with dementia have signed. The reasons include that consultation clinics require out of pocket expenses, and most people feel that people with dementia cannot sign because they do not have the ability to judge. Dr. Chang You-Kang said: "Patients with early-stage dementia still have the ability to make decisions and judge. Before signing, the patient can be taken to the Department of Neurology or Psychosomatic Medicine to have the level of dementia assessed by a professional physician. As long as the total score for the Clinical Dementia Rating score (CDR) is lower than one point, the patient can sign the Advanced Directive. Furthermore, if the total score for CDR is between one and two points, the doctor can also judge the patient's

cognitive status to determine whether a patient can sign. However, if the score is higher than two points, these patients demonstrate that their decision-making and judgment ability have diminished such that they cannot sign the Advanced Directive."

Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital has been selected as a model hospital for promoting advance care consultation and promotion in New Taipei City for five consecutive years. It actively promotes advance care consultation and signing of Advanced Directive, and provides special clinics for dementia consultation. The hospital has made a promotional video "The Way Home" on the issue of dementia, and use it to participate in the "2023 Power in Nursing" International Nursing Creativity Award and Cannes Future Lions Training Program. Such effort hopefully will awaken public's attention regarding Advanced Directive for patients with dementia. If adopted early, patients can communicate and discuss with their families and loved ones when they still have the ability to make decisions and judgments, and record the decisions on their health insurance cards, so that the document can serve as a substitute in the future to speak for the patients, and to reduce family reluctance, disagreements and decision-making pressure.



# Yuli

## Hospital Colleagues Cleaning the Home of a Stubborn Grandpa Who Expresses Appreciation

**2024.01.10**

As the Year of the Dragon approaches, with just one month left until the Lunar New Year, on January 10, 2024, Superintendent Chen Yen-Pi of Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital, along with more than 20 colleagues and community volunteers, arrived at Grandpa Peng's home in Fu-Li Village, located in the remote area of Zhu-Tian Village in Fu-Li Township, to help clean the house.

Fu-Li Township, a 20-minute drive from Yuli Town, leads into a small rural road, where Grandpa Peng and his wife, Grandma Xie, live. They have been long-term care recipients of both Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital and Tzu Chi Foundation. About five years ago, Grandma Xie had to have both legs amputated due to diabetes. Grandpa Peng, deeply devoted to his wife, took on the responsibility of caring for her. However, as Grandpa has aged and his health has declined, he now needs a cane to walk and is unable to care for Grandma as he once did. Currently, Grandma is in a respite service organization.

Tzu Chi volunteers and social



workers visit Grandpa regularly and noticed that his living environment had become increasingly untidy. Therefore, a cleaning event was organized, with support from the hospital's staff and community volunteers, to clean both the interior and surrounding areas of Grandpa Peng's house.

The task involved not only hospital colleagues and volunteers but also the Fu-Li Township cleaning crew, who helped haul away recyclable materials and trash. A total of ten trucks and nearly 40 people participated in the effort. The areas to be cleaned included the living room, bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, storage room, and the surrounding outdoor spaces. Once they arrived at the site and equipped themselves, they immediately began the work, dividing the tasks among different areas.



The storage room, which had not been cleaned in a while, was filled with various items. Colleagues made several trips back and forth, moving large cabinets covered in dust, boxes filled with clothes, and even several jars of pickled vegetables. Throughout the cleaning, they encountered small animals running out as large furniture was moved. Volunteers also asked Grandpa whether they could discard certain items. After about two hours of hard work, the house began to look much better, and everyone felt a sense of accomplishment.

Colleagues from the home care team shared that they were happy to help Grandpa, especially as he had mobility issues, and to restore his home into a safer and more livable space.

During the cleaning, neighbors visited and showed concern. They recalled



how Grandpa was stubborn when he was younger but has mellowed as his mobility decreased. They expressed their sympathy, mentioning that whenever Grandpa needed help, they would do their best to assist.

“We are deeply grateful for the Fu-Li Township cleaning crew, who helped immensely by mobilizing two trucks and arriving early to assist in moving and transporting the items. The clean-up was done in three trips,” said lead volunteer Su-Yu Lin. She further added that when volunteers from Ruey Sui District learned about the need for help, they enthusiastically volunteered. Many colleagues from Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital also participated. The cleaning event was a great success, and it was filled with countless touching moments, leaving everyone with a heart full of gratitude.





**Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital Superintendent Chen Yen-Pi leads colleagues and volunteers to help Grandpa Peng clean his home. After the cleaning, they took a group photo with Grandpa Peng, wishing him a happy and healthy new year.**

With the Lunar New Year approaching, the cleaning was not just about tidying up but also about making a fresh start. Grandpa Peng sat happily by as Superintendent Chen Yen-Pi and volunteer Huang Bi-Yun put up festive red couplets on the wall. The Tzu Chi Foundation provided new bed linens and blankets, while Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital gave winter scarves. Superintendent Chen personally wrapped one of the scarves around Grandpa and offered her blessings, hoping for Grandma's return from the respite care center.

Grandpa was deeply moved by the warmth and care of the Tzu Chi volunteers, and he thanked them with tears in his eyes.

Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Superintendent Chen Yen-Pi shared, "In addition to medical care, our role is also to care for the health of the community. At the same time, we play a charitable role by finding families in need and rallying our colleagues and volunteers to help. Serving the disadvantaged is an honor for us."



# Douliu

**Fifth Anniversary - Beach  
Cleaning across Three Hospitals  
to protect the Earth**

**December 17, 2023**

Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital will celebrate its fifth anniversary on January 5th, 2024. To mark this milestone, on December 17th, 2023, the hospital, along with Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital and Chiayi Tzu Chi Clinic, organized a beach cleaning event to show their commitment to protecting the earth. Over 250 hospital staff members and their families braved the cold winds of a strong cold air mass from

mainland China to participate. In just one hour, they collected 198 kilograms of general trash and 160 kilograms of recyclable materials.

Director Jian Ruiteng of Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital shared that with the hospital's fifth anniversary approaching, December 17th was chosen as the date for the beach cleaning event. The slogan for the anniversary is: "Five Values in Medicine, Protecting Health, Year after Year Progressing, and Caring for Communities with Kindness." As part of the hospital's commitment to community care, Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital had also adopted a section of the coastline in Taixi Township, in collaboration with the Yunlin County government. In addition



**Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital's fifth anniversary event invited staff and their families from Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital and Chiayi Tzu Chi Clinic to participate in beach cleaning to protect the earth.**



to protecting the community, this event also reflected the core value of “doing good together,” as members of the three hospitals united to make a positive impact on the earth.

Despite the cold, gusty winds from the cold air mass, volunteers and their families showed great determination. Wearing gloves and equipped with trash pickers and bags, they carefully collected garbage along the beach, in rock crevices, and near the levees. In addition to the usual plastic bottles and cans, they also found abandoned fishing nets, Styrofoam, and other waste. Some larger pieces of debris buried under the sand required multiple people to work together to extract them. Though challenging, everyone worked diligently,



**Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital's fifth anniversary event invited staff and their families from Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital and Chiayi Tzu Chi Clinic to participate in beach cleaning to protect the earth.**

and soon enough, several bags of trash and recyclables were collected.

Zhou Xingzhen, a staff member from Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, brought her son Huang Boyu, a second-year high school student, and her younger brother to join the beach cleaning. Boyu shared his thoughts on the experience: “It feels good to contribute to making the world a better place. The process was tough, but it was definitely worth it. If everyone starts with small actions like this, they can slowly accumulate into greater change.”

Vice Superintendent Lin Ming-Nan of Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, who had just returned from attending the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, also participated in the



**Vice Superintendent Lin Ming-Nan (second from right) and his wife participated in the beach cleaning activity to protect the earth.**



**Hospital staff and their families work together to pull abandoned fishing nets buried under the sand.**

beach cleaning event. He emphasized that the more people understand the environmental challenges, the more urgent it becomes to take action. “It’s great that Douliu Tzu Chi Hospital, under Director Jian’s leadership, has organized this event. In addition to the beach cleaning, we also visited Chaoyang Green Energy Leisure Farm to learn how to reduce carbon emissions and reach net-zero. It was a great opportunity to continue spreading the message of environmental protection,” Lin shared.

The event concluded with the

collection of 198 kilograms of general waste and 160 kilograms of recyclable materials. Director Jian Ruiteng reflected on the experience: “All this trash is the result of human activities. In addition to cleaning the beach, I encourage our colleagues to purify their hearts by reducing waste at home. Protecting the earth isn’t just a one-time activity – it’s about reducing our carbon footprint every day. This is the true meaning of ‘kindness together,’ and it’s what gives our community the greatest happiness.”