

Non-Stopping Hospital Chief Makes Time for Sutra Rehearsal

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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The head of one of the foundation's six hospitals in Taiwan finds time in his busy schedule to rehearse for a performance of a Buddhist sutra: the Water Repentance. He finds that the practice improves his temper and his behavior.

Pan Yun-chien is superintendent of the Tzu Chi hospital in Guanshan, the most remote location of the six hospitals; it has a population of 10,000, in the north of Taitung county, in a mountainous area on the southeast corner of the island. The foundation decided in 2000 to build a hospital there because the residents did not have access to the quality of care they need.

Born in Hong Kong to an overseas Chinese family in 1961, Pan studied medicine at National Taiwan University and, after graduation, chose to work at the foundation's main hospital in Hualien. From there, he was assigned to Guanshan, whose hospital needs medical staff more than the facility in Hualien. Pan has devoted himself with great dedication to his new post, always putting the care of patients as his priority. "If for any reason I miss a clinic or am absent from the hospital, it is the patients who lose out." Treat them as members of your own family is his mission. "During Chinese New Year, when others are taking a rest, we do not. We must protect life and protect health." The deputy director of the hospital's management office, Huang Kun-feng, has worked with Pan since preparations to build the Guanshan hospital began on March 15, 2000. He considers Dr. Pan as never-stopping superintendent: "whether he is taking a clinic, doing an operation or visiting the wards, it is hard for him to find even five minutes of free time. He is devoted to his patients."



So it is no easy matter for Pan to find time to attend rehearsals of the Sutra Adaptation of the Water Repentance Text. Since the Chinese New Year, nine members of the hospital staff have been holding rehearsals each day from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.; they are led by a teacher of sign language for an hour of intense preparation. After he finishes work at 5 p.m. and if he has no urgent business, Pan joins his colleagues for one or even two hours. They help each other and share their duties, enabling them to make the time for the rehearsals. "Fortunately, we are at middle-aged and do not need so much sleep," said Pan. "About five hours each day is enough. Therefore I can find the time to attend the rehearsals."

He is a bone expert who uses advanced techniques to treat bone fractures. Many people do not believe that the Guanshan hospital can provide a level of treatment and technical quality equal to those in major city hospitals. This is a testimony to Pan's ability and specialization; he has brought the hospital to this high level.

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Through his rehearsals with the sutra, Pan has found a new closeness with his patients and his colleagues and an ability to control his once bad temper. His favorite passage is “I free myself from karma, never to sink again!” He realized that, if you practice the Dharma in your daily life, the human greed, anger and delusion will diminish. Previously, when he saw patient came to the emergency room at the four in the morning with a not very emergency situation, he would tell them to come back during the daytime. But now he thinks: “Maybe the patient was very busy during day time. Maybe the patient was not so much in pain earlier, but was very discomfort in the evening. Therefore the patient chose to come at in the early morning.” He is now more consider on how each patient feel and not to say unnecessary words, but concentrate to care with sincerely heart.

He encourages the staff to work hard at the rehearsals, to care for patients and interact with their condition: use the sutras as a point of reference and through the exercise develop a calm heart and sense of love. After the musical, which is schedule on March 8, he encourages his colleagues to continue their cultivation and make their lives more happy and see things more clearly.