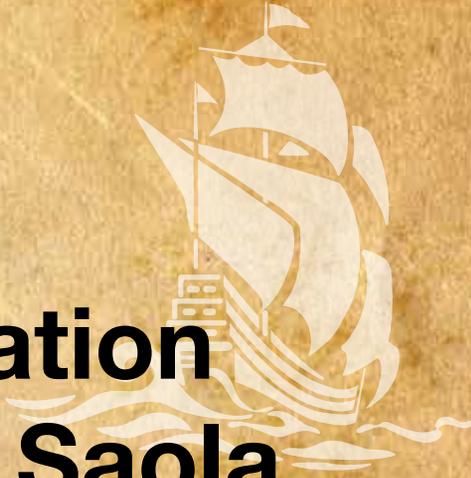




Diaries of Tzu Chi Hospitals

Well-Preparation for Typhoon Saola



Written by: Wei-Jun Peng, Szu-Chi Huang, Pei-Ju Jiang, Hsiao-Juan Huang,
Yi-Lin Yeh, Shun-Pin Yang, Fu-Yuan Cheng, Cheng-Zu Wang,
Hsiu-Ying Tseng, Chien-Ming Sheng

On July 28, 2012, “Saola”, the 9th Typhoon of the year, developed at the eastern sea of the Philippines. Lingering and wavering, Saola was described by the meteorologists as a “drunk”, as well as “intense, ample moisture, and slow,” which is the perfect recipe for disaster. Every hospital under Tzu Chi Medical Mission was diligently prepared for this upcoming typhoon.

July 31

Diligent Prevention

Central Weather Bureau had announced oceanic typhoon alert the night before, while Hualien was already showered with intermittent downpour as Saola approached. The Engineering, the eGeneral Affairs, and the Security teams of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital General Affairs Dept. had initiated prevention

measures. Besides surveying old leakage areas, they cleaned every drainage on the roof and patios, sealing every window, putting up warning signs, and prepared sandbags and drainage devices. In the afternoon of the 31st, the hospital superintendent, Dr. Ruey-Ho Kao, called a meeting to make sure all prevention measures were completed.

For the safety of hospital patients and employees, Taipei Tzu Chi hospital also summoned its first typhoon prevention meeting. Hospital superintendent, Mr. You-Chen Chao, ordered an all-hand mobilization: Engineering Department is to examine the inventory on water, gas and air, ensure the operation of UPS for medical equipment and the safety of on-duty staffs, and to guarantee the public understands any announcements of any hospital updates.

“Why do hurricanes in northern hemisphere spin counter clockwise?”



The General Affairs Dept. Director of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, Shih-Huan Chang updates Soala's latest movement.



Securities place water repellent boards at the underground parking lot.

Famous for his broad knowledge, Dr. Shou-Hsin Chien, Superintendent of Taichung Tzu Chi hospital, explained this natural phenomenon in the staff meeting: The reason is that the earth rotates from west to east, therefore hurricanes in the northern hemisphere spin counter clockwise and vice versa.

Dr. Chien asked all staffs to thoroughly arrange for this typhoon, and elaborated with his personal experience in the Thailand flood in June/July of 2011: “Most hospitals’ backup power systems were flooded because they were placed in the basement...”

Taichung Tzu Chi hospital occupies great area both vertically and horizontally, once emergency occurs, the central control room should be notified immediately to apprehend the situation

and to dispatch help.

Sitting in the Huatung Rift Valley, Yuli and Kuanshan Tzu Chi hospitals remained vigilant, as the typhoon prevention measures were initiated after the typhoon warning was announced. Dr. Chang, the superintendent of Yuli Tzu Chi hospital, advised all staff to be careful of their own safety, and to confirm the safety food stock.

Kuanshan Tzu Chi hospital already have a checklist to correspond typhoon prevention. When land typhoon warning was issued, management went through the list to make sure all necessary steps were executed, and then, upon its completion, turned to the superintendent for confirmation.

8:30 PM. Weather Bureau issued Land Typhoon Warning

Jingmei creek, locates near Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital, is one of the monitored targets.





Shou-Hsin Chien, Supt. of Taichung Tzu Chi hospital, explained the scientific background of how a typhoon spins in the typhoon prevention meeting.

August 01

Prepare for the Storm

Taipei Tzu Chi hospital called the 2nd typhoon prevention meeting that morning. Located in Xindian by the mountain side, the hospital is subject to torrential rain, flood prevention is therefore the top priority.

Kin-Kuo Chen, the head of the General Affairs Dept., has taped and sealed the elevator and window seams with waterproof tapes where water might easily seeped in. The patient record room, which is located in the basement, was guarded with sand bags. Ming-Chong Yang, the head of the Engineering department, said that the gas and oil

were above the safety stock level, the drainage system was unimpeded upon examination, and the nearby Xindian and Jingmei Rivers were all well below flood line.

The safety of medical personnel is as important as the medical equipments. According to past experience, most clinics close during typhoons, so patients were all turned to major hospitals operating 24-hours.

Ren-Liang Hsiao, head of PR Department, said that Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital would stay operational, including the emergency room, regardless the severity of the storm. If otherwise, it would be announced to the public. To better serve the community, Long time Tzu Chi hospital volunteers also attended the meeting to voice opinions.



Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital typhoon prevention meeting was held by the Supt. You-Chen Chao. All staffs and volunteers participated in the job assignment.

Dalin Tzu Chi hospital on Chianan Plain felt the wrath of the typhoon as the night fall. Dr. Po-Chuan Chen, dean of herbal medicines, said doctors have no typhoon break and would continue to work as long as there are patients.

Most patients who showed up despite the pouring rain were those who scheduled earlier and needed alternative rehabilitation. Dr. Chen reminded these patients that they can adjust the dosage to avoid traveling during typhoon. Safety, he added, should be the priority.

Considering staff's safety while commuting, the Security Unit of Dalin Tzu Chi hospital increased the frequency of shuttle services to transport personnel to and from dormitory. Some nursing staffs even volunteered their ride amid the storm to an elderly patient after she missed the last shuttle bus. In the mean time, Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital in Taitung continued with the scheduled IDS (Integrated Delivery Service program) mobile clinic to safeguard the health of local residents.

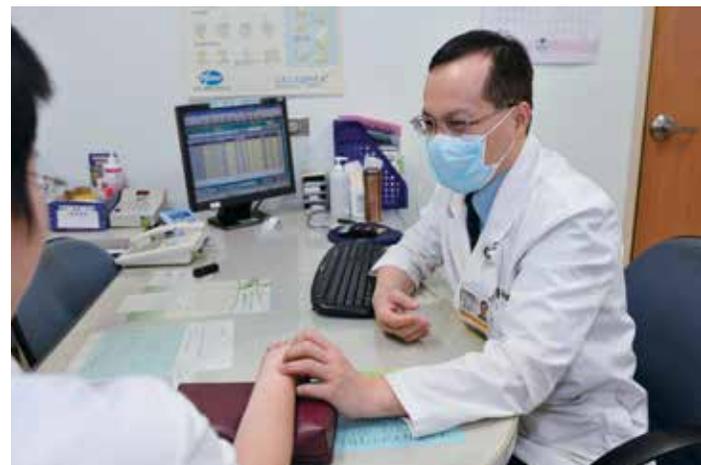
August 02

Emergent Transportation of the Injured

Moving towards north-north east at first, Saola made a sharp left turn off



Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital volunteers helped wheelchair-bound patients as they came in the midst of storm.



Even though it pours and gusts, Dalin Tzu Chi hospital remained operational as long as patients had needs. Director of Chinese medicine Dr. Bo-Chun Chen advised the patients that safety should be the first priority.

the coast of Hualien, landed in Xiulin Township at 03:20am. After a whole night of blasting wind and torrential rain, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital continued with its normal hours and its 24 hour emergency room service despite the cancellation of work and class issued by Hualien County.



At the eve of typhoon, staff in Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital tore down the satellite dish.



At Yuli Tzu Chi Hospital, all hands were mobilized. With limited human resource, female workers were helping to stack the sandbags.



Aviation Service sent helicopters to bring flood-in patients from Show-Lin village. Once the chopper landed, admin staff Mr. Bao-Yang Ko (first right) rushed forward along with emergency staff. Photo / Jun-Wei Yang



After unloading the patients, Aviation Service then transport the living necessities back to the stricken area.



Holding tight to Hospital Supt., Dr. Ruey-Ho Kao's hand, Mrs. Wang tearfully told about her terror in mind.

After the storm, the roar of helicopter rotor blades could be heard in the overcast sky. As Soala, accompanied with torrential downpour, triggered a series of mudslides in Xiulin, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, one of the major medical facilities on the eastern coast, was burdened with the responsibility of accommodating all emergency and critical patients in Huatung region, housing rescued patients from the disaster zones by the airborne rescue unit and the fire departments. By afternoon, 13 villagers in 3 batches arrived at the hospital, including a 5 day old infant. Out of the 13 villagers, 10 require treatment

due to physical discomfort, and most of them were injured during the evacuation.

“It was quite frightening, with the heavy torrential rain and falling rocks...” Recollecting how they were trapped in mud slide, terrified villagers expressed their fear. As they waited for diagnoses and treatments, Sheng-Hao Chiu, the director of the Medical Administration Dept., led his staffs to the scene to help with the admission process, and Kuo-Yang Pang, the director of Service Department, arranged social workers and volunteers to serve hot food and offer consolation, solacing the frightened villagers. Deputy Director of the Service

Hui-Mei Yen, Deputy Director of Social Service Dept. at Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital (from right), CEO Chin-Lon Lin and his wife, Sister Tzu-Lien, went to Hochung village to assess the damage.





In order to assess the medical need in the disaster area, Chin-Lon Lin, CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Mission (second from left) and infection specialist Dr. Wang (first Left) went to Peace Elementary refugee center to look after patients. Third from the right is a local doctor Dr. Mona Watan.

Department, Ms. Hui-Mei Yen, gave them bags of underwear and daily necessities to satisfy their immediate needs.

“My entire house was rolled away with mudslide.” Ms. Wang tearfully told her terror as she held the hands of Reuy-Ho Kao, the hospital’s superintendent.

Superintendent Kao and Shu-Chuan Chang, Director of Nursing Dept., rushed to the emergency room as soon as the villagers arrive to assist, as well as attending to the villagers and medical staffs. Superintendent Kao thanked the emergency team for providing professional, timely services and consolation to the disaster victims.

Superintendent Shou-Hsin Chien of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, inaugurated only few days ago, went to inspect all departments to check staffs’ attendance and to make sure their safety. He and other medical staffs met Deputy Superintendent Hsu at the 6th floor, and Hsu informed Chien what he saw while patrolling the 9th floor: several nurses reported difficulty in commuting, so Hsu encouraged them to carpool by taxi, and asked the head nurse to make sure that all nursing staffs working night shifts could return home safely.

As a matter of fact, the supervisor of Nursing Dept. Jung-Feng Cheng had

requested transportation for four nurses who couldn't return home earlier that day, and the nutrition department prepared 60 portions of buns for nursing staffs working the graveyard shift.

Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital held the third typhoon meeting. There were four births during the night Saola hit, raising the total number of newborns in the nursery up to 34.

Psychiatric department was not open, but the head of psychosomatic medicine dept. Chen Yi-Keng came nonetheless for patients who came to pick up his prescription.

Since the typhoon made its landing at northern Hualien, Yuli and Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital, located in southern Hualien, stayed vigilant in case of emergency. Fortunately the severity of the storm was weaker than expected, and all of the clinics operate as normal.

August 04

Doctors Enter Disaster Zone, Volunteers Report Safety

Saola devastated Hualien, especially Xiulin County where she made her landing. Villagers from Heren and Hezhong community of Heping Village were relocated overnight to Heping Elementary and the local community center. As soon as the North Link Railway



Dr. You-Chen Chao, Supt. of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital (Center), Deputy Supt. Hsien-Chang Yu (Right), Deputy Supt. Rong-Yuan Hsu (Left) and head secretary Li-Hua Chiao went to emergency room to visit patients.



Shou-Hsin Chien, Supt. of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital franchise, and Deputy Supt. Ren-Shu Wang gave life necessity bags to afflicted residents so they can rest assured.



Ning-Sheng Lai, Supt. of Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital led staffs to help afflicted residents to clean their houses.

opened, The CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Mission Chin-Lon Lin, his wife Sister Tzu-Lien and infectious disease expert, Deputy Superintendent of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital Lih-Shinn Wang entered the disaster zone in Hezhong and Heren to apprehend the severity and draft appropriate medical assistance program.

“Tzu Chi doctors are here!” The afflicted victims in Heping Elementary were enthusiastic to see CEO Lin and Deputy Supt. Wang’s arrival. Mona Watan, the director of Jian County Public Health Center, who stayed at the medical station in Heping Elementary, explained that the injuries they treated were mostly

inflicted while cleaning the parameter, or skin diseases from been soaked in water. Fortunately, he added, the staffs from local health centers entered the shelters immediately to assist with the treatments.

Dr. Chun-I Chiang from Hualien Armed Forces General Hospital also proceeded to Heping on boat, providing expedient services. Infection expert Vice Supt. Wang pointed out that, on top of diarrhea and vomiting caused by gastrointestinal infections, the major concern of post flood diseases is leptospirosis. He reminded the locals to avoid cleaning when barefooted, and seek immediate medical attention if there

are any wound infections coupled with fever, headache and chills.

At Heping Elementary, resident volunteer Hui-Mei Yen served as a postman, delivering messages between the ICU patient Ming-Tsung Li, a resident of Heping Village, and his family at the Heping Elementary shelter. Li, who was treated in ICU for stroke, heard about Yen's plan to visit Heping and asked her to visit his family. Li's wife, whom was relocated to the shelter, requested Yen to deliver the health smart card she took during the mudslide to her husband. "With Tzu Chi caring for my dad, I am not worried. I am more worried where we will live in the future." Li's little girl spoke her concern. She also requested CEO Lin and Sister Yen to inform her father that the family is safe, and that he should focus on recovering. CEO Lin took a photo of the little girl so he could show it to Li.

As the team advanced deeper into Hezhong Community, leaving a trail of dust behind, what appalled them wasn't just the dilapidated road, but also rocks and drift woods from mountain top, sliding down with the mudslide and poured into the village houses. "We felt much safer seeing Tzu Chi here!" Victim Hsin-Fa Wang, also the director of Nationalist Party in Xincheng County, expressed his gratitude to the visiting Tzu Chi members. Currently living close to

Jing Si Abode, Wang's native home was in Hezhong Community, thus witnessing Tzu Chi's timely arrival truly moved him. As soon as the road is opened, Wang was willing to join Tzu Chi's rank to assist the disaster victims with reconstruction.

August 05

Medical Volunteers Assist with Aftermath Rebuild

Eastern Taiwan was devastated. The lowland Neilu, Nanto suffered waist-depth flood, about 400 families were flooded, and all the furniture and appliance were damaged.

Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital cancelled the "Father's Day Hiking", and instead, Supt. Chien led about 30 staffs and doctors to join Tzu Chi volunteers distributing relief cash cards and living necessities.

Physiatrist Ta-Wei Hung, a Tzu Chi University Alumni, visited Nanto for the first time after 921 Earthquake to join a camp about solacing victimized children, and it was about a decade ago when he was still a freshman. Now, Hung was summoned natural disaster once again. He was concerned at first of not being able to assist due to the small magnitude of the disaster, but he soon realized that empathetic company to the disaster victims is always helpful.

The pouring rain from the stagnant typhoon made many flooded-in residents' situation worse off. A senior man Mr. Lo's pile of miscellaneous items were soaked in water and generated putrid smell which irked his neighbors.

Called by Supt. Lai Ning-Sheng of Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, Vice Supt. Ching-Cheng Chen, and Dr. Jui-Teng Chien came to aid Mr. Lo to clean the mess. Even though it was Sunday, many people joined the cleaning early in the morning together with their families.

Dr. Ming-Nan Lin, the hospital secretary, also brought stethoscope so

he can examine Mr. Lo and diagnose his condition for further treatment.

With nearly 50 doctors and hospital staffs' help, Mr. Lo eventually returned to his clean house instead of wandering the streets.

From physical treatment to mental consolation, Tzu Chi Medical Mission mobilized across the board and courageously faced whatever the storm might bring. The 24-hour service remained throughout the storm and all staffs continued their service to safeguard the devastated victims long after the storm was gone.

