





Stand by you

Text & photo by: Dr. Chien-Hsing Wang

This is the only path to ICU post-surgery,
a critical midpoint in a lengthy journey.

An oral cancer patient just experienced a major battle.

The ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) surgeons had just removed the malignant tumors that gradually engulfed the patient's appearance and life. The plastic surgeons took over and rebuilt the patient's exterior to face the future.

The operating room nurses, anesthesiologists and anesthetic technicians were all involved throughout the operation, helping the patient survive this ordeal.

The operation lasted ten hours.

As the patient was wheeled out of the operating room, the night was old.

The medical team accompanied the patient to the ICU.

On the way,

the eyes of the exhausted medical staff coincidentally fall on the patient.

Perhaps, the patient has to face the waking world alone,

but hopefully he will know, we stood by him alone the way.

Gazing out the window,

the myriad lights of the

city seemed to have warmed our hearts.



Postscript

Plastic surgery is a career that seems to be synonymous with cosmetic surgery in the present day, but is that true? I was in medical school for seven years, but it was not until I stood at the operating table that I learned what a retractor is, and another six years in residency before I knew what plastic surgery is. Cosmetic surgery is only part of plastic surgery, especially in a hospital setting.

In eastern Taiwan, the majority of work and responsibility for plastic surgeons is focusing on “reconstruction.” Since Hualien Tzu Chi hospital is the only major hospital in eastern Taiwan that provides complete and comprehensive cancer treatment, as a result, we are faced with numerous cases of postoperative reconstruction for oral cancer patients. We hope to give patients their original appearance and restore mouth function. This is a very strenuous work, and often takes eight hours or more to complete one surgery.

After completing a surgery, we still need to monitor the free flap carefully. It is important to transfer patients safely and smoothly from the operating room to the ICU so that patients will be able to slowly recover and regain enough physical strength to endure the upcoming chemical and radiation therapy. Throughout this entire process, we stand by the patient, hoping for a complete recovery.

About the Author

Chien-Hsing Wang

Chien-Hsing Wang is a plastic surgeon of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital and the leader of the trauma team. He received his first camera from his father on an elementary school graduation trip.

After graduating from the National Taiwan University Department of Medicine, he received his residency training in plastic surgery. His teacher, Professor Ming-Ting Chen, required the students to take photos of the affected parts of patients for future tracking and comparison. During many long nights, Dr. Wang studied these photos carefully and asked himself if he would have done anything differently, in order to have better options when encountering similar situations in the future. Those photos, hence, had a great impact on Dr. Wang's future surgeries. As he took more photos, photography began to grow on him. Many years of photographic experience motivated him to experiment with different themes. Being able to capture interesting photos that record memories for him and others has become a great pleasure in Wang's personal life.

