

# Ayutthaya, Thailand

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## Five Hospitals, Four Towns – The Coordinated Mobilization of Love

By: Sang Ruilian, Li Ciren, Cai Qiuling

During 2011 Thailand Flood, Tzu Chi volunteers had poured love into Bang Pa-in County, Ayutthaya. On April 28, 2013,

Tzu Chi Thailand Chapter and Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) coordinated medical personnel from five hospitals, including Mann Pia, Lamar, Bang Chi-Lan, Vientiane, and Peng-Vie, to a total of 212 people, plus 340 Tzu Chi volunteers, returned to Bang Pa-In County once again, servicing a total of 924 patients from four towns including KoKoet, Banplub, BanPaeng and WatYom. This was the largest mobilization of free clinic in Thailand history. In addition to general internal medicine,

Thailand TIMA-Tzu Chi volunteers entered in Ayutthaya again, mobilizing the largest number of medical personnel in history to serve the locals.





**Students from Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Changwat Nonthaburi, cared for a child with learning disabilities and brought forth a big smile.**

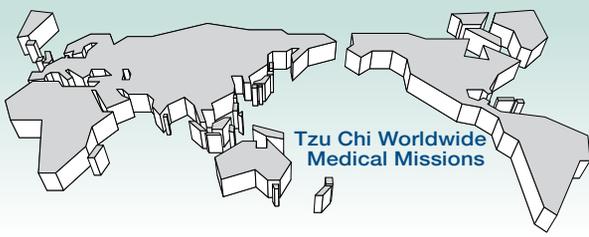
ophthalmology and dentistry, new services such as acupuncture and ENT (ear, nose and throat) were added to provide a wider variety of diagnosis and therapies.

### **Ceaseless Giving, Without Asking in Return**

On the opening ceremony of the free clinic, Convener Yu Jian Zhong of Tzu Chi Thailand Honorable Board and TIMA Thailand, on behalf of all the Tzu Chi volunteers, said: “Today we seem to have brought a hospital here, for the health of the folks of all four towns. If you

need medical assistance, please do not hesitate and inform the volunteers.” The day also marked the first cooperation with Ramathibodi Hospital. The deputy director of the service department, Thanya Subhadrabandhu, remarked, “Tzu Chi is a very good example, providing continuous care. Since the great flood, Tzu Chi’s love has never ended. In addition to the emergency relief during the flood, today Tzu Chi has provided us a free clinic, a demonstration of their incessant love.”

Touched by Tzu-Chi’s spirit of giving without asking for anything in return, two teachers led 60 students to participate in



**Dentists are primarily from Lamar Hospital. To reduce the waiting time under the glaring sun, there are fourteen dental chairs in operation simultaneously.**

the free clinic, so these students can learn about Tzu Chi's humanitarian ideology. Tatiyaporn Tantikul, a nursing student, assisted and accompanied Grandma Zhan Lan's five year old grandson, who has learning disabilities. After a brief interaction with the nursing students, the once nervous child gave a brilliant smile. Tatiyaporn shared her experience: "Today I played with the children not to

let them wait in boredom. Since, before our interactions, the child may be afraid of doctors, nurses or staff." She now realized the importance of treating the mind, in addition to treating physical illness. Tatiyaporn is now looking forward to the future to become a nurse after graduation, and have the opportunity to engage her work with the same spirit.

## Health Care from All Over Gathered to Safeguard Life

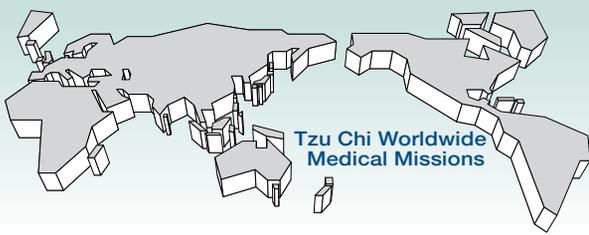
The members of otolaryngology (Ear, Nose, and Throat, ENT) team were primarily from Wat Pleng Hospital, led by Supt. Cai Wanglun. Not only did he led the entire hospital staff to cultivate organic rice, but also invited them to assist Ayutthaya villagers today. The physician tapped the U-shaped tuning fork gently against the elbow, creating a humming sound, and then placed it by the patient's ear, asking, "Can you hear the sound?" The test was a preliminary hearing screen. "Silence" is a feature of the ENT clinic, which significantly differed from the drilling sounds in dentistry. Supt. Cai, wearing a TIMA uniform, shared his joy and experience as a Tzu Chi Volunteer, from vegetable garden to learning Chinese to become close to Master Cheng Yen. He said if the recycling station opens Chinese class for beginners, he is willing to participate along with his six year old son.

Today three female acupuncturists arrived from Mann Pia hospital. Two of them were twin sisters, Ms. Liu and Liu Yuhua, who studied Chinese medicine together; in addition to having Chinese names, they can also communicate in Chinese. In Thailand, acupuncture clinic is relatively new to most people.

The young twin doctors alleviated the Thai's fear and thus willing to accept the insertion of needles into the acupuncture points of the body. Physicians Eingraphat Chatsiriphuwat said: "Today feels good; I am very appreciative that Tzu Chi held this free clinic, providing us the opportunity to serve the needy. Today is our first initiative



**Mann Pia Hospital acupuncturists provided treatment for the residents of Pullman to ease their pain.**



for patient services in the community.”

Dr. Ponthakorn of Rama Hospital volunteered for the free clinic. He was in charge of general internal medicine on that day. He explained that in addition to providing medical services, care should also be given to the patient’s family situation; for instance, when some patients have a chronic soreness with no improvement from prior treatment, then recommend places where they can go for check-up. Many patients suffered from occupational injuries due to prolonged walking or standing. He would share with the patients to manage their workload

if their pain persisted even after taking painkillers. He hopes that through the doctor’s education, patients will take better care of themselves. Doctor Peng Ta-Gong agreed with the idea of free clinic. “Some patients dislike hospitals or simply unwilling to go. Events such as this grant us the opportunity to share with them knowledge to improve self-care,” he said.

### **Bring Smile to Harelip Girl**

There was a four-month-old baby girl named Aurathai. She suffered from



**U-Thai brought her daughter, Aurathai, who suffered from cleft-lips to the free clinic; she is extremely grateful for the medical staffs and volunteers’ diligent care and comfort.**

congenital defects “cleft” or commonly known as harelip. Her palate was badly split, which adversely affected her ability to suckle. Her plastic palate was fixed in position with merely two thin threads. However, the adhesive tape for the palate had caused abrasions along the girl’s delicate cheeks while the plastic palate was barely in place, and the discomfort left the baby crying. Her mother, U-Thai, who had no knowledge of birth control, gave birth to five children. The father, Anusorn, is a security guard in Bangkok. To save money, U-Thai and her children now live in Ayutthaya with her father-in-law, away from Anusorn. Four families currently live in this house, in addition to her in-laws, her brother and sister-in-law’s family also lives with them. As each family has their own burden, U-Thai could hardly ask for any assistance then to have a place to stay.

Aurathai was brought to the clinic by her mother, U-Thai. Doctors from Rama Hospital examined her cleft lip and ears very carefully, and discovered signs of middle ear effusion. Dr. Pachara said: “Generally speaking, children with cleft will often face middle ear effusion. Surgeons cannot proceed with the prosthetic palate surgery if the condition is left untreated. It will also affect the child’s hearing and speaking capabilities in the future.” U-Thai was concerned, as her baby girl already had cleft lips and is now faced with ear

disease. The doctor comforted U-Thai and informed her not to worry, and instructed her to bring her daughter to Rama Hospital on 5 June for ear recheck and cleft lip surgery, which are fully sponsored by the government for children with cleft lips.

U-thai exclaimed, “I like today’s free clinic. Everyone was very enthusiastic, and there were volunteers at each set location to accompany us. I am touched! I was deeply grateful for Tzu Chi. I am still faced with travel expenses and milk money. My husband just got a job and hasn’t receive a paycheck. I am very grateful for Tzu Chi’s care. Every department in the free clinic examined us thoroughly and with great advices. It is truly amazing!”

Through Charitable works, Master Cheng Yen discovered the phenomenon of disease-induced poverty. Thailand Tzu Chi volunteers are also aware of the issue. The free clinic today, in addition to provide health care, more importantly, the love and care from medical personnel and volunteers were passed on to the villagers. Despite the hot summer day and the fatigue, everyone is saturated with joy. Dr. Surawej Numhom from Rama Hospital said, “This free clinic is a perfect success! I am very touched. Although it is the first time Rama Hospital collaborated with Tzu Chi, I believe there will be many opportunities for collaboration in the future.