



Dalin

An Extraordinary Wedding of Love and Filial Piety

February 23, 2013

On February 23rd, a warm and solemn Buddhist wedding ceremony took place at the temple of Heart Lotus Ward in Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital. With a Buddhist master's blessing, Pei-Yu, daughter of a hospital patient Ling-Ling Hsiao, and her lover I-Wen were married and promised to support each other as husband and wife.

Solemn Wedding to Fulfill One Last Wish

A week ago, Tzu Chi volunteer Ying-Ying Chen came to Heart Lotus Palliative Care ward again. While chatting with Ling-Ling Hsiao and asking if she still had any lingering worries or unfulfilled wishes, Pei-Yu's marriage was brought out. Ying-Ying volunteered this sacred mission. In order to set Yei-Yu's mind at ease in keeping her mother company, Ying-Ying, with members of the cancer support group, managed all the details carefully despite her severe flu. Sister Wen-Chueh Lin, who owns a hair parlor, took care of the wedding gown, hairdo and makeup. Chia-Ching Lin, wife of a Geriatrician,

Dr. Hsien-Shou Shih, brought the shawl, bead necklace, and earrings. They did not bypass the wedding traditions which included a full table of wedding cookies and candies, fruits, cakes and ritual processes. As if they were marrying their own daughter away, the volunteers came from near and far to help preparing the wedding prudently.

Re-illumination of a Lost Soul

Pei-Yu was only eighteen years old when her mother left home to escape from an unfortunate marriage, and they lost contact ever since. "Every year, I was hoping that I will get to see my mother next year," she said. However, the longing



Dir. Yu-Chieh Su of Oncology (left) and patient Ling-Ling Hsiao(right) holding hands to show his/her gratefulness toward each other.

had lasted for eight years. In those eight years, depression and stress affected Hsiao Ling-Ling both mentally and physically, which accumulatively caused the tumor malignancy. It was not until 2004 did Pei-Yu heard the news about her mother again. Her mother's sickness was terminal by then, and her life was hanging on by a thread.

In June 2004, Ling-Ling Hsiao, who had been roving in Japan for more than eight years, had finally returned to her hometown through the help of Tzu Chi volunteers from both Japan and Taiwan. Ling-Ling, been registered as a missing resident in Taiwan, was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer by a Japanese doctor, who made the prognosis that she won't survive three days in Taiwan. Prior to the care of Dir. Chang-Kuo Wei of General Medicine, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital, she had lost 29 kg while suffering the ailment. For those people who had cared for her during that time, it was hard to believe that Ling-Ling survived another eight more years. Moreover, she had lived her life with a stunning splendor.

After Dr. Wei's successful operation, the chief oncologist Dr. Yu-Chieh Su continued the treatment for Ling-Ling Hsiao with chemotherapy. In six months, her cancer index was miraculously under control. Ling-Ling Hsiao put on the volunteer vest and had become the

best partner of the medical team. In the past eight years, Ling-Ling always came alone by train for every follow-up, return visit, chemotherapy, electrical therapy or hospitalization. She also courageously shared her own pain and experience as a volunteer. In early 2013, she was transferred to Heart Lotus ward. Her life was completely illustrious.



Ling-Ling Hsiao reminds her daughter and daughter in law to live every moment well.

Patient Guides Doctors in the Last Walk of Life

“There is no prior case in the world where a patient could survive eight year long with all the predicaments and terminal breast cancer metastasis to small intestines and the entire body, no one!” said Dr. Yu-Chieh Su at Pei-Yu’s engagement ceremony. In these eight years of accompanying Ling-Ling, Dr. Su had witnessed Ling-Ling’s resilient vitality. He wanted to, perhaps more than the patient herself, sustain her life.

Dr. Su shared a story on his unique collaboration with Ling-Ling. He was thrilled when came across a health educational manual for cancer patients while attending a conference in Japan. Many health educational handbooks in Taiwan were either translated from or had consulted European countries or the United States that have very different dietary habits and lifestyles than Taiwan. Japanese designed health education handbook, on the other hand, shared many similarities with Taiwanese. However, Dr. Su was incapable of translating the content despite having a general idea of it.

While he was vexed about this problem, he ran into Ling-Ling Hsiao, who happened to make her regular follow-up visit. Dr. Su casually asked Ling-Ling if she could help with the translation, to which she agreed and a month later delivered a

complete translated file. “Do you know? Before this, Ling-Ling had never used a computer. She had completed this by learning the computer step-by-step and typing it slowly for one month. I did not know how to show my gratitude. Now this health education handbook is at the typesetting and final draft stage. This will be a unique health educational handbook in our hospital because there is no such patient like Ling-Ling in other hospitals!”

“My greatest reward in life is to have my daughter receiving so many blessings from the disciples of our Dharma Master, doctors and Tzu Chi sisters. Now I can set my mind at ease! You are on your own in the future. Endure each other. Whenever you encounter any unhappiness, both of you should take a step back, and everything will be okay,” exhorted Hsiao Ling-Ling earnestly to the newlyweds. “I had eight years that I should never have had. If I were to die back then, my life would not have been so complete. As a matter of fact, I know my condition, and I am already prepared,” continued Xiao.

“It is hard not to cry,” Pei-Yu said, despite her mother reminder. “I just wanted to let my mother know, the reason I cried is because I am happy, not because of sadness.” With the help from the volunteers and the doctors, Pei-Yu was able to celebrate the wedding under her mother’s blessing in time. For that, Pei-Yu was incessantly grateful. (Text/ Photo: Tzu-I Ho)