

Taipei

Free Clinic for International Migrant Workers

October 13, 2013

On October 13, the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital, in conjunction with the Northern Taiwan Chapter of Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA), held a free clinic for the international migrant workers at the Taipei Railway Station. Fifteen medical staff from the hospital served 88 migrant workers on that day. In addition to the medical care, the event also provided free haircut and massage services.

To accommodate the event and to help the migrant worker patrons feel at ease, volunteers converted the otherwise busy bus stations into small private examination areas. Medical services provided ranging from basic physical examination, such as weight, height, blood pressure, urine and blood sugar analyses, to specialized areas such as dental care, vision, internal medicine, gynecology, cardiology, dermatology, throat and ear, etc.

The international migrant workers in Taiwan are often under a lot of pressure. Besides the physical demand from their jobs, they are also faced with social/cultural adjustment and language issues.

A simple dental clinic provides private personable services to the foreign migrant workers despite the limitation of space.





Dr. Jia-Fu Lee uses a saliva stress test device to measure the level of stress experienced by the foreign migrant workers.

Dr. Jia-Fu Lee, who has been a volunteer at the migrant worker clinic for more than ten years, said, “International migrant workers who left their countries to come to Taiwan have daily wearies. They take their employment seriously because they don’t want to lose their jobs. They take good care of our family members. If we can put ourselves in their shoes, to take good care of them, they will work harder to take care of our elderly.”

Vuli purwita Nirgsih is a migrant worker from Indonesia. She learned long ago from the internet that Tzu Chi has free medical services. She rarely has time off,

but was able to attend the free clinic in October for the first time. She commented with shyness that she was amazed to find so many people care about the well-being of foreign workers.

SIH Khalimah, who also came from Indonesia, said, “My employer’s grandma frequently go to Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital for treatment. The staff there often teaches me how to take care of the elderly. They also give me free advices such as the importance of taking good care of myself both physically and psychologically and to be happy, so that I can be positive and energetic to take care of others. I really



Director Chun-Hong Chu (right) provides consultation to the unhappy female migrant worker.

appreciate their encouragement and their concern. So when I heard of the Tzu Chi free clinic, I immediately contacted two good friends of mine to come to this event.”

Because of the language barrier, many female migrant workers are reluctant to make medical appointments to see the doctors. Their medical problems often are not treated for a long time. The director of the gynecology department of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital commented with concerns that “many female migrant workers experience menstrual difficulty or genital infections. Therefore, it is necessary to provide preventive care services, such as Pap smear test, in addition to medical

treatment.”

Dr. Wang-Yu Su, an ear-nose-throat specialist, has been a volunteer since he was a student. He often had small talk with the migrant works to help the workers feel at ease and to express their life difficulties. Dr. Su said, “As Master Cheng Yen said: for those who suffer cannot seek help, we are blessed to be able to find them and offer our support.”

Nursing staff are always busy at the free clinic. Nurse Dze-Wei Cheng at the emergency room described how she was inspired and energized to help the less fortunate. Her greatest return is a patient’s smile expressing gratitude.