



TAIWAN ROOT MEDICAL PEACE CORPS

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台灣路竹會

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Message of TRMPC

Filipinos Ease Disaster with Foot

When the entire Taiwan was busy recovering from the 8/8 flood, Philippine was also suffering from a severe flood. While devoting to the disaster relief in the damaged areas domestically, Taiwan Root shared the pain of the Filipinos, and managed to gather a medical team, the only one from Taiwan, to go to Philippine.

Upon arrival at the worst damaged villages in Philippine, we saw no sign of the consequences of a severe flood (as shown in the photo). After questioning the local authorities we confirmed the water once reached to the second floor. The Filipinos managed to clear the areas in less than a month due to their flooding experiences of knowing not to rely on the government. The victims would return home when the water lowered to waist high, and use their foot to mix the mud in the water for several days, until the water brought the mud away. This process made the after job of cleaning much easier.

On the other hand, victims in Taiwan over-relied on the government for disaster relief that when the water was gone, the dry mud became hard to clean. We often saw the military worked hard trying to clear the areas, while the victims having tea aside. It's something we ought to think about.

The truth is, with a second thought and action, the result may be a huge difference.
To share with all.



Liu Chih-chun

President of Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps
30.October.2009

台灣路竹會
Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps



Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps (TRMPC) is a private, non-sectarian, non-profit organization dedicated to improving quality of life through provision of medical services and health education. Founded in 1995, by the vision of Dr. Chi-Chun Liu, TRMPC joined talented medical personnel with enthusiastic volunteers to form a medical service group. In nearly 200 medical missions, TRMPC focuses on bringing medical care to not only indigenous populations inhabiting remote mountain areas of Taiwan, but to people in developing nations and in refugee camps. The number of people we served amounts to 100,000. TRMPC believes that medical service should transcend national borders and exceed the limitations of politics, race, and religion. It holds as its end goal a united international community working in cooperation to bring about equitable access of healthcare to all populations.

A Journey of Fulfillment and Optimism –

Dharamsala

Written by Chiao Hua (喬樺)
Photographed by TRMPC

“I used to be like you. I didn’t believe in reincarnation. But my father has experienced it first hand. Really! He told me that our old neighbor in Tibet was a true case!” The young monk looked straight at me intensely with his glowing eyes. Eddy was 18 years old. When he was 6, he escaped to Dharamsala due to his religious beliefs.

Dharamsala, which is a city in northern India, shelters countless Tibetan refugees who came here to continue their study of Buddhism under His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Many monks who now reside in Dharamsala had spent at least a month climbing mountains after mountains at night to escape the Chinese government. Eddy, who was my translator, was an example. In fact, most of the monks who I have met during my 10-day mission in Dharamsala fled Tibet on foot.

Good Morning Tibetans!

Although Dharamsala was filled with spiritual freedom and enthusiasm, the local citizens still led difficult lives. From the hotel that we stayed at, we saw women, carrying infants on their backs, digging dirt under a wobbly building. When you look up, I saw children and women drying their clothes on bricks of a structure that was not sufficient to be called a house. However, things looked a bit

better when I walked towards downtown, which was a couple miles down the road. At the Main street where locals referred to as the Market, we saw monks carrying Buddhist texts on one hand with bead necklaces on the other, chanting along as they walk; we also saw restaurants and stores filled with trinkets opened by local Indians; moreover, there were donuts been sold on the side walk by local Tibetans! Despite their different nationalities and skin colors, Tibetans and Indians seemed to live in harmony. On top of that, in the hustle-bustle market, there were cows that walked in front of the traffic with such dignity but so painfully slowly. In Hinduism, the cows were sacred because they were a symbol of life, so of course even the police on duty let them go about their ways. Unfortunately, the Main road which can barely fit one car would be jammed. This was our daily routine in Dharamsala: to wait patiently in a devastating traffic.

Optimism and Spiritual Fulfillment

I am a medical student aspiring to become involved in international medicine. Being able to come to Dharamsala with Taiwan Root Medial Peace Corps (TRMPC) for a medical mission was certainly a dream come true. In addition to been awed by numerous temples and monasteries, my most vivid memory of Dharamsala was the Tibetans’ positive and optimistic attitudes toward life. At Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) schools, where our first two medical missions took place, we saw children playing soccer with such delight in their eyes. Hearing their loud and sincere laughs, it was difficult to grasp what they had been through in order to come to Dharamsala. Not only were they at a foreign country at a young age, many of them fled Tibet to come here to survive on their own. I remember clearly a 4th grader excitedly held my hand and said, “You are from Taiwan?! We could watch Taiwanese TV here

too!" This little girl, who was one of our translators, later told us that she missed her family very much. But, she could not even call her parents in Tibet because if the Chinese government was to find out about her, the consequence was unimaginable. Moreover, many young children were sent here by human trafficking. If the children were lucky enough to survive the harsh trip from Tibet to Dharamsala, they still may end up on their own near a trash can, waiting to be found. Now that I was watching them run and play soccer, I must admit my admiration for their strength to stay alive. However, I wish the children's parents, waiting anxiously to hear about them one day, could stand here like I was to watch them play.

Not only the positive attitude was readily apparent at the TCV schools, there was also a sense of optimism at McLeod Ganj, which was a temple where we provided medical services for two days. When an elderly monk gave the camera a peace sign, I knew immediately that he too, never gave up on his desire to live with dignity and spiritual fulfillment despite the obstacles.

Health Education is Essential

As a medical student, my main responsibilities include helping out at triage and shadow physicians. I was able to rotate to different specialties (Ophthalmology, Oto-

laryngology, Pediatrics, and Obstetrics/Gynecology) throughout the mission. At triage, I saw firsthand how deficient healthcare was in Dharamsala. One or two hours before we were scheduled to arrive, there would already be a line of 200 to 300 patients, waiting anxiously to be seen by a doctor. Occasionally, TRMPC volunteers had to prevent small riots from breaking out by calming the patients and keeping them in line. While I wiped my sweat on my already soaked sleeves, I was unspeakably glad that healthcare services in the United States were nowhere near this difficult to obtain.

While shadowing, I remember the ENT doctors could always put a dramatic and immediate smile on patients' faces. I recall a young boy who bravely walked up to Dr. Wang and said, "My ears hurt and I can't seem to hear very clearly." As Dr. Wang wrestled with the patient's ear canals with long tweezers and suction, he was finally able to take out earwax that was as big as the tip of my little finger! The little boy looked at the evil cause of his chronic ear pain with his watery eyes, and nodded with such a bright smile on his face.

The other otolaryngologist, Dr. Lee, also had similar patients. A monk, who has been long bothered by hardened earwax, was so happy that his ear canals were finally free of obstruction. He excitedly held Dr. Lee's hands for at least five minutes to thank him for

freeing him of chronic ear pain and giving him near perfect hearing once again. It is hard to imagine that services which we take for granted, such as cleaning out the ears, can dramatically improve the lives of patients in developing regions. Now to think of it, we who live in an extremely wealthy country comparatively, should really have nothing to complain about!

Although medical mission can often bring tremendous and immediate emotional rewards, it is at times very frustrating. I remember a little boy whose eye glasses were as thick as a cutting board, slowly walked up to our ophthalmologist Dr. Lee. He told us that he could not see anything clearly, and what bothered him most was that he could not learn simply because he cannot read what was written on the blackboard. He was instructed to take off his glasses and read aloud the alphabets written on a paper. When he completed this task with such difficulty, we knew that he had severe myopia. However, the optical powers of his current glasses were no longer correct for his eyes.

Unfortunately, we did not bring new glasses or an eye exam kit to help this child. We apologized for not being able to give him new glasses or at least find out what the correct prescription should be, but we asked the boy's teacher who came along to take him to an optometrist for a new pair of glasses to prevent his eyesight from worsening. Painfully watching



the child silently put the glasses that no longer work for him back on, I wanted to run back to Taiwan to bring him a new pair immediately. However, I stood so helplessly still next to the ophthalmologist.

Thinking critically about medical missions abroad, our power to make a lasting impact on local citizens was so insignificant, despite our burning desire to help. For example, seven days worth of vitamins could not help a child who is undernourished. Moreover, what can we really do for a hypertensive adult other than giving him a few days worth of medicine to help control his high blood pressure temporarily? Perhaps what patients in developing regions really need is health education. Understanding the underlying cause of a disease and eliminating the causal agent is certainly more important than treatment alone.

What education is able to do for patients that medical treatment cannot is improving their

health condition from the root. Thus, TRMPC should consider bringing health education to developing regions, along with our medical aids, to complete the healthcare service. Thinking critically about medical missions abroad, our power to make a lasting impact on local citizens was so insignificant, despite our burning desire to help. For help control his high blood pressure temporarily? Perhaps what patients in developing regions really need is health education.

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Our Last 18-hour bus ride

During our last bus ride from Dharamsala to Delhi, I was excited to be able to eat some Taiwanese snacks that our teammates had brought. Recalling the days when the trashcan and the toilet were my close friends due to my upsetting GI system, I could not remember a day when my teammates were not by my side to make sure that I was okay. Seeing everyone work together, care and cheer for each other, I know the volunteers have become one big family by the end of our 10-day mission to Dharamsala. As I was sentimental for the inevitable separation at the airport, I jotted down everyone's contact info. However, my selfish stomach was shamelessly growling at the same time, asking loudly for the tasty fried chicken and rice waiting for me in Taiwan... ✧

Welcome to Our TRMPC Website www.taiwanroot.org

we record nearly 200 medical missions so far on our website, and there are plenty of photos and video clips kept completely about our mission. Welcome to browse it.

A random note in Dharamsala

Written by Chen, Hong-Sing (陳鴻矢)

In the afternoon of July 24th, 2009, as our plane circled, making its final descent into the New Delhi airport, I woke up and stretched my numb limbs from my seat—“eventually arrive at India” I thought in my mind. 37 people from different parts of Taiwan including doctors, nurses and volunteers from different lines comprised this medical group, which made this trip a totally different one from that of a general tour group. I knew before departing Taiwan that the trip might be a little bit hard, but it never came to me that it would take nearly 17 hours to get to our destination—Dharamsala.

Dharamsala is in the north-western part of India where Tibetan Government in Exile is located. In 1959, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and his followers fled to India, and under the mercy of the Prime Minister of India, Dalai Lama and his followers were allowed to settle down in Upper Dharamsala where they established the so-called Tibetan Government in Exile in 1960. With His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama Dharmasala settling here, Dharamsala has gradually become internationally-known and is now frequently visited by Buddhists seeing a journey to here as a pilgrimage; in addition to that, many Dalai Lama's

followers, especially those from Mainland China, by all means—fake IDs, paying a large sum of money to human smugglers and so on—come a long way across the all-year snowy, rugged natural border, Himalayas, to pay a visit to Dalai Lama and seek shelter here or to send their children here to learn their Tibetan culture.

The first day we saw patients at a children's village. It was rare to see nowadays that children could behave so well—they stood in the queue one after the other waiting for treatment without any arguing, hilarious roaring or roaming around. Two female student translators were assigned to help us by the village for both of them could speak Tibetan, Chinese and English. They both ages 16—one is from Lhasa, the other from Lugu Lake. The former was brought to here by one of her villagers, an elder brother, she called. She was then three or four so the elder brother carried her on his back walking across the mountains for numerous days and then finally got here. The latter was a little bit luckier because she was brought to here by her uncle by airplane. Her uncle left her to a host family and then went back to Mainland. In fact, these are just two of the thousands of

stories behind the India Tibetans.

As we were packing up all the medical stuff, ready to call it a day, a little girl lingered about me. Although I did not understand what she was talking about, I knew what she meant. She kept pointing to her nose to signify her uncomfortableness in the nose. “She is to be the last patient,” I thought, “no big deal to break the rule.” I filled out the form for her and took her to the doctor. “Allergy” the doctor said, after identifying her symptoms. Of course, it was not possible to root out her allergy this time as far as I knew, but at least she might feel a little bit better and soothing in mind.

hall. It is a pretty much big school accommodating students from elementary to senior high. We had lunch at the students' cafeteria where we tasted the best dishes since we arrived at India. During break time, I went to buy a pack of cigarettes and by the way walked around the campus. On the bulletin board, I saw students' works such as English writings and drawings, which were all very well-done. From an elementary school teacher's perspective, I wondered how these kids, under such difficult learning environment, could do so well.

Actually, the kids here seemed to be under good care because most of them were in good physical condition. Only a few of them suffered from back pain, which I guessed might be due to doing too much of their worship rituals.

The weather was changeable that day. The rain was on and off for several times. The sun did not reveal its smile until we were about to leave.

For the next consecutive two days, we saw patients in the monastery—the Tsuglagkhang Temple in McLeod Ganji. The corner of the monastery that we were about to use for practicing medical care had been chaotic before we got ready, because too many patients had already waited there—some were pushing through, some were cutting in lines and still some were trying to wedge in the entrance. One of our translators told me that some of these patients came a long way here and had waited for more than 5 hours. A Tibetan elder begged me to let him see the doctor first, which I didn't, though I could see that he seemed barely capable of walking. I could not defy the rule again this time as I did last time to the little girl. I knew this time the whole situation was totally different because once I gave anyone priority, then everybody else would want that privilege.

On our second day here, we happened to encounter two compatriots, a girl and her

brother, who came on a backpacking trip. They had suffered from diarrhea for several days. They felt happy that they could see a doctor here.

On the sixth day, we went Gangchen Kyishong, an administrative community where all the government departments are situated. This was an easy and relaxed day because not many patients came. Patients that came all seemed to be much more educated and wealthier, which we could see from their dressing.

We finished the day a little bit earlier and went to have a big meal at a traditional Tibetan restaurant. What was the most exotic dish in the restaurant? Certainly “Fried Momo”. In fact, Momo is a bit like Chinese Jiaozy or steamed bun, but fried Momo is different in that it is fried.

On the seventh day we went to the Norbulingka Institute. “Norbulingka” originally refers to the palace in Lhasa, Tibet, which served as the traditional summer residence of the successive Dalai Lamas from the 1780s up until the PRC takeover in the late 1950s; however, nowadays it also refers to the Norbulingka Institute in Dharamsala. Norbulingka Institute demonstrates a mixed style of traditional Chinese and Tibetan architecture; however, it is also very modern. There is a restaurant in the palace where, during break time, I enjoyed a cup a soda with one of our

members and there is also a boutique which sells a great deal of Tibetan clothes and handicrafts, and still there is a museum which has diorama displays of traditional Tibetan scenes, using miniature Tibetan dolls in traditional costumes.

The eighth day was supposed to be free, but Dr. Lu added up one more on the schedule. We went to Gyuto Monastery where His Holiness 17th Karmapa now resides. After our work was done, we met him in the conference room. He was powerfully built, young and shy, kept on fidgeting and taking deep breath when speaking—probably due to nervousness; however, his eyes revealed a sort of wisdom and dignity. Before we left, he bestowed each of us presents—a stone, a string of prayer beads, a thread and three packs of medicine.

“How were the ten days in India?” I asked myself when I got back Taiwan. “How was your trip to India?” friends asked about me. As a matter of fact, I feel that it is beyond description and hard to tell about the my sentiments. During the time in India, I happened to be connected with many unknown beings and till now the faces of those unknown beings still occasionally pop out in my head. It is probably all about Yuanfen that has brought the connection! If you want to know how it feels, go and join the group next time. 卍

Tough Times Never Last, but Tough People Do!

Written by Ying, Daniel Tzuhan (應子涵)

Photographed by Yu, Lien-ko (游連柯)

“Tough times never last, but tough people do!” This was a very short quote I had learned from Dr. Robert H. Schuller of Crystal Cathedral. I thought these were just eight simple words taken from the dictionary and combined into one short sentence with no real meaning. I didn’t realize its true meaning until participating as a volunteer in the Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps in the Philippines.

Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps (or known as TRMPC) is a well-known and non-profit organization devoted to improving the quality of health care and education for communities in remote districts. TRMPC was founded by Dr. Chi-Chun Liu in 1995, and has grown to include many enthusiastic doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists and volunteers who want to make the world a better place. The organization offers free health care consultations and believes that medical service should not be restricted by politics, religion, and race. TRMPC aims to build a united international community that brings equal education and health care opportunities to everyone around the world.

My enthusiasm to help the needy encouraged me to participate as a volunteer for TRMPC’s mission of setting up temporary medical service centers in the Philippines. Coming to the rural country side of the Philippines from the urban, more modern Taiwan, I was initially shocked to

see how the schools and convenience stores, like 7-11, were enclosed with iron bars. To me, they looked more like jail cells than city buildings. Even more shocking was the constant presence of bodyguards, holding M-49 rifles, who traveled with us throughout the entire medical mission. I realized that Filipinos live in constant fear of burglars and other threats. I finally understood how tough life can be in the Philippines. My responsibility as a volunteer for TRMPC was to act as a translator for the patients and their doctors. I am fluent in both Chinese and English, so this responsibility suited me perfectly. In my role as a

least 2000 patients during this medical mission. There was one patient, in particular, I would never forget. The patient was a 4-year-old baby boy with a deformed eye and a blood vessel tumor that had grown so big that I could see a huge bump on his forehead. When I saw this boy, I finally understood why many of the patients had worried looks on their faces. Not knowing what to do to make them feel better, I mustered the best smile I could. Unexpectedly, the boy’s worry disappeared and the boy smiled back at me. I was really amazed by how much of a difference one simple smile had made. That boy’s smile made me forget



translator, I interacted with at

the stress and fatigue I felt



and gave me the energy to work for hours. From then on, throughout the entire mission, I smiled at every patient I encountered at TRMPC's five temporary clinics. The patients said thank you to me and smiled as they left to return to their homes.

During the mission, I had a chance to reflect with a doctor of the TRMPC's mission in the Philippines told me

that we should not treat the patients with an arrogant heart, believing that we are superior. In reality, each patient has many attributes that we can learn from. Many of the patients in the mission lack medical care, and have extremely low incomes, which explained their worried faces when they came to the temporary clinics. But when they saw me smiling at them, they

smiled back and left with smiles. This experience taught me the power of a smile: it helps people to look forward and stop thinking negatively. It reminds others that a tough life there can also have enjoyable times. The patients showed me that tough times do not last forever, but tough people who smile, think positively and continue to move on can endure any hardship. In the future, I am sure to be facing some tough times, but by smiling and looking ahead, I too continue to move on. I had finally learned the meaning of "Tough times never last, but tough people do!" ✝



Human Kindness is Sweeter Than a Peach

Written by Chang Ru-Jun (常如君)

Translated by Lee Yie-zong(李依蓉) 、 Photographed by Tsai Hwei-jhen(蔡慧貞)

The first stop of our medical trip was the Shin Guang Tribe, we ate with great pleasure their juicy peaches and also got to experience the tribe people's earthiness and enthusiasm.

After a hard day of cooking, several girls from the culinary group got together and started to find peaches to eat. As they looked around for it they came to a doorway of a guesthouse which sells peaches. "Excuse me, how much are these?" With that one question, it opened up a sweet friendship between the guesthouse owners, an old lady and her granddaughter, and us. After careful comparing and selecting the old lady said to us: "Come, come, I give each one of you a free sample!", "Really!? Thank you so much!", "These are so sweet and juicy!" and just like that we started to chat.

The old lady was smiling radiantly as if the sun was shining brightly in the clear blue sky.

"Here, everyone can have another one!" The old lady's generous offering left us a bit embarrassed about getting the second helping.

"Now, now, these are really sweet and delicious, go ahead take them!"

She used her wrinkly hands to carefully deliver the beautiful red peaches to us; it was her act kindness that made us



feel the warmth and passion of this mountain tribe. As we were enjoying ourselves among all this, a tanned and skinny girl, who is probably about 15 or 16, came walking toward us. She just sat down on the vine-woven chair and started biting into this jumbo size peach which juices looks as if may gush out any minute. (I thought to myself: "Wow! That must be some first-class fruit, what extravagant way of eating!") Then we realize that the girl was the old lady's granddaughter.

"Little girl, you are so lucky to eat such huge peach!" The little girl smiled shyly. The numerous silver needles that were on her ears and lip corners caught our attention. I

asked, "Can you help us pick out a peach?", as I tried to get closer to the little girl.

She replied, "No problem!" and then threw her peach pit into the depths of the valleys and started towards the peach stand. Even though she is fairly young, she sure know a whole lot about how to buy peaches, maybe even more experienced than a normal housewife. "Try this one!" She picked up one that was a bit dented and cracked, "Although this one doesn't look pretty on the outside, but this is a good one, try it!"

Seriously!? We haven't even paid a single penny and they still offer us more free samples? This is getting a bit too ridiculous on our take. She

kept saying, "It's okay! My granny is in the kitchen she won't notice!" and made a face. Actually, the old lady was standing right there smiling at us through the glass window, gesturing us to go ahead and taste the peaches.

"Do you want to take a look around Granny's guesthouse? It's only one story up."

"If you are convenient that is!" We climbed up wooden stairs to the second floor. Every room seemed to be specially decorated, combining the aboriginals' culture and the unique lifestyles. Like the flying squirrel as an ornament, aboriginal drawings on the wall, and the hand carved wooden doorbell, there were nothing in sight that didn't took our breathe away.

"Don't be scared! It's alright! We will be right by your side! Do come and stop by!"

Before our departure, we asked for the little girl to come and have a free check-up.

"It's very close, near the elementary school. If you come we will have a present for you!"

No matter how hard we tried to persuade her, the little girl just shook her head and smiled shyly again. It was as if she and the one who introduced us the peaches were completely different persons.

Arriving back to the elementary school, we shared our little story of the friendly old lady and her granddaughter to our co-workers. Just as everyone was busying with their affairs, a familiar person suddenly appeared before us.

Alas! The little girl did come after all !



"You have some cavities right? Do come and have the dentist look at it, it won't hurt!"



Your Participation is Our Strength

Thanks to all the volunteers who joined us during the three local and international free medical service trips in summer 2009. The services would not be as successful without all your supports and helping hands. The details of the three service trips are as following:

A. 7/ 11-12 Taiwan Chien-shi Township, Hsin- chu 60 volunteers

8 physicians, 3 dentists, 2 pharmacists, 2 medical technologists, 7 nurses, 6 medical students, 18 logistic volunteers.



B. 7/24-8/2 India Medical service 120 volunteers

8 physicians, 6 dentists, 3 pharmacists, 1 medical technologist, 9 nurses, 6 medical students, 10 logistic volunteers.



C. 8/ 15-22 Philippines Medical service 25 volunteers

5 physicians, 4 dentists, 1 pharmacist, 3 medical technologists, 5 nurses, 2 medical students, 7 logistic volunteers.





Grant yourself a chance to give, take actions and join the team today!

If you have been acting as a spectator, you will eventually find yourself in a place where things are getting less interesting as time goes by. You do not need to be a medical professional to be on our team, we sincerely welcome you to join our Taiwan Root Medical Missions. At the same time, Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps also welcome donations including funds, medications, nutritional supplement and other forms of collaboration and supporting projects.

Join Us

Please find the detailed schedule, volunteers and resources needed on the official Taiwan Root website www.taiwanroot.org. And please fill out an application online, or send it via email or fax.

Volunteers we are looking for:

Medical professional volunteers -

Physicians, dentists, nurses, medical technicians and pharmacists

General volunteers -

Kitchen works, resources distribution, field research, registration, transportation, moving, paper works, translation for foreign missions and periodicals (English and other languages).

Donate to Us

One-time fund donation -

please transfer the donated funds to our Chunghwa Post account. Account name: Taiwanroot Medical Peace Corps. Account number: 19487090. We will issue receipt of donation for tax reduction purpose.

Recurring credit card donation -

Please fill out the credit card form from our official website, or contact us for a faxed credit card form. We will issue receipt of donation for tax reduction purpose.

Medical equipments and medications -

We need various of medical equipments, supplies and medications. Your donations will be organized and used for domestic and foreign medical missions.

Personal and household goods -

Goods including commonly used items, cans, dry foods and etc. We will bring cases full of your love to the rural area and distribute them to the ones in need.



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