

The Cap and **the Pledge**

The Beginning of a New Milestone in Nursing

June is the graduation season. Students wear their gowns and toss their caps at the end of the graduation ceremonies to celebrate the completion of an academic education or the beginning of a new life in the real world.

For nursing students, April and May is the season of the internship capping ceremony. Faculties and teachers honor the students nurses with white caps (females) and ID Tags (males). Students recite their vows “to respect life and

treat patients like families...”

About a hundred years ago, Florence Nightingale and her nursing students solemnly pledged “to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully... and elevate the standard of my profession...”

When these students begin their clinical practice in real life, they carry the blessing of Dharma Master Cheng Yen: “to devote their lives in saving the lives of others”.



On April 22nd, 46 sophomore students of the Nursing Department in Tzu Chi University and their families were invited to attend the capping ceremony. In the Nursing Department, the ceremony has long been planned and coordinated by senior students, who not only pass down the experience, but witness the growth of their junior classmates.

Hui-Ling Lai, dean of the Nursing Department, led faculty members to present nursing caps to sophomore students. She said to her students, "As long as you are mindful (of your job), there is no obstacle that you can't overcome. You should help each others and learn clinical expertise together."

Lin-Chu Tsun, a student from Myanmar, said her teachers told them to consider transferring to a different major if they couldn't withstand the vigorous

curriculum. Tsun came to Taiwan all by herself and was not deterred by what was said. "Hospital is where I want to fulfill my dream; it is an ideal work place," said Tsun.

Another student, Yu-Ju Huang, recalled that due to her mother's illness, the family was often helped by Tzu Chi volunteer during her high school senior year. Huang was moved by the nurses caring love and decided to become a nurse. Nursing school at Tzu Chi University was her first choice. After two years of hard work, she was excited that her dream is about to come true.

On May 6th, the 20th capping ceremony was conducted for 194 sophomore students from the Nursing Department of the Tzu Chi College of Technology. Led by Masters Te Mai and Te Man, students held candle lights to



symbolize the passing of the torch and to extend Nightingale's spirit of sacrifice and love.

One by one, students dressed in white nurse uniform stepped on stage while teachers, relatives and friends



were cheering and offering their good wishes. Each teacher carefully donned a white nursing cap on a student who then turned and bowed to parents and teachers. Being part of the graduation ceremony, all parents and teachers witnessed the milestones of the students' nursing career.

Li-Chen Huang, among the top five in her class, received a NT\$20,000 scholarship to ease her financial burden. A Taiwanese aboriginal student Meng-Chu Yang was brought up by her grandparents. When Meng-Chu first got admitted to Tzu Chi college, her grandma was so happy that she cried. Today,



everyone in the family travelled 62 miles from Yuli to Hualien to attend the capping ceremony and show support. Another aboriginal student Yu Juan, who lives in Nan-Tou County at 1,400 meters above sea level near the hillside of Mt. Chi-Lai. Her parents also travelled long distance to Hualien to attend Yu's graduating ceremony. Her mother, a nurse at an elementary school, has high expectation of her. She reminded Yu Juan to "stay foolish and stay hungry; nursing is a great career to serve people".

Shao-Chen Peng, dean of the Nursing Department, looked at the young faces that were about to enter

clinical training. She urged students that patients' safety is the top priority. The capping ceremony is an encouragement to nursing students before they enter practice, a heritage of nursing spirit, and the beginning of responsibilities.

