Editors’ Column

Humanity • Humility

When I attended the Ceremony of the Hong Kong Humanity Award in May as a member of the humble audience, I was delighted to see Sr Helen Kenny as one of the awardees. The Hong Kong Humanity Award is a tribute to her selfless contribution to the Hospice movement in Hong Kong. I also noticed many more familiar faces among the supporters, the audience, and even among those who received the award. Among them, some were disabled, but that did not at the least a barrier to altruism. It was a moving occasion which exemplified the greatness and yet the humility in their deeds of compassion, and the gracefulness of the weak helping the weak.

An act of compassion requires an awareness of the sufferings of others, a sensation of their emotional distress, and the urge to relieve them. The need to be aware of others’ sufferings explains why those who help with compassion are often those who were once wounded and those who have gone through difficult times of their own. At times of seemingly unbearable distress, some escape by committing suicide, some look for a quick fix by asking for a hastened death, but there are always more who can transcend their suffering and find meaning as many of our palliative care patients do. Compassion does not extinguish suffering as such, but compassion can lift one up to the horizon to see beyond the limits of human.

In this issue, we share with you photos and abstracts from the 6th Hong Kong Palliative Care Symposium, and other articles contributed by our local palliative care professionals. Although we are making considerable progress professionally, there are still many challenges ahead - developing palliative care for non-cancer, educating the public on death and dying, and advocating for quality care of the dying.

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Acknowledgment
Our Newsletter is sponsored by Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care.

Cover photos: Phuket, Thailand, with courtesy of Dr. Doris Tse