

Message from the Chairman

Dear friends,

It is my honour to be elected as the new Chairman of the Hong Kong Society of Palliative Medicine. It is also my greatest pleasure to work with a cohesive group of supporting people, and call them friends. I have been thinking how fortunate I am to have very dedicated predecessors, who have been leading us towards the goal of promoting the standard of palliative care in Hong Kong in the past 4 years. Having said that, I will not underestimate the challenge of preserving the best of the past, and adding on blocks to what has been built.

Our ex-chairman, Dr. KS Chan, shares with us two stories of life in this issue of newsletter. Life is made up of stories, or rather; life itself is one story compiled of chapters. Every life story has its uniqueness, with variation in content and volume of the chapters. All life stories share a similarity, with birth as the prologue, and dying as the epilogue.

In palliative care, many of our patients grieve that their golden age have long gone, or bitterly regret that they have not yet come. Few will regard their dying phase as golden in the midst of their sufferings, but who will deny the importance of the epilogue of a life story? For many patients with terminal illness, it is the time for them to slow down physically, but this is also the time when their minds take up the greatest momentum in life – a time for recollection, a time for reflection, a time for reconciliation.

As a palliative care physician, I have the honour to appear in the epilogue of their life stories, even though, for many patients, I have never met them before. This is never a casual encounter to me. This does not mean that we can prevent a natural death from happening, glorify death with a spell, or wipe out all the sufferings with a wand. However, by adding elements like comfort, serenity, wholeness, and fulfillment of life, we can certainly make a difference to the epilogue.

The Society has attracted people from different professions, and doctors from different fields. This simply reflects the truth that palliative care is not just relevant to a small group of people, but to nearly all of us, when death and dying is inevitable and natural.

In hope, we move forward; in diversities, we work in unity.



Dr. Tse Man Wah, Doris
January 2002