

Beyond the garden of time: where the unspoken humanity bloom through every season

Au-delà du jardin du temps : là où l'humanité silencieuse fleurit à travers chaque saison

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In the bustling Wuhan General Hospital in China, a stage-III lung cancer patient arrived on a stretcher with his anxious daughters. Yet no department was willing to admit him for hours; in a system strained by patient overload and limited resources, terminally ill patients were often deemed “too costly” to care for.

For convenience, his stretcher was pushed aside and landed in front of the bathroom. Bound by volunteer rules, I could only watch helplessly as his daughters’ cries echoed down the indifferent corridor.

Then came Dr. Liu, my volunteer supervisor, who secured a bed for him against all odds. In the following days, she ensured his pain was managed and dignity preserved.

When he passed away two weeks later, there were no accusations nor regrets—only his daughters tearfully hugging Dr. Liu: “Thank you for not letting our dad die in front of the bathroom.”

Reflecting on this moment, Dr. Liu smiled, **“To be a doctor is to cure sometimes, to relieve often, and to comfort always.”**

This reshaped how I view care—not as something dependent on “perfect” conditions, but as empathy practiced in imperfect ones. Dearly, I dedicate this piece to physicians like Dr. Liu, who uphold the heart of healthcare even when the system falters.

Inside the watch, a physician nurtures a glowing lotus that symbolizes the patient’s unspoken humanity. It is set against a sapphire blue background, representing the financial and societal barriers hindering care.

Encircling the scene, the embroidered watch bears marks of the seasons. This *garden of time* reminds us that while life moves in cycles, patients deserve to be respected through every season. May this piece stand as a call for medical learners: only when we meet the trust and vulnerability of patients with compassion can the lotus bloom beyond the *garden of time*.

Medium

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