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Blue Attraction

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Blue Attraction

Jianan Li, MD, is nearing the completion of a six-month visiting fellowship in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine of Jefferson Medical College. He wrote the following remarks when asked to provide his goals for the fellowship and his reactions to the Jefferson programs. Dr. Li is Professor and Director of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at both the Nanjing Medical University, and its First Affiliated Hospital in Nanjing, People's Republic of China. He is also the Deputy Secretary General of the China Association of Rehabilitation Medicine.

What first captured my attention when I arrived in Philadelphia after 16,000 km of flying from Nanjing, China was the blue sky, a pure and transparent blue. What a beautiful city for tourists! After a few hours of being involved in the activities at Thomas Jefferson University (TJU) and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital (TJUH), I felt the extension of this attractiveness to the blue "J" signs on Jefferson buildings and the identification badges of staff. What does blue mean? Does it mean tradition, faith, will, holiness, devotion, creation, and innovation? I have been thinking.

One month after being in the Jefferson family, I found an attraction to the tradition of medical education and medical service. The attraction is not only to Jefferson's tradition, but also to its principles as a leader of modern medicine. The essences of these principles include the following: (1) always meet a patient's needs, providing state-of-the-art, comprehensive, compassionate, and cost-effective health care services; (2) continuously steer medical education on creative, inductive, and productive approaches; (3) insistently seek new information on important fields in medical research, especially clinically oriented research; and (4) harmoniously adapt to the changing society by innovating and improving health care economics, management, and delivery.

The attraction has been further strengthened by more and more involvement in various activities, adding to the original attraction magnetized by Professor Melvin from his academician style and his lectures with visions penetrating the depth of rehabilitation medicine (Kyoto, 1997, Washington, D.C., 1999 and Guiyang, China, 2000). The Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at TJUH and MossRehab Hospital were identified as the best services in the United State this year, showing the unique strength of rehabilitation medicine here. I have visited rehabilitation facilities in more than a dozen countries. There is no doubt that the strength of rehabilitation medicine in the Jefferson Health System (JHS) is one of the very best in the world. The blue attraction is transforming my understanding: (1). Early intervention of rehabilitation in acute and sub-acute stage of diseases and injuries is crucial for the conservation of a patient's function and cost benefit, demonstrated by early discharge with reasonable physical and social capability; (2) A coordinated network with inpatient and out-patient service of general hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, and hospices as well as community rehabilitation services, offers a comprehensive approach to meet the various needs of the patients and the disabled and to guarantee the quality of service; (3) The inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach in rehabilitation is representing the spirit of rehabilitation team work and, also, I believe, the spirit of medical practice of the United States; and (4) The foresight of the founders of Thomas Jefferson University was to penetrate medical education into various clinical and social activities, thus developing the best physician and health professionals in the United States. The general goals of my study were to adopt the above essences

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in China and to be updated on the progress in rehabilitation concepts, technology, and skills. The more important goal is to develop a cooperative relationship between my institution and TJU, TJUH, and JHS. China needs help from advanced countries. It is a developing country with 1.3 billion people. The general status of health care in China (1999) may be expressed by the following numbers: annual medical expenses of 30 U.S. dollars/head; there are 2 million doctors, and a doctor's monthly income is 140 U.S. dollars/head (similar among medical professionals). These numbers indicate that Chinese medical professionals must use <1% of the U.S. medical expenditure (\$4,575) to meet the needs of the Chinese in mainland China. China's medical system is under a massive reform from the planning economy to the market economy. It is facing many challenges and would benefit greatly from the expertise at Jefferson. I do hope that the blue of TJU and its system will reflect to China and also the world.

About the Author

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