



With gratitude, Nguyen Thi Phuong and her husband Trung Khung presented Dr Leong See Odd with a token of appreciation (a plaque with translated text "A compassionate doctor is like a loving mother")

“ I am truly blessed to be in the good hands of Dr Leong. He is very knowledgeable and professional, and can relate closely your health problems and lifestyle. His compassion is so commendable - he provided me hope and also gave me the will to live. At Gleneagles Hospital, everyone including the nurses, who came in the room to check on me looked in my eyes and asked how I was doing. I know I wouldn't have been alive today if I hadn't gone to this hospital. ”

~Nguyen Thi Phuong~

A KIDNEY FOR GIFT

Nguyen Thi Phuong's kidney problem started during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. She was inflicted by a shrapnel and suffered a traumatic injury to her right kidney. While struggling in the jungle, she was evacuated to a makeshift hospital and underwent a partial nephrectomy to remove half of her injured kidney.

Everything seemed to be a bed of roses for her until three years ago. In 2007, she started to experience extreme fatigue while carrying out her daily household chores and climbing flights of stairs. Worried about her deteriorating health condition, she went for a health check-up in Vietnam and was shocked to discover that she was suffering from kidney failure. At 58 years old, she was told repeatedly that dialysis was her only choice of treatment and hope.

Undeterred, Thi Phuong decided to seek second opinion overseas. After checking around, she was being introduced to Dr Leong See Odd, a nephrologist who practises at Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore. When she saw Dr Leong on 13 May 2008 in Singapore, he immediately ordered an ultrasound scan which revealed a tumour in her left kidney. A Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan also confirmed Dr Leong's suspicion that her tumour was malignant and she had renal cell carcinoma (kidney cancer). Her kidneys were functioning at only 10 percent capacity and the cancer was at its end stage. A week later, Dr Leong operated on her to remove her left kidney. She was left with only half of her right kidney, and was put on dialysis right away while in Singapore.

Thi Phuong discharged and flew back to Vietnam in early June to continue her dialysis. During that period, Dr Leong kept frequent contact with her over the phone several times a week to check on her condition and help her adjust her medications. "I was so touched by his concern and empathy, especially when I was so far away. I had made the right decision to seek second opinion, and am very blessed to have found the right doctor to treat me," says Thi Phuong.

She travelled to Singapore for follow-ups with Dr Leong at Gleneagles Hospital every three months. A treatment plan was worked out for her as she needed to be kept cancer-free in order to prepare for a kidney transplant.

After six months of dialysis in Vietnam, she returned to Singapore in mid December 2008 in the hope of a kidney transplant. She underwent a combined scan of Positron Emission Tomography and Computed Tomography (PET/CT). Unfortunately, a thyroid nodule was found, and a biopsy confirmed that she had Papillary Carcinoma (thyroid cancer). A week later, a thyroidectomy was done to remove the thyroid nodule. Thi Phuong returned home to recuperate.

In end November 2009, Thi Phuong returned to Singapore again to explore the possibility of a kidney transplant. Like the last round, a PET/CT scan was ordered to ensure there was no recurrence of the two cancers before a kidney transplantation. Much to her delight, she was declared cancer-free, and had also found a suitable donor in her nephew, Dang Hoang Vu.

As with any kidney transplantation, Thi Phuong and her donor underwent some preliminary investigations to determine their (medical) suitability for a transplant. They also went through an extensive evaluation process by the Transplant Ethics Committee in Singapore.

All was clear for both Thi Phuong and Dang Hoang Vu. The transplant took place on 27 January 2010. The operation was a success and Thi Phuong was monitored round the clock by the transplant team. She was also put on anti-rejection medications to prevent and treat rejection of the transplanted organ. Results from her post-operative tests showed no abnormalities with her new kidney. Within two weeks after the transplant, she was fit enough to return home to Vietnam.

Thi Phuong's ordeal of surviving on half of her right kidney is finally over. She is very elated with the outcome and grateful for the excellent care that she received from her caregivers in the hospital. "I am truly blessed to be in the good hands of Dr Leong. He is very knowledgeable and professional, and can relate closely to your health problems and lifestyle. His compassion is so commendable - he provided me hope and also gave me the will to live."

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"The hospital environment is fantastic. Each time when I visited the hospital, I felt like entering a five-star hotel, and provided with premier service. From the concierge to the housekeeping staff, everyone was so personable and warm, and they really made you feel at home".

It was with great gratitude that Thi Phuong and her husband Trung Khung presented Dr Leong with a plaque as a token of appreciation, when they returned to Singapore for her recent medical follow-up.

Thi Phuong's health has improved significantly after the transplant. Now, she exercises in the morning for 45 minutes to an hour without much difficulty. She is also eating well, gaining some healthy weight and enjoying her life with her family. She feels that Singapore is like her second home and she would like to come to Singapore for a visit every now and then.

ParkwayHealth Kidney Transplant Programme

The Kidney Transplant Programme at ParkwayHealth offers a wide range of medical and surgical interventions to treat patients with kidney diseases, including acute and chronic kidney disease management, end-stage disease management and kidney transplantation. It is made up of a highly-skilled multi-disciplinary team of nephrologists who work closely with internationally-trained surgeons to provide high quality care and outcomes.

ParkwayHealth has carried out more than 500 kidney transplantations since its Programme started in 1993. The ParkwayHealth Kidney Transplant Programme provides a high level of comfort and care, with the attainment of high success rate of more than 96.5 percent for the first-year survival rate.

Living Donor Kidney Transplant (LDKT)

Kidney transplantation is typically classified as deceased-donor (cadaveric) transplantation or living donor transplantation, depending on the source of the recipient's organ. Living donor may be related or unrelated to the patient. Living donor transplantation offers many advantages, which include providing:

- Better quality of life, as the transplant can be scheduled at the time when patient is at his/her healthier state
- Better survival outcomes
- Shorter waiting time, as compared to wait listing for cadaver donor



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