

## Doctors must protect Chen

Written by Dan Bloom

Tuesday, 22 January 2013 08:33

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The Hippocratic Oath is a pledge, called the “Doctor’s Oath” in Chinese, that is taken by doctors and other healthcare professionals, asking them to promise, to the best of their abilities, to practice medicine ethically and honestly. It is not a formal contract, and it is up to each doctor or nurse to live up to the oath as best they can.

It is apparent from photographs in newspapers and on television news that former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), currently serving a long jail sentence, is not in the best of health. Visitors from who have seen Chen have reported back to the media that he looks frail and depressed.

Whatever the legal and correctional system issues that are facing Chen — and he must face these squarely — surely there is room in a warm and humane country like Taiwan for some kind of medical pardon: based not only on humanitarian and medical reasons, but also on the Hippocratic Oath.

The oath’s content: “To keep the sick from harm and injustice,” surely applies to the situation Taiwan is facing in regard to Chen’s health. The doctors looking at the issue of medical parole for Chen should leave politics aside and only focus on the medical aspects of his case.

The Hippocratic Oath is understood by all doctors and now might be the time to jettison politics, put the political issues to one side and focus solely on the medical aspects of Chen’s condition.

If Taiwan’s doctors do this, be they members of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) or the Democratic Progressive Party or just independent voters that support neither party, they can better focus on what needs to be done, and done soon.

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2013/01/21](#)