

## Hou Chuan Village Clinic – Dr. Hai

Through this project, our partner, the Amity Foundation, is reaching out with a loving and helping hand to those in need, while simultaneously fulfilling another of its goals, that of making the presence and the caring of Chinese Christians for all people more widely known in Chinese society by working with people of many different backgrounds to bring concrete expressions of love that touch the deepest needs of others in tangible ways that make a difference in their lives. Through our help in the building of the village clinics and through our provision of some needed medicines, we American Baptists have also become a part of this ministry of love-in-action. Here is the story of Hou Chuan Village and of village doctor, Dr Hai (Hai Yang)

Hou Chuan Village is located in the mountainous region of Guang Ting Township in the Yuan Zhou District toward the southern end of the Ningxia Autonomous Region of China. The 193 families of this village, which include 976 people, live in homes scattered over several hillsides. They had 16 newborn babies during the last year, bringing to 63 the number of children up to four years of age. In addition, the village also includes 153 children between the ages of five and fifteen.



A November look over the hills and fields of Hou Chuan Village

Dr. Hai Yang, a villager and farmer, graduated from Amity's one-and-a-half-year village doctor training program in 2001. Before that, villagers had to go 9 km or 5.6 miles or more, often on foot or by bicycle, to reach the township clinic. Since 2001, in addition to his farming, Dr Hai has also served as the village doctor, making it much easier for villagers to receive treatment for the most common illness they face.

Dr. Hai and his parents used to live in a cave-like dwelling hewn out of one of the hillsides. From 2001 until November 2004, he would see and treat his patients in a tiny room which served as bedroom, living, dining room and clinic.



The front wall forming the entrance to their hand-hewn cave-like rooms

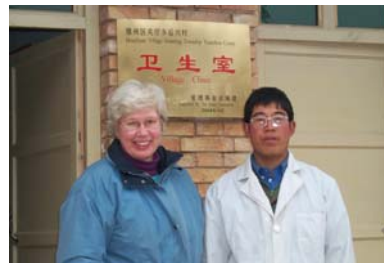


A special brick bed with a fire underneath keeps the family warm in the winter



Now married, Dr. Hai, who is 27, lives with his wife and their infant son in a small home they have recently build near the cave-like room where his parents still live.

With \$1000 in One Great Hour of Sharing funds contributed by American Baptists and sent through the Amity Foundation added to funds from his farm work along with help from relatives and friends, Dr. Hai has been able to build a small clinic according to the specifications of Amity and the requirements of the Provincial Health Bureau.<sup>1</sup> The clinic has three rooms—a reception room, an examination and treatment room, and another room with a bed for patients who might need to stay at the clinic overnight.



Judy Sutterlin visited in November 2004, right after the clinic construction was complete and again in June 2005

The Hou Chuan villagers belong to the Hui Minority (one of 56 different ethnic groups that are recognized as vital parts of the population in China today). The Hui Minority people have Muslim roots and considered themselves ethnically Muslim.



Village homes and fields  
Can you see the cave-like homes?



Path to Dr. Hai Yang's home  
(June)



Villagers working in their small field

Relatively poor mountain farmers, the villagers have an average yearly per capita income of about 2000 *yuan Renminbi* (approximately \$250). Their main crops include wheat, potatoes, snow peas, benne (a type of sesame grown in this area and used to make edible cooking oil), a few apricots and grasses for fodder to feed ox and goat. The plots of land allotted to each

person or to each family are relatively small and farming is generally done by hand. Some families may also raise two or three goats or sheep or one or two head of cattle.



The number of patients Dr. Hai sees each week depends a lot on the season. More become ill and seek the doctor's advice in the winter and spring than in the summer and fall. During the winter, for example, he may see as many as 60 – 70 patients per week, while in the summer that usually dwindles to just two or three per week. The main conditions he treats include respiratory illnesses such as coughs, bronchitis and pneumonia; digestive problems such as indigestion and diarrhea; various women's health problems; and small injuries such as burns or cuts and bruises. Dr. Hai also provides prenatal care and advice for pregnant women. The mothers-to-be, however, would usually go to the township hospital to give birth.

If a patient who has seen the doctor in the township or the county hospital for a more serious illness has a prescription for IVs or injections, Dr Hai gives the IVs or the injections in the village clinic or even in the patients' homes, making it much more convenient for the villagers to receive their prescribed treatments in a timely manner.

Every year Dr. Hai also provides preventative medical care for his villagers as well, giving appropriate vaccinations for the children and offering lectures about a variety of topics like the importance of clean drinking water, proper methods for purification of drinking water, appropriate nutrition during pregnancy and proper nutrition for children. In addition, he teaches villagers about issues of personal hygiene and the importance of proper air circulation in their homes.



Dr. Hai signs for the medicines American Baptists have provided.  
A county health official looks on



Dr. Hai offers Judy, Dr Yang (local Amity staff overseeing this project), and county health officials a vegetable soup and noodles made from food he and his family have grown.

Many times patients who come to see the doctor cannot pay for the small cost of the medicine they need, let alone any fee for the doctor. In this case, they usually sign some kind of I.O.U. These patients will always try to pay the doctor back gradually and will do their best to clear their debt at harvest time. Nonetheless, there are always some who are so poor that they cannot pay back what they owe and the doctor continues to pay for their treatment out of his own pocket even though the doctor and his family are also quite poor. This is true of Dr. Hai, as it is of other village doctors as well. To help mitigate this problem and enable village doctors to continue to serving the poorest of the poor in their villages and surrounding areas without totally draining their own resources dry, American Baptists, with the help of the

Amity Foundation and the Ningxia Provincial Health and Sanitation Office have started to provide a supply of commonly needed medicines that these village doctors can use when treating those who cannot afford to pay for their care. ABWM is currently raising White Cross funds to help with this project.

Dr. Hai and other village doctors regularly attend additional training seminars held by the County Health and Sanitation Bureau in Guyuang. These include a one day meeting each month to update village doctors on pertinent health and hygiene information they need to share with their villagers, as well as important vaccination and treatment information relevant to diseases appearing in the area. Moreover, there are periodic three day seminars on specific issues such as important medical regulations that village doctors must comply with or appropriate use of various medicines.

Thanks again for your part in this ministry of “love in action” in Hou Chuan Village and in nine other villages, also in the southern part of the Ningxia Autonomous Region in China.

<sup>1</sup> ABC International Ministries is interested in helping other similar villages with their medical needs in the same way. The \$1000 reflects what was needed for the construction and provide basic equipment for each clinic in 2004. As costs have been rising, any future clinics built will need \$1400 for construction and basic equipment.