

## Jinghua Village Clinic - Dr. Wang Sixian

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 Jinghua Village and of village doctor, Dr. Wang (Wang Sixian).

Jinghua Village is located in the mountainous region of Sha Tang Township in Long De County toward the southern end of the Ningxia Autonomous Region of China. Actually, it was originally two villages, but when Zhonglin Village joined Jinghua Village, they all took the Jinghua Village name. Part of the village is located in the flatlands of the foreground in the pictures below, while the rest is in the hills. A little over 700 people belong to the 100+ families of this village living scattered over an area with a radius of about two kilometers (approximately 1¼ miles) and with the many living up and down both sides of the closest hill. They have about 70 preschool-aged children and a little over 200 school-aged children up through fifteen years of age.



Fields, hills and some homes of Jinghua Village

Dr. Wang, a 43-year-old villager and farmer, graduated from Amity's one-and-a-half-year village doctor training program in 2003. In the past, his father served as the village doctor, but is too old to continue to do so. Dr. Wang felt called to follow in his father's footsteps so that all the people of his village would continue to have basic medical care close at hand. Since 2003, in addition to his farming, Dr. Wang has served as the village doctor, making it convenient for villagers to continue to receive treatment for most illnesses they face.



To visit Dr. Wang's home would require a 30 – 40 minute climb up this mountain path from the main road. The path looks quite level at the beginning, but a careful look above the roof of the house in the picture on the right shows that it soon begins to rise steeply up the mountain slope. He lives there with his wife and two children, a 15-year-old son and an 11-year-old daughter. From 2003 until November 2004, Dr.



Wang would see and treat his patients in a small room of his home as his father had done before. It was not very convenient, definitely not private and not so sanitary for some medical procedures.

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 and some of his own labor, Dr. Wang 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> Amity expects the local people receiving help to also contribute to the projects that benefit them. That way they feel real ownership and the projects are truly sustainable. Dr. Wang showed us a prime example of his contribution in hours of labor in the actual construction of the building. When we arrived, he was outside on a ladder doing some additional pointing of the bricks. At the time of that visit in June 2005, this clinic was nearly completed--a work in progress. This area of the country is cold late into the season, so he hadn't been able to begin the construction as early as some in other places, and he was doing most of the construction himself in order to save on labor costs. As soon as the cement on the inside walls dried several weeks after the visit, he painted them and began to move in the basic equipment need to make the clinic operational. It 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.



Dr. Wang outside the new clinic



Judy Sutterlin gives Dr. Wang the final part of our contribution.



Waiting for the walls to dry.



Judy learns from Dr. Wang about his village and their medical needs.

The Jinghua villagers belong to the Han Chinese majority, which means they are the people we usually think of as being ethnically Chinese.

Relatively poor mountain farmers, the villagers have an average yearly per capita income of a little over 400 *yuan Renminbi* (approximately \$50). Their main crops include wheat, potatoes, soybeans, benne (a type of sesame grown in this area and used to make edible cooking oil), and corn. 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. They are all fortunate in this village to have a very good supply of water, which they pipe in from a distant spring.

The number of patients Dr. Wang 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. On average, he sees seven to ten patients a day. The main conditions he treats include colds and flu, other respiratory illnesses; digestive problems such as diarrhea, high blood pressure, and women's health issues. Dr. Wang also provides prenatal care and advice for pregnant women and may help take them to the township hospital clinic for a check-up as needed. Jinghua Village is fortunate in that they now meet the government's goal for each village to have two

village doctors, so Dr. Wang and the other village doctor share the load as they respond to the medical needs of residents living in different parts of the village.

Throughout the year, Dr. Wang also works together with the other village doctor to provide preventative medical care for the villagers, giving appropriate vaccinations for the children and talking with the villagers about drinking water safety and other health issues. Each time villagers come to him with medical problems, he also talks to them individually about relevant personal hygiene issues.

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. Wang, as it is of other village doctors as well. To help mitigate this problem and enable village doctors to continue to serve 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 Yang (local Amity staff overseeing this project) tells Dr. Wang about the medicines we have given for use in treating patients who cannot afford to pay.

When asked about the benefits of having this new clinic, Dr. Wang said that the location is very convenient because it is in the center of the village and because it is beside the local road, which makes transportation relatively easy. Now, quite a number of villagers will be able to ride their bikes to visit the doctor instead of having to climb the mountain path.

Thanks again for your part in this ministry of “love in action” in Jinghua 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.