

## Ma Ding Village Clinic - Dr. Liu Ronghui

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 Ma Ding Village and of village doctor, Dr. Liu (Liu Ronghui)

Ma Ding Village is located in the flatter regions of Tou Ying Township in the Yuan Zhou District toward the southern end of the Ningxia Autonomous Region of China. The village population exceeds 2000 and consists of 300 or so different families. There are over 300 children, including seven infants. The village has two geographic points of concentration, one near the clinic and one 2-3 km away (approximately 1¼ - 1¾ miles).



Fields and part of Ma Ding Village near the clinic.



Looking both ways up the road outside the clinic



Fields and buildings in the second section of Ma Ding Village

Dr. Liu Ronghui, a villager and farmer, graduated from Amity's one-and-a-half-year village doctor training program in 2000. Since 2000, in addition to his farming, Dr. Liu has also served as the village doctor, making it much easier for villagers to receive treatment for the most common illness they face. However, the only place he had to see and treat his patients was a very small one-room mud hut that I would guess from the looks was no bigger than five by eight feet or in his very small home where the 24-year-old doctor lives with his wife and young son.



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. Liu 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.



The new Ma Ding Village Amity Clinic building had just been completed at the time of Judy's first visit in November 2004. At that time, she gave Dr. Liu the last part of our One Great Hour of Sharing gift that has made this new clinic possible.



Examination room with curtain for patient privacy



Supplies and medicines



Room and bed for any patients who need treatment overnight

Most of the Ma Ding villagers are ethnically Chinese, except for three families which 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.

Relatively poor mountain farmers, the villagers have an average yearly per capita income of less than 1000 *yuan Renminbi* (approximately \$125). Their main crops include wheat, corn potatoes, benne (a type of sesame grown in this area and used to make edible cooking oil), wolfberry and watermelon. The plots of land allotted to each person or to each family are relatively small and farming is generally done by hand. For example, Dr. Liu has six *mu* of land (a little less than one acre) to raise the food he needs to provide for the complete support of his young family. Some families may also raise two or three goats or sheep or one or two head of cattle.

The number of patients Dr. Liu 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 thirty patients per week, while in the summer that usually drops to around ten per week. Patients would usually come in the morning before work or school begin or in the evening after school is out or the day's work is complete. The main conditions Dr. Liu treats include colds and flu; respiratory illnesses such as coughs, bronchitis and pneumonia; and liver problems. Dr. Liu also provides prenatal care and advice for pregnant women.

Every year Dr. Liu also provides preventative medical care for his villagers as well, giving appropriate vaccinations for the children, talks with individual patients about relevant hygiene and disease prevention measures, and public talks about a variety of topics such as the importance of vaccination, the purification of drinking water, nutrition, hygiene, and measures to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses. Dr. Liu also uses a blackboard leaning against the clinic's outer wall to further the health education of the villagers. On my June 2005 visit, I found the message that day was about HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention..





Dr. Yang (Yang Wen), local coordinator and supervisor of Amity medical projects, explains our ABC International Ministries donation of medicines for patients who can not afford to pay. On the right, Dr. Liu unpacks the box of these medicines.



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. Liu 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. Liu 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.

Dr. Liu thanks us and says that the new clinic provides a more convenient, more comfortable and cleaner environment for him to give and for the patients to receive health care.

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