

Family Medical Team Builds "Bridge of Love"

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48 Medical team members sing at farewell party

On August 18, at a famous restaurant in Seoul, a farewell party was held for 48 Japanese doctors, nurses, and medical students, all members of the Unification Church, who had just spent a week of sacrificial service dispensing free medical care to the people of rural Korea. After a delicious pulgogi dinner, spontaneous entertainment and fellowship were shared between the Korean and Japanese 'shikku' (Family members), Korean medical students, members of the Seoul Western Family, and distinguished guests. A warm glow filled the room, and many people who had never experienced Family love before commented afterwards that they had never experienced such a wholesome good time.

The warm give-and-take between Japanese, Korean, and Western people was a fitting climax to a new chapter in international relations; a "bridge of love" had just been established between the Korean and Japanese people which will never be broken down.



Using a as a makeshift hospital, the medical team members treated thousands of people.

The Unification Church Medical Service Team

The 48-member team consisted of six professional doctors, fifteen nurses and the rest medical or nursing students. They stayed in Korea from August 12-19. All travel and hotel expenses, as well as the cost of drugs and medical equipment, were paid for by the Japanese Unification Church.

After arriving at Kimpo airport, the group was given a welcoming reception at the "Korea Times" building, after which they were divided up into three teams: one went to Chunjoo in Cholla Bukdo province, one to Sunsan in Kyongsan Bukdo, and the other to Chuncheon in Kangwhando. Twenty-four Korean medical students accompanied the Japanese, making a total of seventy-two people in three 24-man teams, each team headed by two doctors. Most of the Korean students came from Seoul National University or Ehwa Pharmaceutical College. About half of them were non-Family, but had received Divine Principle training for two days prior to joining the Team.

The purpose of the Team was, first of all, to medically serve the rural populace in Korea. At the same time, the Team intended to promote friendship between Korea and Japan; increase each members' moral sense and sacrificial spirit; to increase the members' knowledge and practical experience in medicine; and finally, to help build a peaceful world through the "Red Cross Spirit" of love and sacrifice, transcending national barriers.

Activities

Soon after the welcoming reception, the teams went to their respective provinces, and began work the next day, Aug. 13.

During four days of medical service, the teams treated a total of about 5,000 people. In Chunjoo, they treated about 1,200 patients, mostly leprosy victims at a local leprosarium. In Chunchon, working out of a school building, they treated 1,800 people. In Sunsan, which is President Park Chung-Hee's hometown, they treated 2,000 people, using the Unification Church building as an impromptu medical center. To inform the people of their services, the local Family members distributed handbills throughout the provinces.

Wherever they went, the Medical Teams received enthusiastic support and encouragement from citizens and government officials. Every day, the local mayor, police chief, or province chief would always visit the teams with gifts and words of encouragement. The members worked very hard in the 90 degree summer heat. Some of the members fainted from the strain, but they kept on working in spite of it.

On Aug. 17th, the team members spent an afternoon planting trees to help the National Reforestation Program, and then returned to Seoul. There they visited three University hospitals, and were interviewed for 20 minutes on "the Morning Show," which is rated as the most popular television show in Korea. The Japanese Team members eagerly told the national audience that they came to Korea because they were inspired by the Divine Principles taught by the Unification Church. In addition, their activities were publicized by most of the major newspapers and magazines in Korea. Throughout the country, the news was spread about the "Unification Church Medical Service Team."



Japanese Unification Church doctor treats a mother and baby in Chunchon.

Short History of the Medical Team

Our Leader first initiated the Medical Service Team in December, 1970. The Japanese Family has about 200 doctors and medical students in its ranks, living in seven "medical homes", three of which are in Tokyo. Most of these homes have established their own medical or dental clinics which regularly serve the Japanese people.

After the Japanese Family campaigned in the streets to gain funds for the teams, the first team of 40 members came to Korea in August, 1971. After finishing their service, they published a booklet, "Lilies of the Field", and made a movie, "Bridge of Love," about their activities. At that time the Team went under the title of "Japanese Christian Medical Service Team," In April 1972, the Japanese Family sent a 25-man team to Taiwan, and a fifteen-man team to Okinawa. In August of the same year a 14-man team came to Korea. This time they went under the title of "International Victory Over Communism Medical Service Team." In April of this year they sent another team to Okinawa, and then the latest team to Korea. This time, the program is under the title of "Unification Church Medical Service Team."

Altogether, 128 Japanese Family have participated in the teams. To do the fundraising, 2,400 Japanese Family members were mobilized, raising a total of about \$13,000,000. In Korea alone the teams have treated to date a total of about 17,600 people.

Future Prospects

The future plan for the medical teams is to expand them worldwide. On August 11th of this year a Korean team was founded. Soon this team will begin programs throughout Asia and eventually the world.

There are many factions and enmities between nations, but in medical service, there are no factions, no enemies. We can unify the world with this spirit of mercy and concern -- the "Red 'Cross" spirit of international medical service.