Change Through Language Learning
The Amity Teachers Project Approaches Its Tenth Anniversary

Join the experience! - Amity teacher in class

Over the almost ten years of its existence, the Amity Teachers Program has gone from relative obscurity with 22 teachers largely in Nanjing, to 80 teachers in 50 institutions and middle schools in seven provinces. The demand for Amity teachers now exceeds the supply, and not all requests from universities can be filled. The commitment of the Amity teachers has also changed. Teachers are extending their two-year contracts to three, four or even five years.

The first project initiated by Amity, the Teachers Program was conceived with nothing but a little goodwill, according to Ting Yen-Ren, Amity Education Consultant and Associate General Secretary. "We just felt that we should do something for the people in China. One of the things we could do was to invite teachers. We never thought that we would someday have over 70 or 80 teachers."

This reflects one of the main goals of the Foundation, to serve as a channel for people-to-people contact, says Don Snow, Amity Education Program Associate: "It would be unfortunate if the opportunity provided by the Teachers Program for significant and sustained interaction with China were limited to people from only those countries which use the languages covered in our program." The Teachers Program, he points out, is the only project of Amity that allows large numbers of people from overseas to have an extensive experience in China.

Finding the most practical method of recruitment to be through previous church contacts, Amity was able to begin the program in August 1985. Most Amity teachers come by way of over 30 independent church-related sponsoring organizations, in North America, Asia and Europe, a tradition which holds today. The teachers represent a wide range of countries - Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan -- which may seem surprising given that the foreign languages taught are limited to English, German or Japanese.

Priority Given to Rural Schools

Much of that experience takes place in China's smaller towns and rural areas. Once limited largely to supporting colleges in big cities, Amity's education work is increasingly focused on teacher training institutions for rural middle school teachers. These schools often face funding problems and staff shortages, while the regions the middle school teachers serve may have a teacher/student ratio as lopsided as 1-to-300. "Over the last few years the appeal of teaching jobs in rural areas outside the major cities has declined -- as has the prestige and appeal of teaching as a profession in general. Language teachers are in especially short supply because many leave teaching for better-paying jobs in business," explains Snow.
The presence of Amity teachers in these teacher training institutions not only helps meet the needs of less wealthy areas outside China's major cities, but also provides these future teachers with a "model of volunteerism," says Snow. "If motivated and talented young people are to continue to come into the profession, it must be for reasons which go beyond financial reward."

Living and Teaching in China

While Amity teachers may be working in schools which have fewer resources, their living conditions are far from basic. Most teachers have their own apartment, or a room of their own in a shared apartment in the school's "foreign expert building." Often their rooms come equipped with TV, an air-conditioner/heating unit, a telephone, and a hot-water heater in the bathroom. In many schools cooking facilities are available.

It would seem that with an initial two-year commitment in their contracts, the teachers have plenty of time to adjust to their living and working situations and to fully experience another land and culture. Yet, for some, it's just enough time to get settled. "Even though two years is longer than most other programs, which last a semester or at most a year, it is still a very short period -- particularly if one arrives not knowing the language or the culture, never having lived or taught in China before. It seems that no sooner has one grappled with culture shock and thus adjusted to working and living in China, it is time to leave," writes Kate Allen, who taught in Nanjing, Jiangsu.

Making an attempt to get past the language barrier and enter more easily into Chinese society speeds up the adjustment process, says Kate Goodspeed, who also taught in Nanjing, Jiangsu. "When I first came, the whole society felt alien. Signs, language, stores, products, food -- everything was different. It was overwhelming, and there were so many people! If it were not for a strong character and a determined will, I might have stayed inside. I was very, very lonely my first few months here before student visits began. Now, I am not at all lonely. Now I know elementary Chinese and can find almost everything I need on my own."

For many Amity teachers, a major adjustment in living in China is to the standard of efficiency of a developing country. "Many things don't work as efficiently as you think they ought," notes Goodspeed. "There were days when I was working so hard, I had little patience when the school's only copy machine broke down, or the office closed without warning on a schoolday morning, or the bank took an hour to process my request."

Yet, the mix-ups, break-downs and unpredictability of events help teachers develop an important attribute. "I learned to be flexible -- a well-known trait of the Chinese people," comments Peter Fischer, who taught in Hangzhou, Zhejiang. It's not a trait which is cultivated in Germany, he adds, where it is felt "the decline of a nation starts with the delay of a commuter train!"

Amity teachers must also adjust to a different education system, as well as teaching and learning styles. With a teacher/student dynamic which one likened to "watering pansies with a fire-hose," many are often frustrated by the initial shyness of their students. They come to understand that it's simply a difference in training. Chinese students are accustomed to the "pouring method" of teaching, where the teacher lectures and the students absorb the material with little need for response.

Teachers also have difficulty adjusting to their role as a "guest teacher." Some complain of feeling peripheral in their schools -- that there is a lack of communication with school administrators and colleagues, and that they are often not invited to participate in staff meetings which are conducted in Chinese. As short-term staff, Amity teachers may not be expected by their schools to understand the work context fully enough to make contributions. "Often schools are interested in improving their foreign language departments, but they don't really pay attention to the concrete work needed, like cooperation and exploring ways to make the best use of the human resources which have been made available," says Ting Yen-Ren.

Whatever the difficulties Amity teachers may face in their terms, working for Amity allows them more support and guidance than if they came independently. Always willing to listen to its teachers, Amity, as a Chinese organization, is also able to intervene more effectively on their behalf when communication difficulties arise in their schools. Given the more rural and diverse location of the teachers, staff from both Nanjing and Hong Kong offices may only be able to visit each teacher once a year. But plans are underway, says Don Snow, to develop a small core of staff of longer-term teachers who will provide professional assistance. "Election campaign": Chinese students enjoy Western teaching methods
leadership in teaching, and give support and guidance for new teachers as they adjust to life in China.

"Amity also provides opportunities for fellowship and support through yearly conferences and workshops. We see teachers at the summer training program for new teachers, the August orientation in Nanjing, and the winter conference. In addition, there is a newsletter -- the Amity Echo -- put out by teacher volunteers and the Nanjing staff," says Snow.

The Contribution

Despite time spent making adjustments in living and teaching in China, the contribution of Amity teachers to their schools and students is a notable one. As one Amity teacher prepared to leave for summer break, a student stood up and read a farewell speech, first thanking her for two years of tireless service. "In everything and for every student you always try to be fair, and this has set us a great example as future teachers. From you we've learned the value of equality and fairness... Also, you've shown us how sentimental and loving a foreigner can be, which has corrected our stereotype that Americans are not as sentimental as Chinese."

"Amity teachers are usually highly appreciated by their universities, not only as language teachers but also as bridge builders between people," said an Amity staff member. Bishop K.H. Lim, President of the Amity Foundation, noted: "Amity teachers provide a preparation and training ground for democracy in their classrooms. Amity teachers do this not by what they say. Through their presence and their style of teaching, they help to foster a democratic spirit. For instance they do not pretend to know everything or to be always correct, but encourage free discussion."

With Amity from 1986 to 1994, Christiane Boucique, a Belgian ICM sister, was the first foreigner in Jiangsu Province to be honored with the prestigious Tao Xing Zhi Award ("excellence in teaching" award). Praised for her professionalism, dedication and love for China, Boucique commented that she was "simply doing what should be done as a teacher." For her, this involved taking on a heavy teaching load and attending in a holistic way to her middle school students' needs.

In September this year, the government of Fujian Province honored 15 international professionals for their excellent contributions in business, cultural exchange and education with the "Outstanding Foreign Expert Award." Amity teachers Sue Todd, Barbara Rose and Henry Bergen were among the prizewinners.

Christian Presence

Achievements such as these mirror a general attitude among Amity teachers, many of whom see their work in China as that of Christian service.

Encouraged to "live and serve in a way which brings credit to the churches which send them," Amity teachers are also invited to identify themselves with Chinese Christians through participation in local churches. "This is not always an easy task," says Snow. "It often means sitting in a crowded room and listening to a service in a language you know only poorly -- but it proclaims your faith and identifies you with the Chinese church and the church universal in a way that speaks louder than words."

Since the publication of China's new regulations concerning the religious activities of foreigners earlier this year, Amity teachers are often asked by friends and relatives overseas if they are restricted in any way in their worship activities, notes Snow. "The bottom line is that the regulations are a codification of existing policy and do not change the situation for Christian foreigners in China. As before, foreigners are allowed to worship in Chinese churches as well as among themselves. With the approval of a provincial Christian council, a foreigner can preach in a Chinese church. Foreigners can even be married in a Chinese church -- as I was last year at Dongshan Church in Guangzhou."

The Rewards

For most teachers it's the contact and close rapport with their students which bring the most satisfaction to their two-year term. "I can truly say that I have received so much more than I have given," comments Goodspeed. "After my first few months in China, I finally admitted to a student who would periodically ask if I was lonely, that 'yes' I was. That was a big step. Several students and then groups of students started visiting me, and it made all the difference."

For departing teachers, it's the rewards of their two-year experience which stand out most in their minds. Many are sad to leave a life which is slow in pace and strong on simplicity. "Chinese people maintain healthful routines," notes Stephen Bartlett. "They ride or walk to their jobs which are invariably near their homes. They arise early and enjoy afternoon naps during most of the year. They don't burn fuels to keep warm in the winter but turn to high energy foods, such as pork fat, and wear many layers of..."
flannel underwear." And Fischer concludes: "It was wonderful to have incredible amounts of free time and to sit and talk for hours with a cup of tea. "Doing less, setting certain priorities and focusing on the more important aspects of life is definitely a means of improving the quality of it."

"In China, it's not what you do or what you accomplish that's important, but simply being with others. When a cup of tea is served the goal is not to drain the cup. One discovers that as soon as one does, it's refilled. . One can imagine that the cup of tea is the hour glass, setting the time one can give to a relationship," writes Anne Harrison, who taught in Hangzhou, Zhejiang. "In our culture, if we were measuring a relationship by cups of tea, we would probably say one or maybe two cups is long enough. We are too busy to give up more time. In China one has the feeling that the relationship is timeless. One takes as much time as it takes without measuring the length."

Yes, giving up time - two or three years - for China has indeed had its effects on the lives of countless Amity teachers far beyond the duration of their appointments. Many have turned into long-term friends of China - a commitment and an orientation that take as much time as they may take...

Lois Cole

Amity Needs You!
An Interview With Don Snow, Amity Education Program Associate

Does Amity need more teachers?
Yes. Every year we have requests from schools to which we would like to send teachers but cannot because we don't have enough. We have a special need for more people who are trained language teachers, or those who have Chinese language and culture skills.

Who can apply?
The bare minimum requirements are a college or university degree, native or near-native competence in the language to be taught, and the support of a sponsoring agency. Personality attributes such as patience, a cooperative spirit, and a good sense of humor are also highly desirable. Of course, Amity is particularly interested in candidates who have training and experience in language teaching, those who have Chinese language skills, and those who have experience living and working in cross-cultural situations.

How can one apply?
For application, the best first step is to inquire through your church or denomination and see if they sponsor Amity teachers. (If they don't, you might suggest the idea.) Alternatively, you can contact our Hong Kong office for suggestions as to a potential sponsoring agency.

Under what terms are teachers employed?
The standard monthly income of an Amity teacher is 800 yuan plus US$225 a month, a salary more than adequate to cover living expenses in China. In fact, many teachers put a significant portion of their monthly salary toward vacations. Also included are airfare, medical insurance, a summer training program, a vacation allowance, and a small departure allowance for shipping. (There is some variation in benefits due to the policies of different sending agencies; some agencies offer contracts which go beyond that described above.)

What kind of work assignments do Amity teachers have?
Most teach conversation and writing courses to students who have already studied English for several years. Japanese and German teachers more often teach beginners.

Each year, new teachers are needed
For many Amity teachers, the greatest rewards of working in China come from developing meaningful relationships with students and gaining a richer knowledge of their culture. Henry Bergen, Amity teacher in Sanming, Fujian, shares the story of his student Ida, her struggles with traditions he thought no longer existed for women in China, and how, with a little help in phonetics, she began to come into her own.

Opportunities for interaction are numerous: Henry and Bettie Bergen with students on an outing

The idea that young girls are given as brides to cover debts always seemed to me to belong to remote times and places, perhaps to characters in the Old Testament, or novels, but not to living vibrant people - until I came to China to teach.

My wife Bettie and I are at a small teachers college teaching English. During our second term, we had a few ideas of how we wanted to live and interact. One of these ideas involved holding an open house, with hopes that shy students would be encouraged to come and feel less inhibited relating to us in a smaller group setting. A pair of students that came early and regularly were a strange combination: one was outgoing, vivacious, anything but shy, with good English language skills; the other girl, Ida, was the opposite, not exactly shy, but withdrawn and seldom spoke. Though she had a charming smile, there was something unsure, somewhat sad about her. When spoken to, her eyelashes fluttered like a frightened bird, brows furrowed in concentration.

by her friend, she came for help, and I spent extra time with her and some of the other weak students. A few weeks later she came for a visit. "I passed," she said, beaming. Perhaps more so than the phonetics training it may have been the extra bit of encouragement and moral support that got her through. With the exam behind her I suggested that we stop the sessions, but she firmly insisted, "No, how can I teach my students to speak properly if I am so poor." I agreed to continue and gradually her true character, which was very gentle yet based in an unassuming toughness, piqued my interest in her life, a story Bettie and I had only just begun to hear.

Bettie’s speaking class is wonderfully suited to Bettie’s favorite sport - probing into people’s lives. As an individualized test piece she assigned the students a biographical snippet: "Tell me something about yourself." Some students were imaginative, most were honest, and some revealed secrets that even closest friends did not know, as did Ida. True, she had prepared and prepared well, but she told her story easily and fluently, her face relaxed. When Bettie commented on how well she spoke, Ida said, "With you I am not nervous."

When she was young, her family had been very poor - not an uncommon story as our students generally were born during the Cultural Revolution, a rather sad period of recent Chinese history. Her grandparents had been 'landowners,' a sin for which they and their children suffered. The house Ida’s parents lived in had two small rooms for their family of seven. But the father was an intelligent, resourceful man. With careful planning and extra frugal living, a larger house was built and paid for, all except the roof tiles, which they planned to purchase with money from the sale of their old house. But China, for all its revolutions, is still very tradition-bound. An uncle, as head of the family, refused to allow the sale of the
old family home. Ida's parents were at a loss. The tiles had already been received and money was nowhere to be borrowed. They had three girls and began to consider the possibility of "selling" one. Traditionally a family with only boys would "buy" a little girl from a family with too many girls and raise her as a future wife for one of their sons. In the meantime she might be more like a household slave than a daughter-in-law. But Ida, the number-two child and the natural choice was still too young to work. It was agreed upon that she would stay with her parents until she was six years old, old enough to do chores.

Ida didn't have an inkling of what her future held in store. One day, she recalled, a man arrived at their house who, her parents said, would take her to visit some distant relatives. Her brother accompanied them but disappeared after lunch without a farewell. She felt lost, rejected and worthless. After some argument, she was allowed to go home for spring festival. It was the first chance she had to vent her anger at what she saw as a betrayal by her parents. She spent the way home with her mother in sullen silence; at home, in bed that evening, she began to shout, scold and cry, wanting to know why she had been sold, but there was no reply. Surreptitiously she noticed the tears and pain in her parents' eyes and understood, at the age of seven, that not all things can be explained and, accepting the situation, complained no more.

Her prospective father-in-law was kind; the mother-in-law though not mean, was cold and demanding. Her prospective spouse and brother-in-laws started school and soon quit after grade one. At age eight education could not be denied Ida and it was agreed that she would go to school from her own home and return to the in-laws during the holidays. One holiday, at about age ten, when her father-in-law came to pick her up, she abscended off to a friend's. Her mother finally managed to persuade the man to let her stay with them. Her father came up with the plan that if she studied hard and managed to go to college, she would be free of the arrangement. The community would accept the argument that a college-educated girl could not marry an illiterate - though the father would have to repay the money.

And so Ida studied. Unfortunately after four tries she still failed the college entrance exams and the opportunity for tuition-free university. But the family remained supportive and she was admitted into a college for junior middle school teachers, whereby she could enter as a fee-paying student because her scores were not too bad. Ida's sister had a good job and was able to pay for her tuition.

Ida has been teaching now for a year. It has been a real pleasure to have had a small part in helping to restore a beautiful soul's sense of worth and help her along, if only a little, in her search for truth and meaning.

**Challenge On The School Front**

_Ting Yen-Ren, Amity Education Consultant and Associate General Secretary, explains why schools, particularly those in rural areas, are not benefiting from China's economic reforms, but are losing resources - both human and monetary - to China's prospering coastal cities._

Economists in China never get tired of alarming the public to the over-heating in capital construction and the neglect of agricultural production, both regarded as potential crises looming behind the dazzling growth rate. What underlies these two problems is nothing other than the flow of capital in seeking maximal profit, a common phenomenon in a market economy that is not effectively regulated.

As Mammon comes into play, schools, especially those in rural areas, are losing their resources to the rapidly prospering coastal cities. The suffering of such losses should not only pose a challenge to education planners and school administrators, but also to those who do not share such suffering and are riding the tide of prosperity.

For most of us, the gruesome state of the loser can be very shocking:

School teachers are already among the most underpaid of workers, but beginning in 1993, even the money allocated for their salaries could be diverted for other uses. Some received no income, but IOUs. In the province of Inner Mongolia alone, the salaries owed to teachers amounted to 120 million yuan in 1993, and they were not paid until seven to eight months later. Even in January 1994, there were still ten provinces nationwide where many of the teachers had not received their salaries for the month.

The press in China has reported cases of school principals lobbying township governments in order to get some compensation for teachers, who were being paid in kind -- local spirits, cigarettes, meals that pupils' parents took turns to offer. Some teachers couldn't afford college education for their own children. With these gloomy stories, few would be surprised by the large scale "teacher flight." Beijing alone lost about 6,400 primary and secondary school teachers between 1990 and 1992.

The draining of resources intensifies many chronic problems within China's educational system, the world's largest but also one of the most vulnerable.

At the beginning of the 1992-93 school year, the primary school enrollment was 122 million, the primary-one enrollment representing 98% of China's six-year-old population, while the junior middle school enrollment was 41.22 million
representing 80% of that population. This impressive achievement, however, is to a certain extent sustained at the expense of quality. In 1992, only 63\% of the primary school students and 78\% of the junior middle school students passed the final examinations in all subjects, while 20\% and 13\% of their peers respectively failed the exams. School failure is one reason for students dropping out. As of 1990, 23.7 million school-age children, or 19.1\% of the total (16.1\% of the boys and 22.4\% of the girls) were not in school. Today, some studies claim that with schools in dire straits, the drop-out rate is rising by 10\% each year.

China has about nine million primary and secondary school teachers. But the minimal qualification requirement for a primary school teacher is only completion of secondary school education, and for a junior middle school teacher completion of junior college education. Even so, only 83\% of primary schools have teachers who meet all of these requirements, while 44\% of junior middle school teachers have had no formal tertiary education. Again, this situation will be perpetuated when, for example, teachers in Jiangxi move to schools on the coast of Guangdong to fill vacancies left by those who have gone to joint venture companies.

The fact that children are being deprived of the right to a decent education, the fact that losers are losing more, is a moral challenge to all who claim to be committed to the well-being of people. In fact, the handling of primary and secondary education has become a touchstone for such commitment.

For progress to take place in a civil society, public awareness and mobilization is crucial. How much the government does for schools in China is proportional to how much the public asks for. There are at least three things the Chinese people can ask for in order to promote better schooling for their children:

1. Increase educational expenditure. At present, the government spends a little over 60 billion yuan (US$7 billion) a year on an educational system that has about 200 million students and teachers. The per-student spending in China is one of the world's lowest. This is in sharp contrast to the estimation that each year 100 billion yuan of public funds is wasted on banquets, another 200 billion is lost through tax evasion, and 20 billion is used by various offices and institutions for the purchase and maintenance of automobiles.

2. Encourage non-governmental initiatives in education. Under an over-centralized planned economy, only the state can run schools and other educational programs. This situation is changing, but private and collective school programs still run into great difficulty with fund raising, faculty recruitment, accreditation, and the granting of academic titles. Laws should be made to stipulate their rights and obligations.

3. Enforce educational legislation. Here, an important measure is to make public the budget of the local government, since the strength of law enforcement lies with the public. At present, even though misappropriation of educational funds and teacher salaries is an offence punishable by law, few have been caught and convicted.

Achieving a better education for children of the working men and women in China's countryside and city is a moral responsibility for all who have made the pledge to "serve the people." It is a dream shared by all who love and care for the disadvantaged. The dream will become true only through struggle and hard work, through public participation in government processes and decisions. Here, the non-government initiative is important not only in that it provides a channel for such participation, but also in that it nurtures and strengthens a moral sense that honors care for others and the collective welfare.
"Asia In Crisis!"

Given the financial crises facing many colleges and universities, school departments are finding ways to make extra money. Jeanette Hanson, who served as an Amity teacher in Jiujiang, Jiangxi, writes that coffee shops and discos are sprouting on university campuses with a competitive spirit which matches that of the cut-throat business world. (CEE Update, Vol. 13, No. 2)

"Asia is in crisis!"

Should we pack our bags? Take our life savings out of the sock drawer? No. But for the students and staff of Nanchang Vocational Teachers College this announcement does mean one less opportunity for dancing, singing and drinking coffee at the "Asia Club."

Departments in colleges and universities throughout China have been encouraged to make extra money to finance teaching, boost salaries and buy teaching materials. The Foreign Languages Department of our college has put the skills of their English teaching/tourism students to use. They began a coffee shop in the school gym which is open four nights a week. Each evening involves putting up the disco lights and sound system for the dance hall and getting tables, chairs and special lighting set up in the coffee shop. For a fee, you can sing to a music video, dance, drink coffee or eat small snacks.

The crisis has arisen from the competition on campus. Two other departments, also trying to make money, are managing evening dance halls. Located in a secluded rural town, the college does not have a huge clientele from which to draw. One of the other night clubs is run by the maintenance department. They have decided the Asia Club is using too much electricity, so they simply throw the switch, leaving the club in darkness. The teachers involved in "Asia" are now trying to find money in the department to buy their own generator. Unfortunately this began after they had already placed an ad in the college newspaper. The newspaper, by the way, is also in need of finance. A half page ad cost the Asia Club the equivalent of two monthly teacher salaries.

Unfortunately this preoccupation with making money doesn't seem to be limited to Nanchang Vocational Teachers College. One of the most disappointing realizations in my dealing with students and teachers has been the discovery of their intense desire to make money. In prioritization activities in oral classes, money almost always comes out at the top of the list as the most important thing in life. This has been the same in classes for college students as well as in training classes of teachers.

I received some insight into this money-making mindset in a class for teachers. In order to practice the past tense in a speaking class, I gave each teacher a piece of paper and asked them to draw six quick sketches representing six happy memories from different periods in their lives, beginning with their childhood and ending with something very recent. I showed them my examples: as a child with grandparents, with family at Christmas, with friends in college, on a train in China.

The pictures they drew revealed the difference in our life stories. For some their earliest happy memory was their entrance into college. Some told of sad memories: "This is a picture of me when I was seven. I was standing by our house. I was crying because I was hungry. I was hungry every day for three years. I never thought anything besides how to get food." "This is a picture of me when I was fifteen. I was sad because the school were closed. If I didn't go to high school I could never get into college."

The happy memories, by contrast, were not childhood reminiscences, but recent events: the birth of a child, day spent playing with a daughter, son's high mark on a math test.

It seemed that the present happiness of the parents was, in large part, made up of happy hopes for their children. The driving force behind many of these money-making schemes may be the intense desire to be able to provide better childhood memories for their son or daughter.
Did The Christ Send You?

For some Amity teachers, involvement with social development projects other than education provide for an enlivening experience in China. Sylvia Skeffington, who served as an Amity teacher in Yangzhou, Jiangsu, writes of how the orphans at Amity’s Yangzhou Welfare Center touched her life.

"Did the Christ send you?" - I thought for a moment and then found myself answering, "Yes." For, like me, the young nurse at the Yangzhou Welfare Center saw Christ as synonymous with open hands reaching out in compassion and love.

Cycling across town once a week to spend a day at this center cuddling babies, playing with toddlers and telling their vacant lives with a caring presence was something I did in response to a deep desire within me to be part of a community in need. Not because I had something to offer but because I recognized how my own operation was bound up with that of the children at this orphanage. It is through these visits to the orphanage I have discovered the liberating power of what it means to be truly alive.

There are many ways in which being with this abandoned community has allowed this discovery to happen. One of my first lessons was learning to overcome the temptation to romanticize poverty. It is easy to fall into the trap of feeling sorry for people and to feel depressed by their circumstances, but compassion goes far beyond that. It enables you to reach out with love that is not afraid of pain. This has meant being a real part of the orphanage’s cycles of birth and death, sickness and health.

Probably one of the most exciting parts of becoming involved with this community has been the revolutionary changes that have taken place there. When I first went to the orphanage, the children were strapped into potty chairs. They were terrified of me, and screamed when I touched them. Now the orphanage has taken up residence in a much more spacious, better equipped building and the children no longer scream when they see me. Instead, they charge independently on unsteady legs, a race to be first for a cuddle. They bubble over with excitement, and I discover again the liberating love of belonging.

Together, the children, the staff and I play with all of the goodies dumped out from my bag. Or we go for long strolls in the beautiful gardens outside. Watching the children discover the miracle of life found in nature also deepens my insight into the connectedness between our Creator and we the Created. It was there in that harmony that one little girl found the courage to stammer forth sounds and syllables out of her silence. This small child, unable to use her voice except for fits of screaming, was talking! And I felt my wellspring of love overflow.

Connectedness has taken on a broader meaning, too. In my involvement with the orphanage I have become part of a large "HELP" network. People from various parts of Australia have responded generously with gifts. I have received medication and vitamins from Japan. A young woman I met on my travels donated 500 yuan, with which I bought three strollers, and "presto" the orphanage added five more. The Yangzhou Department Store delivered a host of walking frames, just after Christmas (with some prompting); there have been public appeals and exhibitions to inform the wider community about the Welfare Center; and best of all, my students have shown a keen interest to help, visiting on two different occasions and planning further visits. I have discovered the liberating power of being part of a whole, working together, alongside one another.

Yes, the Christ of compassion sends us, goes with us and is in our midst as we care for one another at the Yangzhou Welfare Center.
Amity Mourns Bishop Shen Yifan

With deep sorrow, the Amity Foundation announces the passing away of its board member Bishop Shen Yifan, who died unexpectedly of heart failure on 7 August. Based in Shanghai, Bishop Shen was vice-president and general secretary of the China Christian Council. He was 66 years old. As a pillar of the Chinese church, he was widely known both inside China and internationally. He will be greatly missed as a theologian and a church leader.

Hong Kong Office Expands

Since August, the Overseas Coordination Office in Hong Kong has two new staff members. Rev. Kim Jong-Goo, sponsored by the Korean Methodist Church, brings the number of nationalities represented in the Hong Kong office to five. His appointment, resulting from close consultations with the National Council of Churches in Korea, is a response to intensifying connections between China and South Korea and increasing Korean church support channelled into the mainland. After a year of language studies in Beijing, Rev. Kim started his work at Amity with a liaison visit to ethnic Korean churches in China's northeastern provinces, Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang. Lois Cole, who served as an Amity teacher in Fuzhou from 1987 to 1989 and as Associate Editor of the Hong Kong-based China Talk (the newsletter of the United Methodist USA China Programme) between 1989 and 1994, is now involved in Amity's teachers program and general publication work. She is sponsored by the United Methodist Church (USA).

Amity Co-sponsors International Consultation

In cooperation with the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Amity Foundation held an international academic symposium on "Christianity and Modernization" in Beijing from October 10 to 14. Twenty-two scholars from 10 different countries and regions participated alongside an equal number from mainland China. Representing a wide range of academic fields, including religious studies, Christian theology, Western and Chinese philosophy, history and sociology, participants presented papers which discussed the role of Christianity in east-west cultural exchange and in value orientation, as well as in natural science and economic development. The challenge of reform and modernization to the churches was equally on the agenda as was a Christian critique of the de-humanizing effects of the prevailing global modernization processes. (The next issue of the Amity Newsletter will focus on this consultation.)

Amity’s 1994 Bible Production Hits New Record

The eight-millionth Bible came off the Amity printing press in Nanjing in September of this year. For 1994, the production of Bibles for distribution in China is expected to reach 2.26 million. According to the United Bible Societies, this will surpass the number of Bibles printed by the American Bible Society in the US in 1993, which was 2.2 million. With more than 11 million copies printed and distributed in China since 1980, the Bible is now the second most widely published book in the country after the Selected Works of Mao Zedong.

So far this year, the Amity press has also printed 35,000 Bibles for export, among them 15,000 Children's Bibles destined for India, 10,000 Bibles in the Jingpo and Lahu languages for Thailand, and 10,000 Chinese Bibles which the Hong Kong Bible Society plans to distribute to Chinese living in Russia.

With a second US$1.7 million Timson printing press to be installed, the capacity of the Amity Printing Company will reach four million Bibles annually. [ANS]
Social Welfare Division Envisions Nationwide Polio Program
Between October 3 and 20, medical specialists from Taiwan and Norway performed operations on five polio scoliosis patients at the No. 359 Hospital in Zhenjiang (south Jiangsu) as part of an in-service training course for Chinese doctors from the province. Organized by the Amity Foundation, the course is part of its polio rehabilitation program carried out in cooperation with the Norwegian Mission Alliance. Under the program, another polio-related project was set up in Pi County, Xuzhou City (north Jiangsu). Amity is developing plans to establish a China Polio Scoliosis Fund to support the rehabilitation of polio victims throughout the country.

Community Based Rehabilitation Program Sees Progress
From August 23 to September 4, Christian Blind Mission consultant Robert Jackle, a specialist on community based rehabilitation (CBR), visited Yixing (south Jiangsu), where the Amity Foundation runs an experimental CBR project for the rehabilitation of handicapped people in a rural area. Together with the field workers of the project, Jackle discussed worldwide experiences with CBR concepts, evaluated the first stages of the CBR project in Yixing and developed future strategies.

Project Proposals 1994/1995 Published
Amity's Project Proposals 1994/1995 have been published and are available from its offices in Nanjing and Hong Kong. Outlined project plans, which cover implementation periods of one to five years, include a total of 18 projects in rural development, social welfare, medical rehabilitation and training, health care and education. With two of the listed projects, an integrated development project in Puding County (Guizhou Province) and an AIDS program for Yunnan Province, Amity is exploring new ways of developmental involvement. For all listed projects combined, the Amity Foundation is seeking grants totaling 4.6 million yuan (US$540,000). Not included in this sum are ongoing project themes and project proposals previously published.

Staff Receives International Orientation
In September, (Ms.) Cao Jingxin of Amity's Education Division went to Edinburgh to participate in a one-year study course in theology and development at New College. Her responsibilities with the teachers program were taken over by (Ms.) Pan Le, who previously served in the Rural Development Division and returned this summer from a three-month-training course at Selly-Oak-Colleges in Great Britain.

Led by Amity Associate General Secretary Gu Renfa, a seven-member delegation from China visited India from November 20 to December 3 to study integrated rural development projects. The program was coordinated and sponsored by Christian Aid (London).

At the invitation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Amity Medical and Health Division Director (Ms.) Li Enlin visited the United States from September 27 to October 22 for an orientation in voluntary health care institutions.

Philippine Connection Intensified
Led by Theresa Carino, Director of the Philippine-China Development Resource Center (DRC), a 14-member peasant delegation from the Philippines visited Nanjing, Beijing and Yunnan Province from July 6 to 20. The program, which was coordinated by the Amity Foundation, focused on the situation of national minorities.

Miao Christians in traditional dress for church
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(ethnic groups other than Han-Chinese) in China. In Nanjing, the delegation visited the Amity Foundation, a forest university, a middle school, a Muslim Temple and a duck-raising & feather-products enterprise, which was one of the highlights of the program, according to Amity's (Ms.) Gu Xiuhui, who accompanied the group.

At the enterprise, the visitors "saw how ducks were raised and made into the famous 'salted duck' - a local delicacy. Nanjing, and how the longer feathers were used to make fans or shuttle-cocks while the shorter ones went to the manufacturing of down jackets," writes Gu. "Because salted duck is a traditional dish of the Hui minority, the factory gives priority to the employment of Hui people. The workers of township enterprises like this one are mostly peasants. Besides their factory employment, they do farm work in their spare time and during the harvest season. This combined industrial and agricultural production on a local basis has increased the living standards of China's rural population tremendously." The visitors were most impressed by the fact that the highly prosperous duck-and-feather factory had been started with private funding and was run as a collective enterprise by local peasants. As a back-bone of the economic reform process, they learnt, all township enterprises combined have this year produced a greater output than China's entire state industry. Drawing comparisons with their own country, where land is concentrated in private hands and ordinary people hardly have the means to establish their own enterprises, the visitors concluded that what the Philippines needed most was a genuine land reform. "We hope China's today is the Philippine's tomorrow," they said.

After a visit to Beijing, where they had talks at the Central Nationality Institute and the Chinese Religious Studies Association, the visitors toured ethnic-minority areas in Yunnan Province. Intensive contacts with local villagers of the Miao population and visits to a variety of rural Amity projects were seen as most rewarding by everyone involved.

Another PDRC-organized exchange program took place between August 3 and 13. Three Amity staff members, including its two associate general secretaries Ting Yen-Ren and Gu Renfa, together with five Chinese specialists visited the Philippines for a conference on rural development. After three separate exposure tours to NGO-run projects on Luzon, Cebu and Mindanao, conference participants discussed practical strategies and ways of Philippine-Chinese cooperation in the fields of rural water conservancy, agro-forestry and traditional medicine.

Finally, another acupuncture training course for seven Philippine health workers was arranged in Nanjing. The three-month course, which started on September 1 and was held at the Nanjing Traditional Chinese Medical College, was a follow-up program for the Philippine participants, who had attended a basic course at the same institute previously. Their participation was coordinated by PDRC and sponsored by the German-based Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE).

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The Amity Foundation was created at the initiative of Chinese Christians for the purpose of promoting health, education and welfare in the People's Republic of China. It is an independent Chinese voluntary organization in which people from all walks of life may participate. Amity represents a new form of Chinese Christian involvement in society, through which Chinese Christians are joining hands with friends from around the world to serve the needs of China's modernization. The Amity Newsletter is distributed free of charge four times a year. If you would like to receive the Newsletter, or desire further information on any of our projects, please feel free to write. Institutions receiving the Newsletter are welcome to reprint any article from it. Credit should be given to the Amity Newsletter, Quarterly Bulletin of the Amity Foundation. Funding for the work of the Amity Foundation comes from sources, both Chinese and foreign, religious and nonreligious, individual and organizational. Inquiries and suggestions concerning possibilities for new project initiatives are welcomed, as are contributions for the direct support of the Amity Foundation. Cheques or bank drafts made payable to the Amity Foundation may be sent to the Nanjing Office.

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