A New Future For Mr. Chen
Rehabilitation Project In Yixing Shows First Results

To 42-year-old Chen Jingjia, China's economic reform came as a disaster. He was sacked and had no prospect of ever finding a job again. Since he lost his hearing as a child of three, his future prospects had always been bleak. Growing up as a deaf-mute on his parents' farm, he never went to school. To send him to a special boarding school was far beyond the financial means of this village family with six children in southern Jiangsu Province. As a young man, Chen found work in a sheltered workshop in Yixing, the nearest county town. But it was quite a way to go, and transport was inconvenient. A nearby gardening company, run as a collective enterprise, took him in.

This job lasted until the privatization drive reached Yixing County. The new owner found communicating with Chen too awkward. His only concern was his company's image and efficiency. Chen Jingjia was laid off.

While his five brothers would not let him down, he could no longer contribute to his family's income. In the prime of his life, he felt completely useless. To be ostracized by society and deprived of an active life was much harder to bear than the mere physical handicap. His isolation spawned gloom and despair.

But then things started to change. In mid-1994, Chen was contacted by a local woman. Originally an accountant in her township government, Yan Shaoyun had been hired as a field worker in a rehabilitation project of the Amity Foundation. This pilot project carried out in Yixing County was designed to explore ways to empower blind and deaf-mute people through re-integration into their local communities.

Riding her bike from the nearby town, Yan Shaoyun called on Chen Jingjia regularly. With a lot of gesturing and the help of some illustrated materials, she found a way to communicate with him and cheer him up. Over time, she managed to mend his self-esteem and encourage him to face his future. Business opportunities were identified which could put him on his own feet. Chen's great hobby was bonsai raising, the traditional Chinese art of gardening he had learned at his former job. His house and garden were full of flower pots with typical miniature landscapes and artificially shaped plants which required years of patient tending and trimming.

Our Nanjing Office has moved!
Please find new address and numbers on the back page.
Together with one of his younger brothers, plans were made to establish a private bonsai farm. His family yard offered sufficient space, and increasing wealth in the region promised a lucrative market. However, before the first plants were ready for sale, two or three years of work would be needed. To help with initial investment and to bridge the time until the first profits would come in, Chen bought two pigs with a non-interest loan of 1,000 yuan (US$120) granted by the Amity Foundation.

This took place two years ago. Now, a second generation of pigs is squealing in the shee, and the financial surplus from the first, plus another Amity loan of 4,000 yuan (US$480), have made a difference around the house. The yard is filled with loads of clay pots, bundles of tree bark, slate rocks, and hundreds of neatly shaped miniature trees and potted plants being nurtured toward artistic perfection. With a proud grin, Chen shows his visitors around pointing out his most promising pieces and posing between his plants for the camera.

Some time next year, the first products will be ready for sale. The most expensive plants, Chen hopes, will bring in several hundred yuan. His five brothers and their families will make an excellent team of marketing agents. The village head, who assisted the business initiative with a small public grant, beams with satisfaction: "I had never thought that there would be such an ingenious solution to the problem. This not only helps Chen Jingjia, it even makes him happy!" And Chen's parents stooped from age and hard work, shuffle out into the evening sun, nodding their approval. Their faces marked by years of grief and worries, shine with grateful smiles.

G.O.

Not Money But Know-How
Amity Brings New Ideas To Work With The Disabled

What comes to most people's minds when they hear the term "community-based rehabilitation" is a rehabilitation center or at least some big building. In such a place, they think, the disabled are well looked after, find proper facilities and receive professional training. If money permits, the center may include an operating theater for cataract patients or an orthopaedic division for polio victims. Such notions are grossly mistaken.

For community-based rehabilitation, known by its acronym "CBR", is something entirely different. It needs no building and no sophisticated equipment, no doctors and only very little money. It does not gather the disabled in a central place but meets them where they live. It does not require them to leave their families and move to the city but reaches out to their families, their neighborhoods, lanes and villages. With a minimum of administration, it relies on human resources that are locally available. Operating flexibly, it finds for each of its clients an individual solution which is sustainable, realistic and adapted to the context of rural poverty. Instead of treating the disabled as mere recipients of help, CBR teaches them to take their own lives into their own hands. CBR pulls them out of their isolation of shame and immobility and allows them to walk their lanes and market places, to visit friends and share in the life of their community.

According to official estimates, China has a disabled population of 60 million. Of these, almost 8 million are blind. In the cities, most of the disabled receive public support. But in the countryside, home for three-quarters of China's population, the picture is very different. Especially in economically backward areas, the disabled are condemned to a life of abject poverty. While some may receive token subsidies from their local governments, they all have to rely on their families to keep them alive.

Over the last 15 years, the Chinese government has paid great attention to the plight of the disabled. With great financial and professional input, the cities have created medical and occupational rehabilitation programs, schools for special education and sheltered workshops, which have all tremendously improved conditions for disabled city-dwellers. However, in light of the country's huge population, its uneven development and the growing income gap between urban centers and the countryside, it would perhaps take several generations to achieve the same re-
sults with the same methods in every part of China. Yet disabled people in the countryside are desperately waiting for their situation to change.

A new life is just around the corner

Victimized by deeply entrenched prejudice and superstition, they are often seen as useless mouths to feed, a curse on their families. And the disabled believe this themselves. Thus, a physical handicap is generally accompanied by a complete lack of self-esteem. The blind in particular feel totally useless, sometimes even plagued by evil spirits. Unfortunately, these people and their communities are not aware that all disabled have a variety of compensating abilities. If only they are trained to develop their latent potential, their lives quickly improve. In most cases, there is no reason why the disabled should not join in the life of their communities and develop a healthy balance of give and take just like everybody else. Normally, a new life is waiting just around the corner, and with a little effort it can be found.

For millions of handicapped people and their relatives, CBR is the key to this new world.

Supported by Christian Blind Mission (CBM), a German-based multinational aid agency for blindness prevention and rehabilitation, the Amity Foundation decided to establish a pilot project to demonstrate the effects and advantages of the CBR concept to the Chinese public. As the location for the experiment, Amity chose Yixing County, situated in southern Jiangsu Province, right between Nanjing and Shanghai. Yixing's authorities had proven to be very cooperative (Amity's first rural development project was based here).

The church in the area was open to social involvement, and the place was close enough to Nanjing for Amity staff to supervise the project on a regular basis. In late 1993, Amity discussed its plans with concerned groups in the county, including the Federation for the Disabled, the Civil Affairs Department, and medical and educational circles.

Mr. Feng Guiyu, who had just retired from the Christianity section of the county Religious Affairs Bureau, was put in charge as Amity's local liaison person. He cleared out his backyard kitchen and turned it into the project's head office. Eight townships within the county were selected as target areas. (In China, a county consists of some dozen townships, each township made up of several villages.) In each township, someone was selected to become a CBR field worker. Since they had to live where they worked, no specialists were available, of course. The eight women recruited were between 20 and 40 years old, had finished nine years of schooling, and showed a general willingness to work with the disabled. The group included a housewife, a vegetable vendor and a paper mill clerk. Others were township officials who had worked as teachers, accountants or secretaries.

When they arrived in Nanjing to receive some short-term training, none of them had the faintest idea what community-based rehabilitation actually meant. They received three weeks of training and exposure at the Nanjing School for the Blind and the Nanjing School for Deaf-Mutes. After their return to Yixing, they conducted comprehensive surveys of the disabled living in their home townships. Their data provided the necessary basis for the planning of the project. Of the 3,215 disabled registered, 413 were blind, 246 deaf-mute, 1,810 crippled or paraplegic, 450 mentally handicapped, and 116 multi-handicapped. It was decided to dedicate the first three years of the project exclusively to work with the blind and deaf-mutes.

For further training of the field workers, the Thailand-based Australian CBM consultant and rehabilitation specialist Robert Jackle visited Yixing four times, each time giving a course of ten to twenty days. He instructed the field workers on how to arrange mobilization training for the blind, how to teach them routine skills needed in everyday life, social communication skills and ways of learning professional skills. Special education specialists from Nanjing were invited to give background lectures and to answer questions resulting from field visits. In addition, a teacher from Yixing's higher middle school coached the field workers in the writing of work reports.

Since mid-1994, the eight field workers (half of whom have since been replaced) have reached out to about half of the blind and deaf-mute living in the eight target townships. The youngest client has been five, the oldest 80 years old. At any given time, one field worker relates to five
different clients, who are visited two to three times a week. After the field worker has studied the physical, psychological and social conditions of a client and identified his or her most urgent needs, a rehabilitation plan is mapped out in consultation with the client and his/her family. After six to ten weeks, the most basic rehabilitation targets should be achieved, and training visits give way to occasional follow-up visits. Every fortnight, all field workers have a meeting to share their experiences and discuss special problems. The meetings are chaired by project coordinator Feng and, at least every other time, attended by Amity's Zhuang Ailing and/or her deputy She Hongyu.

Deaf-mute Mrs. Zhou riding her new supply tricycle

The field workers congratulate themselves on being part of the project. They have not only learnt a lot, but since they have started to tour the countryside on bikes in all weathers, their health has improved significantly, and they find their new work much more fulfilling. Before she joined the CBR project, ShiYeping had worked as school teacher, radio announcer and family planner for her township government. "In the past, I went to the villages to campaign for the one-child-policy," she recalls. "Today I visit the same villages to teach the blind to walk. I must confess that now I am received much more warmly than before."

Hundreds enjoy new self-esteem

Whomever one asks, everyone involved testifies that the program has brought tremendous changes to the lives of the clients and their families. Differences are felt not only in financial terms. Even more important, with the renewed confidence and self-esteem of the blind or deaf-mute family member, new happiness and peace have moved into their homes, and the neighbors marvel at the abilities of people they had long written off as idiots or subhuman. In the communities of Yixing County, the project will have a long-term effect on the people's awareness of the phenomenon of disability. Prejudices give way to new experiences, superstition to new concepts of human life. The blind, the lame and the deaf are now increasingly seen as who they are - ordinary people with normal feelings, needs and aspirations no different from others, people who have particular weaknesses but also special gifts and sometimes outstanding talents. What used to be unthinkable has already happened once - one of the clients, a blind man, has got married.

The Yixing CBR project is a matter of know-how, not of money. Some time ago, the Yixing Federation for the Disabled erected a costly rehabilitation center with funds from Taiwan. Apart from some rooms used by the blind for massage, the building stands empty and has never made a difference to the thousands of Yixing's handicapped. The Amity project, on the other hand, charges the lives of many but costs only a fraction of the price of that building. The salaries for the field workers, including their superannuation and annual bicycle maintenance allowances, amount to less than DM 10,000 (US$ 6,500) per year. Expenditure for local administration (rent for Mr. Feng's backyard kitchen, stationery, some bus tickets, travel for Amity staff between Nanjing and Yixing) are minimal. Net expenses for no-interest loans and other support for the clients add up to another DM 9,000 per year. All in all, this makes an average input of less than DM 100 (US$ 65) per client.

The domestic media response has been very positive. The project was featured on local and provincial TV in several radio reports and a great number of newspaper articles. A CBR leading group has been established in Yixing, headed by a county vice-magistrate, with participation from the County Education Commission, the Social Welfare Department, the Health Bureau, the United Front Work Department, the Federation for the Disabled, the Yixing Christian Council and the Amity Foundation. The purpose of this group is to publicize the Amity project, promote the CBR concept and campaign for its application in all parts of China. That the national government has included the CBR concept in its rehabilitation blueprint laid down in the next five-year plan may be regarded a major success. Part of this is owed to the Amity Foundation and its overseas friends, the staff and supporters of the Christian Blind Mission (Christoffel-Blindenmission).

Zhuang Ailing / G.O.
(Ms. Zhuang heads Amity's Blindness Prevention and Rehabilitation Division)

Christians In Yixing Support The Disabled

Twenty-five blind and deaf-mute villagers and their extremely poor families in Yixing County, south Jiangsu, received 350 pieces of warm clothing, donated by Amity staff and by members of the biggest church in the county. Together with small cash subsidies totaling 3,000 yuan (US$360) out of Amity funds, the donations were handed over shortly before Chinese New Year in mid-February. The recipients have been clients of the Amity-run community-based rehabilitation project.
Blind Grandma Gets Back Into The Act
The Testimony Of Peasant Woman Ding Longdi

Like most peasant women of her age, Ding Longdi is illiterate. The following text is a translation of a speech she gave at a solidarity function held last November to celebrate the second anniversary of the start of Amity's CBR project in Yixing.

My name is Ding Longdi, and I am 54 years old. I am from Long Dyke Village in Shilipai Township, where I share a little house with my husband. My two sons are grown up and have moved elsewhere. Every year they give me 100 yuan in pocket money.

When I was a child, my eyesight was already very weak. Fourteen years ago, I went blind. The lights went out, and I was left in darkness. Helping in the fields or earning cash was now impossible. But even simple housework was difficult. How could I cook rice? I could not see how much firewood and straw was needed to light the fire.

Sometimes my sons got angry and scolded me. "In other families, the old people can still do something useful," they said, "but you are only sitting around!" I hardly dared to ask them a favor, and when my husband went out, I would rather not call than call for them. My husband was frustrated, too. I often heard him shout at people. I could blame neither heaven nor earth, only my bad eyes. I was so depressed, day after day, year after year. Heaven knows how many tears I shed.

Sometimes I longed for a chat with my neighbors. But going out was difficult. It was so easy to trip or bump into things. And people were too busy to always accompany me. So I myself together, got up and to do things by myself.

I never forget how Comrade once taught me to walk. She was so kind and patient. She held my hand and showed me how to move the cane. She explained everything that was around me, the pitfalls to avoid and where it was safe to walk. Today, I use my cane correctly and I walk safely around the village - all by myself. If I want a chat, I drop in at my neighbors. If I need to wash something, I go down to the river. I can do the cooking, the laundry and everything. I can even sweep outside my front door, and my husband is happy.

Last summer, Teacher Zhuang and Teacher Yu from the Amity Foundation came to see me, accompanied by Section Chief Feng. They even had a foreign friend with them, Mr. Bob. They took such great interest in me and were so concerned. I was so overwhelmed, I didn't know what to say. Afterwards I could not sleep for days. I am just a blind person, and even my own relatives want nothing to do with me. But those visitors were so eager to help me that I just don't know how I can ever repay their kindness...

Suddenly, I could pour out all the bitterness that had been pent up inside. Comrade Shen listened and laughed and was so nice to me. "Grandma," she said, "you must not despair. I will teach you all the things you want to do, and I will bring you a brand new cane that will help you when you go out."

When I heard that, I cried for joy. I had never thought there were such good people on earth. For all those 14 years, nobody had ever talked to me like that, nobody had ever told me that such a thing was possible. Comrade Shen visited me very often. She talked of my grief and misery. So I myself together, got up and to do things by myself.

Last year, Amity gave me a loan of 500 yuan to buy animals to raise. Now I have a flock of chickens and three goats. The goats have already grown big. Next year I can sell them. I feel really blessed, and I want to thank the Party, the People's Government and the Amity Foundation for their support. Thank you for not forgetting us disabled people!

Ding Longdi
“My Daughter Is Not A Genetic Failure”
Blind Girl Joins Sighted Peers In School

When Dong Leping was born 15 years ago, she was blind. Relatives and neighbors urged her mother to have a second child: "Since your first one is physically useless, the Party allows you to have another one. You must use your chance!" But the mother promptly rejected such suggestions: "Leping is not useless. She is my daughter and deserves all the love I have to give." Her mother understood the spirit of those state regulations all too clearly, and she did not like it. "If I have a second child while other families have only one, Leping will always know that we regard her a genetic failure. She will always feel like a second-class child compared to the other one."

Economic reforms have brought prosperity to Leping's family. Her father, who works in a rural enterprise, earns enough that his wife can afford to stay home and care full-time for her daughter. The nicest room in the newly built two-storey townhouse belongs to Leping, where she has surrounded herself with dolls, music tapes and bulky books. Thanks to the Golden Key Project, a government-sponsored program launched in the late 1980s, Leping has learned Chinese Braille and become a fluent reader. The government provides school-age blind children with special reading courses and all necessary school books in Braille. Leping is a sixth-grader in the local primary school. There she is the only blind student, but the school has a number of children with other disabilities. Since Chinese teaching is book-oriented and teacher-centered, Leping has no big problems in following the class. Teachers and classmates have become used to her presence and help her in a matter-of-fact way. "Leping has a far better memory than any of us," her class teacher comments. "Because she cannot write, we arrange oral exams for her. That's about the only adjustment she needs."

When Leping was visited by her CBR field worker, things already looked very good. Leping's mother had taught her daughter all basic activity skills when she was four to five years old. "I had no idea about rehabilitation," explains the mother. "I just believed in my daughter's ability and taught her by instinct." Through the Amity project, Leping has met more people who care for her. And she received a special cane which has widened her range of mobility tremendously. However, the traffic in town is so chaotic that her mother never allows her to go out alone.

Leping has a beautiful voice and entertains her visitors with a lot of folk songs she has learnt by heart. She has mastered the harmonica and would like to try piano next. Does she already have career plans? She is aware that the northeastern city of Changchun has a special university for disabled students. One day she hopes to go there and study music.

G.O.

More Support For The Disabled Urged

About a third of China's 60 million disabled people do not have enough food or clothing, according to Deng Pufang, son of Deng Xiaoping and chairman of the All China Federation for the Disabled.

Some 40 per cent of the disabled are illiterate and 30 per cent are unemployed, Mr. Deng said at the opening of China's first National Working Conference on the Disabled on April 22. The number of disabled people in China is rising by one million every year, Xinhua (the New China News Agency) said in a report on the conference.

In the next five years, China hopes to rehabilitate three million disabled people and help 80 per cent of disabled school-age children to obtain regular schooling, Xinhua said. The chairman of the Co-ordinating Working Committee for the Handicapped, Peng Peiyun, told the conference China also aims to find jobs for 80 per cent of the country's disabled. Disabled people would be encouraged to take part in more social and cultural activities, she said.
Deaf-Mute Mother Happy:
Amity Loan Turned Isolated Home Into Village Center

In the long line of village houses, it is not difficult to spot the home of Zhou Zhenhua. While all the three-storey buildings with their white tiles and blue-tinted windows expose the rural affluence of the 1990s, Zhou's house is small and shabby. Its one-and-a-half storeys and grey, crumbling plaster tell a story of poverty. This is not surprising, because Zhou Zhenhua is a deaf-mute, and her 19-year-old son, who suffers from chronic kidney problems, is too weak to help his father in the fields. With the family marked by illness and the housewife sputtering unintelligible sounds, neighbors preferred to stay clear of the house.

But no longer. Today, if people have forgotten to buy soap or matches in town or have run out of liquor or cigarettes, they drop by the Zhou's. Since they have turned their little front room into a shop - the first and only one in the hamlet - their house has become the communication center of the neighborhood. People come here not only to buy but also to chat and exchange the latest gossip. Zhou's son stands behind the counter and manages the finances. His mother rides their newly purchased goods tricycle to pick up new supplies from town.

Since the shop opened in January this year, it has run at a profit of 15 yuan per day. In other words, the earnings this family of three makes from their living room sales alone equal the average income of a rural household in China. The first repayments on Amity's no-interest loan have been made, and it is hoped that the newly prescribed medicines will improve the son's health in due time.

G.O.

Nanjing Orphanage Revisited

In early January, Human Rights Watch/Asia published a report on orphanages in China, accusing social welfare authorities and child care workers of deliberately allowing orphans to die from starvation or confinement. This was described by the report as a "summary resolution" in the interest of cost and population control. Since then, the Amity Foundation has received a lot of inquiries from overseas friends who were wondering about the credibility of the report. In response, Amity published a statement in the last issue of this Newsletter. Since 1985, Amity has had close cooperation with the Nanjing Children's Welfare Institute, which served as a partner for a number of Amity's social welfare projects. Our staff member Tan Liying, in charge of these projects until 1993, revisited the Institute in February and has written about her findings.

When I arrived at the Nanjing Children's Welfare Institute, which I had visited so many times in the past, Dr. Ma Songli, director of the institute, and Dr. Zuo Zhengzhi, his assistant in charge of medical and rehabilitation work, were happy to receive me. They remembered me as the liaison person who was involved in most of the Amity-initiated projects at their institute. They greeted me as a long-time working partner who would, they said, have a good understanding of their work, their feelings and their difficulties.

Our conversation naturally turned to the recent Human Rights Watch report. Instantly they appeared somewhat indignant, saying the situation had been utterly distorted and they could not help suspecting that Zhang Shuyun, the report's main witness, who previously worked in the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute, had ulterior motives for providing the material and deliberately distorting the facts. According to Dr. Ma and his colleague, their institute differs a great deal from the picture given by Human Rights Watch.

Orphanages with Chinese standards

1. While they admitted that their institute had faced great problems in the past, they emphasized that great improvements had been made in recent years thanks to swift social welfare reforms in the wake of China's rapid economic development. The same would certainly be true for other orphanages, especially those in areas as prosperous as Shanghai. It would be unfair, however, to compare China's orphanages with their counterparts in much more affluent societies. China would have to set its own standards and explore ways to care for its orphans which were suitable to the Chinese context.

2. Dr. Ma and Dr. Zuo seemed to be genuinely proud of their work and
their institute's achievements. They told me that about 40 percent of their staff are college graduates. It would be ridiculous to suspect these people of criminal intent. Most of the staff members, Dr. Ma assured me, love children and are anxious to improve their conditions. If somebody were to be found to be involved in child abuse, this person would not only be severely criticized internally but also face legal punishment. Any tendencies toward maltreatment would be stopped by the institute before they developed further. The fact that child care workers are organized in teams, Dr. Ma explained, secures an element of mutual control. It would therefore be hard to imagine how staff members could intentionally starve children to death.

**Burden shifting to orphanages**

3. I was informed that the overwhelming majority of the children brought to the institute are new-born babies who have illegally been abandoned in the streets. The causes for abandonment vary from financial to psychological frustrations on the part of the parents. Since single mothers are generally not well accepted in Chinese society, one can be certain that some of the abandoned babies have been born out of wedlock. Baby girls who are abandoned because of a preferene for males comprise only a very small proportion. The most common causes for abandonment, according to Dr. Ma, are physical and mental birth defects.

This, he pointed out, needs to be understood in the context of China's social development. Since the concept of rehabilitation is new and still widely unknown, any handicap in a newborn child means a great tragedy for the family and is usually seen as a life-time burden. In this situation, a few irresponsible parents abandon their children in places where they are easily found by others, thereby shifting their burden to state-run institutions. Some parents abandon their sick infants only after they have spent all their money on medical treatment. These days, medical care in China is becoming increasingly expensive and the rural population is not usually covered by medical insurance. Many infants who are seriously ill never receive proper nutrition or medical care. Once their condition has deteriorated, Dr. Ma concluded, they die in any case, no matter whether they stay at home or are brought to the orphanage.

Dr. Ma also explained to me the reception procedures of his orphanage. Incoming children are segregated for three months before they join their age groups as regular residents. During this time doctors monitor their health to rule out infectious diseases and attempts are made to find the children's families. Dr. Ma admitted that some seriously ill infants do indeed die during this period, especially if they have been exposed to heat or cold without any food and drink before they have been brought to the orphanage. He also conceded that some of these victims could be saved if his institute had better trained staff, more advanced equipment and greater financial resources to afford expensive life-saving medicines.

4. Every year, Dr. Ma's institute releases about 60 children for adoption. Half of these find parents overseas. Although foreign adoptions bring in some money, it is not much compared to the sums allocated to the institute by the Chinese government. Over the last few years, government contributions have grown by an annual rate of 32%, with last year's allocation reaching 5 million yuan (US$600,000).

Due to China's one-child policy, the law allows only those couples to adopt who are childless, infertile, at least 35 years old, with a stable income and in a position to provide a proper education. The adoption of a second child is only permitted if the first child has some physical handicap or mental disorder and if the child to be adopted has a physical or mental defect, too. Dr. Ma told me that even with such a strict adoption policy, there is often a waiting list of eligible Chinese couples who are struggling with the paper work in order to adopt a child. For some, the process may take a few years.

**Sweet little patients**

5. On behalf of the Institute, Dr. Ma and Dr. Zuo expressed their appreciation for all the support from the Amity Foundation. They specifically mentioned the child care and rehabilitation training program carried out in cooperation with the Hong Kong Yang Memorial Methodist Social Services. Though the project ended some time ago, its effects are still evident.

During our one-hour conversation, Dr. Ma was twice called to the phone. The second call was from the principal of a nearby school. Twenty of the Institute's orphans attend outside schools, four of them a middle school. The mentally handicapped children are taught on the premises of the Institute in a special school which, like their rehabilitation center,
is also open to children from outside.

While Dr. Ma attended to other visitors, I was given a tour of the facilities by Dr. Zuo. It was a fine but cold February morning. The seven-storey building, which was formerly known as the Jinling Children's Hospital, specializes in treating the handicapped. It used to have no connection with the orphanage, but today it treats orphans in addition to patients from outside. I was told that the premises date from the late 1950s and will soon be replaced. Construction will start this year.

In the surgical wards of the hospital, eight of the ten patients were orphans recovering from surgery to correct congenital deformities. Three of them were supported financially by the Amity Foundation. The room was clean and bright. Electric heaters radiated a mild warmth. The little patients looked sweet in their brightly colored woollen sweaters and smiled at me when I bent over their little beds.

With a medical staff of 122 (45 of whom are doctors), the hospital wing also houses the Experimental Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Jointly supported by Amity and the Yang Center in Hong Kong, it was established a few years ago as a model unit to provide rehabilitation for the orphanage's handicapped children. Key staff members have received professional training in Hong Kong or from visiting occupational therapists in the hospital itself. Many of these guest trainers were invited through Amity or the Yang Center.

The rooms in the orphanage are decorated with brightly colored pictures and eye-catching posters - timetables of children's activities, routine regulations and rhymes that help the children learn proper hygiene. There are devices specially designed for the rehabilitation of handicapped children. A boy of eight was strapped on a little sloping board and, under a doctor's instruction, learned to exercise his twisted legs. When the time was up, he was helped down for lunch - it was about 11:00 am. That morning, the children had rice, pork and green vegetables. Children have three meals a day plus an afternoon snack of cookies and fruit.

The Institute has apparently been improved thanks to the support of many agencies and individuals. It receives donations from inside and outside the country. Sometimes the Institute prefers to decline support - for instance if a movie star or a new enterprise offers a large sum with the sole purpose of self-promotion. But most gifts and donations are well received. As one child care worker told me, "We are so happy to see that our work is appreciated and that there are so many people all over the world who empathize with our orphans. This spurs us on to do a good job for these children who have nobody else to care for them."

Questions about staff allocation

On my way home I was reflecting on all that I had seen. I felt touched and impressed, and yet something puzzled me. Thinking about what I had heard about staff allocation, I did some rough calculations. The Institute has a total staff of 330. Of these, 122 are medical staff in the hospital and over 100 work in the administration. People working in the hospital are very much involved with patients from outside, and many in the administration section are engaged in sideline services. Called the "third industry," these have become very common in China's state-run institutions. To increase their income, they use their know-how, space and surplus labor for all kinds of cash-earning activities. Taking all this into account, there remains only one third of the staff to care for 250 to 300 orphans, most of whom have serious handicaps.

Unless more staff is allocated to the day-to-day care of the orphans, how can their situation effectively improve? The Chinese people live much better today than they did just a few years ago. Medical care has improved and rehabilitation skills have spread. It is time that the most vulnerable of China's people, infants without parents, receive their due share.  

Tan Liying

Village Doctor Training Evaluated

The Amity Foundation held a consultation on training of village health workers December 20-22, 1995, in Lanzhou, capital of northwestern Gansu Province. The meeting was attended by representatives of medical schools and health bureaus involved in Amity's training program in the provinces of Yunnan, Guangxi, Guizhou, Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu (all in western China). The program, which started in 1992, has seen more than 5,000 trainees. Of the 3,782 graduates so far, over 80% have already set up health stations in their home villages. In order to further improve the program, consultation participants discussed matters of administration, curriculum and qualification targets. The program is to be continued.
Help Them Sleep Warmly
Amity’s Relief Efforts After The Lijiang Earthquake

On February 3, an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale hit Lijiang County in the southwest corner of China. Situated in the northwestern part of Yunnan Province, Lijiang suffered the same fate as Wuding County in October last year. Both earthquakes resulted from seismic activity at the south-eastern edge of the Himalayas. As before in Wuding, the Amity Foundation has been involved in Lijiang with a variety of relief and rehabilitation activities. Amity's Associate General Secretary Ting Yen-Ren filed this report about Amity's immediate response to the Lijiang quake.

The whole village gathered in a huge crowd, under brightly colored flags and banners. One by one, the head of the village committee read out a long list of names. As a name was called, a villager stepped forward, took the bulky cotton quilt handed over to him or her, left a signature or fingerprint at the desk and returned to the crowd again. Whenever a quilt changed hands, loud cheers and applause burst from the waiting people.

Standing next to the village leaders, Amity liaison Du Peiliang commented: "This is quite a different experience for me." It was indeed. This factory manager of 20 years had retired from his job just five weeks before and joined the Yunnan Christian Council's Amity liaison group.

Since the earthquake struck, this liaison group had worked almost day and night, together with partners from the Association of Poverty Alleviation Through Know-How (APAK), which is affiliated with the Provincial People's Political Consultative Conference.

The earthquake had left 245 people dead and almost 4,000 severely injured. Half a million people camped outside their collapsed or damaged houses, as countless aftershocks shook the earth for weeks. Over 30,000 tons of grain were lost. Because of freezing temperatures at night, frost-bite, coughs, colds and diarrhea spread quickly. Most people affected by the disaster were of the Naxi ethnic minority, followed by Miao and Han. While many Naxi believe in indigenous religions, most Miao are Christians.

Soon after the quake, Du Peiliang was on the scene to investigate the situation. The earthquake struck just two weeks before Chinese New Year, the most important festival in China. While the joy of the celebration was lost for the people in Lijiang, Amity decided to at least meet their most urgent needs before the holidays.

The Amity office in Nanjing and its partners in Yunnan were in daily contact, unified by one simple ambition: "Help them sleep warmly through the winter!" It was decided to supply cotton quilts and asphalt felt material to be used for the building of temporary shelters. Mr. Du contacted several garment factories in and around Kunming, the provincial capital, and got the sewing machines running.

Masterminding transportation

However, the most difficult part of supplying Lijiang farmers with quilts was transportation. As mountain roads and bridges had suffered severe damage, transportation became a bottleneck, slowing relief work down considerably. A load of 2,800 quilts was the maximum that could be handled by the already over-worked transportation system within such a short period.

Both road and air transport were administered directly by the provincial governor's office. The Amity quilts filled eight army trucks. They left Kunming in two convoys three days apart, because the garment factories were unable to deliver them all in one batch.

The PLA soldiers drove day and night from Kunming to Lijiang, taking turns at the wheel. Shortly before they reached their destination, the road was too damaged to allow the passage of the big trucks. The cargo was unloaded and carried to vehicles waiting on the other side. Thirty-six hours after their departure from Kunming and nine days after the earthquake, the goods arrived at their delivery points in Lijiang.

Though the garment factories operated around the clock, the quilt cov-
ers were a bit delayed. But rather than postponing the shipment of quilts altogether, the Amity liaison group decided to send the trucks ahead and have the covers flown behind. However, airplanes could only be used for the transport of medical personnel and the shipment of fresh blood and other medical supplies. It needed the governor’s special permission for the quilt covers to be airlifted to Lijiang. In this way, they arrived at the distribution points hours before the quilts arrived.

The asphalt felt material had to be trucked in from Zigong City, Sichuan Province, which is north of Yunnan. The purchase was made by phone through the mediation of the provincial government, and shipment was also handled by the army.

Mr. Du and four colleagues accompanied the quilts and quilt covers. For about a week, they stayed in Lijiang, spending their nights in a big tent which they shared with some county officials. There was no thought of taking showers, and freezing winds blew right through the tent. If the cold did not wake them, frequent aftershocks did.

Signing with fingerprints

During the day, they went to village after village to distribute the quilts and asphalt felt material. Families with four members or less received one quilt and one roll of asphalt felt. Those with five or more received two. In this way, supplies were sufficient to help over 2,000 families through the winter nights. Detailed distribution records were kept, as recipients had to sign with signatures or fingerprints.

The villages they visited did not look like villages any more. All the houses were gone. People were searching through the ruins for grain, clothing or other belongings. Temporary shelters had been erected hastily, but due to the shortage of building materials these were no more than sheds one had to crawl into and which gave no real protection once it rained.

The homes of the Naxi people are two-storey farm houses. People live upstairs, while their livestock stays underneath at ground-level. This meant that falling mud walls and wooden beams had crushed most of the animals to death, including at least 13,400 head of cattle.

Despite the severe damage, the situation was rather calm. Theft and other crime was said to be less than in normal times. Several women gave birth, and there was a wedding, at which villagers, rescue workers and soldiers sang in front of the newlyweds’ crumbling shelter.

"When we were leaving," Mr. Du told the Amity office by phone, "the villagers gripped our hands tightly, reluctant to let us go. Some were in tears." The people in Lijiang were already rather poor when they lost what little property they did have within the blink of an eye. According to Du, it will take them at least two to three years to restore their homes and resume normal lives, even with assistance from outside.

When Du and his colleagues returned to Kunming, their wives complained that nothing had been prepared for the New Year festival. At the last minute, they did some holiday shopping and bought gifts for their children. If they lacked anything for their personal comfort at this year's festival, this was more than compensated by their satisfaction about what they had been able to achieve. Thanks to their organizational skills and untiring efforts, the Amity Foundation was the only non-governmental organization that managed to have supplies distributed before Chinese New Year.

Ting Yen-Ren

Bible Printing Capacity To Double

A thanksgiving service held on March 19 at the Amity Printing Company marked the putting into operation of the second Timson printing press. The machine, which was imported for US$1.7 million, is expected to increase Amity’s Bible printing capacity by two million copies per year. At the end of March, the number of Bibles produced by the company for the China Christian Council had reached 11.92 million. A total of 2,613,430 Bibles of various types were printed in 1995.

Support For Church-Run Projects Increases

Since July of 1994, the Amity Foundation has spent a total of 780,000 yuan (US$94,000) in support of church-run projects. These include 18 clinics, five homes for the elderly, three kindergartens and three rural development programs. With this activity, Amity intends to encourage China’s local churches to participate in social development.
Center For Polio Victims Opens in Pizhou

In response to a polio epidemic which hit the north-western parts of Jiangsu Province in 1989, the Red Cross in Pizhou County established the Hope Center, a clinic for the rehabilitation of children who have fallen victim to the disease. The center, which started operating in December 1995, received support from the Pizhou government and the local church, as well as from the broader community. At present, Hope Center serves 17 children aged between seven and eight with rehabilitative training and primary education on a boarding basis. As most of the children are from poor families in rural areas, their “tuition” consists of 15 to 25 kg of grain per month, while cash expenses are covered by the Norwegian Missionary Alliance through the Amity Foundation. Amity has also channelled technical and professional assistance to the center.

Salvation Army Finds Rural Project a Success

Amity's integrated development program in Bulang Township, Puding County (Guizhou Province), has been highly successful, according to representatives of its major donor agencies, the Australia and Hong Kong branches of the Salvation Army, who visited the area January 9 - 11. The project, which has been implemented since June 1995, consists of a variety of components including irrigation, drinking water supply, slope terracing, fruit tree planting, sheep and cattle raising, village doctor training, vocational training for women and financial assistance to primary school students. The concept of integrated development was first adopted by Amity at its board meeting in 1993. After a year of careful planning and investigation, Amity began to put the idea into effect in the three target areas of Fei County (Shandong Province), Wuding County (Yunnan Province) and Puding County (Guizhou Province). After their visit to Puding, the Amity partners from Hong Kong and Australia advised Amity to keep people's participation as a priority on its development agenda.

The Amity Overseas Coordination Office and 1997

On July 1, 1997, the People's Republic of China will resume sovereignty over Hong Kong, ending more than 150 years of British colonial rule. We rejoice in the return of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong to our motherland. We hope and pray that there will be a smooth transition, ensuring the continuing peace and prosperity of the people of Hong Kong and closer relationships between Hong Kong and the rest of China.

The Amity Foundation has maintained its Overseas Coordination Office in Hong Kong since our beginning in 1985. During that time, Amity's work has grown year by year, and the work of our Hong Kong Office has also increased. This office has an international staff drawn from many denominations who have not only contributed to the work of the Amity Foundation but also to the work and witness of the China Christian Council. In cooperation with churches and partners in Hong Kong and around the world, this office has helped to promote social development and mutual understanding among people and churches at home and abroad.

As one sign of our confidence in the future, we are committed to maintaining our Hong Kong office in 1997 and beyond. Supported by churches and Christian organizations from around the world, we believe it will continue to play a very important bridge-building role in the years to come.

Signed,

K.H. Ting
President, China Christian Council
President, Amity Foundation

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Acting General Secretary, China Christian Council
General Secretary, Amity Foundation

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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,

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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.

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