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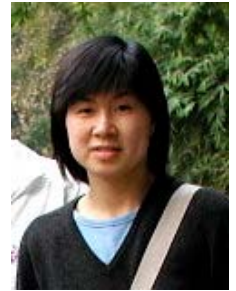
~Dr. Richard Wong is the Medical Director of MSI. He is a General Pediatrician practicing in Toronto.

Eating in Gulin

Elaine Chu

“Eating” in Gulin can be a big mental and physical struggle...to eat or not to eat??

Well, I am not complaining. Instead, the food in Gulin was excellent in terms of taste, aroma, and presentation. However, most of them were heavily masked with fat and spices that made us hesitate to eat. Another hesitation was whether the food met our safety standard...a standard developed by our team authority. We labeled dishes from “Level 1” to “Level 3”; “1” being the safest and “3” being the most hazardous. Frankly speaking, there were quite a few things that I wanted to try so badly, but was commanded not to!!



Upon arrival, one thing I wanted to do the most was to visit their food market, since that would help me to know more about their eating style. In the market, what impressed me most were the stalls that sold “fat”. We are not talking about fat in forms of butter, margarine or oil, but a whole tableful of pig fat, stacked up in layers to approximately 2 feet high, to be sold to people for all kinds of uses, including processing it into lard. To me, seeing that much fat at one time was an eye-opener.



Among all the people I knew in Gulin, the one I miss the most was “Chiu Mama”, the cook assistant in the cafeteria of Gulin Hospital. With a loving and caring heart, she always served us the best she could: fresh steamed buns stuffed with meat, chewy noodles in hot soup, mouth-watering fried eggs with tomatoes, garden fresh vegetables, steaming hot rice served in a wooden bucket and many other flavorful dishes that fed us so well in those cold winter days. Moreover, she was so teachable that once she learned that less oil and fat should be used in cooking, adjustment was then made.

‘Chiu Mama’ (2nd right standing) with some of her happy patrons.

Now, let’s talk about my role in Gulin Hospital as a dietitian. Since the topic “Nutrition” was very new to the people in Gulin, they showed great interest and enthusiasm in knowing more about food and its nutrient contents. The Gulin diet was high in fat and oil. Therefore, those were the things I emphasized the most throughout the two weeks. By using real object demonstration, I showed them how much fat they consumed on an average day and that really amazed them. Indeed, they were even more amazed when I told them to cut that amount down to at least half. Also, I encouraged them to make healthy choices from their market, shared with them all the good things about drinking plain water and above all, the benefits of a well-balanced diet to their general well being.

Because “food” is such a common topic, I was able to build up contacts and relationships with the Gulin people through discussion of “food”. I was so glad that I could demonstrate to them the gifts and the joyful spirit God gave me. Although there wasn’t much opportunity throughout the trip that I could witness God by verbally sharing the gospel, I took every moment as a time to witness Him through the service I could offer.

I greatly treasured this 2 weeks experience in Gulin. It opened my eyes to a reality that we cannot take things for granted, and it allowed me to witness the wonderful providence of God. It is true that we were there only for 2 weeks, and not much could be done in that limited time. However, I am sure God is always there with the local people no matter whether we are gone or not. God has His plan for this county. I pray that I am always a faithful servant that my Lord is willing to include me in His plan.



~Elaine Chu is a dietitian from Edmonton. She went to Gulin with the medical/English team in November 2001.

The chef at Gulin Hospital busy at work.

A Dream and A Prayer *Chien Gan*

This was the first overseas trip that I have ever made that did not include “leisure” in the initial plans. My sole purpose was to follow a prayer and a dream that one day I would be able to go to a place with less material affluence and serve the people there. Gulin became a reality for that dream and prayer.



Chien (right) and her husband David (middle) celebrated their birthday in Gulin.

I went in as an English teacher from Vancouver, together with three other younger teachers from Toronto. As it turned out, none of us had formal teaching experience; at least not in the area of “teaching English as a foreign language”. Being the first team to be formally invited to teach in the two Senior Middle schools in Gulin, we were uncertain of the level of English the students had and what they expected of us. We did, however, get a lot of teaching material from MSI headquarters, along with many tips from “teachers” who had gone before us.

The four of us divided the preparation workload. I was to try to piece together some presentation of teaching methods for the four evenings for teachers that the schools had requested. I thus attended a few lectures at University of British Columbia’s Language Institute to see what current methods were most effective and scouted for books and materials to teach “teaching methods”. I then prepared programs for the four evenings geared for the teachers.

We travelled for 2 days from HK to finally arrive at Gulin. After the initial introduction, the first task was to sort out the logistics of the teaching schedules between the two middle schools. Our team leader was very efficient and tactful in settling these issues. It was indeed a blessing. Teaching thus began.

It was a true joy to have been part of this experience. The students were very responsive and really enthusiastic. The material that the teachers had prepared for the students was appropriate and of high calibre. The local teachers sat in on most of the classes that we taught and thought that the material was good and suitable.



We made some key contacts with the headmaster and English teachers in the two middle schools. They were genuinely pleased with what we had done within the two weeks. They did, however, stress that their goal for English learning was much more long term and would appreciate teachers with experience. There is so much eagerness to forge forward to take command of what they think is a very important language to help them better their position and status in an otherwise poverty stricken area of China. We would do well to meet their requests for more long-term and more experienced teachers.

Our next challenge is to find teachers with experience in teaching English as a second language to go to Gulin and teach. Will your dream and prayer be to bring your expertise to a less affluent area and to serve the people there?

~Chien and David Gan are from Vancouver, Canada. They went with MSI to Gulin in Nov 2001. David, a dentist, worked in the Dentistry Department in the hospital, and Chien taught English in Lin Yang Middle School.

Prayer Items

1. The Vancouver Chinese Christian Business and Professional Association will be meeting in Feb 23-24. Dr. Taylor will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Stephen Hoh and Dr. Po Kee Cheung will be the speakers in the MSI workshop. Please pray for the health of Dr. Taylor, and pray that many Christian professionals will respond to God's calling to China.
2. MissionFest will be held in Toronto on March 1-3. MSI will have a booth there. Dr. David Wong is organizing MSI alumni to man the booth. Pray that good contacts will be made, and that there will be ample opportunities to share about the work of God in China.
3. Pray for the preparation of MSI trip to Gulin in May. A few new people are considering joining.
4. Continue to pray for the registration of MSI Canada as a charitable organization with the government.