

Northern Asia-Pacific Division



NEWS & VIEWS

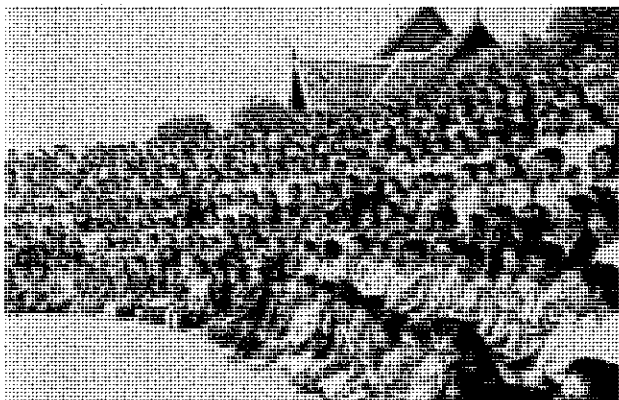
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First Women's Congress for NSD/SSD : 600 Women came from 11 Unions

Interview with Dr. Mary Wong, NSD Women's Ministries Director

Editor: Mary, thank you for taking time to have this interview in spite of the busy schedule you have right after coming back from the Bi-Division Women's Congress in Thailand. When and where did you hold the first women's congress for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)?

Wong: The date was July 2-5, 1998, and the venue was "The Empress Chiangmai Hotel."



Delegates of the First Bi-Division Women's Congress on July 2-5, 1998 in Chiangmai, Thailand.

Editor: According to Elder P. D. Chun, there were 88 delegates from Japan Union, 84 from South China Island Union, 23 from Korean Union and 13 from East Asia Association in our Division. Will you give further information on the attendees of the congress?

Wong: Yes. We had two special guests from the General Conference. They were Ardis Stenbakken and Lynnetta Hamstra, Director and Associate Director of Women's Ministries of the General Conference respectively. Linda Koh and I, Directors of NSD and SSD, prepared for this historical event with assistance of each Union Women's Ministries Director. We had around 600 attendees from 10 unions, one association, and one attached mission as follows: East

Asia Association (considered as a Union), Japan Union, Korean Union, South China Island Union, North Philippine Union, Central Philippine Union, South Philippine Union, East Indonesia Union, West Indonesia Union, Southeast Asia Union, Myanmar Union, and Guam-Micronesia Mission.

Editor: I see. Tell me the theme and purposes of the congress.

Wong: The theme of the congress was "EMPOWERED TO SERVE," and the theme song was "I Will Serve Him." The main purposes of the congress were: (1) to acquaint the women with the direction of Women's Ministries and to help them to perceive the role of women in the ministries of the church; (2) to provide ladies from different parts of the Asia-Pacific region with the opportunity to meet each other, to share their experiences in women's ministries, and to inspire each other in playing a greater role in the work of the church.



Women's Ministries Directors: Linda Koh of SSD (left) and Mary Wong of NSD (right).

Ardis Stenbakken of GC Women's Ministries Director (right) and some delegates.



Editor : Will you tell me about main programs?

Wong : Yes, of course. First of all, we had the impressive grand opening ceremony during which the participants, dressed in their colorful native costumes, marched into the auditorium with the flags of their countries. Distinguished speakers for this occasion included Dr. Wichitt Srisupan, Vice President for Academic Affairs of Chingmai University ; Elders P.D. Chun and V. F. Bocała, Presidents of NSD and SSD. This important occasion received press coverage. Other programs of the congress included devotions, seminar presentations, testimonies, a musical concert, and dramatic presentation of women in the Bible.

Editor : Can you tell me a little bit more about seminars?

Wong : Sure! In the variety of topics we covered in the seminars, we tried to provide the participants with information that would meet their physical, spiritual, and professional needs. The keynote address, "Directions of Women's Ministries in the Year 2000" was delivered by Ardis Stenbakken. Other seminars included "Christian Charm" and "Women Mentoring Women," by Linda Koh, "Prayer Ministry," by Dr. Sally Phoon, "Common Diseases Affecting Women's Reproductive Organs," by Dr. Belen Rajagukguk, and "E. G. White's Concept of Women's Role in the Church," by myself.



Some delegates dressed in their national costumes from Korea.

Editor : All programs must have been so attractive. Finally, what was the strongest impression to you about this congress?

Wong : The event made a deep impact on those in attendance. It was a rare occasion for them to meet together in order to study the issues that concern Women's Ministries. Many were moved to tears by the dramatic presentation of women in the Bible and the final commitment service. I believed that because of this historical event, women in this area of the world has been empowered to do greater service for the Lord.

Editor : Thank you very much.

Mongolian Church : Average Age is Seventeen

Mr. Hideo Watanabe, a volunteer worker of ADRA Japan, gave me an interesting and thrilling report about the Adventist work in Mongolia. He has stayed in Mongolia for 6 months from January to July, 1998 and worked mainly for the street children. I would like to share his report with you including my additional comments.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was recognized and registered with the Ulaan Baatar city government on July 24, 1997. The first Adventist church in Mongolia was organized on October 11, 1997 with 26 charter members at Ulaan Baatar, the capital of the country.

Adventist work in Mongolia began in 1992 and it has continually grown. When we speak of the number of baptisms, there were 3 persons baptized in 1993, 6 in 1994, 4 in 1995, and 16 in 1997. Therefore, there are 29 church members now. It is amazing that the average age of these church members is just 17 years old. What a young church it is! Another 6 people will be baptized in this coming summer.

Since there is no baptistry in the church, they conduct baptismal ceremonies at rivers or hotel swimming pools. Their church service is now conducted at a renting room of an office building. There are around 60 to 70 attendees regularly on Sabbath, but the room is too small. There is not enough room for the number of chairs needed.

Therefore small children are sitting on laps of adults. They have 6 different classes during the Sabbath School lesson study period. Four classes for adults are conducted in the room and children are studying in a storage room. An English class is held at the office room of the church. They have a plan to rent a room from the Red Cross building in the city, but the negotiation is not developing well. The average amount of the Sabbath church service offering is only around US\$2. So you can understand the financial struggle of the church.



Mongolian young church members who came to the church on February 28, 1998.

ADRA Japan recently donated a keyboard (an electric musical instrument) for the church. In the past 6 years the church has not had even a keyboard. When they sang church hymnal accompanying with the keyboard, they expressed their great thanks. Their Mongolian hymn books are prepared by themselves and they share them because of lack of hymn books. Since there are no Bibles to loan to visitors, they share their Bibles too.

How are they doing the evangelistic work? They are holding English Bible classes, Mongolian Bible classes, Business English classes, and basketball & volleyball for communication. Of course, church service itself is an evangelistic program. Two members who recently came back from the Philippines after their studying are also conducting study groups at home to win people. One of them taught English at a high-school as an English teacher for 3 weeks. As the result of it some former students came to the church to study English with the teacher. Thus church members are fulfilling their roles of evangelism according to their spiritual gifts.

Finally Brother Watanabe writes about a plan to establish a Mongolian church building which can be the headquarters of the Adventist work in that country. According to him the cost will be approximately US \$250,000. This goal seems not to be possible without the help of the brothers and sisters from overseas.

Tadaomi Shinmyo, *Communication/PARL Director*

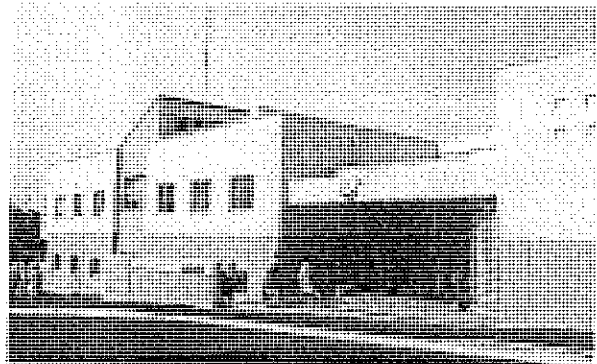
Two Brand New Expensive Buildings in Japan

Japan Union Conference has recently built two brand new institutional buildings and these institutions began their functions with great expectations. Pastor Masaru Kawagoe, Communication Director of Japan Union Conference, gave me some information about them with photos.

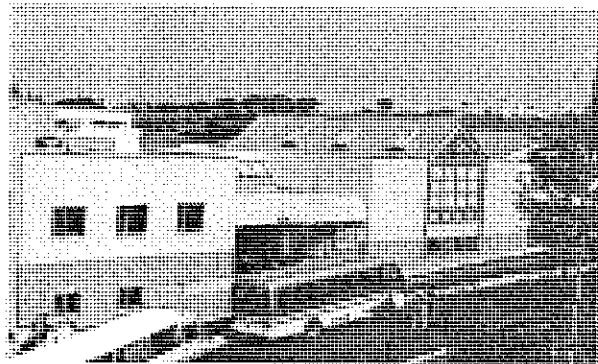
Elementary School

First of all, Yokohama San-iku Elementary School was newly built and the celebration of construction was conducted on March 3, 1998 at the compound of Japan Publishing House in Yokohama. The cost of the building was around 460,000,000 yen (about US\$3,285,714).

This school is operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The school was started with one teacher and 6 pupils in April 1, 1957. But, now there are 113 pupils with 8 teachers and 3 staff at the school. Only 30% of the pupils are from Adventist homes and so it is considered as a mission school.



Yokohama San-iku Elementary School (above and below).

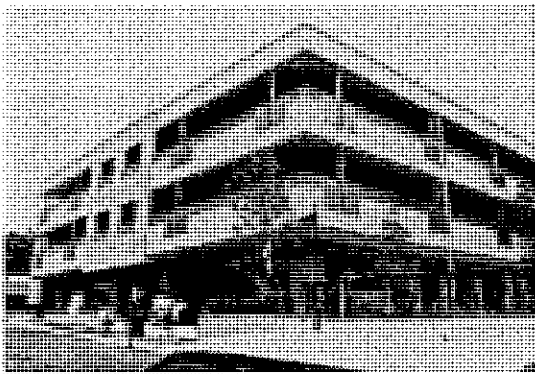


In the Japan Union Conference there are 10 elementary schools and 890 pupils altogether.

Senior Aged Home

A large senior aged home was also erected in the same compound of the Japan Publishing House. In fact, the location of both the elementary school and the senior aged home was intentionally placed next to each other. So the young and old people can interact with each other.

The opening celebration of the home was held on April 8, 1998 and many significant people inside and outside of the Adventist Church came. The cost of the building was 3,151,601,000 yen (about US\$22,511,435). This building is divided into two homes, namely Shalom Yokohama for handicapped old people and Shalom Sakurayama for healthy old people. Shalom Yokohama can accommodate 120 persons and Shalom Sakurayama accommodate 50. The number of full time staff for both facilities is 54.



Shalom Yokohama, a brand new senior aged home (above and below).



In Japan, the ratio of senior citizens who are more than 65 years old is 14.5% of the total population as of September 1995. The ratio will be 21.4% in the year 2011 and 25.9% in the year 2025. It is said that Japan is one of the countries which are rapidly increasing the ratio of the old people in relationship to the total population. Therefore senior aged homes are very much appreciated by general public.

The Japan Union Conference is operating two more senior aged homes, namely Shalom Yokosuka which can accommodate 100 persons with 73 full time and 32 part time workers, and Shalom Higashikurume which can accommodate 80 persons with 63 full time and 41 part time workers.

Tadaomi Shinmyo, *Communication/PARL Director*

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