



"Heart to Heart"
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Mission to Myanmar

LLU HEART TEAM VISITS YANGON

One of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's best known international mission teams completed another life-saving mission—this time in the southern Asia country of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). The Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team returned from Myanmar in mid-October following a two-week surgical stay in the capital city of Yangon (Rangoon).

The ten-member team, headed by Joan Coggin, MD, MPH, professor of medicine, special assistant to the Loma Linda University president for international affairs, and director of the Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team, operated on 15 patients ranging in age from 20 months to 27 years. All patients completely recovered following surgery.

"During our stay, we had the privilege of operating on two young members of the local Seventh-day Adventist church," says Dr. Coggin.

The two children, ages 12 and 14, were each born with a congenital heart defect. Nan, a 12-year-old girl, is the daughter of members of the Yangon Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her family heard of the heart team's visit to Myanmar through the ADRA director

Twenty-month-old Catherine was the youngest child operated on by the LLU Overseas Heart Surgery Team.

Working in cooperation with ADRA, the Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team spends two weeks in Myanmar.

in Myanmar, Pastor Peter Cooper.

The other Adventist child, Ekumu, a 14-year-old girl from a small village north of Yangon, was advised to have surgery 10 years earlier, but her parents were unable to afford the surgery.

"Both young ladies came through surgery extremely well, and have a normal, healthy life to look forward to," says Kenneth Jutzy, MD, chief of cardiology at Loma Linda University Medical Center and cardiologist for the Myanmar trip. Without the lifesaving surgery, both girls probably would not have lived beyond their teenage years.

The team also operated on a 20-month old baby. "Baby Catherine was referred to us by the United States Embassy in Yangon," says Anees Raz-zouk, MD, a LLUMC cardiac surgeon, and surgeon for the Myanmar trip. "Catherine and her twin sister, Andrea, were taken in by an employee at the Embassy after their mother

died, and their father was unable to care for them."

Both children were very ill. Andrea had an enlarged liver and spleen, but is now doing nicely; Catherine was diagnosed as having a congenital heart defect. She was operated on by the team in early October and is now on the road to recovery and a potentially normal life.

Preceding the team to Myanmar were 131 boxes of equipment and medical supplies to be used during the surgeries. Disposable items not used during the operations were donated to the Yangon General Hospital. An estimated \$300,000 worth of supplies were either used during the surgeries or donated to the local hospital.

"We were very appreciative of the support given to us by Pastor and Mrs. Peter Cooper of ADRA/Myanmar," Dr. Coggin says. "The cooperative effort between the heart team and ADRA/Myanmar was very beneficial."

Members of the Myanmar heart team included Dr. Coggin; Dr. Raz-zouk; Dr. Jutzy; Martin Allard, MD, anesthesiologist; Jerry O'Brien, PCCP, perfusionist; Teri Thompson, MD, anesthesia resident; Jeff Morgan, RRT, respiratory therapist; Stanley Davidson, RN, intensive care nurse; Mary Summerhays, RN, intensive care nurse; Jerry Daly, administrative director of the heart team; Kevin Win, MD, and Diana Win, MD, both physicians



Team cardiologist Kenneth Jutzy, MD (left), and cardiac surgeon Anees Razzouk, MD, examine a young patient following surgery.



Dr. Razzouk visits with a few members of the operating room staff.

from the University of California at Los Angeles.

During the past four decades, the heart team has made surgical trips to 14 overseas countries—Chile, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. Multiple trips have been made to Greece, Nepal, People's Republic of China, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

The team made its first overseas trip in 1963 when, with the assistance of the United States Department of State, the Loma Linda University Overseas Heart Surgery Team spent six weeks at the Karachi Seventh-day Adventist Hospital in Pakistan. On their return to the United States, the team performed surgeries in India, Thailand, and Taiwan.

In the fall of 1967, and again in 1969, the team traveled to Athens, Greece, where they worked at the Evangelismos Hospital, performing a total of 61 open-

heart surgeries. In 1970, the team began a continuing relationship with the Evangelismos Hospital by training Greek personnel in all aspects of heart surgery. By the time the team's involvement was completed in 1975, the Athens hospital was recognized as the foremost heart center in all of Greece.

In 1974, and again in 1975, the team made trips to the Republic of Vietnam where they performed more than 100 surgeries at Saigon Adventist Hospital. The team left Saigon (renamed Ho Chi Minh City) only weeks before the fall of the South Vietnamese government.

In January, 1976, the team was invited to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Working under the direction of the Ministry of Defense and Aviation, the team assisted the Saudi Arabians in developing their own open-heart surgery program. Although the heart team completed their formal affiliation in 1986, close ties are still maintained

by the University. Currently, the School of Allied Health Professions maintains an off-campus program in respiratory therapy in Riyadh.

In 1982, the heart team traveled to Suzhou in the People's Republic of China as part of a medical exchange program. Since that time, the team has visited and operated at hospitals in nearly a dozen cities throughout China. In addition, nearly 150 Chinese health professionals have come to Loma Linda University and Loma Linda University Medical Center to share and gain medical expertise.

In 1984, the heart team traveled to Chile, and in 1985 the group assisted Hong Kong Adventist Hospital to establish their new cardiac surgery program.

Another country to be assisted by the Overseas Heart Surgery Team is Zimbabwe. In late 1987, the team was invited by Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health to assist Parirenyatwa Hospital

in Harare (the capital city) with the development of its heart team. In February of 1988, the team made its initial visit to the east Africa country.

Following that visit, medical personnel from Parirenyatwa Hospital received additional training at LLUMC. In mid-1989, the local Parirenyatwa Hospital heart team performed its first open-heart surgeries—without outside assistance—and all were successful.

In June of 1988, the team traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, and in 1989, the team returned to the People's Republic of China where they worked at heart centers in Mudanjiang and Hefei. In 1991, the team traveled to Beijing to assist the Fu Wai Hospital in developing an open-heart surgery program for newborns.

In March of 1992, the team traveled to the Kingdom of Nepal, where in 12 surgical days, the team operated on 15 children—14 of them under the age of 15.

In 1993, the team returned to Harare, Zimbabwe, where they assisted local physicians in developing an open-heart surgery center for children. Later in the year, the team traveled to Kathmandu, Nepal, where they worked with physicians at the local teaching hospital in developing a heart surgery program for children.

Although the team's activities have been encouraged and nurtured by Loma Linda University and Medical Center, much of the financial support has come from other sources.

Pharmaceutical companies and medical supply businesses have been generous in supplying much needed medicines and equipment. Airlines have shipped thousands of pounds of supplies and equipment either free or at a greatly reduced rate. □



Members of the Myanmar life support education team meet with Joan Coggin, MD, MPH, special assistant to the president for international affairs (third from right) prior to their departure for Yangon. Pictured are (from left) Steve Green, MD; Patrice Johnson, RRT, RCP; Dr. Coggin; Joyce W. Hopp, PhD, MPH; David Lopez, RRT, RCP; and Mel Sundean, MBA, RT.

Life support education program given in Myanmar

The School of Allied Health Professions' life support education team taught a group of 180 physicians and nurses in Yangon, Myanmar, in early 1995. A team of five specialists traveled to this fabled "Golden Land" at the request of the deputy ministry of health for the country, Colonel Than Zin.

The participants, invited from all across Myanmar, included cardiologists, internists, anesthesiologists, orthopaedists, senior nurse tutors, resident physicians, and student nurses. In spite of daily temperatures of over 100°F and classrooms with no airconditioning, they spent four days studying, listening to lectures, and participating in hands-on demonstrations.

Vice Admiral Than Nyunt, minister of health for the Union of Myanmar, opened the training program with an address that provided a perspective of the place of life support education in the country's plan to reduce deaths from heart disease and trauma.

Joyce W. Hopp, PhD, MPH, had mentioned in her lectures on arrhythmias that the stress of studying arrhythmias often produced an arrhythmia in the student; she was surprised, however, when one of the physician students actually had to be placed in the hospital due to an arrhythmia. The physician pluckily quoted the statement back to the team member who visited her in the hospital.

Patrice Johnson, RRT, RCP, director of life support education for the School of Allied Health Professions, coordinated the planning of equipment, supplies, and texts for the venture. She worked closely with Peter and Betty Cooper, technical consultant and program officer respectively for ADRA/Myanmar, to assure smooth functioning of the intensive educational program. Other members of the team included David Lopez, RRT, RCP, instructor in the department of cardiopulmonary sciences; Mel Sundean, MBA, RT, assistant professor in cardiopulmonary sciences; Steve Green, MD, director of the emergency residency program at Loma Linda University Medical Center; and Kevin Win, MB, BS, anesthesiologist from the University of California/Los Angeles County Medical Center, who made the initial contact with the Ministry of Health leading to this program.

The team was featured twice on national television and in Burmese and English language newspapers.