

Report by John Strode: Redding, CA

I am in Guanxi. I am staying with Josie and her husband.

We have some good news! Liu Fuyin (Fu Yin means Gospel) and her adopted grandmother arrived here in Guanxi, Josie's house. It was very moving to see her. This was the first time I have seen her and her grandmother since 2000. She is a big girl now, 16 years old. The first time I saw her was in 1997. It was in Ping Liang (8 hours bus ride over an icy mountain pass, 10,000 ft elevation above sea level).

She was probably the ugliest little girl I ever saw. She had a very bad cleft palate. Shelby, Yang Xiao Sheng, my masters degree English student at Lanzhou University, was my guide and friend. We went to the Three Self Church on Sunday morning, and that is how we met Liu Fuyin. We asked her grandmother for permission to take her picture. We took her picture to our classes and told the students that it would not cost very much for each of us if we all donated something and worked together. So the students and the foreign teachers all donated.

This precious little girl had been abandoned. She was placed in an open cardboard box on the side walk in front of the Ping Liang Three Self church. It was well below freezing, It was 9 PM, and it was snowing. She was naked, bloody, and her umbilical cord was still attached to her. At least the person who placed her on the side walk was knowledgeable enough to place her in front of the Christian Church gate. I suspect this person was either her so-called father or grandfather, since so many men want to have a son and not a girl--and because of the one child per family limit rule in China.

Some passer-by beat on the gate, and Grandma Liu came out. They warmed her up, cleaned her, and took her to the police department. No one claimed her in 24 hours, so Grandma Liu adopted her.

The Church prayed for her healing for over two years. Their prayers were answered--but not in the way they expected. Instead, God sent this retired civil engineer all the way from Redding, California to Ping Liang China to arrange for a surgical healing. Everyone Ping Liang knows the story of Little Miss Liu Fu Yin, Little Miss "Gospel", including her real parents. But to this day, no one knows who they are. But the real family knows!

Her story was the basis of a newspaper report in 1997 in Lanzhou and a TV interview in 2000. Said TV program was broadcast in Lanzhou and at least twice in Beijing on the Lanzhou Channel. She was taken to the Number One Military Hospital in Lanzhou and they corrected the cleft palate, the jaw and the teeth. This was in Feb/Mar 1997. The total cost was amazing! Surgery, a month stay in the hospital, food, clothes, transportation to and from Ping Liang was about 2800 yuan! At 8.2 yuan to the dollar equals \$340.00!!!!!! She looked pretty good.

She rode next to me in the back seat of the taxi on the way to the hospital. When we picked her up a month later, she did her best to avoid me!

However, they did not take care of the hole in the roof of her mouth. That was done in the summer of 2000. I Think Project Smile came to Lanzhou and she was first in line for the skin graft to close up the hole in the roof of her mouth.

She was one of about 300 cleft palate corrections that this international team of volunteer doctors did in two weeks.

Why so many cleft palate defects in one region? It may be because of poor nutrition. The region in and around Lanzhou is economically poor. With limited education and limited income, it's difficult to maintain a good diet for the mother.

I read an article many years ago in Science News that when mother rats were deprived of vitamin E, cleft palates in rat offspring were noticeably more common than control group of well fed rats.

Back to Liu Fuyin now. She is an affectionate nice looking girl. She and Grandma Liu remember me very well, as well as Josie. Josie worked a lot with them in 1997 and in 2000. She is studying the non-professional part of landscaping.

What a grand privilege to put in a little effort and change the life of a girl forever! She won't have to walk around with her hat over her face because she is ugly. She has a good chance of a normal, productive life. What a thrill it is to me and Josie to be able to change the life of someone forever!

Yesterday we went to the bank of China in Tianshui. Josie filled out a lot of bank paperwork. I wrote the \$1000.00 check of Whole Body Ministries. She endorsed it in English and Chinese; and now the 45 day wait for the check to be paid by North Valley Bank in Redding and the necessary paper work to respond to Bank of China. Josie has the passbook. The reason for giving the check to the bank is to get the maximum rate of exchange. Josie will be the only signatory. The reason for this is because of the enormous amount of laws, rules and regulations to set up a government recognized charity. This was the Bank's idea.

Now that the account is established, and the rules are established, I will send more money by check when I get back home.

Josie will work with the local schools to decide who gets the scholarships and how much they will be. We need to be flexible up to some reasonable limit. This limit will be written in the contract between Whole Body Ministries and Josie.

Josie was our a very capable student in Lanzhou University in 1996/98. She is very dependable and honest. I have trusted her for the 15 years I have known and worked with her.

With lots of love for you all,

John