



Seoul Adventist Hospital, 1936

Photo courtesy of Seoul Adventist Hospital.

# Seoul Adventist Hospital

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## GEO SEUNG YANG

Dr. Yang, Geo Seung graduated from Soonchunhyang University College of Medicine with the dream of medical missionary work. He completed his internship and residency at Seoul Adventist Hospital in 1992 and has worked for 30 years as a gynecologist. From March 2021, he is serving as president of Seoul Adventist Hospital after serving in major positions such as director of QI Department, chief of Staff, vice president, and chief operating officer.

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Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Sahmyook Seoul byeongwon) is a medical missionary organization under the Korean Union Conference. It is located at 82 Mangu-ro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul (185,123 /about 56,000 pyeong/45.6 acres), as of the end of 2020. The hospital has 119 doctors, 371 nurses, and 531 other employees, with a total of 1,021 people.

## Developments That Led to the Establishment of the Institution

The medical missionary work of the Seventh-day Adventists, which led to the establishment of the hospital, began with the activities of Pastor Smith's wife, who visited Korea as the first missionary in the fall of 1905. As a nurse, she took nearby ill villagers to her home to treat and care for. Feeling as desperate as evangelical missionary work on the land, Pastor Smith asked the missionary department of the General Conference in the United States for a doctor who could serve as a medical missionary. At the request of the General Conference, Riley Russell and his wife were dispatched to Korea in the fall of 1908.<sup>1</sup>

## Founding of the Institution

In 1908 Dr. Riley Russell and his wife, the first medical missionaries to establish the hospital, arrived in South Korea and purchased a 103-year-old thatched house in Soonan, Pyongyang, for \$20 (KRW 40). In addition to the treatment of patients, they enlightened the Korean people around them through education including hygiene education. In the first hospital, a doctor, a nurse, and two other employees worked, and the Washington Post reported that they took care of 20,000 patients for four years.<sup>2</sup>

In 1913, five years after the opening of the hospital, with the support of the General Conference, the land was purchased at a cost of 2,000 USD and a new one-story building using bricks and cement was built and used. After receiving a notice from the Japanese government to improve hospital facilities, the General Conference allocated \$7,000 in excess of the special Sabbath Offerings, expanding the 36-foot one-story building to 36 X 69 ft. two-story brick buildings.<sup>3</sup> The newly expanded hospital could accommodate 20 in-patients. In 1920 the building was expanded with \$10,000 support from the General Conference and was used until it moved to Seoul.

Following the resolution of the Council of the Far Eastern Division in February 1931, the new hospital project started in Seoul. After the purchase of the hospital site and construction of the new building, the treatment was started in February 1936 under the name of Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital.<sup>4</sup> The total construction cost of the hospital was about \$65,000, and it was supported by the association of each church and General Conference.

During the eight-year period from 1968 to 1976, the building was newly built with 250 beds, and about 10 years later, in 1985, it was expanded to become a general hospital with more than four hundred beds.

## Milestones in the History of the Institution

In 1908 Dr. Riley Russell, the first medical missionary, bought a house in Soonan, Pyongyang, and used it as a hospital. Young-shin Lim was the first patient who had a surgery.

In 1911 Bong-ho Kang (the first Korean nurse who later became a doctor) began working at Soonan Hospital.

In 1913, Gyeong-Rok Jang, the first Korean doctor, started working.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1929 Dr. George H. Rue took office as the president of Soonan Hospital.<sup>6</sup>

In the fall of 1931, medical treatment began at Janggokcheon Clinic (Sogong-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul).<sup>7</sup>

In November 1932, it was relocated to 136 Insa-dong, using the name "Seoul Sanitarium and Clinic."<sup>8</sup>

In 1936 the new hospital building was constructed on the current site (#29-1 Hwigyung 2-dong) and renamed Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital. An affiliated nursing center (currently Sahmyook Health University) was established.<sup>9</sup>

In 1943 Soonan Hospital was sold for 78,000 KRW.<sup>10</sup>

In the middle of 1944, at the request of the Japanese government to disband the church, Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital was sold to the Chosen Branch of the Tuberculosis Prevention Association for 400,000 KRW.<sup>11</sup>

On January 15, 1946, after Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule on August 15, 1945, Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital reopened after taking over the same building.<sup>12</sup>

In 1947 the first American style internship training started.<sup>13</sup>

In May 1947 Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital was renamed Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Seoul Wisaeng byeongwon).<sup>14</sup>

In 1948 Dr. George H. Rue was appointed as presidential Doctor of Korea by President Lee Seung Man, as well as taking care of the U.S. Embassy staff and foreigners in Korea.

In 1951 Busan Adventist Hospital, a branch of Seoul Adventist Hospital, opened.<sup>15</sup>

In 1952 the orphanage, Seong-yook-won, opened.<sup>16</sup>

In 1954 Dr. George H. Rue was awarded a certificate of appreciation for his contributions to Korea for 20 years and the Order of Cultural Merit of the Republic of Korea by President Lee Seung Man.<sup>17</sup>

In 1957 it was recognized as a training hospital and opened as the US VISA Examination Center for the first time in Korea.<sup>18</sup>

In 1965 Bo-shin Noh, the nursing director, was awarded the Nightingale Badge.<sup>19</sup>

In 1967 Gwi-boon Ahn, the nursing director, was awarded the Nightingale Badge.

In 1968 the new building construction (currently used) began.

In September 1969 the amphibious aircraft "Angel" for the residents on islands was launched.

In July 1972, for the first time in Korea, an affiliated "5 Day Stop Smoking School" was established.

In July 1976 the new hospital building (with 250 beds) was completed.<sup>20</sup>

In November 1985 the hospital building was expanded to 406 beds.

In August 1993 UNICEF appointed Seoul Adventist Hospital as a baby-friendly hospital.

In March 1996 an MRI and a spiral CT were installed.

In June 1999 Seoul Adventist Hospital signed a medical cooperation with Loma Linda Medical Center in the United States.

In October 1999 the construction of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital was completed.

In September 2003 Postpartum Maternal Center was opened.

In November 2003 OCS and PACS began to operate.

In February 2005 there was a new vision declaration, "Making Happiness, Sharing Happiness."

In June 2007 the construction of a funeral home (with 13 incense chambers) was completed.

In October 2007, for the first time of Korean hospitals, Laughter Therapy Room was established.

In December 2007 the construction of Yu-ja-won (a senior care center) was completed.

In July 2008 the remodeling of the main building and the construction of the parking lot were completed.

In September 2008 with the commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Medical Missionary Work in Korea, there was a new vision declaration.

In January 2009 the name of the hospital was changed to Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Sahmyook Seoul byeongwon).

In April 2009 64-channel 3-dimensional imaging MDCT was introduced, and the number of VISA physical examinations exceeded the total of 300,000.

In April 2010 it was selected as a pilot organization for institutionalization of nursing services by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

In July 2010 the construction of Lifestyle Medicine Institute was completed to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of medical missionary work (434 beds licensed).

In December 2011 the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system was launched.

In May 2012 the Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service certified the hospital as a first-class hospital with excellent stomach and colon cancer surgery.

In January 2013 it was certified by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Korea Institute of Healthcare Accreditation (the 1<sup>st</sup> period).

In November 2013 PET-CT and latest gamma cameras were introduced.

In December 2013 an isolated dialysis room was opened in the artificial kidney room.

In December 2014 it obtained the first grade of Adequacy Assessment in "Colon Cancer."

In June 2015 it was designated as the first National Safety Hospital for MERS by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

In July 2015 the Department of Laboratory Medicine launched the latest laboratory automation system, and the Dialysis Access Center was established.

In December 2015 a newest 128-slice CT, which minimized the radiation exposure, was introduced.

In January 2016 an All-Digital Bi-plane Vascular & Interventional Imaging System was launched.

In October 2016 the expansion of the main building was completed.

In December 2016 it was certified by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Korea Institute of Healthcare Accreditation (the 2<sup>nd</sup> period).

In July 2017 the Dialysis Access Center performed the accumulative 2,000 hemodialysis vascular procedures and operations.

In October 2017 it obtained the first grade of Adequacy Assessment in "Hemodialysis Service."

In April 2018 online reservations began at VISA Examination Center for Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and China.

In May 2018 an additional Nursing Integrated Service Ward was opened (234 beds in total).

In September 2018, with the commemoration of the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Medical Missionary Work in Korea, there was "Vision 2030" declaration.

In July 2019 it received a "Presidential Commendation" in the public sector for overcoming low birth rates in commemoration of the 8<sup>th</sup> Population Day.

In August 2019 Seoul Adventist Hospital was selected as a pilot hospital for the project of medical request and transfer for the patients by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

In September 2019 it obtained the first grade of Adequacy Assessment in "Hemodialysis Service."

In February 2020 it was designated as the first National Safety Hospital for COVID-19 by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

In 2020 it obtained the first grade of Adequacy Assessment in nine different medical fields.

In December 2020 it was certified by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Korea Institute of Healthcare Accreditation (the 3<sup>rd</sup> period).

In December 2020 it obtained the excellent grade from Emergency Medical Institution Assessment for two consecutive years.

In April 2021 the Department of Laboratory Medicine obtained the certifications for excellent laboratories for five consecutive years.

## Historical Role of the Institution

Seoul Adventist Hospital, which began in 1908 when Dr. Riley Russell came to Korea, has been working hard to serve the community as an institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

When the hospital first started in 1908, it began with the treatment of eight patients on the day of the arrival of Dr. Riley Russell, the first hospital director. In addition to treating patients who came to the hospital, they trained the local residents to boil water for the health of patients and tried to prevent and treat infectious diseases such as typhus, cholera, and pests. In addition, he taught them how to farm and how to raise silkworms, providing a financial foundation for living and studying. By establishing nursing schools, he also worked hard to transfer medical technology to Koreans that could serve the Korean medical community.

After moving to the current site in 1936, Dr. Russell worked hard to train doctors as an educational training hospital, and Mrs. Ryu Eun-hye established an orphanage to foster many orphans caused by the Korean War to become members of society. In particular, Dr. George H. Rue was appointed as President Lee, Seung-Man's physician and played a crucial role in taking charge of the health of the president who led the Republic of Korea.

It was the first U.S. visa physical examination conducted in 1957, and is currently a designated hospital for VISA physical examinations in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, as well as for U.S. Embassy officials and military personnel. GE 128-channel 3D CT, Siemens 3-Tesla MRI, PET-CT, and Cardiovascular Contrast are equipped with state-of-the-art specialized equipment to secure high-level expertise for patient treatment.

Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Seoul Wisaeng byeongwon), which marked the 100th anniversary of the medical mission after remodeling the hospital and building a funeral home in 2008, renamed it "Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Sahmyook Seoul byeongwon)" in 2009 and obtained a medical institution certificate from the Ministry of Health and Welfare for three consecutive periods from 2013 to 2020.

Seoul Adventist Hospital is a general hospital that operates 22 medical departments and a heart unit. The acquisition of certification from the Ministry of Health and Welfare has been recognized as a hospital with high safety and medical quality for the patients, and it has also been certified as a cardiovascular intervention medical institution. The diagnostic examination department has been certified as an excellent examination room for five consecutive times in a biennial examination.

With the operation of the electronic medical record (EMR) system and the opening of an integrated call center, customers can be treated quickly. It developed a specialized application for smart-phone users so that they could receive information about Seoul Adventist Hospital anytime and anywhere. Pharmacy Services operates an "automatic refining classification packaging system," and automatic packaging is being carried out when prescribing medicines for the in-patients and out-patients.

## Outlook

Seoul Adventist Hospital uses not only "Health Care" but also "Human Care" as its vision to achieve the hospital that it wants to work and be treated the most. In accordance with the spirit of Christian service, it conducts internal and external services and overseas services for missionary purposes and is carrying out various social contribution projects as a medical institution located in the transportation hub of Dongdaemun-gu.

The first project of social contribution activities, Love the patients with Care, is an activity in which all employees of our hospital visit the in-patients to convey the love of Christ through "Human Care." Human Care will continue to be all activities to help patients mentally or spiritually, such as greeting, delivering small gifts, reading the Bible or books, and praying for them.

The nation's first stop smoking school, which started in 1972, has so far run a program to help people succeed in quitting smoking by promoting and improving their healthy lifestyle. In addition, it helps patients to experience a quick recovery of their bodies and minds through healthy laughter therapy and become happy in their daily lives.

In addition, as part of its mission, the free foot massage service, which conveys Jesus' love, has been conducted with volunteers for in-patients, guardians, and local residents since November 2010. Through community service activities, Seoul Adventist Hospital visits the senior citizens center in Hwiyung-dong and provides blood pressure measurements, blood glucose measurements, and health counseling services to residents on the Baebong Mountain trail connected to Seoul Adventist Hospital.

In order to meet the mission given to us not only in Korea but also abroad, we are continuing active overseas medical volunteer work (20 times), including church construction and support in China, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Cambodia, and Mongolia in 1996.

In recognition of this continuous social contribution project, Seoul Adventist Hospital received the Korea-U.S. Special Medical Increase Award from the Seoul Metropolitan Council and received a letter of appreciation from the head of Dongdaemun-gu for free medical support for the Residential Vulnerable Areas Project.

According to the spirit and purpose of many missionaries dedicated to the development of hospitals, Jesus' Love is conveyed to those who do not receive medical benefits, and efforts are being made to prevent diseases as well as health of mankind through medical services.

## Hospital Name List

Soonan Hospital (1908-1943); Seoul Sanitarium and Clinic (1931-1935); Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital (1936-April 1947); Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Seoul Wisaeng byeongwon) (May 1947-December 2008); Seoul Adventist Hospital (aka Sahmyook Seoul byeongwon) (2009- ).

## List of Heads of Hospitals

Riley Russell (1908-1922); H. Scoles (1923, 1924); Clyde A. Haysmer (1926); R. S. Watts (1926-1929); George H. Rue (Rue Jae Han) (1929-1945); Sa Young Jeong (1945, 1946); George H. Rue(Rue Jae Han) (1947-1967); L. Eric (1967-1970); Jeon Geol Jeong (1970, 1971); R. Newbold (1971, 1972); Keun Hwa Lee (1972-1982); Eun Gu Huh (1982-1985); Eul Gi Ryu (1985-1991); Ki Hyun Jang (1992-1995); Jung Sik Park (1996-2000); Geon Pil Choi (2000-2004); Kwang Doo Kim (2005-2008); Myung Sup Choi (2008-2020); Geo Seung Yang (2021- ).

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### NOTES

1. Geun Hwa Lee, *Review of Medical Mission of the Korean Adventist Church* (LA, Korean Adventist Press, 2003), 18.
2. Man Kyu Oh, *History of One Hundred Years of Korean Seventh-day Adventists, 1904~1945* (Seoul: Korean Publishing House, 2010), 124.
3. Man Kyu Oh, 328
4. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), 304.
5. Geun Hwa Lee, 20.
6. *Ibid.*, 35.

7. Man Kyu Oh, 333.
8. Ibid., 333.
9. Geun Hwa Lee, 47.
10. Man Kyu Oh, 685.
11. Ibid., 717.
12. Geun Hwa Lee, 66.
13. Ibid., 72.
14. Ibid., 63.
15. Ibid., 115.
16. Ibid., 125.
17. Ibid., 128.
18. Ibid., 146.
19. Ibid., 160.
20. Ibid., 248.

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