

# Serving in Asia

## Auxiliary leaders give training, visit the homes of members

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During a two-week tour of Asia, Relief Society General President Bonnie D. Parkin met with civic leaders, women's organizations and priesthood leaders. She met the mayor of Taipei, Taiwan, in what she called an "amazing experience."



Relief Society General President Bonnie D. Parkin visits with Relief Society sisters in Bangkok, Thailand, during recent tour of Asia. She visited also in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Photo by Sasithorn Krisanalome

But it was in the homes of Relief Society sisters that her heart was most touched.

"The women of Asia are strong and they want to do what's right," Sister Parkin told the *Church News* soon after her return to Salt Lake City. "They love their families. They feel strengthened because of the gospel of Jesus Christ and they are living their covenants."

Sister Parkin traveled throughout Asia during the Feb. 8-23 tour, meeting with priesthood leaders, giving training meetings and speaking in member meetings in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and Taiwan. Also traveling in Asia during the same time period — in a separate tour except for a meeting in Hong Kong — was Elaine S. Dalton, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, who also visited India, Cambodia and Singapore.

Both auxiliary leaders returned to Utah speaking of the strength and commitment of members in Asia.

"I saw young women and leaders who know that they are daughters of God, who are guided by the Spirit, who are preparing for their future roles as wives and mothers and who are keeping the covenants they made at baptism and who are preparing for temple covenants," Sister Dalton said. Then referring to a

quote by President [Gordon B. Hinckley](#) during the January 2004 worldwide priesthood leadership training broadcast, Sister Dalton paraphrased: "(These young women) really are the bright shining hope of Asia. That area is just going to blossom and they will be great leaders."

During her visit to Taiwan, Sister Parkin met with Mayor Ying-Jeou Ma of Taipei, presenting him with a porcelain statue of a family and explaining the Church's emphasis on families. "He knew so much about the Church," she said. "He talked about Joseph Smith. I talked with him about the women of the Church and about our beginnings. I told him how family home evening could bless his land.

"He believes in families," Sister Parkin added, saying he was touched by the porcelain statue.

During a meeting with local women's organizations in Taipei, Sister Parkin explained the Relief Society organization, the visiting teaching program and the literacy effort. The women discussed some elements that weaken the individual, families and society at large, including family violence, abuse, prostitution, cultural conflicts and racial discrimination. They also talked about health, the job market and education.

In Bangkok, Sister Parkin met with Senator Pavena, considered one of the most influential women in the country. Also present during this meeting was Elder John B. Dickson of the Seventy and president of the Asia Area.

But of all the people, dignitaries and others, with whom Sister Parkin met during this two-week tour, she spoke most of the Relief Society sisters of Asia. One such was Xiao Hong Qiu-Xu. In 1989, she was introduced to the gospel through a colleague and joined the Church. Today, her three children are active in the Church and she expresses hope for her husband to one day join the Church.

"What touched my heart about this woman was her commitment to her covenants and her belief that her husband will someday join the Church," Sister Parkin related.

Sister Parkin visited this Relief Society sister's home and met the family, including the husband. That night, during a general member meeting, Sister Parkin saw the woman walk in accompanied by her husband.

- Public affairs directors from the Asia Area contributed to this article.