Entering a new decade

AMDA Projects in Mongolia
Initially prompted by Dr. Suganami in 2006 who inquired Mongolian government officials to provide support to AMDA activities, the idea has blossomed in creating a vast range of activities in Mongolia since 2008. As of now, AMDA Projects in Mongolia have expanded as follows:

- AMDA GPSP Soul and Medicine Program
- Free Cataract Surgery Mission
- Children’s Eye Project
- Training for Mongolian Ophthalmologists in Japan
- Mongolia-Okayama Student Exchange
- Dr. Suganami to receive the Order of the Polar Star

AMDA GPSP Soul and Medicine Program
AMDA believes that healing a human soul is essential to peace building. To pay tribute to war victims, AMDA has held GPSP Soul and Medicine Program in past battlefields around the world. The program has a twofold purpose: 1) to conduct a multi-religious memorial service to pay tribute to those who suffered or died in conflicts and wars, and 2) to provide medical services to the present communities.

In 2005, the concept was expanded to include natural disaster victims as a result of calamitous tsunami that hit South Asia on 26 December 2004. Since
then, AMDA has held a memorial service in the locations where AMDA conducted emergency relief.

—Free Cataract Surgery Mission
In collaboration with Mongolian Ophthalmologist Society, AMDA has held ophthalmology workshops for ophthalmologists in Mongolia. Besides providing up-to-date knowledge and skills, AMDA also conducted cataract surgeries on patients who were connected with “the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol” (Nomohan Incident) in 1939, also known as the Soviet-Japan Border War.

—Children’s Eye Project
Since 2011, AMDA’s ophthalmologic project in Mongolia has been one of the most viable efforts to date, mainly providing better eye-care to the people in Mongolia. The project primarily focuses on the institutionalization of children’s eye checkup: a medical system which is thought to be requisite in uplifting children’s visual health from an early age.

In September 2016, a team comprising two Japanese orthoptists as well as AMDA President Dr. Shigeru Suganami and AMDA Singapore Chairperson Dr. Don Lau with a couple of others visited Guchin-Us village, Övörkhangai located 500 km southwest of Ulaanbaatar. The team organized children’s eye checkup with some adults being examined upon request. On 05 September, AMDA collaborated with Mongolia Ophthalmology Association to hold a forum titled, “Children’s Eye Problems in Mongolia” at Mongolian Ministry of Health.

—Training for Mongolian Ophthalmologists in Japan
In 2011, training was held for Mongolian doctors visiting Japan including the chairperson of Mongolian Ophthalmology Association. It was mainly held in Okayama and Tokyo.

—Mongolia-Okayama Student Exchange
Eight students from Okayama University held a cultural exchange event with students from Asian Medical Students’ Association (AMSA)

-Dr. Suganami to receive the Order of the Polar Star
In 2017, Dr. Suganami received the Order of the Polar Star from His Excellency Mr. Dambadarjaa Batjargal, Ambassador of Mongolia to Japan in acknowledgement of his contribution to the betterment of Mongolia’s medical sector. The award is the highest civilian award presented to a foreign citizen by the government of Mongolia.
**Saving the eyes of Mongolian children**  
**Eye-checkup Promotion Project 2017**

Since 2008, AMDA has held eye-checkups for children residing in Ulaanbaatar and its suburbs. The project is promoting the importance of institutionalizing eye-checkups for pre-school children in Mongolia.

On 01 September 2017, AMDA held a yearly checkup at Guchin-Us village in Övörkhangai, 11 hour-drive from the capital. (The program was supported by Zinrui Aizenkai Mongolia Center.) The team led by orthoptists from Kawasaki University of Medical Welfare in Japan saw 113 people of which 78 are children aged five to 17. As a result, five strabismus cases were found while seven people needed immediate referral to the hospital.

**Children’s eye-checkup finally institutionalized**

On 05 September 2017, AMDA team made a courtesy call to the Mongolian health minister and reported how earnestly AMDA has worked toward the eye-checkup institutionalization. Later on, Dr. Takasaki, an orthoptist from Kawasaki University of Medical Welfare reported the efficacy of AMDA’s checkups in the last three years, and reiterated that 1) in Mongolia, amblyopia and astigmatism cases are higher than the world average, 2) half of the children with potential problems can be saved by wearing glasses. It was then when Dr. Suganami proposed the idea of replicating the current Japanese school-eye-checkup system to be introduced in Mongolia. 10 days later, the health ministry held a press conference to announce the enactment of school eye-checkup institutionalization, setting 15 September as “Children’s Eye Day”.

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*Children’s eye checkup (2016)*

*Meeting with the Health Ministry officials (2017)*

*Press conference at the Health Ministry (Sept. 2017)*
**GPSP SMP in Mongolia 2016 (Gandan Monastery, Ulaanbaatar)**

On 03 September 2017, GPSP Soul and Medicine Program in Mongolia was held for the tenth time to commemorate the victims of the Battles of Khalkhyn Gol which took place in 1939. The ceremony was attended by both Mongolian and Japanese priests to offer peace prayers for the realization of a better world. Regardless of what one’s race or creed may be, AMDA is determined to spread the spirit of “Open Sogo-Fujo”, a concept which embodies mutual assistance in the most accessible manner. Since it was implemented in 2008, affiliated religious organizations have been taking part in the event completely on a voluntary basis (AMDA shoulders none of their expense.)

![Memorial service at Gandan Monastery (2017)](image1)

The 25m-tall statue holds holy water on the right and an eyeball on the left.

**Gandan Lotus Project for Child Monks in Gandan Monastery**

AMDA has provided assistance targeting child monks in Gandan Monastery. For the last three years, the assistance was mainly about donating clothes or stationery. However, by responding to child monks’ ardent wish to eat as much as they can, it was decided that, for next year, AMDA will be sending food items to fulfill their hearty appetite.

![Exchange with children monks after the 2017 peace prayer](image2)

**“Land of Sea Buckthorn” Project**

A promise which was made between AMDA and the village mayor of Guchin-Us has borne fruit. “Land of Sea Buckthorn” Project is aimed at producing sea buckthorn (an edible plant rich in vitamin C, A and E) for the purpose of greening the desert, regional promotion and local manpower building. The project engages every villager to take part in it in every possible way. In May 2017, 1,000 trees were planted in one hectare of land.
Suganami Scholarship at Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences

Since 2009, Dr. Suganami has been providing scholarship to cover part of the tuition of the students who are pursuing medicine in Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences. This year, the bursary was provided to each student from second to sixth year (five students in total.) The scholarship reception ceremony was held with the presence of college officials, AMSA Mongolia members and its alumni, followed by recent activity reports from AMSA Mongolia and its student-driven medical efforts (mobile clinic etc.)

Medical Seminars held by Dr. Takushi Sato

Dr. Takushi Sato (Professor at Faculty of Medical Science, University of East Asia) visited Mongolia to hold seminars in several locations in which he gave guidance on his specialties such as emergency medicine and endoscopy. Dr. Sato holds his position as vice-chairman of the acting committee of AMDA Platform for Nankai Trough Earthquake Disaster Strategy and is a registered doctor of AMDA ER Network.
On 08 September, Dr. Sato held a lecture for medical students (AMSA members) on emergency medical relief at Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences. Based on his vast experiences in Afghanistan, Sudan, Cambodia, Nepal, and most recently in Kumamoto, Japan, where devastating earthquakes struck in 2016, he emphasized the importance of the roles of doctors serving the affected. After the lecture, some of the students showed their willingness to take part in volunteering overseas, which proved that the lecture raised their spirit as future doctors.

Training at Ulaanbaatar Emergency Service 103
From 09-10 September, Dr. Sato also held a two-day seminar on emergency medicine in partnership with Ulaanbaatar Emergency Service 103. On Day 1, about 100 officials and emergency doctors from Ulaanbaatar’s 20 Health-Department-certified medical institutions participated in the seminar. At the beginning of the event, AMDA was credited for help setting up 103’s ER base within Japan Mongolia Friendship Hospital. This allowed ambulance and doctors to always at standby, and hence, technical exchange of this kind was considered to be something worth continuing with both parties’ contributions. Dr. Sato began his lecture by introducing the history of disaster medicine in Japan, followed by the guidance on external injury treatments. He also demonstrated thoracoabdominal ultrasound examination. On Day 2, Dr. Sato took himself to the field where he rode in an ambulance with a local medical team to conduct a practical training. Mr. Purevdash, the director of 103, expressed his deep gratitude to Dr. Sato’s deed and AMDA’s support and hoped that this project would be continued next year as well. As a result, it was promised that this initiative would be continued until the summer of 2019 as a yearly event.

Endoscopy Training at Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences
Based on the partnership with Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, AMDA held endoscopy training which showcased Japan’s cutting-edge medical techniques, namely, endoscopic treatment/examination. The two-day training (11-12 September) ended successfully, receiving a fervent request to have it made into an annual event. The university is scheduled to establish an endoscopy center at its hospital next year. One of the officials said, “It is not exaggerating to say that we want him to visit us every month as we still have a lot to learn from him.”
Accordingly, AMDA promised the university to send Dr. Sato for the endoscopy training every summer until 2019.

*Ultrasound examination in Dambadarjaa*

Japan-Mongolia Friendship Hospital teamed up with a local family hospital to organize home-visit ultrasound examination in Dambadarjaa district. The joint team visited three families in the area whose family members have a potential abdominal problem. Dr. Oyunchimeg who heads AMDA Mongolia was impressed with the way the team handled the examination, stating that Dr. Sato’s instruction was already visible in their practice.