

Chapter One

Profile of a mentor

In the Honam district of Guangzhou is a village named Honglok. To the front it faces the wide and winding Pearl River; to the rear lies Huangpu Road. These transportation links connect the village to every point; adjacent to the left and right are the villages of Hadu and Fengwong. In the distance lies the shadow of the Pagang Pagoda, nearby lies the Xiaogang wharf. Streams sparkle everywhere, tall green trees and an ancient Buddhist temple graze the sky, and the White Cloud Mountain is clearly in view. This rare scenic location in Honam is one of the best ten spots in Guangzhou. These are the wide vistas of the campus of Lingnan University in Guangzhou.

The total area of the campus reached 4,000 *mu*, sloping from south to north with undulating hills, divided by a central avenue, reaching two miles from the ferry pier at the northern gate. Looking inward from the riverbank, in every direction one can see green trees, red walls obscured by foliage, and green roof tiles reflecting the sunlight. Breezes ruffle the trees. The school's founders took care to follow nature's harmony. They

established a foundation for wide-reaching growth through a gradual and difficult process during which they purchased half-*mu* parcels piece by piece.

The red and gray banner of the school flew high above the centre of the campus, in the open space of the central quadrangle where the grass was deep green. Here was Swasey Hall, used for chapel services, meetings, and recreational activities. To the right of Swasey Hall stood Grant Hall, housing the offices of the university's central administration. In between the two buildings was the large Blackstone Lodge, which served as President Chung's residence and reception hall. He lived in this residence for decades, receiving many distinguished visitors, including Dr Sun Yat-sen, Chinese and foreign guests, scholars and experts, students, parents, and his own friends and relatives. Even local villagers were his frequent visitors. His door was never closed to them. Whatever advice they sought, whether the matters were large or small, was provided through cordial and frank conversation; no one's request was refused. Mrs Chung entertained guests with her fine cooking and elegant manners, providing her husband with enormous support. The Lingnan students remember the house as though it were holy ground. After Dr Chung passed away, the Presidents who succeeded him felt they could never aspire to recreate this place. Finally in 1948, Yeung Wah-yat, Chairman of the General Association of the Lingnan Alumni Association, decided in discussion with President Chen Su-ching to turn

the building over to become the General Office of the Lingnan Alumni Association. Serving as the general headquarters of the association, the building transmitted the wishes of Dr Chung, so that chapters around the world would fly the red and gray banner forever.

Lingnan University has flourished from these sprouts for the past forty years, in intimate relation to Dr Chung during his forty years of service. Even today, when we remember him, it seems that he is not so far away. Somehow we see his presence still. Outwardly, Dr Chung was a handsome man, slender and tall, with a slim face. There was always a smile in his eyes, and he was easy to approach. He was kind-hearted and spoke with a slur. When speaking, he would often gesture to get his meaning across, sometimes inserting words in English and occasionally in local dialect. His manner of speaking was very pleasant to the ear. He usually wore Western dress, with a tie and a Panama hat on his head, and carried a walking stick. He wore eyeglasses and his manner was austere, just like the Chinese returning from overseas. When he went out, he would not take a private car or launch. He would either take public transportation or go on foot. Even in the hot southern climate, he would frequently walk between Dongshan and Wai Oi Road, taking out a handkerchief to mop his brow, and taking off his hat to fan himself. The townspeople followed him with their eyes, saying to one another: "There goes President Chung Wing Kwong of Lingnan University."

Dr Chung's daily life was austere and disciplined. He would arise early, perform light calisthenics, and take a cold shower, without interruption of this routine either in summer or winter. He would then go down to his study to devote himself to prayer and reading the Bible, and he would then read the journals and newspapers. After breakfast, he would begin office work. If he went into the city and was late in returning, Mrs Chung would always be waiting for him outside the door. After supper, he would participate in faculty, staff and student activities. Before going to bed, he would make detailed entries in his journal, recording his reflections on current events. A decade would pass like a single day, and he never rested. Alumnus Kaan Yau-man remembers that Dr Chung often entered the drill ground early in the morning and joined formation with the students to do drills. Even as he aged, Dr Chung devised a system of gymnastic movements to be performed in bed, and drew up a set of illustrations. One of these pages described pounding one's belly with a fist for two minutes, encouraging circulation of the blood. Later during his convalescence in Hong Kong, he said to Yeung Wah-yat, "If you have a minor illness, don't behave like a child whining and crying for mother. A grown man should straighten his spine. If you say no to illness then you will not be ill. Then Mrs Chung added, "Mr Chung is now getting up early every day, and going to the veranda to grind ink and assume a straight and balanced posture ready for writing. Then he practises calligraphy. Even the north wind and cold rain cannot affect him." "Why bother with pain?" was his philosophy. Judging from

this, it is clear that his philosophy of longevity was far beyond the reach of ordinary people.

Dr Chung maintained his faith in Jesus. As is well-known, freedom is only found in self-discipline and this can only be found within oneself. Rather than impose discipline on others, one must serve as a model. He pursued Western learning, but only hoped that Western learning would merge into Chinese cultural tradition, so that one could take advantage of Western learning rather than replace native culture. According to Matthew V.16: “Let the light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Dr Chung was just like this passage in the gospel.

Lingnan alumnus Reverend S. K. Lee preached that Dr Chung’s ministry work was always evident on Wednesday evenings, at the prayer meetings held in Blackstone Lodge for the Chinese faculty and staff and in his spiritual retreats to the outskirts of the city. Reaching those quiet and peaceful surroundings, his spirit would be freed and he would be inspired to preach. And in various churches and schools he would deliver sermons, always with solemn words and a serene heart. What he most liked to read was *Corinthians*, Chapter 13, Verse 1, in which are the words, “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.” Here it is also said: “And

now abideth faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.”

Alumnus Lee Shao-cheung studied at Lingnan during the early years. Dr Chung was Lee's father's good friend. Dr Chung did not hesitate, however, to give Lee Shao-cheung a thorough talking-to in private. He once summoned Lee to say, “Jesus Christ was a perfect man. He was able to accomplish what the sages and earlier generations could not accomplish. He washed out all our sins and was reborn in a victorious life. At Lingnan we have missionaries from different countries along with teachers and various staff members, all of whom serve our country whole-heartedly. You can take them as examples. If we wish to change the old order, everything depends on education. To help ordinary people become open-minded, it is necessary to first instruct students to become morally educated boys and girls, so as to succeed in this task. When Dr Chung spoke in such an earnest manner, asking him to kneel down and pray, Lee was moved to tears. Eventually he converted and was baptized, and has remained grateful until this day. During the revolution, Dr Chung encouraged Lee to cut off his queue, and send it to his parents in a package, asking for their forgiveness. Alumnus Lee became a professor in Hawaii, and was invited to return to Lingnan to deliver lectures.

Dr Chung's mind was full of new ideas; he did not stick to old ways. He liked to advocate new and extraordinary trends. He used a fountain pen

early on because it was so convenient. He would write in vertical rows, but starting from the left-hand side to avoid touching the freshly-written words. He used a circular seal with his name carved in the middle surrounded by western words. In composition, he did not stick to the classical style, so that his meaning would be clear. He composed a school motto to hang on the right-hand wall of the school's assembly hall. The motto read, "Today's scholars serve others." At the morning assembly he would explain this by quoting from the Four Books and would provide his modern-day annotation to explain that the meaning was to serve the people. Dr Chung embraced China's traditional teaching of filial respect. In early years, the campus bookstore imported and sold athletic equipment made in the United States such as blue ribbons and white canvas shoes. Dr Chung felt that these looked like funeral clothing, and were therefore inauspicious. He once prohibited these imports to avoid injury to filial sentiments. Until 1922 he employed the former Minister of Justice, Tsui Him, to teach classical Chinese. Mr Tsui was an advocate of the view that to write well in modern Chinese it was important to learn classical Chinese, because several thousand years of Chinese culture were transmitted through classical Chinese. To study classical Chinese would make one's modern Chinese succinct. Dr Chung also invited the Guangdong bibliophile Tsui Shun-fu to join the faculty. Later Tsui generously donated his entire collection to Lingnan, thus establishing the Chinese section of the university's library, which became known as one of the best collections in southern China. Furthermore, Kaan Yau-

man recalled with lively gestures that when Dr Chung was Dean of the Chinese language faculty, his lectures on the Confucian *Analects* were like the ancient teacher Kung Ye-cheung's interpretation of the speech of beasts. Although Kung had been imprisoned (despite his innocence), Confucius nonetheless chose him as a son-in-law. When Dr Chung explained this passage using colloquial language, it was even more appealing to students than *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Dr Chung always held high aspirations and concentrated on his goals. Cultivating talent instead of seeking wealth, he had a cosmopolitan outlook, and treated students like his own sons and daughters. Whenever he spoke, it was to speak of Lingnan, and all his thoughts were of Lingnan. His plans were all for the benefit of Lingnan. In the words of the proverb, "All roads lead to Rome." This sums up Dr Chung. Sun Fo, Chairman of the Board of Directors, once declared that Dr Chung's talent and wisdom surpassed that of others. He was more intelligent and qualified and his achievements as Lingnan's leader were remarkable! But he had only a local reputation; he was not nationally known. This was because he concentrated on Lingnan, without concern for other matters. Only Lingnan existed in his mind. Because Dr Chung was so sure of himself, he frequently met with opposition. For example, his order that three thousand graves should be moved for Lingnan, with compensation payments made to the families concerned, was strongly supported by the provincial governor, Chu Hing-lan. Despite this, a

gathering of villagers loudly vented local indignation like roaring waves, and villagers even fired into the campus with guns. Another example was the two stone lions flanking the entrance of Martin Hall. They had been abandoned relics left over from the demolition of the Guangzhou city wall. With great effort, Dr Chung had them carried to Lingnan. In addition, he extended Lingnan's network of ties as a way to establish sources of students meeting the criteria for admission, and kept in contact with former students working in the commercial sector and in government posts so as to increase financial support for Lingnan. He expended unstinting energy in all these activities.

Dr Chung was especially good at fundraising. His remarkable effectiveness could be seen and heard. At one point in Lingnan's history, Acting Provost Henry Graybill reported to the Lingnan Trustees in New York, "Dr Chung's superhuman ability can transform a hillock into Mount Tai." Looking back, we recall that Lingnan University was on the verge of bankruptcy many times, for instance when the value of the United States currency fell during the First World War, and later when the administration of Lingnan was transferred to Chinese hands during a period of growth. During each of these periods, Dr Chung was able to overcome crisis by practising a variety of fundraising techniques.

Yeung Wah-yat remembers that while he was in Nanjing, he observed that Dr Chung, accompanied by his personal secretary and former

student Mr Hung Kwan, stayed in a hotel for a long period while seeking an allocation of funds from the central government. When he accomplished his mission, Dr Chung was jubilant. Mr Yeung asked, “Teacher, your fundraising manner has become well-known. But I would like to know, how do you find so much courage when you are asking strangers for money?” His answer was, “My fundraising is for a righteous cause, so it is not I who asks; rather it is the donor who asks me to accept. I have given face to people; if they chose not to give face to me, then it does not affect my position. Therefore others should feel ashamed, not I.”

During the early period, Dr Chung travelled to the United States on a fundraising tour. Lingnan graduates Benson Fong and Tang Tso-yum, his fellow natives of the Four Districts, took Dr Chung by car to distant places and introduced him in restaurants, laundries, marketplaces, and on farms. Everywhere the overseas Chinese waved to him, saying, “Oh Dr Chung, you have come again!” They would open their savings boxes and donate their few hard-earned gold coins. Dr Chung would also encourage them with kind words, inspiring them with the prospect of Lingnan University’s emphasis on education for the overseas Chinese, a heritage for the benefit of future generations of Chinese sojourning abroad.

Dr Chung was a broad-minded visionary. He was not only concerned

about the Chinese nation, but about all humanity. He did not pay much attention to clan or village associations. If someone asked him, “What is your native place?” he would always answer, “China.”

Alumnus Chiu Koon-hoi relates that Dr Chung’s answer had an ethical point, saying that “Although people have the five relationships, the most important ones are actually between man and God, man and man, and man and goods.” Dr Chung never referred to his age and did not celebrate his birthday. He was always discreet about his age so that no one knew what it was. According to Tsang Chiu-sam, at a wedding party for Ngai Pang-p’ing’s daughter on January 8, 1941, at which the bride and bridegroom were both his students, Dr Chung revealed that he was the same age as Dr Sun Yat-sen, born two months later in the same year. That would make him seventy-five years old on September 7 that year. Mr Tsang proposed a birthday celebration, but Dr Chung protested, “No, no, please no! At that time I will not be in Hong Kong. I will be in Chongqing to attend the meeting of the Consultative Assembly.”

Although Dr Chung was strict in business matters, he had a good sense of humour. He had a song about his noon-time naps, “At noon I sleep for fifteen minutes. If someone knocks on the door, I will not get up. Don’t blame me for being impolite! I need to see the Duke of Zhou before I can see anyone else.” When staying at the Kowloon Hotel, he composed this couplet: “A first-rate Chinese, a second-rate foreigner,

three meals a day and two teas!” He also taught the servants an easy way to remember characters, “A master of all trades, two persons with the same heart, three men at a crossroads, clothing for four seasons, a five-generation family, a six-nations gathering to swear in the premiers, seven stars accompanying the moon, majesty radiant in eight directions, nine dragons playing with pearls, and a bountiful tenfold harvest.” Dr Chung energetically promoted the Lingnan Agricultural University, and made fun of himself, saying, “Lingnan students have the nickname “Lingnan Oxen.” The True Light Girls’ School has the nickname “True Light Pigs.” Now oxen and pigs are coming, filling up our buildings. Without a College of Agriculture, then how can this be?”

Dr Chung was open-minded and extraordinarily tolerant. During the early days, when the school was still occupying wooden bungalows, alumnus Lau Tai-chee borrowed a rare manuscript of Guangzhou from Dr Chung. Accidentally, he stained it with ink. He was very embarrassed about this, but Dr Chung smilingly excused him, saying, “Sooner or later, this book will be worn out in any case, so why worry about it!” Another example is that when he served in the provincial Bureau of Education, and was attending a meeting on provincial affairs, someone placed an anonymous note in his seat which read, “Dr Chung should immediately resign!” Dr Chung simply pocketed the note without any sign of unease. At one point in the history of Lingnan an invitation to the monthly lecture was sent by mistake to middle school students.

When the students came to the lecture they were asked to leave. The students then got into a dispute with the Chairman of the event, Professor Brownell. Dr Chung then invited the class representatives, Y. W. Lee and others, to visit him at Blackstone Lodge and asked for their magnanimous forgiveness of the foreign teacher. Every one of the students was moved by this, and agreed that the matter was resolved.

Dr Chung lived to be seventy-six years of age, devoting himself to university affairs for forty years. He respected and praised virtue and emphasized learning. He pardoned minor lapses and recognized those with ability. After his death, his living quarters in Blackstone Lodge were full of his books but his own writings were scarce. When Dr Chung retired because of poor health in 1937, and went to Lushan to recuperate, Y. M. Lin asked him to take the time to write his memoirs for the benefit of later generations. Dr Chung replied “All my life I have lived by deed rather than by word. I kept a diary for more than forty years, however, and this would be adequate material for the basis of a memoir. I once composed a set of couplets to describe myself, which I can now let you see ahead of time. Although they are just a few words, these fully describe my life’s journey and display my ideas.”

“For thirty years I was mired in the imperial examination system. Since confessing my sins as a Christian convert, I have been a revolutionary, but have received no citations. I have also been a government official,

but served without distinction. I studied abroad but received no diploma. My talent and ability have always been inferior to others'. My sole contribution has been to give my best to Lingnan until my dying day.

I have become accustomed to travelling between the two hemispheres, taking satisfaction in the accomplishment of each of my missions. Without gaining a personal fortune, I have enough for my daily needs. I have raised no children, but have had many students. I have not sought fame, but have composed my memoirs. My true self lies in my soul and I have undergone many trials. All glory belongs to Christ everlasting!"

Later as the War of Resistance against Japan intensified, a large bundle of Dr Chung's manuscripts was delivered to a place for safekeeping. But the manuscripts were lost after the landing of the Japanese forces and the fall of Guangzhou. As has been said, "His talents speak for themselves by the path beaten toward his door." This describes President Chung Wing Kwong of Lingnan University!