

Chapter Twelve

Assuming the leadership of Lingnan University (1927-1937)

Lingnan University encountered difficulties in consequence of the large-scale “anti-imperialist and anti-Christian” labour movement. The special study commission sent by the Board of Trustees in New York, as described above, set to work with urgency after arriving in China. Its members met frequently with Lingnan’s alumni advisory committee. After three weeks, they drafted a report and received permission to proceed from the Board of Trustees.

On recommendations of the special study commission, July 1, 1927 was set as the date on which representatives from the United States would transfer responsibilities to a Chinese administration, and the name of the institution in English would be changed formally from the Canton Christian College to Lingnan University. In addition, a Chinese person would be selected to fill the position of President. Educational work would continue in order to complete registration of the college in compliance with the government of China’s regulations. The highest

decision-making body of the college would be newly organized as two legal entities. One entity would be a Board of Directors established in China. It would assume responsibility for the college's regular operations and handle all financial matters related to the Chinese teaching staff. The second entity was the Board of Trustees in the United States (originally based in New York). It would assume all responsibilities related to the Western teaching staff, maintaining the size of the staff at its former level. According to the stipulated terms, management rights over the existing campus property and other physical assets of the college, excluding farmland, would be leased for an annual sum of one yuan to the Board of Directors in China. The Board of Directors would be composed of a majority of Chinese members.

Dr Chung Wing Kwong was selected as the most suitable Chinese candidate to fill the position of President of Lingnan University. Because Dr Chung was busy with fund-raising work and public relations, it was necessary to appoint a Chinese Vice President as well, who would be actually in charge of administering the university. Mr Lei Ying-lam, General Secretary of the Guangzhou YMCA, was chosen as the ideal candidate for this position. At the same time, the Lingnan Foundation in New York posted a Trustee to the Lingnan campus to serve as Provost. In Chinese, this representative was referred to as an advisor, while in English he was called "Provost." Dr James Henry was chosen as the appropriate candidate. After these matters had been decided, Lei

Ying-lam was invited to begin by spending a portion of his time at the university before July 1, in order to familiarize himself with the situation.

Dr Chung thus became the designated President of Lingnan University. His formal inauguration was delayed on the grounds that the labor unrest situation should be settled first. Later, with sincere urging from all sides, on August 1 he assumed his post at last on August 1. At the inauguration ceremony, the lawyer Tsin Shue Fan delivered a welcoming address, representing the Lingnan alumni advisory committee. After former Provost Henry personally handed over the university's official seals together with a complete inventory of the university's assets to Dr Chung, the new President, the ceremony came to a close.

In 1927, the Lingnan Foundation in New York received a grant of US \$120,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation through the efforts of Dr Edmunds. This fulfilled the terms of a cooperative agreement according to which the Rockefeller Foundation set aside US \$1,730,000, from which one dollar would be donated for every three dollars that Lingnan University succeeded in raising from other sources. In addition, Mr Charles M. Hall, the discoverer of an aluminum-production process, had established a restricted fund of about \$700,000 at the Harvard-Yenching Institute, stipulating that Lingnan would receive the interest on \$300,000 of this fund.

After Dr Chung became President of Lingnan University, he first organized the new Board of Directors. The following persons became Directors: Sun Fo, Kam Tsang Ching, Lei Yuk-tong, Ma Ying-piu, Tse Tsok-kai, Chan Chau-on, Lei Sing Kui, Lam Woo, Y. M. Lin, Wong Kai-ming, Fok Liu Feng-yan, Kwok Lam Shung, Tsin Shue Fan, W. W. Comfort, Charles K. Edmunds, Stewart J. Kunkle, and Ralph L. Watts. Dr Chung also served concurrently as a member of the Board. Thereafter, Lingnan University was registered with the Education Committee of Guangzhou in accordance with the regulations. Later, according to a new set of regulations, the Board was reorganized with a membership of fifteen Directors, including Tang Shaoyi and Kan Koam Tsing as new members.

Kam Tsang Ching, whose alternate name was Sheung Fan, was a native of the Panyu District of Guangdong. When he was young he studied in Japan, graduating from the Higher Normal Institute in Tokyo. He returned to China in the early Republican period, and became an inspector in the Bureau of Education. Later he was appointed as Dean of the Advanced Normal College in Guangzhou. He was a very warm and friendly man, with a scholarly air. He served successively as director of the Department of Education of Guangdong and as a member of the provincial Executive Council. Regarding the promotion of education in Guangdong, he had earned an excellent reputation. After becoming a member of the Lingnan Board of Directors, he made many contributions, and also had

the authority to act as Chairman of the Board on behalf of Sun Fo. He managed affairs in a smooth and orderly way.

The next stage of Dr Chung's work was to draw up the university's budget for the 1927-1928 year. The total budget was equivalent to US \$320,000. The Chinese administration was responsible for \$190,000 (this included tuition income), while the American Foundation was responsible for \$130,000. Reflecting the unsettled conditions of the time, Lingnan faced a budget deficit which was difficult to make up (tuition income shrank by about HK \$100,000). Nonetheless, Dr Chung received the government's profound regard and trust. The Guangdong government first allocated funds of 100,000 *yuan* to support the university's operation, further granted 60,000 *yuan*, and then provided a cash grant totaling 160,000 *yuan*. The next year, the government responded to a request for a further allocation of 100,000 *yuan*, which brought its total support to 260,000 *yuan* (equal to about US \$100,000 at the time). This was not all; the municipal government of Guangzhou also agreed to post city policemen to assume responsibility for Lingnan's security. This resulted in a savings of over 10,000 *yuan* annually for the university.

There were more than one thousand students altogether at Lingnan at this time, including the university-level, middle school, and primary-school levels and the Overseas Chinese School. The teaching staff

totaled two hundred Chinese and Western members, and there were twenty-four large faculty residences. The students' classes and numbers were as follows: there were two hundred students in the College of Arts and Science, forty students in the College of Agriculture, more than ten students in the vocational agricultural program, two hundred students in the college preparatory program, two hundred in the senior middle school, two hundred in the junior middle school, more than one hundred students in the primary school, and ninety students in the Overseas Chinese class. Teachers and students got along well together, and the teachers' influence was like gentle spring breezes and light rains sprinkling the seats of students, whose appreciation wafted up to the teaching platforms like mist.

China's new government was not stable at first. On July 1, 1926, the Nationalist Government at Guangzhou launched the Northern Expedition, occupying Wuhan. On April 18, 1927, the Central Standing Committee and the Nationalist Government Committee established the nation's capital at Nanjing. The government's departments and agencies were then established in the new capital and began to conduct their official duties. By the time they reached their full scale, it was the early spring of 1928.

Dr Chung left Lingnan in the summer of 1928. In his absence, Vice President Lei Ying-lam had signing authority in internal correspondence,

while external correspondence was co-signed by Chung and Lei. Dr Chung travelled northward alone to report for duty in his capacity as a member of the government's Standing Committee for Educational Administration. He was then appointed to serve as Director of the Central Bureau of Overseas Chinese Affairs. The Bureau was established in quarters on the Shanghai Bund, for the purpose of receiving and staying in contact with Overseas Chinese residing around the world and returning to China, and as a way of expressing from afar their homeland's good will and benevolent concern. The Bureau of Overseas Chinese Affairs was a free-standing two-storey building in the foreign style, with a spacious hall in the front portion of the building. The Director's private residence was located in an Italian apartment in the northern district of the city. The room was small and simply decorated, furnished with just a single desk and bed. Even when Dr Chung was a visitor away from his native region, he spared no time apart from managing public and private affairs for Guangdong. After finishing his daily work in Shanghai, he would say that he was going out for a stroll and then would paddle along the city's Huangpu River. He would watch the rising and falling tides of politics, observing those who likewise rose and fell. He did not know when he would be able to bid farewell to high appointment and return to his former pursuits.

In early February, 1929, at Lingnan, Vice President Lei Ying-lam and Academic Dean Clinton Laird held a two-day retreat for the entire

faculty in Dean Laird's residence. At the retreat, four principles of Lingnan's educational vision and direction were defined. The University was: 1) private by nature, 2) Christian, 3) international, and 4) Chinese. At the same time, six facts were stated, namely, 1) Lingnan's faculty numbered over one hundred members, and the staff numbered ninety-five. 2) The normal annual budget was close to HK \$100,000. 3) There were 224 students at the college level, but only twenty in the College of Agriculture. 4) After graduation, Lingnan's middle school students would stream northward to Beijing and Shanghai to continue their studies because the costs were low and educational programs were complete. In comparison, the cost of a year's study at Lingnan, tuition, lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses would add up to 600 yuan (though for each student an additional cost of about 2,000 yuan was met by the university), and therefore it seemed to them that Lingnan had become too expensive. 5) There was a lack of communication and understanding among the members of the teaching staff, and between teachers and students. 6) There had been a steady decline in the numbers attending the religious services on Wednesdays and Sundays, and for a long time there had been no "harvest" ceremony for new converts. Passing on these principles and facts, the assembly at the retreat then presented its general opinion to Lingnan's Board of Directors, suggesting urgent reforms. Five methods were proposed: 1) Reduction of tuition fees, 2) The establishment of additional bursaries. 3) Increased recruitment to the middle school. 4) Strengthening the

two-year college preparatory program to replace the freshman college year. 5) Expansion of the library.

When the Board of Directors met in March, Vice President Lei made statements explaining the points one by one. Nonetheless, they were not accepted. The Board's view was that current phenomena were temporary and there was no need to make a series of changes. The Board resolved, however, to increase the number of tuition-free scholarships and also planned to separate the middle school from the college, choosing a location to establish it independently, to set up branches of Lingnan University, and to keep in close contact with the other Christian middle schools. The questions would all be discussed further after a review.

At this point, Lei Ying-lam resigned from his post as Vice President, returning to his position as General Secretary of the Guangzhou YMCA. Dr Chung was required to return to Lingnan to take up management and administrative work in person. His reputation had become more exalted every year, and in the same year, 1929, St. John's University in Shanghai had conferred upon him an honorary Doctor of Laws. At this time, Dr Chung sent telegrams to invite Chan Wing-tsit, a Harvard PhD, and Ng Pak-shing, who had earned a PhD in Political Science at the University of Chicago (both were Lingnan alumni) to return to China to serve as secretaries to assist him.

At this time the National Government at Nanjing had strengthened its organization, and established a new Ministry of Railways. Discussions were held on the use of returned Boxer Indemnity funds together with foreign investments. A schedule was set for the completion of east-west and north-south railway lines across the country. Sun Fo (Sun Ke), Chairman of the Lingnan Board of Directors, received an appointment in Nanjing as Minister of Railways for the purpose of implementing the scheme for national construction drafted by President Sun Yat-sen. At the same time, in the field of education, the Ministry of Education determined that the establishment of a university would require the inclusion of at least three colleges. Within each college there should be three departments and each department should offer a full program of courses. Degrees and diplomas would be conferred and issued directly by the Ministry, and it would regularly supervise and conduct inspections of schools. Foreign languages could not be used for instruction at the middle school level and below, nor could foreign-language text books be used. English must be treated as a separate course of instruction.

In April 1929, because it was necessary for Dr Chung to return south to manage affairs at Lingnan, he resigned from his position as Director of the Bureau of Overseas Chinese Affairs and moved to reside in the Central Hotel in Nanjing. He had close contact with Board Director Sun Fo and held useful discussions with him on the

expansion and maintenance of Lingnan University. When Sun Fo served as Minister of Railways, a number of Lingnan graduates were his colleagues in the Ministry. Lingnanners were also members of the Railway Construction Committees established for each railway across the country and members of the Capital Construction Committee. In the Ministry, Yeung Wah Yat served as Secretary, Wu Kai-yin headed a department, Chan Chau-on was a manager, Tang Tze Hung was a superintendent, and Wong Tze Kwan, Chau Chung Kee, Chung Kai-cheung, H.L. Wu, Cheung Hing Ying, were all bureau directors for the various railways. Chau Man Kong was a secretary, and Lei Kuen Heng and Mui Fook Keung were chief engineers. Y. M. Lin was Chairman of the Capital Construction Committee and served concurrently as Director of the Bureau of Design. Sun Fo had a deep appreciation of Lingnan's successful establishment as a well-run institution with great academic achievements. Also, because skilled personnel were urgently needed for the national railway program, Sun Fo generously offered his full support, asking Dr Chung to draft a statement of interest for an Engineering College at Lingnan that would accelerate the training of engineering personnel to meet the Ministry's needs, for submission at a meeting of the Ministry. After the meeting, a sum of 100,000 yuan was allocated for the construction of classrooms. Another resolution was passed for the provision of annual expenses.

Regarding the cooperation between the Ministry of Railways and

Lingnan University in founding the College of Engineering at Lingnan, the University Weekly stated: “The College of Engineering will establish a program of instruction in engineering to meet its primary goal of the training of technical specialists in railway and road construction. After discussing this project directly in Nanjing and raising full funding for it, Dr Chung has delegated alumnus Y. M. Lin to return to Guangdong in time to make a report to the Board of Directors. During the meeting the College of Engineering has been formally established, and scheduled to open next semester.” The Weekly also reported that the Canton-Hankow Railway Bureau had allocated annual expenses of 6,000 to the college, of which several instalments had already been paid.

In December 1929, the building plan for a College of Engineering, designed in Chinese palatial style, had been drawn up by architect Wong Yuk-yue, and the ground was broken for construction. The building was completed in 1931, and named “Zhesheng Hall.” The first and second groups of engineering students attended classes in this building. Many of the instructors were well-known specialists from the transportation sector, who had expert knowledge and rich experience. Then after three years, more than ten graduates had been recruited by the Pearl River Bureau of Water Works, the Guangdong Department of Reconstruction, the Bureau of Highways, and the Guangzhou Bureau of Public Works. In addition, the Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Canton-Hankow Railways sent letters inviting graduates to join them.

Sun Fo also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the China Educational and Cultural Foundation. Other members were Cai Yuanpei, Mei Yiqi, Hu Shi, Zhu Jiahua, and Dr Kendric N. Marshall. The Foundation was responsible for custody of the returned British and American Boxer Indemnity funds to be used for China's cultural and educational development. At this time, the Foundation received Dr Chung's application for funds to support research on the improvement of sericulture, and made a special allocation to the College of Agriculture at Lingnan of 30,000 yuan annually.

Dr Sun Yat-sen and his son Sun Zhesheng (Sun Fo) always had great affection for Lingnan University and were happy to provide their support. Earlier, on March 20, 1918, the school received the following letter from Sun Fo, secretary of the Commander-in-Chief's Office:

“I am instructed by Dr Sun to reply to your letter and to tell you of his great interest in your school and his appreciation of the excellent work that is being done in your College....(and a cheque for 2,000 yuan). Be assured that when the time comes, Dr Sun will do all he possibly can for this wonderful school which deserves all sympathy and aid, especially from our countrymen.”

In the winter of 1929, Railway Minister Sun Fo sent his sons Che-ping and Che-keung southward to study at the Lingnan Middle School. It is

clear that he felt great trust in Lingnan.

At the same time, the various Christian missions in Guangdong supported Lingnan University's pure endeavours and expanded its strength, demonstrating their confidence. They wished to transfer work that had been forced into suspension for management by Lingnan so as to avoid the complete abandonment of their past efforts. On September 4 of this year, it was accordingly announced that the Canton Hospital on the Bund would resume operations after its closure for several years following the strike of 1926. Large receptions were held to entertain various social circles. Shum Pang-fai, Acting President of Sun Yat-sen University, delivered a speech. Announcements stated that the hospital was "an international and religious charitable organization; although the property was privately owned, the hospital was fortunate in receiving the cooperation of colleagues, which continued to show its value day after day. In the past, President Sun Yat-sen spent his days as a medical student here, and when he was based in Guangdong as Commander-in-Chief, the hospital was used to handle the treatment of wounded soldiers. Its contributions were very significant. President Sun ordered a tract of land in Saichuen to be allocated to the hospital, which would be used for expansion and building a new hospital, and it also received an operating license from Sun Fo, formerly the Mayor of Guangzhou. The hospital will now be merged with Lingnan University, and is preparing to link up with Hackett Women's College Hospital. The date of September

4 has been set for the resumption of regular service to society through medicine as usual, and Dr Paul Todd and other renowned physicians have been hired as resident managers at the hospital.”

In the autumn of 1929, Dr Chung returned to Guangdong from Shanghai and resumed his duties. Clinton Laird and Henry C. Brownell representing the Lingnan faculty, and Mok Wai-yin, leader of the Students' Union, went together to Hong Kong to greet him. Before they departed, Mrs Chung privately gave 20 yuan to Mr Mok, asking him to take Dr Chung to purchase a new hat, because Dr Chung seldom paid attention to his clothing. For more than a decade Tak Cheong Tailors had kept his measurements, and by now his felt hat was worn out and should be replaced immediately. But once Dr Chung understood this, he just took the money and slipped it into his pocket, saying, “I have received an Honourary Doctorate of Laws at St. John's University in Shanghai, and was wearing an academic cap and gown. Why should I concern myself about a hat? It would be better for us to go to a restaurant and take a meal together.”

On September 19, 1929, on the occasion of Dr Chung's return to resume responsibilities as President of Lingnan, the entire student body assembled in a welcoming ceremony at Ten Friends Hall in the College of Agriculture. Professor To Shu-choi addressed the gathering. In his arrival speech, Dr Chung spoke the following apposite words: “Heaven

has bestowed us with arms and legs, with the intention that they be used in pursuit of careers, in order that we may help ourselves and help one another in our endeavours. At present, eighty-five out of every hundred persons in China are engaged in agriculture; it is clear that China is truly a nation founded on agriculture. It may seem that the number of students enrolled in our College of Agriculture is too small, and that only if primary school students are included is the number significant. Yet the quality of the vocational students must be taken into account. Thus although the College of Agriculture is only able to produce five specialists every year, or fifty specialists every ten years, nonetheless, if these fifty persons cooperate in concerted efforts, they will succeed in transforming agriculture in one province.

On December 6 of the same year, a large celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Lingnan's move to the Hong Lok site, newly established where farms and forest had been. Dr Chung had experienced the founding of the college in person, and therefore joined staff and students in holding an exciting two-day anniversary assembly. Bamboo scaffolds were erected in open spaces all across the campus and banners were attached to them. All sorts of games and competitions were taking place. At this time, a formal ceremony was held inaugurating Ten Friends Hall, where the College of Agriculture was housed, Lingnan's anniversary ceremony was carried out with great seriousness. At the same time, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for the construction

of Zhesheng Hall, the classroom building for the Engineering College. Many dignitaries from various circles and students' parents visited the campus to watch these activities and stroll around; altogether there were more than a thousand visitors.

Lei Chai-shum, the provincial chairman of Guangdong, was transferred to a post in Nanjing in 1929. Chan Ming-shue was appointed to fill the vacancy. Both were very popular among the people of Guangdong, and were also friends of Lingnan. No matter what the request, they were certain to help. Lei's two sons, Pui-kum and Pui-man, had at one time studied and taught at the school. Chan Ming-shue was even more respectful of Dr Chung, behaving like a humble student toward him. General Chan had once led a regiment of crack troops, full of valor and spirit and marching in perfect order, on an excursion to the campus. Sitting still in rows outside Swasey Hall, the soldiers listened without a murmur as General Chan invited Dr Chung to address them in a pep talk. In the winter of 1930, General Chan visited Lingnan once again, giving a speech in which he explained in detail the merits of the reduction in size of administrative districts. After this, when armies were mobilized to resist the Japanese invasion, the troops that fought in the campaigns in Shanghai in January 1932, heroically sacrificing their lives under the leadership of the 19th Route Army, were troops trained by Chan Ming-shue.

In the early years, Lingnan students began to carry out military drill on their own, with the instruction of an instructor named Iu Koon-shun. Later, the government sent an instructor in military training to take charge. The brave and high-spirited students of the red and gray were truly forerunners in this regard. Although there were no high-ranking officers among the students of Lingnan, nonetheless numerous Lingnan alumni pursued military studies in China and abroad, participating in the war as officers in the army, navy and air force, including Chan Tung Chong, Lei Man-hin, Lei Shue Chee, Lau Iu-wan, Auyeung Lim, Lo Wing-tit, Henry Hsu, and Cheng man-kit. In addition, among those serving in leading positions in the Central News Agency were Lo Kei-sun, Iu Sai-fan, and Ying Yee-kuen.