

Foreword

As I look at history, from ancient to contemporary times, down through time and across space, both in China and abroad, I am aware that the strength of a nation is not dependent on whether its territory is wide or narrow, on whether it is populous or not, on whether its geographic endowments are favourable or challenging, or on how sharp its weapons may be. The principal element is the level of its educational development. If education is not in a healthy state, then the people will be helpless and confused. No matter what the strength of arms, the challenges of environment, the size of population, and the extent of territory, all would then be useless. How could a great power arise?

After our nation came under the rule of the Manchu Aisingoro clan, a constraining form of education was promoted. Until the end of the last century, the eight-legged essay was used to select civil servants, with the purpose of keeping the people ignorant and docile. Thus our nation's circumstances became perilous, with increasing humiliations at the hands of the foreign powers, until the revolutionary movement arose. Therefore to avoid this fate, is it not important to pay attention to the proper methods of educating the people?

President Chung Wing Kwong, with his singular and far-sighted illuminating vision, took on an ambitious educational project at the beginning of the twentieth century. He collaborated with associates from friendly nations to establish Ling Naam Hok Tong at its site in Honam in Guangzhou. With its grand scale and a comprehensive curriculum, the reputation of the school has grown more splendid ever since, spreading throughout southern China. Students consider admission to Lingnan to be the highest of honours. It was because of the revolution that my uncle Lam Woo became acquainted early on with Dr Chung. My uncle personally accompanied me from Hong Kong to the Bureau of Education in Guangzhou for an appointment with Dr Chung. I saw that Dr Chung was kind and amiable and had many encouraging words. In this way, I began the first stage of my studies at Lingnan.

Dr Chung became President of Lingnan University in 1927, and the university's Board of Directors was formed at the same time. Although he was busy with many matters, he honoured me with a visit to my residence, to tell me that Lingnan's financial affairs could not indefinitely rely solely on foreign support. He said that Lingnanners should shoulder responsibilities, and persuaded me to serve as a Director. Thereafter I was frequently in touch with Dr Chung in connection with Lingnan affairs. I observed his great integrity of character and his extensive and deep intellectual attainments. His ideas and reflections were far-reaching—in his every word and deed, there

was nothing that was not respected by his successors. For instance, regarding the choice of a site for the university's new campus, the establishment of the university's buildings, and total annual operating expenses, all matters that the Directors felt were difficult to finance, Dr Chung was always optimistic, saying "Education is a national and community enterprise — if it is managed well then the funds will be attracted." The realization of his expectations year after year can only be attributed to Dr Chung's far-sightedness.

In 1937 Dr Chung became President Emeritus on account of his age. Afraid that his lifetime of merit would vanish, I asked him to compose an autobiography to be passed on to future generations. Dr Chung said "Throughout my life, I have not sought fame and profit; I have kept a journal for only about ten years. Now that I am passing on the post of President, I will use my leisure time to organize my notes from past years. Someday they may be stored at the university or used for publication." Unfortunately, because of the Japanese occupation of Guangzhou, Dr Chung's Lingnan memoir was lost. Earlier, the Lingnan Alumni General Association had proposed a biography of Dr Chung, but because of political changes this was not accomplished. I also approached senior alumni asking them to edit the work, but each one humbly declined. They declared that they were not up to the task of writing about such a great man; having insufficient knowledge of his many achievements, they dared not assume such an important responsibility.

In 1966, the New York Trustees of Lingnan University provided funding to the Chinese University of Hong Kong for establishment of the Lingnan Institute of Business Administration. As a representative of the Trustees, I attended an inauguration ceremony which coincided with the centenary of Dr Chung's birth. The twenty-fifth anniversary of his death had already passed, his former students were growing fewer, and a biography of Dr Chung was still lacking. Fearing that those who knew him would become even fewer, I suggested to the Lingnan Alumni Association of Hong Kong that a "Chung Wing Kwong Biography Editorial Committee" should be formed. This motion was passed unanimously by the Association, and I was nominated together with Tso Iu, as Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee respectively. However, because I resided in the United States for much of the time, I was unable to oversee the matter. Thus all the business was left in the hands of Tso Iu, who took charge of arrangements for publication of the biography. Each of the committee members contributed a great deal. Moreover, our fellow alumnus Yeung Wah-yat generously agreed to serve as general editor. Thereafter we began to gather information about Dr Chung's deeds. For instance, we paid individual visits to his ninety-nine year old fellow degree-holder from the civil service examinations, Mr Lo Hsieng-fu, as well as to his eighty-six year-old former colleague Tang Suen of the Guangdong Educational Bureau and his fellow villager Mr Yuan Tai. We also collected material from Lingnan alumni. We paid personal visits to those who were nearby while corresponding with those

further away. Within one hundred days, the task was thus accomplished. We then arranged the material in an orderly fashion, creating a large volume. As a result, Dr Chung's entire life, as lived in word and in deed "for God, for Country, and for Lingnan," has been recorded permanently for the benefit of a hundred future generations. This is the book that has been long awaited not only by Lingnan alumni, but will also serve as a mirror for those interested in educational enterprises.

Ah! As a scholar, Confucius set up a teaching platform between the streams of Zhu and Si. He has been honoured as a humble king for innumerable generations. As a Christian, Dr Chung created Lingnan, building the school at the Honglok site. Our generation regards him as our spiritual leader. The educational contributions of both these teachers have nurtured heavenly transformations, competing in brilliance with the sun and moon.

Y. M. Lin, Xinhui, 1967