

Chapter Three

Turning over a new leaf (1898-1900)

Looking back beyond the turn of the twentieth century, we see that the Presbyterian Foreign Mission of the United States sent Dr A. P. Happer to China to spread the Gospel through medical and educational work. He went first to Guangzhou, but because of difficult circumstances there, was only able to operate a provisional primary school in Macao. He then opened a clinic and Gospel Hall in Guangzhou. This took place in 1844. Dr Happer made a second visit to China in 1881. He then opened a school at Fati in Guangzhou. Eighty students were enrolled, including four American-born Chinese children. Everything remained rudimentary.

Up until 1884, Dr Happer's dream was to found a college in China. His colleague Reverend B. C. Henry completely supported the idea. It was unclear, however, whether the college would be located in northern, central, or southern China. Because each location would have both

advantages and disadvantages, it was difficult to make a decision. During the stage of conducting surveys and making plans, a petition was presented to the Presbyterian Church in New York by more than four hundred of Guangdong's notable public figures, led by Lee Wing Cheung and Chan Tsz-kiu (the father of Chan Shiu-paak). Extending a warm welcome, the dignitaries declared that the college ought to be founded in Guangzhou. In view of the ardent request by local people, and with the support of Wing Yung, supervisor of Chinese students in the United States, and Mr J. Russell Young, former United States envoy to China, in 1892 it was decided that Guangzhou would be the college's location. The college was named Canton Christian College.

As stated by the Presbyterian Foreign Mission, the purpose of the school was as follows:

“The college must be based on economic realities, on common sense in business and management, on political circumstances and social consensus. It will be also the realization of an ideal, however. It will extend understanding and sympathy among humanity, and achieve learning while maintaining the faith.

“The school must provide training in all the subjects of western learning and training in English, the medium in which the learning will be transmitted.

“The object of the proposed Christian college is to raise up educated men to be Christian ministers, teachers, and physicians, as well as for every other calling in life, by teaching western science, medicine, and religion. (See Charles H. Corbett, *Lingnan University* (1963), page 11)

In 1893, Reverend B. C. Henry succeeded to the post of Provost of the College. He was an earnest evangelist for whom education was a secondary concern. Because of the environment, economic difficulties, and concerns about the recruitment of students, the college was merged for a time with Pui-ying College. For a six-year period, there were two departments, one for Sciences and the other for Religion. Chan Shiu-paak was one of the first students to enroll. Because Pui-ying emphasized religion while Lingnan emphasized science, in 1899 Oscar F. Wisner adjusted to the circumstances by separating the two schools once again, re-establishing the Canton Christian College in Sipailou and changing its name in Chinese. At this time, there were only seventeen preparatory students, but the next year the school was thoroughly reorganized and strengthened, for instance with the appointments of Dr Andrew H. Wood in medicine and Mr Clancy M. Lewis, an engineer.

Because of the disturbances of the Boxer movement in North China, with its anti-foreign slogans and widespread destruction and death, every province was shaken and foreigners were panicking as their endeavours faced a crisis. Because the Canton Christian College was operated by

foreigners, it then experienced a torturous period of constant turmoil, going through frequent changes of location, even making several moves in a single day.

Long before the occupation of Beijing by the forces of an eight-nation alliance, an upstanding young man named Chung Wing Kwong made his own assessment of the situation in 1898 in Guangzhou. He was convinced that if he did not make conscientious efforts, he would simply crumble like grass and wood. He then became determined to do something purposeful, to purify his heart and change his attitude. He wished to follow a new path, aiming at a new goal with a new faith, and rising above the filth and mire in order to find his own orientation. Consequently, he made the decision to believe in Jesus Christ, cutting his queue and abandoning the Manchu style of clothing. He dismissed his maids and concubine, gave up all vices, and distanced himself from all criminal behaviour. Because Mr Chung was frequently coming and going between the Canton Christian College and the Canton Hospital during this time, he became acquainted with Christians and ministers such as Liu Tak-san, Tso Tou-san, Au Fung-che, and Yeung Sheung-po. They pursued truth night and day. Chung gained a deep belief in Jesus Christ as the light of the world, and in his sacrifice in crucifixion to atone for the sins of humans and ensure their resurrection. Therefore in 1899 he made a trip to the To Tsai (Daojihui) Church in Hong Kong to seek baptism from Reverend Wong Kuk-cho and thus become a

Christian. At the same time he talked about his innermost thoughts and feelings with Reverend J. W. Pearce and Reverend Cheung Chuk-ling. Thereafter, Mr Chung felt great delight and newfound spirit. He was admitted to studies at the Canton Christian College, beginning to study English. At about the same time, the Chinese name of the college was changed to Ling Naam Hok Tong. In 1905, Chung Wing Kwong was a member of the school's second graduating middle-school preparatory class. He was already thirty-nine years of age!

After his baptism as a Christian convert, at a church service one Sunday, Mr Chung went to the pulpit and declared that he would like to make an announcement. He then stated, "Today I have separated from my concubine Teng Chu-yi. I have given her complete freedom and assumed full responsibility for her living expenses and education." Teng Chu-yi studied at the Lutheran School in Guangzhou and received training as a midwife. She later married and raised a family. One day more than twenty years later, Mr Chung heard that a girl had come to visit him. The girl claimed that her mother Teng Chu-yi had passed away, and had asked Mr Chung to act as a guarantor of her mother's will so that she could make a life insurance claim. This incident was the further good result of Mr Chung's admirable recognition of human rights and freedom.

At first, Mr Chung was one of a dozen students at Ling Naam Hok Tong,

but was a teacher as well as a student. He held the position of chief instructor in Chinese. In the middle school system, there were at first a general studies program and a four-year college preparatory program. As everything remained in a rudimentary state, the school had not yet gained a reputation. But thanks to his reputation, after “Chung *juren*” joined the school, it gradually won the respect of literati and the public, and they became eager to send their sons and brothers to study there. Meanwhile, because the Western leaders of the school made use of Mr Chung’s role as a bridge between cultures of East and West, everything went smoothly.

Among the students, Sz Kin-yue came from a prominent clan in Guangdong. He was ambitious from a young age, and passionate about national affairs. He secretly joined the Revolutionary Party, in the hope of serving the revolution. Although his family and Mr Chung loved Sz very much, no one could stop him. After careful consideration, Sz Kin-yue secretly purchased dynamite and dug a tunnel beneath the rear wall of the Viceroy’s government house with the intention of assassinating De Shou, the Manchu Viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, and destroying the building. But it happened the explosion was only minor, and Sz was arrested when he returned to the site to take a look. After President Wisner and Mr Chung Wing Kwong made several unsuccessful efforts to save his life, Sz was sentenced to death and executed. He was one of Lingnan’s early revolutionary martyrs, and truly a part of Lingnan’s

glorious history. At this time the Boxer movement was reaching the peak of its turbulence. Taking the view that the church-affiliated schools were letting their students run wild, the newly appointed Viceroy Li Hung-chang wished to restrict their activities. The college thus seemed to lose its footing; its future was uncertain.

At this critical moment, Mr Chung suggested that the Canton Christian College should seek refuge in Macao to avoid danger. Mr Chung's father asked him to take his family to Macao first to settle down there. Chung then chose Holland Garden and Chang Garden as the school's location. There was a public drill field nearby. Because Mr Lewis was a strong advocate of physical exercise, he set up a cadet corps to practice military drills, and organized a football league together with local Chinese and Portuguese nationals. Other exercises such as routines using dumb-bells were also practised in unison, and whenever the students performed they received thunderous applause. Thus even in their time as refugees, the Lingnan students still felt that their daily lives were full of interest.

At this time, an outstanding teacher from Xinhui named Chan Tsz-bo was operating a school in a neighbouring street; he had long been well-regarded. He and Mr Chung were old acquaintances and laid a foundation for cooperation. Thereafter, Mr Chung would always extend an invitation to Mr Chan to visit Lingnan during the summer vacation to

give lessons in Chinese. Later, most of the Chinese teachers at Lingnan were recommended by Mr Chan, who thus served like Lingnan's right hand, raising the students' level of proficiency in Chinese. Chan Tsap-ng, Chan Chung-wai, Au Long-yeuk, Chan Tak-wan, Au Lai-chow, Chan King-tu, Chan Yee-lun, and Chang Pak-ying were all teachers whom he had recommended. Chan Tsz-bo's students also naturally entered Ling Naam Hok Tong, including Sin Yuk-ch'ing, Chow Man-kong, Kan Kaom Tsing, Lei Ying-lam, Cheng Yun-tin, Chan Shiu-cheung, Chan Shiu-kun, Cheng Bing-kwong, Yeung Wai-kei, Cheuk Sin-woon, Lei Yuk-man, Chu Show-hang, and Yeung Wah-yat.

At this time, the Qing government's weaknesses had become fully apparent. Sun Yat-sen was promoting the revolutionary cause in Japan, and raising funds for military payroll. Students in China were dissatisfied with the status quo under Qing dynastic rule. At the Nanyang Public School in Shanghai students went on strike as a political protest. Because Dr Chung had already dedicated his life to the field of education, and was convinced that education would prove to be the right path to national salvation and reform in the long term, he was determined as a result to devote himself with each thought and deed to no purpose other than the cultivation of talent on behalf of the nation. Thereafter each and every one of his actions was undertaken in the interest of Lingnan. He was unwilling to let students take part directly in political activities. Was it not the responsibility of students to concentrate on studying?