

Chapter Four

Devotion to Ling Naam Hok Tong (1901-1910)

In Dr Chung's view, there was no higher ideal than to serve as a Christian in a Christian university. He thus devoted himself wholeheartedly to this goal and the school became his second home. He gradually adapted himself to assume greater responsibilities in a foreign-founded Chinese institution. Provost Oscar Wisner from the United States showed great appreciation of Dr Chung's abilities. In all matters of "social relations," Reverend Wisner would invariably first consult Dr Chung, relying closely on his assistance.

When Ling Naam Hok Tong moved from Macao back to Guangzhou in 1904, the school was vigorously making long-term plans. Dr Chung guided Reverend Wisner in looking for a site for the school. Finally, with the help of Lau Tze-wai, a well-known dentist in Guangzhou, the location in Honglok in Honam was chosen as a permanent site. It was chosen because its distance from the busy city would place vices and

bad habits out of young people's reach, and because the campus lay on a height above the Pearl River, where the breezes were cool and the air was clear, so that teachers and students would enjoy a pleasant environment, living together like a large family. As a result, when parents came to enroll their children as boarders at the school and saw the lovely environment, they would relax and feel at ease despite the difficult separation from their young ones.

After students entered the school, their housing, their meals, and their studies were all provided and administered by the school. A teacher was assigned to each class as an advisor. If the teacher had a family with him, he would often invite the students to his home for meals, which would cultivate good feelings and deepen acquaintance among students and teachers. As a result, a joyful and harmonious atmosphere prevailed at the school. The school also accepted girls as students at an early stage. This was also because a few teachers brought their own children along to their classes, thus setting an example for others to follow. Chung Wing-chun, Chung Wai-ha, Yeung Wai-kei, Liu Fung-hin, Liu Fung-yan, Y. Y. Moy, Chan Kwei-han, and Law Yau-tsit all were female students during the early history of Lingnan. For convenience in caring for them, the girl students were all accommodated in the Chung's bungalow. A small path was specially designated for the girls to follow as they walked to their classes and back. Because the coeducational trend had not yet been accepted at that time, it was important to take care to avoid

mockery from society about permitting boys and girls to mix together.

The students' way of life at the school was very well-disciplined. Everything was uniform without exception and unified into a coherent whole. Wake-up time was at six in the morning. The students would perform light exercises and then take breakfast. Classes would begin at eight o'clock. Unless a general assembly was held, there were four lessons every morning. Classes resumed at two o'clock and there were three lessons every afternoon. After classes, there were drills and ball games or various other sports, and also marching band practices. After dinner, from half-past seven to half-past nine, students would study on their own. At ten in the evening the lights were turned off, as signaled by a bugle call as in an army barracks. Whenever the students were preparing for a parade, there would be inspections on Fridays. If they wished to leave the campus during the weekend, students were required to wear smart-looking school uniforms, which were different in summer and winter. Students were posted in turns at the main gate of the campus and at the general office of the school. In each place there was always a student on duty who would be wearing a red sash, and was responsible for assisting the gatekeeper. Visitors were invariably impressed by the earnest attitude of the students on duty at the gate.

Ling Naam Hok Tong first purchased land in the village of Hong Lok. The campus spread out gradually from that point, with the addition

of property purchased at different times from the villages of Ng-tsun, Kak-san, Fung-wong (Phoenix), and Ha-dou. The land varied in type; some was farmland and some was brush. There were graves on some parts while others were uncultivated. The school employed a broker to negotiate the prices for pieces of land of uneven shapes. Thus the land was put together piece by piece. By the time the school moved to the site, two hundred *mu* had been purchased. The school's extremely capable general staff person, Mr Ho Chau-shue, was busy going to and fro in negotiations for land purchases. On the grounds that some villagers opposed the invasion of outside influences, a few owners declined the school's purchase offers. This aroused controversy about the sale of land to the school, and a conflict eventually occurred. In an incident in 1905, gunshots and bullets whistled above, causing a moment of needless panic.

At first the school's buildings consisted of only two temporary wooden bungalows, one on the south and one on the north, serving as a residence for the teachers and as a classroom building. There were only sixty-one students at the time. Szeto Wai graduated from the middle school in 1908, and was appointed to open the primary school for the convenience of the children of the teaching staff. Later, there were also many day-school students. For example, Chan King-wah, head of the Bureau of Police, later sent his daughter to the school.

During these few years, Ling Naam Hok Tong gained many teaching staff, all of whom were earnest and erudite. Among the staff from the United States, were the Mathematics teacher Mr O. E. Pomeroy, the instructor in English Mr O. D. Wannamaker, the Geography teacher C. G. Fuson, the education specialist Mr H.G. Graybill, the physicist Dr Charles K. Edmunds, and the botanist G. W. Groff. On the Chinese side, in addition to Chan Tsap-ng, there were Cheung Fung-chau, Chung Yu-chau, Chung Yan-cheun, and Chui Tung-yeuk. In addition, Lingnan also employed a physician, Dr Liu Tak-san, along with Mr Tsui Kum-tong. At the same time, the trustees in New York sent an architect, Mr O. W. Stoughton, to draft a survey of the boundaries and features of the Hong Lok site, so that plans could be made for housing and pathways on the campus, as a blueprint for construction work in the future.

Although there were not many students at the beginning, a few were truly outstanding and became well-known later on. For instance, in 1904 the government in Beijing selected twenty-seven students from among five hundred candidates in Guangdong, including the Ling Naam student Wong Ka-lun, who came in ninth place. As well, in January 1905 the first Guangdong Provincial Athletic Meet was held. Forty-seven schools participated, and the Ling Naam student Sun Hung was the overall champion, winning three prizes. In 1903, moreover, the collegiate program graduate Tsin Shue-fan went to the United States for doctoral studies in Law. There were also Chan Ting-gap,

who was the first student from China to enter the West Point Military Academy, and Ting Lap-hin, who was later a member of the Guangdong Provincial Assembly, as well as Yeung Yuen-kung, who became Governor of Guangxi Province, and Ko Kim-fu, who became a famous painter. Among the others were those who went on to study in the United States, returning to China after graduation, including Kwan Yan-cho who was the Principal of Pui Ying Middle School, Ng Hei-lui (H. L. Wu) who was the Chief Structural Engineer for Guangdong Province, along with Wong Kai-ming, who became the Principal of Pui Ching Middle School, and Lam Iu-cheung and Ng Pak-Luen, who were primary school principals. In addition, Liu Fung-hin became the Dean of Women of Lingnan University and Law Yau-tsit served as Principal of the True Light Girls' School. Thus they all became well-known.

The Lingnan student body was already organized at that time, and students displayed their abilities on certain occasions, as when students and teachers joined together in 1915 to build a swimming pool, twenty-five yards in length and ten yards wide, so as to avoid the hazards to health and safety of swimming in the river. In 1906, after the Russo-Japanese war, there was an anti-Chinese movement in California, and a student from Guangdong studying in the United States committed suicide. Another overseas Chinese jumped into the sea from his ship en route back to China. These incidents led to a boycott of goods imported from the United States, and the Lingnan students organized

a strike. In 1908, in response to flooding in the East, West, and North Rivers in Guangdong, people set up a charity bazaar in Laicheewan. There was then a very enthusiastic response from Lingnan students, who performed street shows to spread the news and offered their services at the bazaar. At that time the students organized a Cantonese opera performance with the name “Studying to Excel” (the phrase has a double meaning, alluding to successful studies leading to high rank as well as to traditional opera roles). There were only male roles, no female roles. One of their most famous acts portrayed Moses crossing the Red Sea. Although there was no traditional musical accompaniment to their performances, their costumes were formal and complete. The students’ singing was clear and refined. Famous actors participated, including Lui Sun-che, Szeto Yiu, and Che Hing-cheung, while Dr Chung served as the troupe’s general secretary, lending his ability to help save the flood victims from hunger and drowning.

In 1907, Dr Chung accompanied Reverend Wisner on a visit to Japan to attend the meeting of the World Federation of Christian Students. After the conference, they travelled to North China to survey educational matters. When they were passing through Tianjin, they visited Beiyang University, and afterward visited the Zhili provincial high school established in Baoding. During the trip, Dr Chung was suddenly arrested by the Tianjin police, who charged him with revolutionary activities, including conspiracy. Fortunately, the Guangdong gentrymen Chung

Shek-wong and Kong Hung-yan jointly sent a telegram requesting his release, while Tang Shaoyi, prominent official of the Cantonese native-place association of Beijing and Tianjin, Liang Shiyi, and Chan Chui-Sheung, circuit intendant of Shanhaiguan, spoke on his behalf. As a result, Governor-General Yuan Shikai ordered Dr Chung's release. He had been imprisoned from June 17 to July 22, a total of thirty-five days. While being held in prison for a long period without a trial, Dr Chung thought that he would be put to death. Therefore he would often close his eyes and pray sincerely for renewed hope. This caused him to gain renewed confidence. After his release from prison, Dr Chung recalled that he had composed these words: "In the world there exists no elixir of immortality; in my life I have most loved the flower of freedom."

In 1908, Dr Charles Edmunds assumed the post of Provost of Ling Naam Hok Tong, and at the same time Dr Chung became Chinese Dean of the school. But for many years, except for his instruction in Chinese, this was an empty title for Dr Chung, as he assisted President Edmunds in administration. At that time East Hall (later Martin Hall) was completed. It was a three-storey concrete building, the first such building in China as well as in Guangdong. The Board of Trustees of New York sold securities to raise funds for the building. Dr Chung hoped that Chinese donors would be encouraged to contribute funds to emulate this generosity by donating funds for the construction of the first, second, and third dormitory buildings. As a fund-raising method,

he asked students to take along donation pledge books when they returned home on visits, so that they could solicit donations from their parents. Dr Chung announced that every donor who contributed \$1,000 would be able to choose a name for honorary inscription on the lintel of a classroom door, and would also be able to send a qualified student to Lingnan for ten years free of tuition. Eighty persons were invited to make contributions, including Kan Yan-cho and Yeung Pei-kuk. In the same year, on July 3, 1908, a reception was held on the Lingnan campus to thank the donors. The senior scholar Kong Hung-yan, President Edmunds, and Dr Chung cordially and warmly received the guests in person. All along the riverbank that day, guests were seen coming and going from steam launches, floating restaurants, and canvas-shaded sampans. The Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi was ill but as representatives sent the Director of Foreign Affairs and the Director of the Education Bureau. Liang Cheng, China's former Minister to the United States, delivered a speech which was the highlight of the occasion.

The following year, the Lingnan school authorities sent Dr Chung on a round-the-world trip. He visited various cities, making personal appeals to the overseas Chinese communities for funds for the construction of the Number Three Dormitory. Dr Chung's idea of Lingnan as one family began with this, and he devoted his energies to encouraging the overseas Chinese to send their children to China to study. The

Chinese residents of the Americas were concentrated mainly in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Vancouver, and Hawaii, and in each place had established a well-known Chinatown. These sojourners overseas fervently loved their homeland and earnestly hoped to return their roots. Therefore Dr Chung's special plan and idea was to fully support special preparatory education for overseas Chinese children. Thanks to the deep understanding between themselves and Dr Chung, the overseas Chinese were happy to entrust their children to Lingnan despite the school's distance from their homes, and this trust created close ties.

From 1909 to 1910, Dr Chung raised Hong Kong \$6,000 in Singapore, \$17,500 in Vietnam in Saigon-Cholon, and a total of \$70,920 in Hawaii, including Hilo, along with Seattle, San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Portland, Victoria, Vancouver, Butte City, Chicago, New York, and Boston.