

Chapter Six

The college community as a family (1914-1917)

A target of Yuan's brutal measures, Dr Chung was compelled to escape from the campus, and again visited the United States. In the midst of misfortune, his old home was lost as well, and he established a new family. Dr Chung saw his new family as part of the extended family of Lingnan and belonging to an ideal world. In this period, alumnus Chiu Koon-hoi pointed out that Dr Chung's view was a philosophy of viewing the whole world as one family; it could also be called a philosophy of great unity and was compatible with Christianity. In his view the basic principle of "viewing the world as one family," was that humans all shared the same anatomy and were all God's children. On the basis of this concept, Dr Chung envisioned Lingnan's internationalization, without distinctions based on ethnicity, nationality, religion or political affiliations. Any person upholding the principles of the abandonment of selfishness, devotion to education, and the pooling of talent and material resources for the same good cause would be heartily welcomed

in a spirit of full cooperation and untiring effort, to realize the true meaning of the phrase that “within the four seas all are brothers.” On someone’s behalf, Dr Chung once composed the following couplets: “Confucian, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, teaching knows no boundaries; Asian, European, African, American, one family they form.” These lines fully reflect his all-inclusive embrace.

During the winter of 1913, Dr Chung first sought refuge in Hawaii, paying visits to the overseas Chinese who resided there and declaring to them that their ancestral culture was unforgettable. He recruited the children of Chinese residing overseas to return to the motherland to receive their education. At the same time, he made many acquaintances who in turn enlarged Lingnan’s circle of friendship.

When Dr Chung had completed his work in Hawaii, he went to the mainland United States and travelled to New York City. He entered Columbia University, pursuing advanced studies in the field of education. At this time the unfortunate news reached him that his wife, Ms Ho, had died in their residence at Lingnan. Dr Chung suffered the loss of his spouse, grieving unceasingly.

Ms Chung Fan-ting was accustomed to the Western way of life. She was one of the few capable women of the late Qing period. Because her husband died young, she applied her talents in the educational field.

She founded the On Wai school for girls in Hong Kong. In those days people believed that a virtuous woman was without talent, and that girls should not be seen in public, even in Hong Kong where Chinese and foreign customs were mixed together. As a result, Miss Chung became a devoted advocate of liberation for women and girls, so that they would be provided with opportunities to become self-sufficient. This is just a small example of her great talent and bravery. Because she and Dr Chung from early years shared the same ideals and path, they frequently encountered one another, and enjoyed a good relationship. At this time, Ms Chung happened to be in Hawaii, and heard that Dr Chung had suffered the loss of his wife. She then resigned from her teaching post and travelled to New York City to extend her personal condolences to Dr Chung. Meeting such a fine companion while visiting a distant place, Dr Chung made a proposal of marriage to her. They were then married in a church ceremony in New York. An excellent marital union was thus established. When the news spread, however, it led to public denunciation from people in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Macao who considered the marriage to be a violation of the old prohibition of the *Rites of Zhou* forbidding marriage between persons of who shared a surname and were thus considered blood relatives. The couple was even on the verge of expulsion from the Chung clan. Even many years later, rumors about the matter continued to circulate. From today's perspective, the matter would perhaps be unworthy of comment, so was it not excessively harsh to criticize this couple who made a revolutionary

departure from traditional teachings?

After their marriage, the Chungs lodged at the Chinese Presbyterian Church at East 31st Street. Although their lodgings were narrow, damp, and uncomfortable, they thought nothing of it. Dr Chung was happy in making a new home with a wise and able “better half” who could encourage him in his aspirations, and help him advance in his endeavours. While pursuing further studies, Chung was commissioned to serve as the head of the New York chapter of the Guomindang, aiming to rally the overseas Chinese to overturn the tyranny of Yuan Shikai. He founded *Minqi bao*, which served as a guide for the Chinese community, effectively opening minds and raising awareness. This sums up the period during which Dr Chung suffered the loss of his wife in 1914 and remarried in 1915.

During 1916, Dr Chung travelled around the United States, visiting numerous cities. In every place, he was praised and assisted by the leaders of the Chinese clan associations. He proposed the organization of an association of friends of Lingnan in the United States, in the hope of expanding the basis of financial support. He established chapters of the association in dozens of places. A network of communications was set up, serving to recruit the children of the Chinese sojourners to study at Lingnan, while at the same time donations were gathered to cover expenses. The donations flowed continuously, every drop making

a contribution, and eventually US \$7,000 was raised. This was the first example of financial support for Lingnan from overseas Chinese donors.

While he was in San Francisco, Dr Chung founded the Chinese Young Men's Christian Association of San Francisco together with Reverend Chan Tung-sang, Reverend Tse Kay-yuen, and others. They aimed to foster moral, intellectual, physical, and social education among Chinese youth. Additionally, he promoted a movement to transform the customary backward behaviour of the Chinese community. The activities of the San Francisco Chinese YMCA continue to flourish today. Without Dr Chung's efforts, could so much have been achieved?

International affairs became turbulent during this time. War broke out in Europe in 1914, causing the Great Powers to divert their attention from China. Japan took advantage of the situation to realize her ambitions in the Far East, and the following year, took the opportunity to present the Twenty-One Demands, aimed at gaining control of China. President Yuan Shikai harboured evil motives, wishing to restore the Imperial monarchy, and planned to install himself as Emperor. Dr Sun Yat-sen then sent Zhu Zhixin and Chen Jiongming back to Guangdong to instigate a second revolution. He also sent Li Liejun and Cai E to Yunnan. Afterwards, Li Liejun and Tang Jiyao led the Yunnan armies into Guangdong, expelling Long Jiguang. In 1917, Admiral Cheng

Biguang of the Beiyang Navy was the first to rise up. He commanded the First Fleet to enter the Pearl River and the Huangpu. Many members of the National Assembly also gathered in the south, holding an Extraordinary Assembly. They established the Guangzhou Military Government, electing Dr Sun Yat-sen as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces for the purpose of upholding the national Constitution.

At Lingnan College in 1917, Provost Edmunds was in great difficulties and distress as he weathered the storms of the World War. One problem was the unprecedented financial exigencies faced by Lingnan. Charitable donations from the United States shrank by half under the pressure of the promotion of Liberty Bonds. In addition, the rate of exchange of the yuan against the US dollar fell so precipitously that a US dollar was only worth about 1.2 *yuan*. Lingnan had no means of dealing with this problem. The second problem was a particular feature of the organization of Lingnan that caused a management problem. As a report to the Board of Trustees stated: "If we wish to have a well-run university, we face difficulties because we duplicate our efforts in providing primary and middle-school education as well."

Consequently, Dr Chung Wing Kwong was appointed as Vice Provost and Vice President for Chinese Affairs. Telegrams were sent to urge him to return to Lingnan immediately. Thus he returned together with Mrs Chung at the beginning of 1918.

That year the Qingming Festival was changed to a national Arbor Day (later it was called Family Day), and Dr Chung made a special invitation to the Provincial Governor, Chu Hing-lan, to come to the school to officiate as master of ceremonies. In front of Swasey Hall, the Governor planted a *bailan* tree. The whole body of six hundred Lingnan teachers and students solemnly observed the ceremony, and martial music filled the air. Seeing that the whole school had assembled, Governor Chu discerned the high calibre of the students. Realizing that the school was very well-administered, he immediately donated one thousand *yuan* as a sponsor. Also, seeing that the campus was still full of old grave mounds which had not yet been moved elsewhere, the Governor issued an circular bulletin immediately after returning to his headquarters, announcing that compensation for the removal of graves would continue to be offered for a limited period of time. As a result the remaining graves, numbering a thousand or so, were soon moved. In this way a matter that had been pending for many years was resolved at last.

In 1918, Dr Chung focused his energy and spirit for the purpose of overcoming financial difficulties. His policy and method were self-reliance on the part of the Chinese people associated with the school. The facts were that from 1917 to 1918, regular operating costs amounted to 200,000 *yuan* (and capital expenditures were 100,000 *yuan*), while tuition fees were only 60,000 *yuan*, creating a deficit of

140,000 *yuan*. In response, students organized a fund-raising campaign, raising about 20,000 *yuan*. There were donations from various circles, namely 250,000 *yuan* from Chinese and foreign friends, 160,000 from Chinese faculty members, 2,000 *yuan* from Dr Sun Yat-sen, 1,000 from Chu Hing-lan, 9,000 from the provincial government, 2,000 *yuan* from the Governor's Office, 7,000 from the Friends of Lingnan in the United States, and about 30,000 *yuan* in donations from Southeast Asia. Thus donations from the Chinese side already amounted to half of the total, which may certainly be said to have fulfilled obligations, and established a precedent of equal assumption of financial obligations by the Chinese and foreign sides. (In that year the US dollar was almost at par against the Hong Kong dollar, having fallen from 2.27 to 1.2 *yuan*.)

By surmounting difficulties through collective efforts, the senior and junior, older and younger Lingnanners became an even more harmonious group. Because they made all their plans and efforts together, there were no boundaries between the college, collegiate, and primary school levels—they stood united like one large family. As Dr Chung was instructing the college students, college students taught the middle school and primary school students, and the primary school students modeled themselves on the college students. Sharing accommodations and meals, activities and studies, they were continually together, year in and year out. The harmonious feeling of their lives together was not matched elsewhere. The very complexity of Lingnan's

multi-level organization, seen by Provost Edmunds as a cause of difficulty, actually made Lingnan a site of successful experimentation in China. Moreover, the middle school and primary school students were able to enter directly into the college program, constituting a reliable source of students!

Within the great Lingnan family, not only were the “children of the red and gray” (the colours of the school flag) mutually close and affectionate, but the spirit of service demonstrated by the instructors and their wives, whether they were Chinese or foreign, was exceptionally rare and valuable. Taking Provost Edmunds as an example, although Edmunds had a PhD in Physics from Johns Hopkins University, after coming to Lingnan he was hardly able to make use of his advanced learning and talent. He was still young then, and his marriage engagement lasted for six years as he long delayed his wedding in hopes of better times, not daring to start a family on such a modest salary. Salaries at the professor level then were between about 200 and 300 Hong Kong dollars monthly, and there were no other fixed subsidies. If a professor were sent by the Lingnan Board of Trustees in New York, he would receive an additional fifty US dollars monthly, allocated from the faculty pension fund. Professors’ compensation was very low, and their way of life was quite austere. Those who endured this demonstrated the spirit of Christian service, not concerning themselves with monetary rewards. Knowing this, there was no one among the whole student

body who did not feel even greater respect and affection for them. Dr Chung frequently praised their great spirit of sincere and benevolent concern, and whenever an anti-foreign movement was flaring up, or a misunderstanding arose between the students and the foreign faculty, he would personally resolve the matter. His view was that because the foreign instructors had been willing to travel such a great distance and had pure and correct intentions, it was inappropriate to criticize and quarrel with them.

When Dr Edmunds was Provost for the few years following 1917, instructors were hired in Guangzhou as well as sent from New York. In addition, the London Missionary Society sent Reverend Alexander Baxter to join the faculty. He lectured on Comparative Religion and Philosophy. Thus Lingnan was able to amass a rare cluster of brilliant scholars. There is a saying that, "As people remember times gone by, old branches burst into bloom again." Today's alumni share such sentiments in their hearts.