

## Chapter Seven

# **Virtue attracts good neighbours (1917-1923)**

Dr Chung's temperament gave him the special ability to find new hope in every difficulty, and new strength when energies seemed to be exhausted. He was able to find a way out of any difficult situation. Thus whenever the school's fortunes were at a low point, he would immediately pack his bags, accompanying Provost Edmunds and Professor Chan Tsap-ng on overseas fundraising tours. During the autumn of 1917, they arrived first in Singapore, where overseas Chinese businessmen such as Chan Ying-sam, Professor Chan's brother, welcomed them warmly. During a reception, businessmen referred to the problem that local schools were short of experienced teaching staff. Dr Chung immediately promised to send an alumnus, Lam Iu-cheung, to assist in the promotion of education for the Chinese sojourning in Singapore. He also sought suggestions from the local people about the idea of establishing an Overseas Chinese School on the main campus of Lingnan, where Chinese children returning from overseas for study would be provided with boarding facilities. Considering that their

motherland would naturally have suitable personnel and resources for this endeavour, the Singaporean merchants promptly and unanimously endorsed Dr Chung's proposal. Starting with a donation of HK \$70,000 from Zhang Bishi for the construction of the Overseas Chinese School, Dr Chung raised money for the school in a short period between the fall of 1917 and January 1918. During Dr Chung's fundraising tour of Southeast Asia, he made stops to visit Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Delhi, Medan, Sumatra, Asahan, Siam, Bangkok, Saigon, Cochin, Haiphong, Hanoi, Nanting, Batavia, Bandung, Tjirebon, Surabaya, Ampenan, and Semarang. Altogether he raised the equivalent of US \$120,000 in the currency of the day.

The completion of an impressive new building provided a dormitory and several classrooms for the Overseas Chinese School at Lingnan. When instruction began in the fall of 1925, there were over one hundred students, who had come to study in the homeland from as far away as the United States, Australia, Southeast Asia, England, Africa, and Japan. Because their language abilities, customs, educational backgrounds, and ages were all very different, they needed individual and small group guidance, emphasizing elementary standard Chinese, to gradually catch up with the regular program. When they had attained the appropriate levels in the courses taught in English, they would be admitted to the middle school. When they were at the average level in the various subjects, they would be assigned to the appropriate grade levels in the

regular program. There were also some who would return to their places of origin to continue their studies after receiving several years of instruction in understanding the culture of their homeland. There were then eighty-six students in the Overseas Chinese School, and over one hundred and forty other overseas students in the regular programs. By then, Dr Chung's promise to their elders overseas had been fully realized. The school was an experimental creation for China. Those in charge of the Overseas Chinese School were Lam Iu-cheung, succeeded by Mak Ying-kee. The teaching staff in the school included Yee Sun-man, Ka Kwok-cheung, Wong Chim, Wong Yu-heng, Lau Kwok-suen, Chui Yau-on, Lau Ming-suen, Wong Wing-siu, Lei Yiu-sun, Ho Ke-yan, and Yeung Wah-yat. Thanks to the individual tutoring that they provided, the students were eventually able to overcome all their particular difficulties.

Ma Ying-piu, proprietor of the Sincere Company in Hong Kong, was appointed as a Director of the University in 1919. He made special donations for the construction of a school infirmary and a guest house close to the entrance to the campus. Another Director, the Guangzhou merchant Taam Lai-ting, also made a donation for the construction of an Alumni House and two residences for teaching staff. The development that most increased Dr Chung's enthusiasm for the establishment of a College of Agriculture was a donation from the Silk Association of America for the Sericulture College. The wealthy New York merchant Marcus Fieldler donated the funds for a model silk filature, and in

addition the Atwood Machine Company of Connecticut funded and equipped a sericulture laboratory and an attached cold storage facility. All processes, were under the management of two former students, Tang Iu-cho and To Shu-choi, including inspection, disease prevention, silkworm and egg selection, and promotion of the use of testing paper for silkworm eggs. The laboratory made an important contribution to improving the quality of Guangdong's silk, resulting in increased exports to the United States and thus enabling it to compete with Japanese silk.

Early in 1919, Commander-in-Chief Chen Jiongming was stationed in Zhangzhou in Fujian, and began to establish a new municipal administration and promote free public education. He invited Dr Chung to serve as a senior adviser, and Yeung Sek-chung as his Director of Public Works. They all made important contributions.

After the First World War came to an end, the Great Powers held a Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. When they decided not to discuss the status of Qingdao, there was a general outcry in China, with righteous indignation rising especially strongly among youth and students. They demonstrated in Beijing, in a movement calling for reforms in government, education, and literary forms. This was the famous May Fourth Movement of Chinese history. There was an impassioned response from Lingnan students, who missed classes in order to spread the news to the public with exhortations that the

whole country should oppose the Great Powers' decision. When Wang Zhengting, the leader of the National Assembly, visited Lingnan to deliver a speech, he received an enormous welcome. During this period of heightened patriotic feelings, Dr Chung would often invite dignitaries to give speeches at the morning assembly, including Wu Zhihui, who promoted a syllabary for Chinese sounds, Yan Yangchu, who promoted rural reconstruction, Liang Shuming, who promoted rural education, Liang Shaochu of the YMCA, Academician Gui Zhan of China's Consulate-General in the Philippines, and Ms Zheng Yuxiu of the Work-Study program in France.

In the summer of 1919, Dr Chung went to Java again, visiting various cities on a fund-raising tour aimed at raising money for the construction of the college dormitory. In Batavia, Auyeung Kei, China's Consul-General, and Yau Sit-ting, the Chairman of the Chinese Manufacturers' Association, organized a welcoming reception, attended by representatives of the Zhonghua School, the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing native place association, the Po Leung Association, the China Athletic Association, Chinese publishing firms, and leaders of the various manufacturing enterprises. Dr Chung elaborated on the importance of education, urging them to provide financial support. Out of their deep love for the homeland, the overseas Chinese gave their whole-hearted support. One after another, they emptied their pockets, happy to help, giving over 30,000 guilders altogether. Afterward, Dr

Chung visited Bandung, Tjirebon, Semarang, and Surabaya, where the overseas Chinese likewise welcomed him, making generous donations. Altogether, they donated 130,000 guilders (approx. US\$ 5,000), to Dr Chung's great satisfaction. He then announced his enthusiastic pledge to give the new residence the name of Java Hall in honour of the overseas Chinese of Java.

Dr Chung came to a deep conclusion in the course of handling Lingnan's financial crisis at that time and during his tour of the agrarian countries of Southeast Asia. Reflecting on the proliferation of China's population in a nation based on agriculture, he realized that for China to be a wealthy and powerful nation, it would first be necessary to improve the agricultural sector. In Guangdong, furthermore, it was urgent that agriculture should become more specialized, so as to develop its particular strengths. Consequently, Lingnan University would foster specialized expertise, designating agricultural studies as an important path for the school. At the same time, the campus area was expansive and well-endowed with natural features, so that if agriculture were developed, not only would Lingnan attract the appropriate research staff, but would also strive to improve production and processing and to extend improved methods so that the school could be self-reliant and economically independent. Therefore Dr Chung described his vision: He would plant ten thousand palm olive trees, which would provide an annual harvest of olives of sufficient

value to cover recurrent expenses and also provide a surplus. Dr Chung accordingly resolved to do the utmost within his capability to establish the following ambitious scheme for Lingnan, while participating energetically in administration of the school so as to reach the goal of establishing a multi-college higher-level institution.

Lingnan University's Dean of Faculty at the time was Dr Kenneth Duncan. In June 1920, the university's first convocation ceremony was held. Chan Ting-hoi, Lo Ka-ping, and Lei Yue-kim received Bachelor of Arts degrees as Lingnan's first three graduates. The university had lacked the legal status required for the conferral of degrees, but a resolution was reached just in time, when Dean Duncan announced at the ceremony that the State University of New York had issued diplomas authorizing conferral of the degrees, which provided documentation jointly with the certificates issued by Lingnan. More than ten high-ranking universities in the United States, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, and Stanford universities, then recognized the qualifications of Lingnan graduates, accepting them directly into postgraduate programs. Lingnan's status increased, the school's reputation soared, and the enrolment of registered collegiate-level students rose rapidly, reaching one hundred and ninety-three within four years.

Back in 1917, Reverend Fung Yim-kung of the Methodist Church of

Malaya wrote to Dr Chung that the burial site of Leung Fat, his wife's maternal great-grandfather, was lying untended in the shrubs of Fenghuanggang. Leung Fat was China's second Protestant Christian convert, and the first Chinese pastor. (Reverend Robert Morrison ordained him with his own hands in 1821.) At one point, Hong Xiuquan received a copy of "Words of good advice to the age," which inspired him to launch a revolution, and to found a Taiping Heavenly Kingdom lasting fourteen years. The tract was Reverend Leung's work. On a summer day in 1920, Dr Chung allocated funds for the transfer of Leung Fat's grave and reburial in front of Swasey Hall, separated from the central quadrangle by a mound, and marking the grave with a tombstone engraved with the particulars of Leung's life. Above the grave was the flagpole and by the side was an open space. Privately, Dr Chung expressed his wish was to be buried in the same spot, where he would surely find a peaceful final resting place. In honour of his merit and noble character, Lingnan alumni later followed his wishes, carrying out what he had hoped for in his final words. On the day of the ceremonial reburial of Leung Fat, Dr Chung led the proceedings himself in an extraordinary solemn manner, in the presence of at least one thousand observers from all Lingnan and from various churches. The event was certainly a memorable one.

Dr Chung was a member of the London Missionary Church at Chung Kwei New Street near Guangzhou's West Gate, and also served as an



elder. He was a good friend of Yeung Sheung-pu. After Yeung's death, Dr Chung looked after Yeung's surviving family members, and they were later successful in life. Reverend Tse Yan-luk succeeded Yeung, and, authorized by the congregation to sell the church's original site, moved the church to Eastern Wai Oi Road. All members of the congregations contributed to the construction costs of the new church and the school attached to it, and Dr Chung and his wife were asked to plan and direct a fundraising campaign. The church was named the Wai Oi Church, and was built in a Chinese palatial style following Dr Chung's suggestion, with red walls and green tiles, handsome and dignified in appearance.

From 1921 to 1923, Dr Chung's vision of a comprehensive College of Agriculture was superbly realized. The college established a full four-year program of study in Agriculture, offering the Bachelor of Science degree, along with a three-year vocational program for the training of farm managers, agricultural extension workers, and rural course instructors. The Lingnan Board of Trustees in New York was very cautious at first, concerned about administrative costs, and was unwilling to expand the college. Dr Chung then proposed Chinese-led responsibility, establishing an independent Board of Managers for the Agricultural College. In October 1921 he invited Ma Ying-piu, Lei Yuk-tong, Chan Lim-po, Tsin Shue-fan, and Chan Chung-ngok to serve as Board members. At this time, Dr Chung was elected as a Guangzhou Municipal Councillor because of his highly-regarded reputation. After

he repeatedly urged the Guangdong provincial authorities to lend their support, the provincial government made a grant of 300,000 silver *yuan*, of which an initial allocation of 150,000 *yuan* defrayed the costs of setting up the facilities of the College of Agriculture. In addition, starting in 1921, an annual allocation of 100,000 *yuan* was provided by the government. Dr Chung also requested that the university be permitted to purchase an area containing over three thousand gravesites, to be used for the purpose of setting up experimental farming and forestry plots for the college. He received approval from the Department of Agriculture and Industry to proceed immediately with these plans as well. In this way nine hundred *mu* of new agricultural land were acquired for the college.

When the College of Agriculture was first established, Dr Chung made urgent efforts to budget for it. He had already begun to raise money for a building to house the College in 1920. The building was named the Ten Friends Hall, because ten enthusiastic donors each contributed HK \$10,000, namely Lei Yuk-tong, Lei Hsing-kui, Chow Mun-cho, Lam Woo, Ma Ying-piu, Tsoi Chueng, Moi Choi-tik, Lai Shap-yi, Wong Sai-huey, and Chow Tien-pong. (Editor's note: Mr Tam Lei-ting was the sponsor of other buildings, including Alumni House. Here the names of the five other donors who contributed to the building of Ten Friends Hall have been added, namely Tsoi Cheung, Moi Choi-tik, Lai Shap-yi, Wong Sai-huey, and Chow Tien-pong.) With donations totaling \$100,000, the

building was completed in 1928, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of Lingnan's return to the Hong Lok site. The building was imposing in size, matching the grandeur of the new Science Hall (donated in memory of Willard Straight), which was completed in the same year.

Faculty members at the College of Agriculture were all very learned scholars, rich in experience. George Weidman Groff was among the western professors, for instance, and among the Chinese professors were Fu Po-kwong and Shao Yiu-nin. From 1922 onward, a large number of Lingnan alumni and graduates who had returned from the United States after acquiring doctoral degrees or qualifications in engineering, along with those trained in factory management, were recruited as faculty members one after the other. Those appointed to teaching positions in various departments at Lingnan included Cheuk Fo-yip, Lam Cho-kwan, Lo King-tuen, Wong Ping-fong, Lam Shun, Wei Kok, Ko Ting-che, Chu Yau-kwong, Chan Man-chu, Ho Yam-tong, and Tseng Chiu-sam. Among the first to graduate from the College of Agriculture with the Bachelor of Science degree were Koo Kwai-fan, To Shu-choi, Wong Chak-po, Ho Leung, and Yung Ping-hang, all of whom also served as instructors in the College of Agriculture and other departments at Lingnan.

The experimental agriculture field included work on paddy rice, sugarcane, and maize. In pomology program, papaya, mandarins,

oranges and litchees were grown. In the poultry program, the main focus was on Leghorn chickens, while in animal husbandry it was white and black pigs. Dairy production included Holsteins, and the food-processing program comprised ice cream, butter making, canning, and sugar refining. In sericulture and silk-reeling there was a particularly long history of experience and success.

Within a few years, the College of Agriculture possessed a Field Experimentation Station of the southwestern part of the Lingnan campus, where trials of Chinese and western vegetables, and of forage and pasture crops were conducted. In addition, outside the south gate was a tract of approximately one thousand *mu* for fruits, trees, and crops, with large-scale production of the various items. There were four fields in the Agricultural College: teaching, experimentation, management, and extension work. Its departments were field crops, gardening, animal husbandry, sericulture and silk reeling, and agricultural manufacturing. In addition, silviculture, veterinary medicine, aquaculture and dendrology were also established. The faculty as a whole totaled more than thirty members altogether, with over thirty undergraduate students, and about one hundred field staff. Lingnan's middle-school students also visited for elective courses, taking two hours of classes weekly. There was a short course in sericulture and silk reeling as well, along with a three-year vocational program in agriculture, in which more than thirty students were enrolled. The Lingnan *Annual* of 1925 reported that

the income of the College of Agriculture's farm that year totaled over 80,000 *yuan*.

In addition to the above, Mr Cheng Shau-tse, a wealthy merchant of the Chao-shan region (later he was elected to the Board of Directors), was promoting the development of agriculture, and had established an eight-hundred *mu* orchard in Chaozhou for the cultivation tangerines. The tangerines were a superior kind, and all were sweet and juicy. Because he had full confidence in Lingnan's well-regarded education, Mr Cheng donated his entire orchard to the school, and thus Lingnan's farm in Chaozhou was established, with Mr Lim Kin-chung in charge. Mr Cheng further donated the funds to establish two professorships in Agriculture, along with four scholarships providing funding to encourage agriculture students to study abroad.

In 1923, Dr Chung travelled once more to Saigon and other towns in Indochina, raising 10,000 *piastres* in donations; he also visited Rangoon, raising 36,000 *ringgit* there. In Singapore, he raised \$10,000, and then went on to Australia, where he gathered the equivalent of HK \$20,000, and to New Zealand, where he raised HK \$5,000. In this way he launched overseas fundraising for an Agricultural University at Lingnan.