

Tsinghua Universities and Christianity

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摘要：教育是强国之根本，中国基督徒和美国基督徒在今天的高校教育做出的重大的贡献。大部分基督徒教授是从美国来或是从美国留学回来。他们教给中国学生西方的先进的科学技术并且组建许多基督教校园活动来培养性格发展，领导能力，社交能力，服务他人的意愿。北京清华大学和台湾国民清华大学就有一批这样的基督徒人才。梅贻琦就是其中一员，他在 1931 到 1948 年担任北京清华大学校长，又于 1956 年胜任台湾国民大学校长一职。

关键词：教育 清华 教师 基督徒 台湾

Abstract: Education is important to build a powerful country. Chinese Christians and American Christians play important roles in Chinese university. Most of them come from America or had studied abroad. They become college professor to teach Chinese students western high tech still and colorful culture. Also, the Christian teachers host some Christian activity in order to build character development, service, social action, and leadership. They founded Tingshua Univerisity in Beijing and Tingshua university in Taiwan. Mei yiqi is one of them, had served as president of Tsinghua in Beijing from 1931-48, became the first president in the founding of National TsingHua University in Hsinchu in Taiwan in 1956.

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singhua University in Beijing and National TsingHua University in Hsinchu (Taiwan) are jointly celebrating their 100 years anniversary on April 24, 2011. It may be insightful to see how the shared legacy has been influenced by both American and Chinese Christians. After the 1911 Revolution Tsinghua's first President, Tang Guo'an, wanted to combine English, science, and technology with Christian "character." Many of the first American teachers and some of the Chinese teachers who returned from studying abroad were Christians. The campus YMCA was an active group. Tsinghua hosted the World Christian Student Federation Conference in 1922, often cited as a catalyst to the anti-Christian movement of the 1920s. Many years later Mei Yiqi, who had served as president of Tsinghua in Beijing from 1931-48, became the first president in the founding of National TsingHua University in Hsinchu in Taiwan in 1956.

Origins

Tsinghua's founding came out of an American decision to return the excess of the American part of the Boxer indemnity fund to China. The Allies (7 Western countries and Japan) had made the Qing court pay an indemnity for the loss of lives and property brought on by their support of the Boxers, a secret society of martial arts, who attacked Westerners and Chinese Christians in North China in the spring and summer of 1900.[1]

Arthur Smith, a missionary who had lived in China since 1872, joined the group that suggested returning the American excess for educational purposes when he came home on furlough in 1906. He visited President Roosevelt in Washington, D.C. on March 6, encouraging him to follow the proposal of Edmund James, the president of the University of Illinois. On May 25, 1908 Roosevelt signed a bill stipulating that the excess go to building a preparatory school to train a hundred students a year to study in the United States.[2]

On the Chinese side, Tang Guo'an, one of the students in the Chinese Educational Mission who studied in the United States from 1873-1881, was involved in the planning and negotiation of the Boxer program in 1907-08. He joined the new office for Study in the United States in 1909 that was established jointly under the ministries of foreign affairs and education. He was one of three officials who

accompanied the first group of Chinese students who had won the 1909 Boxer scholarships to the United States. A year later Tang accompanied the second group of Boxer scholarship students to the U.S.[3]

When the Imperial Tsinghua Academy opened in April 1911 Tang became assistant director. After going overseas to research education and to work toward opium suppression, he returned to Beijing in 1912. Tsinghua had been closed for six months following the Republican Revolution in October 1911. Tang chose to leave his government position and to reconstitute and rename Tsinghua College. It reopened in May 1912, with Tang as the founding president. He recruited high quality faculty from among the returning Chinese students and made critical decisions about the organization, funding, and building program.[4]

As a state institution Tsinghua emphasized teaching science and technology, but Tang also wanted to stress the importance of personal moral discipline to "cultivate the whole human character." Tang was a national board member of the YMCA. Many student groups were set up including speech and debate clubs, a student newspaper, evangelistic summer conferences and campus Bible studies. Tsinghua had the largest and most active student YMCA in Beijing. Having suffered from heart disease, he resigned the presidency, just one day before he died of heart failure on August 22, 1913.[5]

Christian Teachers

The first group of sixteen American teachers who came to Tsinghua Academy were recruited by the United States Bureau of Education and the YMCA. They taught English, Latin, German, geography, history, mathematics, chemistry, music, art, mechanical drawing and manual training. Upon their arrival in China in February 1911, the teachers were received by the Shanghai mayor. They arrived in Beijing later in February and the Academy officially opened with 468 students on April 1, 1911.[6]

These teachers came from a variety of backgrounds. Two had studied at the Detroit Training School and the Normal Training School in Pennsylvania. Those

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holding bachelors degrees had studied at the University of Missouri, Ohio Wesleyan University and two at Smith College. Those holding masters degrees had studied at the University of Michigan, Lehigh University, Wesleyan University (Middletown, Connecticut), Worcester Polytechnic Institute. One medical doctor who had graduated from the University of Michigan taught physiology and biology while another graduate from University Medical College in Kansas City, Missouri, taught hygiene.[7]

Some of the teachers who had arrived in subsequent years and were teaching at Tsinghua in 1916 had received bachelor degrees from Richmond College (Virginia), University of Missouri, Hamline (Minnesota), and Colorado College/University of Oxford. Those with master's degrees had studied at State University of Kansas, and Wooster Conservatory of Music.[8]

As more returned students started teaching at Tsinghua the number of American instructors dropped. There were complaints in 1924 that the six western faculty members were of average quality, and at worst, they were incompetent. However, four of the six who taught during the 1923-24 school year had master degrees from Michigan (French), Stanford (English), Wesleyan University (English and Latin) and Harvard (Mathematics). One had a Ph.D. from Missouri (English) and another had studied at the NY School of Fine and Applied Arts and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago (Art). The complaints may have stemmed from the Chinese teachers desire to turn Tsinghua from a preparatory school into a state university, and their frustration that an inept teacher had been allowed to stay for many years.[9]

The presidents of Tsinghua hired Chinese students who were returning with degrees from studying abroad. While Mei Yiqi was the only one recruited from the first batch of Boxer scholarship students in 1909, by 1925, there were twenty-five who had either received scholarships or had graduated from Tsinghua teaching at the school.[10] Some were Christians, including Mei Yiqi who became president of the university from 1931-48 and Jiang Tingfu who was head of the history department from 1929-35.

Mei Yiqi, one of the first group of forty-seven Boxer scholarship students, returned to China in 1914 with a BS in electrical engineering. After serving a year with the YMCA in Tianjin, he became an instructor in physics and mathematics at Tsinghua. He returned to the United States in 1921 and took classes at the University of Chicago and at Columbia. He became dean of faculty at Tsinghua in 1926, director of the Chinese Education Mission in Washington D.C. from 1928-31, and then president of Tsinghua University in 1931. By 1935 Tsinghua had ten graduate departments, more than one-third of all graduate departments in China. In 1937 when Japan invaded the China coast, most of the faculty and students in Beijing fled southwest and Mei became president of the National Southwest Associated University (a combination of Tsinghua, Beijing University and Nankai University) that opened on May 4, 1938 in Kunming, Yunnan. Mei's leadership and generosity of spirit helped to keep the school alive through the dark years of World War II. He oversaw the rebuilding and reopening of the campus in Beijing on October 10, 1946. He served as president until December 12, 1948 when he left for the United States.[11]

After studying at a missionary school in Hunan, Jiang Tingfu went to the United States in 1912 where a YMCA secretary arranged for him to go to Park College in Parkville, Missouri. From 1914 to 1918 he studied at Oberlin College. After graduating, he went to France to serve as a YMCA secretary for the Chinese labor battalion attached to the French army as part of China's contribution to the war effort. After the war he earned a PhD in history from Columbia University. He first taught at Nankai University in Tianjin, where he began to focus on the history of China's foreign relations, since the Qing Dynasty documents had become available. After six years he was invited to become the chairman of the history department at Tsinghua. Because of the proximity to the Palace Museum and Tsinghua's monetary resources, he was able to build a valuable collection of Chinese historical documents for Tsinghua. He created a well-balanced department, reduced the teaching load so the professors could focus more on research, and implemented a system of sabbatical leaves, the first in China. He was known for his ability to convey his enthusiasm for the importance of history to his students. He joined famous scholars including Hu Shi in publishing DuliPenglun (Independent Critic) in 1932. Entering government

service he moved to Nanjing in December 1935 to become director of the political department of the Executive Yuan. The following year he was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union. In 1947 he was named as China's permanent representative to the United Nations, and in November 1961 he was appointed Chinese ambassador to the United States. [12]

Religious Activities on Campus

The YMCA and other Christian activities were some of the most popular on campus. In the Spring of 1912 the campus YMCA was founded with a constitution, officers, and regular worship services held every Sunday. The aim was to bring "fellow students to a thorough understanding of Christianity and of the principle of service." Sunday school, middle school, weekly religious expeditions and night school for college servants were added later. The growing success was attributed to the American and Chinese faculty advisors and the enthusiastic officers and members. In 1916 seventy-six students were listed on the Tsinghua Young Men's Christian Association roll. Besides the executive officers, there were leaders for Bible studies, evangelism, religious services, social service, personal work and prayer, education, membership, programs, and the middle school. [13]

The Bible studies were helpful in more than religious ways. When Wang Zhi arrived at the age of eleven to begin middle school on the Tsinghua campus in 1918, he did well in all of his classes except for English. His second-year English teacher, Lin Yutang, spoke only English in class. Lin was a recent graduate of St. John's University, a missionary school in Shanghai, and later became a famous author. Wang was worried that he would be expelled from school after failing the first three monthly tests. Someone told him that he should attend the Bible study led by Lin in order to get extra English practice. At the end of the fourth month, Wang received a "C" which kept him from being expelled from the school. Wang graduated from Tsinghua in 1926 and graduated twelfth in his class from West Point Military Academy in the United States in 1932. Because of his English ability he was appointed China's liaison officer to General Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines and Australia

during World War II. [14]

By 1920 one third of the Tsinghua students belonged to the campus YMCA. [15] The report in the school yearbook for 1923-24 said the "Y" [w]as one of the largest, oldest and most prosperous organizations on campus. Over the previous ten years the membership had totaled 600 students. The aim of the organization was to "develop Christian character and promote Christian service." The highlights of the year included a large delegation attending the YMCA national convention in Guangzhou in October 1923, a meeting of 1200 Beijing students in November for the World Students' Prayer Day program, a Christmas celebration, and a successful play. [16]

The YMCA continued to influence the lives of the Tsinghua students even after they left campus. The YMCA in Shanghai helped them find rooms for a month as they prepared to sail to the United States and hosted send-off parties. The YMCA in San Francisco would often welcome the students arriving after the ten-day voyage. [17]

Christian Influence and the Anti-Christian Movement

The May Fourth era following World War I caused Chinese intellectuals to attack Western imperialism, perceiving that the Allies "abandoned" China by giving Japan control over Shandong, a province in China. Chinese nationalists complained that Tsinghua's sole goal was to prepare students for study in the United States. They condemned the school's strong ties to foreign ideologies and Christianity. The influence of the campus YMCA made Tsinghua a primary target of an anti-Christian movement that developed in the 1920s. [18]

The World Student Christian Federation's (WSCF) was to hold an international conference at Tsinghua in April 1922. The WSCF was established in 1895 by John Mott and other American and European leaders. Just before the conference, the general committee of the WSCF met at the Hotel Peking. The fifty-seven members consisted of 21 Anglo-Saxons, 20 other Europeans, 13 Asians, and one each an African-

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American, a Native American and a Latin American.

A month before the conference a Great Antireligion Federation was organized by a veteran anarchist, and supported by Communists and leftist Nationalist party leaders.[19] A reporter for the Harbin Communist newspaper wrote: "The YMCA is one of the most important bourgeois organizations of youth people... Missionaries are connected with the secret services of their countries..."[20]

On April 1, delegates from 32 countries gathered on the Tsinghua campus. Those seated on the platform for the opening session included John R. Mott, officers from China, Holland, the USA, France, Japan and India. Every province in China, including Manchuria and Mongolia, was represented. Among the six main forums of the conference, the most controversial was "Christianity and International Problems." It was an opportunity for Christian students from China, Japan, India, and other nations to speak about the tensions they felt as fellow Christians. Eugene Barnett, a YMCA worker in China from 1910-1936, quoted an unknown source: "No gathering has met since the War which more fully reflected the tragic discontent and aspirations which prevail among the youth of the world today." [21]

The attacks on the conference by anti-Christian groups were well planned and carefully timed. On the second day of the conference, a Chinese group sent a letter to an English newspaper published in Tianjin. "We oppose especially Christianity which because of its duration and the extent of its influence has done more harm...than any other religion." Liang Qichao, the famous philosopher, published a letter in a Shanghai Chinese newspaper expressing his support for the anti-Christian movement in order that it would make religion a "live issue again," so it would help people make up their minds "regarding the truth or error." [22]

Shortly after the meeting at Tsinghua, an important National Christian Conference brought together Chinese and missionary leaders in Shanghai. The attendees were predominantly Chinese, both numerically and in its leadership. The National Christian Council was created with Cheng Jingyi as the general secre-

tary. The Anti-Christian movement continued throughout the decade, attacking Christianity and more specifically the YMCA because of its prestige and influence.[23]

Founding of National TsingHua University

From 1949-54, Mei Yiqi conferred with the China Foundation in New York City about how the Boxer fund could help subsidize the almost four thousand Chinese students and scholars stranded in the United States after the People's Republic of China was founded. In 1955 Mei was asked to come to Hsinchu, Taiwan to create a nuclear science research institute to help provide Taiwan with power. When the institute became the National TsingHua University in 1956, Mei became the first president. After an operation for cancer, Mei never left the hospital and died on May 19, 1962. As the founder of TsingHua in Taiwan, he had won his students' love and respect. Even today, students and faculty pay their respect to Mei at this grave in the university's Mei Garden.[24]

Conclusion

Believing that education would build a stronger China, Chinese and American Christians played an important role in establishing Boxer scholarships and founding Tsinghua University. They taught Western ideas to Chinese students to prepare them for study in the United States. These students went on in their careers to help build a modern China that could participate in world affairs as an equal. The campus YMCA offered students opportunities for character development, service, social action, and leadership formation. Mei Yiqi's life was given to building a great school and protecting students during World War II so they could flourish in later years (some went on to become Nobel Prize winners), and he then put all his years of experience to use in founding National TsingHua University in Hsinchu. Though this is only a brief overview, it gives some sense of the significant impact Christians have had on these two great Chinese universities.

About the Author

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Stacey Bieler is the author of "Patriots" or "Traitors"? A History of American-Educated Chinese Students and the co-editor with Carol Lee Hamrin of three volumes of *Salt and Light: Lives of Faith That Shaped Modern China*. These volumes include biographies of a number of Chinese Christians who contributed to Tsinghua's legacy.

Notes

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