

THE HERITAGE OF THE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES IN POST-1949 CHINA

BY RUTH HAYHOE

We rely on our United Board trustees for governance and guidance. Our trustees also help connect us to our heritage, through their relationships with our partner institutions and through their professional expertise. In this essay, former trustee Ruth Hayhoe, a specialist in comparative international education at the University of Toronto, shows that Christian values introduced at United Board institutions in China continued to flourish in new forms.

— Nancy E. Chapman



Ruth Hayhoe

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IT HAS OFTEN BEEN THOUGHT

that the 20 Christian universities and colleges, 17 Protestant and three Catholic, simply disappeared after the Communist Revolution of 1949 and the subsequent Korean War. Yet their emphasis on liberal arts education can still be found in the comprehensive and normal institutions that make their homes on the former campuses of these Christian institutions.

With the system-wide reform of higher education along the lines of the Soviet model in 1952-53, most of the campuses were given to newly reorganized universities within the socialist system. The lovely Chinese-style architecture stands as a testimony to the cultural understanding and respectful dialogue that characterized many of the missionary efforts. Peking University, on the former campus of Yenching University, is a striking example, with the home of Yenching's first president, John Leighton Stuart, now used as a venue for receiving high-level international guests.

Not only were the campuses highly valued but many of the teaching faculty from the Christian institutions stayed on to serve in the reconstituted system. Political education courses were, naturally, completely rewritten and educational ideas were strongly influenced by such Russian theorists as Vygotsky

and Kairov. But the liberal arts legacy was evident at the four new normal universities or colleges, set up for the formation of teachers, established on the campuses of former Christian universities: Central China Normal University, in Wuhan, on the campus of Huachung University; Nanjing Normal College on the campus of Ginling College; Fujian Normal College on the campus of Hwa Nan College in Fuzhou; and Zhejiang Normal College on the campus of Hangchow University. These institutions were actually comprehensive universities on the model of the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, with a full array of arts and science disciplines and a strong faculty of education that took responsibility for ensuring a supply of excellent teachers for secondary and tertiary schools. Their curricular content and their emphasis on service to society had some parallels with the ethos of the former Christian institutions.

With the Great Leap Forward, launched in 1958, there was considerable backlash against the overspecialization and highly centralized approach to macro-planning that characterized the Soviet model. Efforts were made to ensure that remote and marginalized regions would be able to develop their own higher institutions, rather

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than having to send their young people to national or regional centers for training. In 1958, the complete graduating classes of Beijing Normal University and Sichuan Medical University in Chengdu moved to Qinghai and established Qinghai Normal College and Qinghai Medical College, the first higher education institutions founded in this remote northwestern province. This sacrificial contribution came from

two institutions that had inherited the campus and/or faculty members of former Christian universities — Catholic Fu Jen University in the case of Beijing Normal and the medical faculty of West China Union University in the case of Sichuan Medical.

When the United Board resumed working with China in 1980, after an absence of nearly 30 years, it found that the seeds it had helped plant in the first half of the twentieth century

had taken deep root. In the new, secular era of Chinese education, certain elements of Christian spirit, particularly the dedication to service and social responsibility, continued to find expression. **UB**

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Go to unitedboard.org for more information on United Board history.

PROGRAMS

FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP: MAKING THE DREAM BIGGER



“MY DREAM WAS SIMPLE – TO

learn to read and then to be a primary school teacher.”

Caixiangduojie, an ethnic Tibetan more commonly known as Duojie, was first inspired by a book of Tibetan Buddhist scripture, carefully kept in his family’s home in Qinghai Province in northwestern China. Though his family members could not read, his grandfather would mark auspicious days by paging through the book. Duojie was curious to read the words in the book, so with persistence, he persuaded his family to let him attend school. He recalls walking into town with his grandfather to sell an animal skin to pay for his school fees.

That four-mile journey started Duojie

on a path that eventually took him to advanced degrees, earned in the Philippines and Thailand, and a faculty position in the Nationalities Teacher’s College at Qinghai Normal University. The United Board was a source of support at key points during his postgraduate education. As Duojie describes it, “The United Board made my dream much bigger. Without their generous support for my higher education, I might still be herding sheep with my family in my village.” Duojie was among the bright young Tibetan students selected for intensive English-language study in Qinghai Normal University’s nationalities division; this English Teaching Program was funded in part by the United Board. After completing the program, he further studied at Ateneo de Manila University and eventually earned his Ph.D. at Assumption University with support from the United Board faculty scholarship program.

And this summer he is one of the fellows at the United Board’s Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT), held at Chung Chi College on the campus of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Before his Ateneo and Assumption experiences, “I thought teaching was done by lecturing on the stage,” Duojie said. But studying abroad changed his perceptions about teaching and learning. “It’s important to know my students well — their interests, strengths and weaknesses — in order to communicate knowledge to them. It’s about how to give and receive information. What will work best for my students?” At IASACT, in addition to pursuing his interest in multicultural education, he is keen to observe how the program’s mentors give feedback to scholars.

Education remains the focus of Duojie’s dream for the future. “I still want to be a teacher,” he said, “but also to be able to give more advice to students, help build a better education system and fulfill the needs of local people in a changing society.” **UB**

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Go to unitedboard.org for more information on the faculty scholarship program and IASACT.

MISSION

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia works to support a Christian presence in colleges and universities in Asia.

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PARTNERS

PAYAP UNIVERSITY: FROM THE TRENCHES, TO THE ACADEMY, AND BACK

THERE ARE ADVOCATES FOR PEACE AT PAYAP UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTE

of Religion, Culture and Peace (IRCP). There also are scholars of religious dialogue and peacebuilding. The challenge for Mark Tamthai, IRCP's director, and his colleagues is to train people to be both. "Our approach is to hold a very close relationship between our work as practitioners and as scholars," he says. "I describe our work as being from the trenches, to the academy, and back."

For instance, IRCP "is in the trenches" when it facilitates dialogue and mediates conflict in the southern border provinces of Thailand. "In the academy" these practitioner-scholars translate practical knowledge from the field into conceptual problems that can be explored at the theoretical level in Payap's classrooms or in dissertation and research topics.

"After formulating possible solutions to these conceptual problems, both in our research and in our Ph.D. seminars, we then try to test them in our practitioner work at the negotiating table or in mediating conflicts in multireligious communities," Dr. Tamthai says.

IRCP is one of the institutions involved in the United Board's Interreligious Understanding and Peacebuilding Initiative. Recognizing the role that Asia's higher education institutions can play as agents of peace, the United Board is supporting programs that train faculty and students and engage local communities through service and experiential learning. For example, with a grant from the United Board, IRCP is sharing its expertise in undergraduate teaching on peace and reconciliation with faculty from all of Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam). The United Board also has made a grant to IRCP in support of its Francis Seely Seminar, which annually convenes scholars to discuss how members of Thailand's different religious traditions view and understand specific religious, social and cultural issues.

The United Board understands that efforts to promote interreligious understanding and peacebuilding in the region must be tailored to the diverse cultures, political realities and historical experiences of East, Southeast and South Asia. Through grants to institutions in seven countries and through faculty scholarships at IRCP, International Christian University (Japan) and the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, the United Board hopes to strengthen the corps of advocates and scholars who travel the road between the academy and the trenches. **UB**



UNITED BOARD FRIEND A PASSION FOR EDUCATION: DR. EVANGELINE BRAVO-MANJARES



THROUGHOUT HER

career as an educator, Dr. Evangeline Bravo-Manjares has been inspired by relationships she developed as a student. Those

connections include Southern Christian College, Silliman University and the United Board. Even as she serves the students at Nassau Community College in New York, where she is the Dean of Academic and Student Services, Dr. Bravo-Manjares is still thinking about how she and others can help strengthen education in the Philippines.

Southern Christian College, where she attended the affiliated elementary and high schools, was an integral part of her childhood and is now a beneficiary of her passion for education. Dr. Bravo-Manjares and her family have supported scholarships for theology students, the preschool and elementary training programs and the Bravo-Manjares Learning Center, which focuses on literacy. Her undergraduate years at Silliman, she says, also were a formative period. "Filipinos usually finish high school at 15 or 16, so they are young and lonely for home when they go away to college. I decided to get busy with groups on campus and became active in the Christian youth fellowship." She remains an active Sillimanian: she enthusiastically joined the alumni reunion in Alaska in June and was honored as an "Outstanding Sillimanian" in 2010 for her community work.

The United Board was often in the background of conversations during her student years. "I would hear American missionaries at Southern Christian College talk about 'help from the United Board,'" she remembered. Visitors at the Silliman campus talked about the United Board's support for the university.



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PROGRAM CALENDAR

RESPONDING TO URBANIZATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE PROBLEMS THROUGH A SERVICE-LEARNING APPROACH

August 1-2

Soegijapranata Catholic University (Indonesia)

ACUCA NETWORK MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION, STUDENT MOBILITY SCHEME AND E-LEARNING

September 15-17

Kwansei Gakuin University (Japan)

ASIAN UNIVERSITY LEADERS PROGRAM – TIMOR LESTE ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN HIGHER EDUCATION – TIMOR LESTE

October 6-7

Ministry of Education (Democratic Republic of Timor Leste)

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Dr. Bravo-Manjares also enjoyed a class taught by a popular Silliman lecturer, Dr. Paul Lauby, who later became the United Board's general secretary. Now that she knows the organization better, particularly through the Silliman Alumni Association of New York and New Jersey, she sees ways the United Board can help its partners in Asia. "The United Board can be supportive on many fronts," she said, "by exposing higher education institutions in the Philippines to new ideas." The support of generous individual donors and alumni associations expands the resources that the United Board can devote to areas as diverse as leadership development, empowerment of women educators, service learning, or alumni relations. **UB**



UNITED BOARD

FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA

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