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YENCHING UNIVERSITY

Minutes of Conference on Postwar Rehabilitation

Time: June 29 - July 1, 1945

Place: Gramatan Hotel, Bronxville, N.Y.

Friday afternoon

Dr. Mei was elected chairman of the conference, and two committees were chosen: Business Committee - Miss Cookingham, Dr. Wolferz, Miss Boring. Program Committee - Dr. Galt, Miss Speer, Miss Boynton, Dr. Mei.

Dr. Galt reported on life in Peking during the period between December 8th and the transfer to Weihsien. He stressed the loyalty and friendliness of the Chinese and spoke of his last interview with Dr. Stuart and his last visit to the Yenching campus.

Miss Speer reported on the period of internment in Weihsien, making the special point that Yenching experience as a community was particularly helpful in the organization of the camp and in carrying on the work there.

Dr. Mei summarized the present situation at Yenching in Chengtu:

Three colleges with eleven departments

408 students registered for this term (with an increasing proportion of girl students).

2/5 of the students are registered in the College of Public Affairs; 2/5 in the College of Arts and Letters; 1/5 in the College of Natural Science. Science has suffered most because of the absence of staff and the lack of equipment.

The faculty and staff number between 85 and 90.

Principal problems faced by the University:

- (1) Bad health among the faculty and students.
- (2) No buildings belonging to the University, making it necessary to pay high rents for inadequate accommodations.
- (3) Close supervision by the Ministry of Education.
- (4) Problems of student life.
- (5) Relations with other institutions in Chengtu.

Dr. Mei had two definite conclusions:

The further away one is from Peking and Yenching, the more one feels the unique quality of Yenching training and relationships.

There is an ever increasing appreciation of Dr. Stuart and the inner core of faith which has been the inspiration of Yenching.

Although Dr. Mei has been invited to visit America by the State Department for one year, he hopes to return to the campus by the end of 1945.

Friday evening

Postwar Policy and Procedure for Reopening in Peking (discussion led by Dr. Mei).

Any plans about the future of Yenching on the old campus must be predicated upon two hypotheses: (1) Peking will be under a type of political control which will permit Yenching to reopen and under which it can function; (2) The buildings and grounds will be left sufficiently intact to permit of occupancy without complete rebuilding.

Such plans have two aspects: (1) The physical aspect, and (2) the post-war educational policy.

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The physical aspect is limited only by financial means and priorities.

The postwar educational policy must be developed with certain important considerations in mind:

(1) Postwar China will be a new China (with the end of the unequal treaties and with China admitted to a new place among the nations) and this will help rather than hinder such institutions as Yenching.

(2) The new National Government will not reduce its emphasis on education. While not always wise in the program they have followed, they have not let down on education during the war years. Institutions have been kept going and faculty members and students have been granted subsidies.

Against these considerations, we should not expand merely in competition with other universities but should choose to develop in those aspects where we will be most successful. Just what these aspects are is influenced by several unique characteristics:

(1) An atmosphere of international culture.

Inter-institutional connections such as Harvard-Yenching, etc.  
Good training in English.  
Courses with an international emphasis such as international trade.

(2) Yenching's increasing success in the field of Chinese studies -- the adaptation of Western methodology and comparative linguistics to Chinese studies.

(3) The geographical consideration. Peking might well be the new political capital; but even if it is not, it will continue to be unique as a cultural center and will also be important because of its strategic location with reference to Manchuria and the Northwest.

(4) Christian teaching.

Procedural questions connected with the reopening of Yenching in Peking.

Dr. de Vargas has been designated to act as head of a selected group of Peking Chinese. This arrangement was approved by the Peking members of the Yenching Board of Managers before we left Peking. The extent to which he can get assistance depends, of course, on the position of Dr. Porter and others in Weihsien and upon how many of the Chinese faculty and board members are still in Peking when the time for turnover arrives.

An attempt should be made to get the proper international organizations interested in the preservation of the physical plant at Yenching.

Additional suggestions:

(1) It might be possible for some of the faculty members to go onto the campus and themselves work to make it habitable again.

(2) It might be wise to admit only a freshman class at first so that the educational program could be developed step by step.

(3) Plans and suggestions for opening the university should come from more than

one place. Each group has its peculiar contribution and the Board of Trustees should have the opportunity to hear from each one.

(4) While reopening will probably be carried on with definite limitations, the way should not be closed to wise expansion.

(5) A "yü k'e" might be established for a few years.

(6) A member of the Trustees might go to China as soon as possible to act as a clearing house for ideas.

(7) It is probable that the Chengtu people would stay there until the Peking plant is ready for them.

(8) Two aspects of education which might receive special attention in the post-war reconstruction period are: engineering and agriculture.

Saturday morning

Policy of the Ministry of Education

(1) The general aim of the Ministry of Education seems to be bigger and better universities after the war. Throughout the country there has been encouragement of education throughout the war. Money has been and will be no consideration.

(2) There have been certain controls: Military training, party organization, youth organization.

(At the Sixth Plenary Session of the Kuomintang Congress, certain controls were abolished -- requirement of military training, party and youth corps membership, etc. There seems to have been general improvement. Private institutions are again permitted to have Departments of Education and thus participate in teacher training.)

(3) The government has taken a very strict point of view toward the restriction of Chinese students studying abroad because (a) possibility of profit by buying exchange at 20:1, and (b) the inappropriateness of Chinese students studying abroad during the war.

(In order to come abroad, students have to be assured of a position paying at least \$150 per month.)

Report of the Planning Committee of the Associated Boards for Christian Colleges in China (presented by Mr. Corbett.)

This report was adopted at the annual meeting of the ABCCC a short time ago. (A printed copy of this report is enclosed herewith.)

Notes on and about the Report of the Planning Committee:

(1) The most obvious Yenching problem, as set forth in the report, is its relations with Cheeloo. It has been suggested that Cheeloo should emphasize the medical college and related subjects; while Yenching should emphasize arts and letters. Cheeloo opposes this for several reasons: (a) The purportedly higher standard of living at Yenching which would make it difficult for Cheeloo students to transfer there for arts and letters work; (b) The danger that graduates would hesitate to return to the comparative-

ly more difficult life in Shantung.

(2) Cheeloo cooperation is still to be worked out. From the field point of view, Yenching is not eager to absorb other institutions.

A Findings Committee, composed of Dr. Galt, Miss Speer and Dr. Mei was appointed to sum up the trend of these discussions.

Saturday afternoon

Report on back salaries and annuities (Miss Cookingham)

Problems arising from this report: (1) Treatment of E. O. Wilson - this problem was referred to the reconstructed Administrative Committee with the addition of Dr. Mei; (2) Annuity plans.

Cultivation Contacts and Objectives (Dr. Mei)

- (1) The possibility of personal contacts to be made by Dr. Mei while he is in this country: Cultivation of institutional contacts; search for young Americans to join the staff.
- (2) Establishment of exchange professorships -- perhaps one for each college each year. In 1941 the ABCCC began investigating the possibilities of such exchanges; at that time the idea met with great enthusiasm.
- (3) Search for young Chinese graduate students who are interested in returning to Yenching.
- (4) Cultivation of contacts with the Cultural Cooperation section of the State Department which is planning to distribute books to Chinese institutions and which is planning to send visiting scholars to China.

Report on Finances (Mr. Evans)

Sunday morning

Discussion led by Miss Speer.

Differences between Christian schools in China and institutions in the United States:

- (1) Greater financial freedom of schools in China. The feeling that we have the right to ask for and expect money to be given for our use involves greater responsibility on our part.
- (2) "Spaciousness" of life in China -- a spaciousness of both space and time which makes work easier and makes it possible to know people better.
- (3) The emphasis on the democratic way of life in schools in China.
- (4) Less ingrowing and self centeredness in schools in China.
- (5) The sense of community of purpose is greater in schools in China.

There is the danger of regarding these by-products as ends in themselves.

We should consider what can and must continue to give such by-products:

Enrichment of Christian life. Postwar China will be more nationalistic and there may be an over-estimation of China's place in the world. Yenching must provide a Christian contribution against this new background.

Additional questions:

- (1) The way in which Christian universities can be an influence in the larger community in China.
- (2) The value of drawing inspiration from those who have had great experiences during the war years.
- (3) Continuation of the progress of Christian development at Yenching—from the formal Christian training at the beginning, through the anti-Christian period, to the emergence of a real Christian spirit.
- (4) Experience in occupied China should lead to a reduction of emphasis on denominational differences.
- (5) The emphasis on Christian life should continue after graduation.
- (6) The students should develop a willingness to work in Christian organizations which are not as well developed or as satisfactory as those in Yenching.
- (7) There should be additional attention to the less brilliant students.

Sunday afternoon

Suggestions regarding the re-establishment of Yenching University on its Peking site (Presented by Dr. Galt for the Findings Committee)

(1) Presuppositions:

- (a) That the city of Peking will not have been destroyed and that the campus buildings are on the whole intact and not obstructively pre-occupied.
- (b) That circumstances are such that President Stuart is not available for leadership in steps toward re-establishment.

(2) The Groups concerned:

The Special Committee for Yenching University of the newly inaugurated "Associated Boards" in New York, as the controlling body for the University, should issue directions and regulations to both China groups in such a way as to coordinate the steps taken by the two groups and promote the common enterprise.

The administrative and faculty groups at Chengtu and Peking should establish communication with each other as early as possible, seek a common understanding, and cooperate with each other under the common direction of the Committee of the Board in New York in so far as commu-

nication facilities permit.

(3) The time-span herein envisaged:

The period of time to which the present suggestions are presumed to be applicable extends to the point where Peking is free from Japanese authority and communication between Peking and New York and Peking and Chengtu are entirely free.

(4) Immediate Objective:

The immediate objective at Peking will be to obtain and maintain possession of the campus and buildings and undertake at once such rehabilitation steps as are possible.

(5) The Committee of the Trustees should make the earliest possible provision for a small executive commission, composed of representatives of both the Chengtu group and the Peking group, if possible to undertake the first steps in the rehabilitation program and proceed until, under the authority of the Trustees, a more permanent organization may be effected.

(6) As soon as circumstances permit the Trustees Committee, or their authorized representatives on the field, should provide for a consultative body at Peking, consisting of the resuscitated Board of Managers or its representatives, and selected administrative and faculty members, who shall in deliberative sessions determine the policies, methods and requirements by which the University shall establish and undertake the work of the new era.

As a tentative policy, during the early period of hasty actions, the watchwords may well be restoration and reformation -- restoration of what was good, accompanied by such measures of reform and improvement as are possible.

(7) It is suggested that the Trustees Committee make the earliest possible provision for a deputation of their own representatives to proceed to Peking, advise with the authorities on the field and report to the authorities in New York.

(8) If either of the presuppositions in section (1) proves to be untrue, some or all of these suggestions will require to be modified accordingly.