

## **Catholic Universities on Chinese Soil: Precedents from Mainland China and the Prospects for Hong Kong**

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[ABSTRACT] This paper assesses “whole person education” in a Catholic university—Furen—in the 1930s and 1940s. While we often talk about “whole person education” in contemporary settings, Chinese Catholic elite and foreign missionaries already devoted much effort in the pursuit of this area. Therefore, this paper investigates the very significant contribution of the Catholic Church to China’s development, in founding Furen University (1925-1952) in Beijing. *In doing so, it is hoped that this paper will throw light on the process of the establishment of a Catholic university in Hong Kong.* First, this paper investigates Furen University with regard to its educational provision, curriculum design and contribution to society. Second, it highlights the prominent Christian intellectuals who worked with the foreign Catholic missionaries to provide higher education. Third, it discusses these intellectuals and missionaries individually; and fourth, it compares and contrasts their philosophical approaches to modernization and “whole person education.” *Fifth, this paper compares the development of a Catholic university on the mainland in the 1930s and 1940s and in Hong Kong in the present situation.* In sum, this paper examines the mission and vision of Furen University in providing higher education for the youth of China. Furen University sought to cultivate a Chinese elite capable of contributing to China’s modernization and upholding Catholic beliefs and values. Catholic educators provided Chinese students with all round education emphasizing whole person development. *Therefore, this paper addresses the contemporary discussion of “whole person education” from a historical perspective. The history of Furen inspires more thinking about a Catholic university in Hong Kong.*

## **Introduction**

In an unprecedented move, Hong Kong is considering establishing a Catholic university. There have been reports on the prospects of such a university for many years, and the impetus has come from both inside and outside Hong Kong. In the beginning, the ambitions of the American Jesuits (Society of Jesus) garnered a great deal of attention from the Catholic community, the media, and society. The Jesuits, who have become famous and respected for their level of education worldwide, were initially expected to succeed. However, following difficulties with the local government, people lost hope that a Jesuit liberal arts university would be established in Hong Kong.

Although the American Jesuits remained persistent in their endeavor, the Hong Kong Catholic Church put forth another option. Given the existing vocational training provided by the Caritas, its two tertiary institutions could be developed to form a Catholic university in Hong Kong. Based on Caritas' history of offering practical education to young people, the proposed university would be different from the one envisioned by the American Jesuits in that it would continue to focus on vocational training for students, inheriting the Caritas' tradition of helping graduates secure openings in competitive job markets and the business world.

It would be an historic event were a Catholic university to be established on Chinese soil; specifically, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR). In 1952, the two Catholic universities in China—Zhendan (Aurora

University震旦大學 1903-1952) in Shanghai and Furen (Fu Jen Catholic University of Peking輔仁大學 1925-1952) in Beijing—were dismantled.<sup>1</sup>

This paper examines whether their histories provide insights into the future of Catholic universities in Hong Kong. How did Zhendan and Furen Universities adapt to China’s changing circumstances? What types of curricula did the two universities develop to serve the Chinese communities in the first half of the twentieth century? What type of moral education did they offer to the Chinese at that time? The achievements of these two universities could be a guiding light for the future of Catholic universities in Hong Kong. Here, the past is used to illuminate the present, and to deduce what the future holds for Hong Kong.

### **Efforts inside and outside Hong Kong**

In late 2011, the Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN) reported that the American Jesuits were eager to open a liberal arts university in Hong Kong. At that time, the Jesuits hoped that they could successfully launch their plan within three or four years.<sup>2</sup> According to Fr. Michael McFarland, SJ (from the United States), the Jesuits’ vision was of a university that could provide local students with a holistic education, equip young people with critical thinking skills, and groom the future leaders of Hong Kong. The proposed university would include courses in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences for about 3,000 students.<sup>3</sup> In addition, religious studies would be compulsory for all students. At that time, the Jesuits were competing with

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<sup>1</sup> It is a usual academic practice to use pinyin to cite the names of the two universities. Recent books and journal articles have referred to them as Zhendan and Furen.

<sup>2</sup> “Plans for Jesuit University Face Some Challenges,” October 19, 2011. <http://sundayex.catholic.org.hk/node/145> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

other institutions for a piece of land as the future campus site, and because they had long been running secondary schools in Hong Kong, they were seeking financial support from alumni for the university project.<sup>4</sup> They engaged in long-term fund raising and bidding on land that could house the university. During this process, there were many challenges. Regrettably, in 2015, after many trials and failures, the Jesuits announced their decision to abandon the plan for a Catholic university on Chinese soil.

Despite the withdrawal of the American Jesuits, the Hong Kong Catholic Church is now pursuing the establishment of a Catholic university for local students. Seeking financial aid from the Hong Kong Catholic population, Caritas intends to open “a private and self-financed Catholic university to provide holistic higher education” for the younger generations.<sup>5</sup> Both the existing Caritas Institute of Higher Education and Caritas Bianchi College of Careers aim to become constituent colleges of the future Catholic university.

A site was secured in Tseung Kwan O and the campus was completed in 2009 for the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers, with a capacity of 1,700 students. Subsequently, the Caritas Institute of Higher Education also received an adjacent piece of land for its campus.<sup>6</sup> Both the Caritas Institute of Higher Education and the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers have received enormous attention and support, and are expected to ultimately transform into a Catholic university in Hong Kong. The motto of the future university was taken from the Bible: “I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phi

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/donation/en/index.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

3:13-14). Building on the solid foundation of the Caritas institutes, the projected Catholic university would be able to provide local students with the education to help them secure jobs and advance to higher positions in society.

### **The Caritas Institute of Higher Education (明愛專上學院CIHE)**

The Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) was developed from the former Caritas Francis Hsu College (明愛徐誠斌學院), which had a more than 30-year history. The newly built campus in Tseung Kwan O is to house the CIHE, and provides enough space for future expansion. The long-term objective is to promote the institute as a constituent college of a Catholic university, Saint Francis University, in a few years' time.

Throughout the decades, the former Caritas Francis Hsu College had been offering programs for higher diplomas and associate degrees,<sup>7</sup> including courses in accounting, corporate management, computer studies, translation, and social work. In 2010, Caritas Francis Hsu College was reviewed by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), and was ultimately given degree-conferring status. In May 2011, Caritas Francis Hsu College was renamed the CIHE<sup>8</sup> and began to grant Bachelor's degrees in accountancy, corporate management, information systems, hotel management, marketing and event management, and tourism management.

In May 2012, the government granted a piece of the land at Tseung Kwan O, which was close to the campus of the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers,

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<sup>7</sup> *Towards a Catholic University* (Hong Kong: Caritas Institute of Higher Education and Caritas Bianchi College of Careers, September 2013), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

for the building of a campus for the CIHE. In 2013, the CIHE opened two new programs: a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Language and Liberal Studies and a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honors). According to its official statement, the CIHE intends to establish a private Catholic university in Hong Kong via “the delivery of Degree programmes in various disciplines, the improvement of staff members’ academic profiles, and persistent effort in seeking donations and other forms of external funding to support its future development.”<sup>9</sup> In addition to opening more programs, the CIHE also aims to recruit more capable academic staff members. This decision to hire staff members of higher standing was also included in the message given by the CIHE’s president in 2015: “In the years to come, CIHE will be committed to strengthening its research infrastructure, and to encouraging both its academic staff members and students to engage in research projects and academic activities . . . The recruitment of high-caliber academic staff with strong research backgrounds also contributes to the enhancement of the quality of research and teaching, and to the educational experiences of the students.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the CIHE has secured the land, moved toward opening more programs, and put considerable emphasis on hiring competent academic staff members for existing and new programs. The expansion of academic programs and staff have been constant concerns of China’s Catholic universities, both past and future. They were key items of the agendas of the two Catholic universities in twentieth-century China, with the teaching staff coming from abroad and recruitment of the local elite. The situation is the same in Hong Kong today.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “Message from the President,” May 2015, Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/about/ourrole/message.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

At present, the CIHE has five schools: Business and Hospitality Management, Computing and Information Sciences, Humanities and Languages, Health Sciences, and Social Sciences. According to information provided by the School of Business and Hospitality Management, its programs are specially tailored for the current needs of Hong Kong society, particularly the business and tourism sectors. It offers a number of fields of study, including accounting, finance, taxation, marketing, law, information systems, and event and hotel management. In addition to a professional education, the School of Business and Hospitality Management also emphasizes students’ personal development and concern for their future prospects. The School hopes to enable continued academic opportunities for its graduates by aligning with local and foreign universities.<sup>11</sup>

The School of Computing and Information Sciences states that it both focuses on the professional education of its students and supports their moral development.<sup>12</sup> The School of Humanities and Languages states its commitment “to bringing together academic excellence and contemporary awareness ... as well as fostering knowledge, competence and team spirit in achieving holistic education.”<sup>13</sup> In addition to educating students, it is often emphasized that young people must be aware of current issues, and use their knowledge to meet society’s needs. This paper sees moral and holistic education as common among the institutes, both past and present.

The School of Health Sciences has teaching staff with significant experience in nursing and related services that greatly benefit students’

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<sup>11</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/academic/business/index.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/academic/cs/index.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/academic/gels/index.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

education. Similar to the other schools, the School of Health Sciences also upholds the ideal of encouraging “a passion for lifelong learning and continuing professional development” among its students. As stated, “Graduates’ knowledge, skills, professional and caring attitudes as well as abilities to think critically and seek self-improvement are essential core values of the School.”<sup>14</sup> Finally, the School of Social Sciences, which offers subjects such as Social Work, Sociology, Psychology, and Cultural Studies, has the following motto: “Our School aims at preparing our students to be BRIGHT and STRONG. We will use our lives to light up those of others. We will display the strengths of self-confidence, self-reliance, and independence. Withstand adversity; Look beyond moments of loss; Have faith in our beliefs when alone. Be Bright! Be Strong!”<sup>15</sup>

As the aforementioned paragraphs show, the CIHE is very aware of the swiftly changing demands of Hong Kong society and the world, and designs its programs to suit these contemporary needs. This is not surprising, as universities and higher institutions all over the world are working toward this goal. Perhaps more importantly, the CIHE cares about its’ students’ spiritual growth, self-esteem, holistic education, and future academic pursuits. This focus on the moral education of students is common among the Catholic institutes.

One essential element of present-day higher institutes is the desire to communicate and collaborate with other institutions in mainland China and overseas. Exchange programs with students of other institutes are valuable. This idea of international exchange is not new, as the two Catholic universities—Zhendan and Furen—were excellent examples of cross-cultural

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<sup>14</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/academic/hs/index.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/academic/ss/index.html> (Accessed June 24, 2016).



exchange and the blending of Chinese and Western cultures and values. They set the model of injecting the characteristics of external systems into the higher education of Chinese students.

### **The Caritas Bianchi College of Careers (明愛白英奇專業學校 CBCC)**

Established in 1971, the CBCC, which is situated in Tseung Kwan O, is well known for its programs in business, design, hospitality management, and health sciences.<sup>16</sup> Its present campus in Tseung Kwan O has been in use since 2009. In 2013, the CBCC began offering the Higher Diploma in Pharmaceutical Dispensing Program. The CBCC decided to offer an alternate tertiary education path with a “professional and vocational orientation to facilitate ... academic and career advancement.”<sup>17</sup> The CBCC’s vision statement is as follows:<sup>18</sup>

*The College aspires to be a leading community college, nationally recognized for excellence and innovation in higher and continuing education and student success, working on the basis of the values of the Catholic tradition of education. CBCC will be the primary choice of students seeking an associate or advanced degree, preparing for the job market, and/or pursuing career advancement or personal development. In the long run, the College aspires to be a constituent college of the future Catholic University in Hong Kong.*

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<sup>16</sup> *Towards a Catholic University*, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cbcc.edu.hk/eng/college/vision.html> (Accessed June 27, 2016).

The CBCC emphasizes its Catholic tradition and the objective of becoming part of the future Catholic university of Hong Kong. This desire to be the key building block of a Catholic university demonstrates the importance associated with the spiritual education of the students, who will contribute to Hong Kong's ever growing and changing society. Thus, the CBCC's mission strongly emphasizes Catholic values:<sup>19</sup>

*[The College's commitment is] to preserve, promote and perpetuate Catholic values, and to provide students with a holistic education. In line with its mission, CBCC forms an integral part of the higher education system in Hong Kong focusing on the needs of the society with emphasis on the least, the lost and the last individuals in our community, with the aim to develop them as persons who are morally and socially concerned, valued, caring, culturally involved and opened-minded, well-trained, matured and responsible citizens adhering to the needs of our society.*

The Catholic tradition, as demonstrated in the CBCC's mission statement, upholds the whole person education of students, their transformation into upright and socially engaging young people, and their respect for and service to society's disadvantaged. To be a socially responsible person, students must be aware of what is happening around them, in Hong Kong and in the world. Students gain not only knowledge, but also the skills to become "contributing citizens" in global society.

The CBCC has four full-time programs, offered by the Departments of Business and Hospitality Management, Design, General Education and

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Language Studies, and Health Sciences.<sup>20</sup> The Department of Business and Hospitality Management can be traced back to 1971, although Business and Hospitality Management were two separate departments then. Its aim was “to nurture all-round graduates who will become future leaders in the communities as well as professionals in the relevant industries.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the departmental objective is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also the cultivation of students’ personalities and awareness.

The CBCC’s Department of Design believes that the students must have “international, historical and cultural knowledge and experience” to become professional practitioners.<sup>22</sup> It aims to prepare students for further studies after graduation. The Department of Design has connections with outside companies that provide students with chances to learn through engagement in the local industries. It stresses internship programs that offer students’ experiences in competitive work environments. The Department of General Education and Language Studies asks the students to cultivate an awareness of current world issues when pursuing successful future careers. Of special interest is its Higher Diploma in Translation and Interpretation. The students in this department benefit from language courses, language enhancement courses, and IELTS preparation courses.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Department of Health Sciences has launched a full- or part-time Higher Diploma in Pharmaceutical Dispensing for CBCC students.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cbcc.edu.hk/eng/programmes/index.html> (Accessed June 27, 2016).

<sup>21</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cbcc.edu.hk/eng/academic/bhm/index.html> (Accessed June 27, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> Please refer to <http://www.cbcc.edu.hk/eng/academic/design/index.html> (Accessed June 27, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Please read <http://www.cbcc.edu.hk/eng/academic/gels/index.html> (Assessed June 27, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Please read <http://www.cbcc.edu.hk/eng/programmes/fulltime/hs/hd.html> (Accessed June 27, 2016).

## **Existing Higher Learning Institutes Contributing to the Future Saint Francis University in Hong Kong**

Both the CIHE and the CBCC have a long history of serving local students to prepare them for their future careers. This is very similar to Zhendan and Furen Universities, which offered programs that furthered the modernization of China in the first half of the twentieth century. Chinese universities must consider the needs of the outside world, and serve as platforms for exchanges with institutes outside China. Cross-cultural exchange, which long existed in Chinese Catholic history, is still of prime significance in present-day Hong Kong. The Catholic traditions of holistic education, moral education, emphasis on spirituality, cultivation of social awareness, and willingness to serve one's own people have always been valuable and beneficial to Chinese societies. The CIHE and the CBCC have inherited these traditions, and both would contribute tremendously to becoming a constituent college of the future Saint Francis University of Hong Kong.

### **Zhendan University (Aurora University 震旦大學 1903-1952) in Shanghai**

In 1903, Ma Xiangbo (馬相伯 1840-1939) established Zhendan University in Xujiahui, Shanghai, supported by the French Jesuits. Ma had received education from the Jesuits and became a priest though he later left the priesthood and got married. Subsequently, Ma tried to contribute to government reform but without much success. After the death of his wife and the growing up of his children, Ma decided to pursue a celibate life.<sup>25</sup> He then

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<sup>25</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest, *Ma Xiangbo: Pioneer of Educational Reform in China*, CSRCS Occasional Paper No. 9 (Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2002), pp. 2-5.

devoted his energy to tertiary education. Historian Jean-Paul Wiest is the leading authority on the Chinese Catholic Church, a subject on which he has published extensively. Wiest highly praises Ma Xiangbo’s contribution to university education in China. Zhendan University (Zhendan meant “a promising future”) was the first Catholic university on Chinese soil. Initially, Ma was able to collaborate with the French Jesuits to combine the Chinese way of learning with the French education system. Zhendan University provided the Chinese people with excellent tertiary education, and cultivated Chinese translators for Western books on the arts and sciences. Translated into Chinese, the knowledge from the foreign publications was of crucial significance to the modernization of China in the early twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Inspired by the French education system, Ma had hoped to transform it to suit China’s situation. Therefore, Zhendan University adapted to the circumstances of the time and offered the country what it needed most; that is, to borrow foreign knowledge and save China from its possible demise.

In the beginning, Zhendan University had a two-year curriculum.<sup>27</sup> In addition to Latin, the students had to master another language, specifically, French, English, German, or Italian. This allowed them to translate Western books into Chinese. The arts students focused on “history, geography, politics, sociology, economics and international law”<sup>28</sup> while the science students worked on translating works of “physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and natural sciences.”<sup>29</sup> As Wiest says, “at Zhendan, the study of languages served as a means of insertion into the Western culture.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Wiest, *Ma Xiangbo: Pioneer of Educational Reform in China*, p. 17.

Ma emphasized both Chinese and Western cultures, and tried to avoid religious conflicts.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, he soon engaged in arguments with the French Jesuits on how Zhendan University should be run. In planning the university's administration, Ma had given quite a lot of authority and say to the students on how matters should be handled.<sup>32</sup> He respected the students' role even in political movements, allowing them to criticize political authority and engage in struggles against the Qing regime.<sup>33</sup> However, the French Jesuits' did not feel that the students should take part in running the university, and the Jesuits thought that the students' demonstrations against the Qing government had created tremendous problems that were detrimental to the university's development. Regarding the students' role in the university, society, and politics, Ma and the French Jesuits had opposing perspectives.

Eventually, Ma stepped down from the administration. After he left the university, the French Jesuits focused on making Zhendan a highly esteemed academic institute. They were eager to recruit the best in their country to the education system in early twentieth-century China.<sup>34</sup> The faculties of law, medicine, and engineering opened gradually. To attract suitable personnel to teach the Chinese students, the French brought young Jesuits from their country to serve in China. The fundamental principle of the French Jesuits was that "Chinese students could have the benefits of a European education on native soil."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ruth Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging of a Chinese University Ethos: Zhendan and Fudan, 1903-1919," *China Quarterly*, No. 94 (June 1983), p. 329.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

<sup>34</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations: Shifting Models of Mission among Jesuits in China," *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 4 (October 1997), pp. 669-70.

<sup>35</sup> Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging of a Chinese University Ethos," p. 333.

Under the Jesuits’ direction, the French language had almost become the medium of instruction for all students by 1908.<sup>36</sup> In 1914, the Faculty of Arts offered general arts and law for students over their four years of study at the university. The Faculty of Science provided students with three-year programs in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics, plus an additional two years of Engineering Studies.<sup>37</sup> The Faculty of Medicine required six years of study in “anatomy, embryology, physiology and histology.”<sup>38</sup> There were also classes on “pathology, obstetrics, surgery and internal pathology.”<sup>39</sup> The French Jesuits were eager to produce a faculty of professional elite for the new Republican China, which urgently needed intellectuals to help strengthen the country.

### **Furen University (Fu Jen Catholic University of Peking 輔仁大學 1925-1952) in Beijing**

Ying Lianzhi (英斂之 1867-1926) had been under the influence of Ma Xiangbo. Thus, in 1912, Ying and Ma wrote to Pope Pius X and asked for permission to establish a Catholic university that could serve as a driving force for Catholic activities in China. As Xiaoxin Wu writes, unlike Zhendan University, Furen University was intended “to supply the demand of a large group of the younger Chinese for higher education under Christian auspices,” and was “not intended to be primarily a professional school,” but was “to lay special emphasis on general culture and learning,” for the Chinese people.<sup>40</sup> In 1913, Ying created the Furenshe (literally “Furen Society” 輔仁社) for about

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Hayhoe, “Towards the Forging of a Chinese University Ethos,” pp. 333-334.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Xiaoxin Wu, *A Case Study of the Catholic University of Peking during the Benedictine Period (1927-1933)* (Ed.D., University of San Francisco, 1993), p. 29.

40 men, with the objective of introducing them to “Chinese Christian scholarship;”<sup>41</sup> later, financial aid from the United States facilitated the realization of Furen University (Furen implied intellectuals collaborating for the cultivation of a virtuous spirit).

In 1923, the Roman Catholic Church gave the task of establishing the new Catholic university to the American Benedictine monks from the Archabbey of Saint Vincent. What made this possible? Three years before, in 1920, Rev. Dr. Barry O’Toole went to China and met with Ying Lianzhi. Rev. O’Toole agreed with the idea of a Catholic university, and discussed how to proceed with the Benedictines, who then supported Ying’s petition to the pope.<sup>42</sup> The pope gave his consent and the Benedictines accepted the responsibility for planning and opening the university in China. As a pamphlet on Furen University (undated; probably published in 1945) stated, “The Rt. Rev. Archabbot, Aurelius Stehle, O.S.B, of St. Vincent’s was appointed first Chancellor in 1924 and through him, Dr. O’Toole was appointed first Rector.”<sup>43</sup> In 1926, Ying passed away. Later, the famous historian Chen Yuan (陳垣, 1880-1971) took up the leadership of Furen University.

In the beginning, Furen University only had the College of Arts and Letters.<sup>44</sup> In 1929, the Colleges of Natural Sciences and Education were established. Around this time, Dom Adalbert Gresnigt, OSB was credited with designing the university building.<sup>45</sup> In 1930, Furen University received permanent registration from the government. Thus, in a very short time, the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>42</sup> “The Catholic University of Peking,” n.d. [1945?], published by Furen University, Fu Jen Catholic University Archives, Taipei (hereafter FJU Archives).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.



Benedictines had contributed a great deal to the university, both its physical structure and academic profile. Furen University was becoming a respected institute. Nevertheless, the project was a tremendous financial burden for the Benedictine monks, and in 1933, the German Society of the Divine Word (SVD) took over the sponsorship of Furen University.

From 1933 onward, Furen University was under the management of the SVD. Throughout these years, the university expanded its undergraduate division and moved on to create a graduate division. The undergraduate division comprised the Colleges of Arts and Letters, Natural Sciences, and Education. In the 1944/45 academic year, the College of Arts and Letters comprised the Departments of (1) Chinese Language and Literature, (2) Foreign Languages and Literature (English, French, German, and Japanese), (3) History, (4) Sociology, and (5) Economics. The College of Natural Sciences comprised the Departments of (1) Mathematics and Physics, (2) Chemistry, and (3) Biology. The College of Education comprised the Departments of (1) Education, (2) Philosophy and Psychology, (3) Home Economics, and (4) Fine Arts.<sup>46</sup>

One of Furen University's distinguishing features was its respect for Chinese culture. The university had its own Sinological journals, such as *Fu Jen Hsüeh Chih*, which was published twice a year in Chinese; *Monumenta Serica*, published twice a year in three foreign languages; and *Folklore Studies*, published once a year, also in three languages.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Furen had a Folklore Museum for the appreciation of Chinese customs, and the Association for the Promotion of Chinese Christian Art.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

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In summary, Furen University offered a wide range of programs and subjects that enabled Chinese students to acquire the knowledge necessary for their country's modernization. Like Zhendan University, Furen also recognized the importance of learning foreign languages, as doing so enabled the Chinese to borrow what they could from the West for their own use, and enhanced their understanding of foreign perspectives, promoting new ways of handling matters. Proficiency in foreign languages was important for students in terms of further studies and careers. In addition, the education offered by Furen University gave the Chinese excellent opportunities for cross-cultural exchange. The fact that the university's staff members claimed many nationalities gave the Chinese students of the time unique opportunities for direct contact and communication with foreigners. The university also demonstrated a deep appreciation of Chinese history and culture, thus its students valued their own Chinese traditions while acknowledging the value of Western learning.

### **The Future Saint Francis University and the Zhendan and Furen Universities**

Caritas and the local Catholic Church intend the future Saint Francis University to be developed from the existing CIHE and CBCC. There are similarities between these two Caritas institutes and the two Catholic universities in mainland China in the first half of the twentieth century. Both the CIHE and CBCC have many years of history in Hong Kong, and under the leadership of Caritas have been offering very practical vocational training to local students. The schools of the CIHE, namely, Business and Hospitality Management, Computing and Information Sciences, Humanities and Languages, Health Sciences, and Social Sciences, have designed their programs for Hong Kong's economic and business environments. After

graduation, CIHE students will be able to secure jobs that benefit society. The CIHE grants Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Sciences degrees, similar to Furen University, which had the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Natural Sciences. Thus, the CIHE and Furen University aimed to equip their students with the basic and practical knowledge needed for their future careers so that they can serve society in accordance with its needs and circumstances.

They also emphasize holistic education for their students. The CIHE has asked its students to be bright, strong, self-confident, and self-reliant. This is similar to the initial education of Ma Xiangbo at Zhendan, in which he even entrusted the university’s administration to the students. Although what the CIHE asks and Ma at Zhendan University asked of their students require different levels of competence, both showed strong faith in the students’ ability and sense of maturity. In addition, the CIHE, the CBCC, Zhendan University, and Furen University encouraged their students to develop wider perspectives, and to look beyond themselves and beyond China to behave as world citizens. This is of no surprise, as Zhendan and Furen were the products of collaboration between Chinese elites and foreign missionaries. The CIHE and CBCC have also mirrored the Catholic Church’s global outlook. The contemporary concept of the “internationalization” of tertiary education began in mainland China in the early twentieth century.

Interestingly, the CBCC offers programs in translation, and Zhendan University trained students to serve as translators for Western books on arts and sciences. In the early twentieth century, the Chinese were eager to learn more from the West. In the present day, globalization is a key concept that appears in a wide range of terminology. The desire to link Catholic universities with the wider world has a long history, and is not merely a

contemporary phenomenon. This push for broader networking is also useful in hiring competent staff for the universities. The CBCC has been very eager to recruit high-caliber academic staff, and so was Zhendan University, where the French Jesuits requested younger missionaries from their home country to serve as teaching staff in China. Because the Catholic Church values education, its universities strive to promote their own profiles. Both Zhendan and Furen were highly esteemed institutes in modern China. Now, having gained attention, the CIHE and the CBCC are expected to rise in status and academic recognition. Given how competitive Hong Kong universities are, the future Saint Francis University will have to demonstrate its credibility to local society.

In a document probably published in the early 1930s, the SVD outlined certain objectives for Furen University.<sup>49</sup> In them, it is possible to discern the SVD's mission when it took charge of the university. Could the SVD's mission statement be relevant to the future Saint Francis University? Furen was the youngest among the Chinese universities at that time.<sup>50</sup> This will also be true of Saint Francis. Thus, Furen University in the early 1930s was comparable to the future Catholic university in Hong Kong. In what ways are the concerns of the two universities (in different time periods) similar?

A Furen University document stated: "So now we can say that the Catholic University is the greatest center for advanced studies in North China. ... But when we think of the future, especially after the return of normal times, we begin to feel a little anxiety. We feel that our problem from now on should be how to maintain this position and how to improve it

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<sup>49</sup> "Suggestions for the Stability and Further Development of the Catholic University of Peking," n.d. (early 1930s?), 4 pages, FJU Archives.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

continuously.”<sup>51</sup> There was concern over how to stabilize Furen University to maintain its status as an esteemed institute despite its short history in China. Such thought is applicable to the future Saint Francis University. The CIHE and the CBCC have established their names in serving local society, but in their transformation into a university, much effort would be needed to prove the quality of Catholic education in Hong Kong. Saint Francis University would be the youngest among its local counterparts, and thus would need to focus on establishing its name in the community.

*Universities need a stable source of funding for their future.* In the early 1930s, Furen University was keen on maintaining a stable environment for its advancement. Therefore, there was much emphasis on its endowment fund. In the present day, the local Catholic university would also benefit from reliable sources of income. As a young university, the securing of donations will be an important task.

*Universities seek to have the best professors to enhance their status.* In the Furen document, there was concern that the university’s reputation depended on its academic staff.<sup>52</sup> It said, “It would be to the best interest of the University to keep all the good professors, to give them opportunities for self-improvement, and to try to engage more new ones of high standing.”<sup>53</sup> At Furen University, there were discussions on how to revise salaries, teaching hours, promotion opportunities, and the pension system for academic staff. In Hong Kong, the 2015 message from the president of the CIHE states: “The recruitment of high-caliber academic staff with strong research backgrounds

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Suggestions for the Stability and Further Development of the Catholic University of Peking,” p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

also contributes to the enhancement of the quality of research and teaching, and to the educational experiences of the students.”<sup>54</sup> In Furen University in the 1930s and in the present-day CIHE, management authorities face the same issue of attracting the best people for the development of the institutes.

## Conclusion

Catholic universities have upheld the tradition of providing holistic and moral education. They have responded to the needs of the society and designed their programs in accordance with the local population’s wishes. There has always been the concern that a Catholic university should respond to the desires of the people it serves. In the early twentieth century, Zhendan and Furen were the only two Catholic universities in China. Thus, they had to perform well to demonstrate the sincerity and determination of the Roman Catholic Church in offering an excellent education to the Chinese people. Zhendan and Furen also served as a platform for cross-cultural exchange between foreign missionaries and the local elite and students. Through their educational programs, the Chinese people learned more about the Catholic model of scholarship, and had the chance to acquire Western knowledge through collaborations with foreign missionaries and Chinese scholars.

These days, “internationalization” is the trend in Hong Kong society. Universities and tertiary institutions aim to engage in foreign exchange programs with overseas counterparts. Local students also like to travel abroad for one or two semesters during their university studies. This type of cultural exchange was already practiced in the times of Zhendan and Furen Universities. During the early twentieth century, the two Catholic universities

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<sup>54</sup> “Message from the President,” May 2015. Please refer to <http://www.cihe.edu.hk/eng/about/ourrole/message.html> (Accessed July 6, 2016).

appreciated Chinese history and culture while encouraging students to study more than one foreign language. As a result, the students of Zhendan and Furen Universities were able to compare Chinese and Western thought and select those aspects of their own culture and foreign achievements necessary to enhance their own outlooks.

The future Saint Francis University would be a milestone in Hong Kong and Chinese history, as it would be the third Catholic university on Chinese soil. How would Saint Francis University showcase itself? Its academic programs would definitely suit the interests and needs of local students. It would provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge not only limited to Hong Kong society but also known and practiced around the world. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, the students would receive an education that benefits their personal advancement. They would learn not only the skills but also the values required of a world citizen in the twenty-first century. The students should be bright, strong, mature, and willing to work with each other. They should be outgoing, anxious to learn, and reaching out to the far corners of the world. In planning for so many years, Saint Francis University has attracted much attention. Naturally, it has been the focus of the local Catholic communities. There have been high hopes for what it might offer. Thanks to the passion, effort, and expectations of local Catholics (and even non-Catholics), the university is off to a good start. As the current operation of the CIHE and CBCC reveal, Saint Francis University would begin with a solid foundation for the education of local young people, and its future achievements would act as a model of how a Catholic university might succeed on Chinese soil. In the twentieth century, Zhendan and Furen Universities proved themselves to be esteemed institutes that contributed to the modernization of China. In the present day, Saint Francis University would

follow the endeavors of its predecessors in mainland China and contribute to the future of Hong Kong.

[摘要] 香港將有其天主教大學，這是在中華人民共和國領土上一件不簡單的事情，甚具歷史意義。日後，香港的聖方濟各大學會有何等的發展呢？我們可否向歷史學習？在過往中國二十世紀的前半期，曾出現兩所天主教大學，即上海的震旦大學（1903-1952）及北京的輔仁大學（1925-1952）。這篇文章探討這兩所大學的教學理念及其實踐，藉此，看看其能否作為香港的聖方濟各大學的明燈。聖方濟各大學是否應該跟其他本地大學有所不同？天主教大學向來都是緊隨着社會的步伐，為社會培養人材，亦在某程度上提供德育的培訓。這篇文章把香港最近的發展與中國天主教歷史合而為一，以此，展望將來。