FEATURE

Yale-in-China and Me - Part 2

—"Bulldog, Bulldog. Rah Rah Rah. Eli Yale." I heard this battle cry of Yale men, not at the game with Harvard in New Haven last week, but in Changshaf&, China, 67 years ago — 1936. —

By Jesse Hwa

Missionaries and Bachelors

We rubbed elbows with the so-called Bachelors. I need to explain. They were fresh Yale graduates who volunteered to spend their first and sometimes the second year after graduation to teach at Yali. They received no salary, but supported by their classmates. All told, there were over 70 Bachelors who served in that era. I believe firmly that the stint of those young graduates in China was likewise a jewel in their lives as they reminisced their life history. The Bachelor at the time when I was there in 1936 was Oscar Rand who taught my English class. Later right after the war in 1945,1 met Oscar again in Shanghai. He was then a handsome naval officer in crisp uniform serving on the flag ship of one of the U.S. Pacific fleets, and I was a college graduate teeming with ambition to go to America for graduate studies. I had dinner with him, along with my father and brothers. We asked him what his most memorable moment during the war was — a question meant to share in his excitement of the war. He said it was when his fleet landed in Leyte on MacArthur's return to the Philippines, and when two Japanese fleets sailed toward Leyte in a giant panzer squeeze. At that moment "Bull" Halsey was chasing after a Japanese decoy fleet; it let the landing forces unguarded and vulnerable. Had the Japanese succeeded, the American landing forces would face total destruction. Fortunately that did not happen.

Shortly after my arrival, I saw a Bachelor playing Chinese chess with a Chinese boy. I closed in. As I knew something about chess playing, I thought I could show the foreigner something I knew. I said to him that he would make that move. That Bachelor slowly raised his head, turned around, and gave me the meanest look I ever remembered. That was a moment I learned about how to watch people play chess.

In another occasion a Bachelor was showing some Chinese boys about American football. I watched. One boy tried to dribble the ball, but it bounced crooked. The Bachelor cried: "No, no, no. Boo pei chio (don't dribble ball)."

There was another Bachelor called Schuyler Cammann who was interested in Chinese archeology. In Hunan there were many earthen mounts, or Chinese graves. Because sometimes valuable treasures were buried in the mounts, grave diggers sought after them and worked by night in secret. I saw some of those night lights at a distance, as Cammann pointed out to me. He said most of the time, the diggers found only minor artifacts, such as an up-side-down clay bowl with a small pig inside. It meant in Chinese "chia (home)," my middle name, i.e. a roof with a pig within. Sometimes they had more valuable finds such as sculptured objects. (In later years local Chinese authorities accused Cammann as stealing Chinese treasures. In the 60s Cammann was professor of Oriental Studies at University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. I got in touch with him again. We became friends for many years since.)

"Such results [produced by the bachelors] do not come by chance, and the lifeblood of some of the best of Yale's sons has gone into the institution," as Kenneth Latourette, one of the early pioneers of Yale-in-China, was quoted in Reuben Holden's biography of *Yale in China — The Mainland 1901-1951.*

We had only a few interactions directly with missionaries. One was that my brothers and

I took some piano lesson from Mrs. Rugh, wife of Mr. Dwight Rugh who then was Yale-in-China's representative in Changsha. They had a little girl who I think is now in her 70s. I did not learn much piano as it was hard for a not-so-interested boy to practice without parental pressure.

One day Dean Ying called me and my two brothers out of our classrooms to meet a missionary lady who wanted to take a picture of us brothers — the second generation and the three sons of the famous soccer star a generation ago. She did, and later I saw that picture in a publication.

Special Happenings in School

In the junior school we had an elective of special interests in the evening once a week, such as Glee Club or news discussion. I elected the latter. The leaders were upperclassmen who listened to short-wave and explained the news to us little ones. One night one upperclassman spoke with a wink and a smile: "Tonight we have some romance to report. The King of England has just resigned from his throne as a king. He is going to marry a divorced American woman."

There were also some tense days. Generalissimo Chiang, our leader, was reported to be in "soft confinement" by Marshall Chang for reasons I did not comprehend at the time. This was later known as the "Sian Incident" where Chiang was held incommunicado in Sian by Marshal Chang and the communist faction for wanting Chiang to agree to join the Communists to resist and fight Japanese imperialism. Then one evening during studies, the whole student body was asked to gather outside at the compound to await for some radio announcement. Shortly after we were there, a loud speaker broadcast a special news: "The plane carrying Generalissimo and the Madame (Chiang) had just landed safely in the Nanking Airport. They emerged unharmed." The student body burst in a wild roar. Principal Lao then ordered a parade to celebrate the occasion. So the whole student body snaked out in pairs, singing, shouting, some playing small drums with two sticks, me banging on a big drum — boom boom boom, boom boom boom — as it was the beat of the march and was easy for me to do. The song most familiar to us and sung most enthusiastically was "Chee lai (rise up), you who don't want to be slaves..." That was probably the most popular Chinese wartime song sung by the populous. The music of this song is now that of PRC's National Anthem. And there were firecrackers galore and other schools were also marching. We marched for one and a half hour (I looked at my watch and noted it) through the main streets of Changsha. By the time we returned to the campus, a white cloud from all the firecrackers fired over the entire city hung about six feet high from the ground. Years later when I was in Sian, I was ushered by my Communist hosts to see a site marked as that when the "cowardly" Chiang tried to escape but was caught.

Once there was a soccer match between the teams from Hsiang-Ya and Yali, to determine which one was to represent Hunan Province in the national soccer meet. The score was zero zero. But we felt that there was an unfair call by the referee that Yali should have scored. To protest and to celebrate our unofficial victory. Principal Lao ordered to set off firecrackers.

The entire school once had a one-day outing to Yuelo Mountain to the west of Changsha. The entire student body and staff went. To get there we walked and then had to cross the Hsiang River by boat or by swimming. I swam part of the way. The water was very clear, almost good enough to drink. One reason was that upstream of the river, there was little industry and the water was not polluted in those days. I saw the kitchen crew carry big covered baskets of our beloved steamed bums on bouncing bamboo poles. We played one game there, called Dragon Ball, where large number of boys from two teams supported a huge ball — at least about four feet in diameter — with their raised hands. The goal was to push the ball in the air to the other side. It was the senior vs. the junior boys. "Jump, jump," the teachers on the side cheered. As a little boy, I jumped but barely could touch the ball. Guess

which team won — the big senior boys. That was the atmosphere that the Yali school wanted to build health and character in their education goals.

Once night suddenly there was a swarm of termites flying around lights bulbs in our classrooms. The caretaker raised a large pan of boiling water just below the light bulb to drown the insects. The next day I saw a termite sleuth at work. He dug out some earth outside of the classroom. There lay many small tunnels in the soil. The man used a straw, carefully inserted it into several tunnels and smelled the straw after each insertion. After one smelling, he pointed one direction and told several helpers standing by: "Dig." Sure enough, there the huge termite nest was discovered, scooped up quickly and burned. We never had any reoccurrence since.

Life in Changsha Away From School

Remember the well-to-do Chen family in Changsha where my parents met? Well, T. H. Chen, my father's schoolmate, also had a son of our age. He too attended Yali. So we three brothers often went to his house at weekends, as our father did. As their house was at the south end of Changsha, we had to cut through the mid-city from the north. To do so, we first had to enter the old city gate and then walk through the main cobblestone thoroughfare which was dark and so narrow that two rickshaws could just barely squeeze past each other at a wider section. That surely was old China. Shops were on both sides. We often stopped by a noodle shop as boys at that age were often hungry. When ordering their famous soupy beef noodle, I learned to say in Hunanese: "Ching tiao, zhung gai (light on scoop, heavy on top)." Translation: less noodle, more beef. And we shook on the hot peppers which was so hot that by the time I drank the last mouthful of soup, I was spitting fire. They say hot peppers are good against the dampness in Hunan. The so-called Hunanese hot dishes in the U.S., and even in Changsha today, are no match.

The Chen's house was called "yang fang (foreign house)," meaning a big brick structure, not a mud house. There was running water and a working well. The first time I went there, I believe I kowtowed to the matriarch — T. H. Chen's mother — who was two generations above me, as it was the custom to pay respects for a boy. Before I went to Changsha, my mother instructed me: "Now, when you sit down and eat at their house, don't try to reach far. Giu Pau (uncle's mother) will bring food to your plate." Sure enough, when we ate, Giu Pau forked over food with her chopsticks to my plate with a trembling hand. The next year, 1937, Japan invaded China and later their military came close to Changsha. The Chens fled Changsha. A few years later the Chens came to Shanghai where we were then and stayed in our house briefly. One day a visitor from Changsha came to see the Chens. Giu Pau asked about their house in Changsha. The man said their house was all in ruins as the city was torched as part of China's scorched-earth defense in fighting the Japanese. Giu Pau gave a long and deep sigh because she hid her valuables in the wall of their house, as that was the mentality of old Chinese folks and of even some Chinese folks today in America.

During my school year in Yali, I was injured in a soccer game — I had the ball (a softball-size rubber ball), brought it with me, charged, and slammed straight onto the goalie. I spent almost a month recuperating in the home of Mr. Liu who was the branch manager of my father's company in Changsha.

My mother came to Changsha from Hankow and took me to see a local Chinese doctor specialized in injuries. The doctor prescribed some Chinese medicine and wrapped a warm medicated compost around my knee. After about an hour, he unwrapped the bandage. Lo and behold, among the somewhat whitened skin due to the hot moist bandage, there were many black spots scattered like in a smallpox. Pointing to the black spots, the doctor said: "These are 'doh' (poison). Now they have come out. You are going to get well." Regardless of his diagnosis, what has perplexed me in all these years about Chinese medicine is what those spots

were and how they were formed. (A modem-day description of the injury would be torn knee tendons which required rest to heal.)

During my stay at the Liu's house, one day there was some excitement — apparently Mr. Liu was entertaining some customers. A big table was set up in the living room. "Now, you stay in the bedroom, be very quiet, and don't look out through the bedroom curtain," Mrs. Liu instructed me. Being curious, I peeked out a few times. It turned out to be a dinner party with some girls from a local brothel! The madam was dressed in puffy clothes, just like what I remember from those Little Books (picture stories). The pimp directed where the catered food should go. Then the girls arrived apparently by rickshaw. They wore shiny, new-looking two-piece dresses in bright red and green, just like in some Chinese movies. Their faces were painted with bright red rouge. The madam gave orders, telling the girls to hurry up, etc. Then the next glimpse showed that there were ten people, with man and girl sitting alternately, and a lot of food on the table. The men, some with red faces (apparently from the wine), were laughing and eating, seemingly having a good time. One girl fed some food into a man's mouth. Then the next glimpse showed that some men and girls disappeared. I did not know where they went. The table had only two pairs. Finally the dinner was over, and I was allowed out with Mrs. Liu. Mr. Liu introduced his girl to his wife. There seemed to be some awkward expressions on both women's faces. I did not know what that was all about until years later. This was the scene described in history books, but probably rarely witnessed by people living today.

From 1937 Till Present

1936 was at the zenith of Yale-in-China. From there on the world changed continuously. In 1937 Japan invaded China and later the war front got close to Changsha. The Yale-in-China institutions, staff and students relocated elsewhere in Hunan and continued their limited schooling under difficult circumstances for eight years until war end. Many buildings in Yali were destroyed. Some staff returned after the war and began some reconstruction of the campus.

Then the Communists came. In 1951, Mr. Dwight Rugh, the last U.S. representative of Yale-in-China, was tried, humiliated and ousted from China. Yali was named as No. 5 School. From 1966 on came the Cultural Revolution — the Chinese Reign of Terror. Yale-in-China was shut out of the Mainland for 30 years.

I happened to be in Changsha as an honored guest of the government in 1974 at age 50. It was still during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese hosts did not know my earlier association with Yali. I was led through the former Yali campus. The zigzag corridor was still there. I pointed out that one of the trees next to it was planted by my father. There were students in classrooms looking out the window to see me in a Western suit and accompanied by an entourage, an unusual sight in that period. The swimming pool was dry and laid in waste.

I asked about Mr. Ying, the respected Dean of my days and I asked to see him. My local government hosts knew whom I referred to. They refused my request, but only said that he was still in Changsha and was a teacher in a grade school. Unquestionably he was incarcerated and perhaps abused physically. In my heart I was in great sorrow to hear how the government ground down the former able educator. In the 1980s when the political situation in China mellowed somewhat, Yale-in-China invited Ying to New Haven and honored him. Ying was then already in his 80s and was escorted by a former Yali student in that trip. My eldest brother George, a great Yali enthusiast, specially traveled from Los Angeles to New Haven and joined in the ceremony.

On the New Haven side, the expulsion of the Rugh by the Communist government meant the termination of activities in Mainland. But Yale-in-China, undeterred, continued its educational work by founding a new school in Hong Kong, called New Asia College, which later became a part of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Yale-in-China was then renamed as

Yale-China Association, reflecting the change of times. The dark years lifted after the Cultural Revolution, and in 1984, the No. 5 School was restored to its former name, Yali Middle School. Since then till the present, Yale-China has maintained several active educational and exchange programs with China. Yali is now a highly reputable institution with tens of thousands of graduates. In the end, Yali is sustained by the graduates it bestowed and by the tradition of high standards of scholarship and spirit, just as the founders envisioned.

What struck me is that in spite of the recent 20 years of thawing of the belligerent attitude toward "foreign imperialism," and of the continued pouring of Yale-China resources into China, the Chinese authorities in Beijing or Hunan, as far as I have read, have not come out and thanked publicly the contributions of the early Yale-in-China missionaries and alumni in founding the five great institutions in China — Medical School, Hospital, College, Nursing School, Middle School.

In 2001, Yale-China celebrated its 100-year anniversary of its founding in New Haven, culminated by the publication of *The Yale-China Association — A Centennial History* authored by Nancy Chapman, current Executive Director, with Jessica Plumb. This magnificent 144-page book with 280 photographs and illustrations is a gem for those interested in history. It is fascinating reading, well suited also for coffee tables or as a Christmas gift. Some information cited in this article is taken from this and the other book by Holden, as cited earlier.

Like in the ending of *Goodbye Mr. Chips*, early founders — like Hume, Hutchins, Rugh — could rest in peace while the count of the many youths they educated continues — Lao, Chen, Ymg, Hwa, Hwa, Hwa, Hwa.

Dr. Jesse C. H. Hwa

(1924-2005)

By C. C. Tien

Dr. Jesse C. H. Hwa passed away on July 2nd, in Stamford. He battled cancer for the last 18 months, and is now at peace. On behalf of the Chinese American Forum (CAF), we would like to express our deep sorrow for the tragic loss of Dr. Hwa.

He is no doubt an accomplished Chinese American, not only for himself, his family, but also for the Chinese American community (Dr. Jesse C. H. Hwa, Chinese American Forum, October 2002 issue, pp. 2- 5).

In particular. Dr. Hwa was a long time CAF Board Member (1990-1999) and contributed many articles to CAF. Dr. Hwa was also a distinguished professional chemist with international recognitions. He was the founder of the Chinese American Chemical Society in the 1970s. Lastly, he was a righteous man fighting for justice with fervor.

Through his effort and the effort of his friends at the 'Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WWII in Asia', the Public Law, PL 106-567, titled 'the Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Act of 2000' (27 December 2000) was enacted. For the first time, parts of the dark secret hidden in the U.S. classified files for a long time since 1945 were revealed to the public on the monstrous Japanese War crimes committed in China, Korea and Southeast Asia, during and prior to the WWII.

Dr. Hwa left us a legacy of fighting for humanity and justice. We shall miss him, but will be resolved to continue the fight and to follow his example. May we extend our deepest condolences to Dr. Hwa's family.

Dr. Jesse C. H. Hwa was a retired scientist and longtime CAF Board Member who had contributed many articles to this magazine.
Dr. Hwa passed away last July. CAF is honored to publish his own story about his early school years in China.