

Reflections on Fu Jen Catholic University as a
Catholic University: Strengths and Weaknesses;
Problems and Possibilities.

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After a brief introduction to the Benedictine involvement with Fu Jen University and my work at Fu Jen as a Benedictine, I will present these topics:

The cooperation of religious institutes at Fu Jen University

Chinese-foreign cooperation at Fu Jen University

A Catholic university with few Catholics

Many of my remarks will be of a general nature and would still need further research and study.

The physical establishment of what became to be known as Fu Jen University began in 1924 when two American Benedictines from St. Vincent Archabbey arrived in Peiping, the name by which Beijing was then known. By 1928, the university was officially recognized by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China. The American Benedictines then had to stop running the university in 1933, which was during the Great Depression in the United States, because of financial difficulties, especially those related to the construction of the new main building for the University. At that time, the Vatican instructed the Society of the Divine Word to assume control of the University, which marked the beginning of the Society's university work.

When Fu Jen University was re-opened in Taiwan in the early 1960s, the Benedictines of St. Vincent Archabbey were requested to run one of the colleges, but declined to do so, instead agreeing to send monks to teach, which has continued until to today. The Benedictines established a small priory near the university, Wimmer Priory, named after the German founder of our Archabbey, Boniface Wimmer, who arrived in the United States in 1846.

In 1966, as a young monk of St. Vincent Archabbey, I was assigned to our newly-found Wimmer Priory with the purpose of preparing to teach at the university. After language study at the Jesuit-run language school in Hsinchu, I returned to the States for graduate studies in Comparative Literature at Indiana University. In 1981 I began teaching in the English department of Fu Jen and continued to do so until 2010, at which time I started to teach full-time in the Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture of Peking University. During my years at Fu Jen, besides teaching, I was also involved with various administrative tasks: Director of the Graduate Institute of English Literature, Dean of the College of Foreign Languages, and Director of the Graduate Institute of Comparative Literature.

The cooperation of religious orders at Fu Jen Catholic University

The Roman Catholic Church has hundreds of religious institutes, including orders and congregations of both men and women. Over the years, Fu Jen University has been served by various religious orders and congregations. The mainland Fu Jen University first had Benedictine monks and Sisters, and then priests and brothers from the Society of the Divine Word and Sisters from the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

The re-opening of Fu Jen in Taiwan was mainly the work of Chinese diocesan priests, Jesuits, members of the Society of the Divine Word and Missionary Holy Spirit Sisters. There are few, if any, Catholic universities that developed in this way with the cooperation of a number of religious institutes. This is the first strength of Fu Jen University I would like to talk about.

First a note however about the founding of Fu Jen University in China. It has always puzzled me as to why the Jesuits, so strong in China in early years of the 20th century, were not invited to set up a university in Peiping. Writers who have presented the history of the Beijing Fu Jen University, such as Jac Kuepers, John Chen Shijie and Liu Xian, do not ask this question, as far as I can tell. Reading again the letter by the Catholic intellectual Vincent Ying Lien-chih [Ying Lianzhi] to Pope Pius X (pope 1903-1914) in July 1912 and to Pope Benedict XV (pope 1914-1922) in November 2017, I was struck by his request to have at the Catholic university he was proposing “men of different religious societies to do away with all exclusiveness, all jealousy and all party spirit.” For Vincent Ying to write in this manner shows his awareness of the conflicts among religious orders and congregations at the time. Furthermore, his statement would indirectly substantiate that the Benedictines were told to establish a Catholic university in Peiping because of disagreements between the Lazarists (Congregation of the Mission) and the Jesuits. The Lazarites in no way wanted the Jesuits to establish a Catholic university in Peiping. This conflict, then, if it is true, would be an example of Catholic religious societies not willing to cooperate.

Fu Jen as it stands today would not have been possible without the cooperation of religious orders and congregations. The Jesuits brought with them their 500 hundred years of experience in conducting Catholic schools. The Society of the Divine, following its work at the Mainland Fu Jen, had opened other universities in Asia: such as the University of San Carlos in the Philippines (1935) and Nanzan University in Japan (1949), and were gaining more and more experience in operating a university in Asia. The Chinese diocesan clergy had a number of priests who had received higher degrees from abroad and were no longer able to return to the Mainland.

In the negotiations leading up to the reopening of Fu Jen University, there were basic agreements among the three groups regarding the equal sharing of financial obligations, the architecture (Jesuits and SVDs), shared buildings and so on (Kuepers 2011: 5-6).

With the reopening of Fu Jen University in Taiwan each of these groups eventually had faculties, later to be called colleges, in the university: the Faculty of Liberal Arts for the Chinese diocesan clergy, the Faculties of Law and Business for the Jesuits, and the Faculties of Natural Sciences and Foreign Languages for the Society of the Divine Word with the assistance of the

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit. That each group had more or less complete control of their faculty or faculties allowed them to put in practice their educational ideals. And each could develop their college in a special way. It is regrettable that with the unification of the university in recent years under strong central control, the tendency seems to be to have each college run in a rather similar way, thus losing the original, creative diversity.

Cooperation, nonetheless, between these three groups was not without their problems. The letters by Fr. Richard Arens, SVD, and others regarding the reopening of Fu Jen University, which are preserved in Volume I of Taipei Fujen Daxue shiliaoji 台北輔仁大學史料集（一）(Collection of historical material for Fu Jen University), are an excellent source to understand these conflicts, especially between the Jesuits and the Society of the Divine Word and with both of these groups with Archbishop Paul Yu Pin. A fine analysis of this and other material related to the role of the Society of the Divine Word in the reopening of Fu Jen University is in “The Re-establishment of Fu Jen University in Taiwan and the role of the SVD, in particular of Fr. Richard Arens,” by Jac Kuepers, SVD. As for conflicts of the Jesuits and the SVDs with Archbishop Yubin, one example is the meeting of February 1962 to discuss the land to be purchased as the site for the university, during which one participant wrote “all hell broke loose!” (Kuepers 2011: 9) when Archbishop Yu Pin made accusations against the lawyer assisting the SVDs. Kuepers also describes the relationship between the Jesuits and the SVDs during these years in this way: “The relation of the SVD with the SJ had their tensions, but they stuck together in planning for the University, one reason being that they had a common goal in controlling Yu-pin’s influence on their parts of the University” (10).

As for Benedictine cooperation with these three founding groups, the Benedictines first developed a strong relationship with the History Department in the College of Liberal Arts, providing both teachers and financial assistance and later a Benedictine taught part-time for many years in the Philosophy Department. When I started teaching at Fu Jen it was in the English department that was under the SVD College of Foreign Languages. The English Department, which is one of the well-known and strong departments of Fu Jen University, is a good example of cooperation among religious institutes at Fu Jen University. The first chair was a German SVD, and he was succeeded by a Canadian Jesuit. Among the teachers were a Holy Spirit Sister, who subsequently became chair, and myself a Benedictine. Later we were joined by a younger American SVD.

Today members of the religious institutes teaching at Fu Jen University has been reduced significantly. In the College of Foreign Languages, there are none now full-time in the English Department. The German Department at one time had two Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit but none now. What can be done about this situation? Or should the Fu Jen University of the future be one without priests, Sisters and brothers teaching? A few years ago I was under the impression that Fu Jen University had officially arranged that a department could hire a religious outside its usual quota for full-time teachers. In checking about this, however, I discovered that this is not the case. Perhaps it is something that can be considered in the future.

One place at Fu Jen where there continues to be cooperation among the religious institutes is the Fu Jen Academia Catholica, which was established in 2008 and brought together

these academic institutes or centers: the Institute of Scholastic Philosophy, Institutem Historiae Ecclesiae, Center for the Study of Science and Religion, Monumenta Serica Sinological Research Center, and the John Paul II Institute for Research into Dialogue for Peace. Most of these were either founded or currently are run by a religious.

Another way to get more involvement of members of religious institutes in Fu Jen University could be to make special efforts for cooperation with Jesuit and SVD universities on special projects. The Center for Western Classical and Medieval Studies in the College of Foreign Languages is one place that could work in this direction.

Having seen the successful cooperation of the Chinese diocesan clergy, the Jesuits and the SVDs in bringing Fu Jen University to fruition, as well as the problems among these three groups, there should also be mention of problems within these three groups. One of the problems when the American Benedictines were in charge of Fu Jen University was the lack of cooperation among the monasteries of the American Cassinese Congregation of Benedictines that were originally to work together in establishing the university. As it turned out nearly all of the work was left for St. Vincent to do with little assistance from the other Benedictine monasteries. After the arrival of the six Benedictines Sisters, there developed, as seen in their letters to the Mother Superior, two factions as to the nature of their cooperation with the Benedictine monks. In her letter of August 22, 1933 Sister Ronayne talks about "the lack of harmony" among the six Sisters, with three only listening to Fr. Francis and three wanting to follow Fr. Basil.

Later, with the reopening of Fu Jen University in Taiwan, the three groups running the university were not without their own internal problems. For the Jesuits, work at Fu Jen University was mostly the work of Chinese Jesuits as most foreign Jesuits with a strong academic background preferred to work at the two national universities near the Tien Center in Taipei, so there were not many foreign Jesuits working at Fu Jen University. With the SVDs, there was strong competition between their two colleges, especially in terms of financial support, as seen in the founding deans of these two colleges had strong disagreements about funding. When the memoirs of Edward Vargo, who was an SVD and Dean of the College of Foreign Languages are published, we will know more about the inner workings of the SVDs at Fu Jen. For the diocesan clergy, there seems to have been disagreements at times with the policies of Archbishop Yu Pin.

Chinese-foreign cooperation

The relationship between Chinese and foreigners is another way in which to look at Fu Jen as a Catholic university. The Catholic Church has members in many countries throughout the world. But each country usually has a particular Catholic identity. French Catholics in some ways differ from English Catholic and English Catholic from American Catholics, and so on. In terms of educational institutions, a French Catholic school would probably have many differences from an American Catholic school. Chinese Catholics then would have some differences from European and American Catholics; and the Chinese way of running an

educational institute would be unique too. Fu Jen University is also an example of the cooperation of Chinese and foreign Catholics. The idea to have a Catholic university in China came from Vincent Ying Lien-chih [Ying Lianzhi] 英斂之(1867-1926), and Ma Hsiang-po [Ma Xiangbo] 馬相伯(1840-1939), two prominent Catholic intellectuals. But for the university to be set up it took the efforts of foreigners, though with the help of Chinese Catholics such as Ying and Ma. For Fu Jen to be recognized as a university in 1928 by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China, the President could not be a foreigner, because of the previous foreign control of the many Protestant universities, so Chen Yuan 陳垣(1880-1971) was made president. However, he was president principally in name only as it was the foreigners who actually had control of the university, under both the Benedictines and the Society of the Divine Word.

In the Taiwan Fu Jen University, however, the relationship between Chinese and foreigners was more complex. Given that there were three independent units to the reopened university, the Chinese diocesan priests had full control of the College of Liberal Arts. For the Colleges of Law and Business run by the Jesuits, it was the Chinese Jesuits who were in charge. But the Colleges of Natural Sciences and Foreign Languages were mainly in the hands of foreign members of the Society of the Divine Word. Overall, there was very successful cooperation between Chinese and the foreigner religious in building a strong Fu Jen University. The German members of the Society of the Divine Word were successful in getting help from the German government to build many of the buildings in their section of the University. But the Chinese way of doing things can of course be different from the Western way. For example, one story I've heard is that Archbishop Yu Pin wanted a friend to be hired by a department in the Jesuit section but the foreign head of that department refused to do so because he was concerned about the qualifications of the person. Another story is from the 1980s. A student from the English department who had gotten his doctorate in the States was not willing to return to Fu Jen University to teach in the English department because he did not want to be in a department where foreigners were in control so he want to teach at a national university.

Within both the Chinese and foreigners working at Fu Jen University, there were also problems. I'm not all that familiar with the problems within in the Chinese diocesan clergy and the Chinese Jesuits, but am more so with the difficulties among the foreigners. Within our own little Benedictine community, there were conflicts between our Prior, Fr. Hugh Wilt, a history professor, and our Frs. John Murtha and Claude Pollok, also history professors, as to the role we should have in the history department and the College of Liberal Arts. As for the SVD section of the university, there apparently were conflicts between Fr. Arens, SVD and some of the other SVDs. Later, with the arrival of more American SVDs to teach at Fu Jen University, there were different approaches to the task of education by the Americans and Germans.

The College of Foreign Languages is a good example of the development of cooperation between Chinese and foreigners. The first Dean of the College was a German, followed by an American and Spaniard. Then there were three Chinese deans, with me coming after the first one. Within the departments, control gradually went from the foreigners to the Chinese.

A very successful area of cooperation between Chinese and foreigners involved with Fu Jen University is publication. In the early years of the Beijing Fu Jen, the first President, Barry

O'Toole, cooperated with Ying Ch'ien-li, the son of Vincent Ying, in publishing as seen in these two publications:

Ch'ien-li Ying and George Barry O'Toole (1929). *The Nestorian Tablet at Sianfu: A New English Translation of the Inscription and a History of the Stone*. Peking Leader Press, Peking.

George Barry O'Toole and Quianli Ying (1931). *Luo ji xue: Zhong Ying dui zhao*. [Logic: A comparison of Chinese and English logic.] Beijing.

The development of foreign/Chinese cooperation with great results began with the creation of the sinological journal *Monumenta serica* at the Beijing Fu Jen in 1935. This famous journal of Chinese studies now brings together Western and Chinese scholars to present to the West a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. Its main office is in Germany but there is a branch office at Fu Jen in the Academia Catholica. An outstanding example of foreigners and Chinese at the Taiwan Fu Jen University working together on a publishing project is the 14-volume Chinese translation of German books and essays presenting current cultural issues (1982). This was the idea of Fr. Sprenger, SVD, who supervised the work of numerous Chinese translators.

When I was Dean of the College of Foreign Languages the university was very much under the control of the Chinese. At time there was indeed successful cooperation between me and the central administration. But there were also conflicts related to the differences between the Chinese and American way of doing things. I always tried to express exactly where I stood on matters under discussion but it was not always so easy to see the position of the Chinese administrator. Also, most Chinese administrators took their task to be to implement whatever their superiors had directed them to do, but I felt at times it was also necessary to see if the upper administrators had made the best decision.

A Catholic university with few Catholics

When the Catholic university was established in Peiping its purpose was to educate Catholics. In his letter to Pope Pius X and then to Pope Benedict XV urging the opening of a Catholic university in Peiping, Ying noted how successful the Protestants were in setting up universities in China, while in Peiping there was "no university, no secondary schools; not even elementary schools." As a result, according to Ying, few Catholics were sufficiently educated to participate in the Chinese government. Moreover, Ying wanted both Catholics and "pagans" to be educated in this Catholic university that "would be a model for the entire nation, preparing a class of elect among Catholics and giving to pagans the true light." As for the teachers in this university, he wanted "learned men, mild and humble of heart, to be our masters; men of different nationalities . . ." Overall, then, Ying wanted to educate Catholics, especially for government service, but at the same time also to educate "pagans." The teachers were to be from different countries and different religious societies; and the university was to be a model for university education in China. With the founding of Fu Jen University and its over 25 years of existence these objectives of Vincent Ying were fulfilled.

Archbishop Paul Yu Pin also had clear objectives in reopening Fu Jen University in Taiwan. In his "Draft of the Plan for the re-establishment of the Catholic University of China in Taiwan (Formosa)" he proposes these reasons:

- A. For missionary purposes
- B. For training future Chinese leaders
- C. As a Token of Confidence in Free China
- D. To Show the Deep Interest of the Church of the Free World in the Now Silent Church on the Mainland
- E. For the Youth of Taiwan (30,000 take College entrance exam, but only places for 10,000) For overseas Chinese students

Referring back now to Ying's proposal, we see that Yu Pin's item A, "missionary purposes," corresponds with Ying's providing "light to the pagans." Item B, "training future leaders," can be related to Ying's emphasis on preparing Chinese Catholic leaders, but Yu Pin does not specify Catholics as such as to whom should be trained. New in Yu Pin's proposal are Items C, D and E. With Items C and D, Yu Pin wants to show the difference in the situation in Taiwan as opposed to that of the Chinese Mainland under Communist control. As for Item E, the re-established Fu Jen University in Taiwan will be of service both to students in Taiwan wanting a university-education and to overseas Chinese students.

In reflecting upon what Fu Jen University should be doing today, let us consider what can be implemented of the above two sets of proposals. For Ying, the training of Catholic youth was primary. Today, however, very few Catholic students enter Fu Jen University. Is it possible to make more efforts to attract Catholic students to enroll at Fu Jen University? Perhaps there could be scholarships for Catholic students. Or, should we simply state that the training of Catholics is not our mission. As for Yu Pin's Item A, "missionary purposes," each year there are a small number of converts prepared by the Chaplain's Office and the Religious Offices of the colleges. These efforts deserve much praise. It would be interesting to hear from those involved as to what should be done to develop this missionary dimension.

Both Ying and Yu Pin stressed the need for training future leaders. The Beijing and the Taiwan Fu Jen University have been successful in this regard, as can be seen in the number of Mainland Fu Jen graduates who served first in the government of the Republic of China and then in the Chinese Communist government. And, various prominent government officials in Taiwan are graduates from Fu Jen University.

Yu Pin's Item E relates to supplying a place for students in Taiwan wanting to go to the university. Fu Jen University fulfilled this purpose extremely well from the 1960s to the early years of the 21st century. Now, however, there are too many universities in Taiwan so no student is denied entrance to a university. How then should Fu Jen University respond to this fact? I would suggest that Fu Jen University should investigate ways it can be of help in the development of universities in Southeast Asia and Africa where there are indeed many students who do not have an opportunity for a university education.

Yu Pin's Items C and D are related to the Chinese Mainland. For a number of years I was involved with seeing whether or not a Fu Jen University could be opened or reopened on the Mainland. Ultimately these efforts were without success, whether it be the current educational situation on the Mainland, or that the Fu Jen Board of Trustees was not interested or that the Taiwan Ministry of Education would not permit it. Fu Jen University, however, continues to have a good reputation in China and someday there should be once again a Fu Jen there.

Ying wanted the Catholic university to "a model for the entire nation." In many ways, the Taiwan Fu Jen University has fulfilled this mission. Fu Jen, in a sense, is a training ground for young professors who then go on to teach at state universities, taking with them the Fu Jen spirit. An area in which Fu Jen University is often acclaimed is student counseling. Many universities from Taiwan and abroad come to study the system Fu Jen has implemented. Fu Jen has also educated a large number of overseas Chinese students, which aptly fulfills the second part of Yu Pin's Item E.

In the tradition of Vincent Ying and Archbishop Yu Pin, it would be very useful for the current Board of Trustees to prepare a document indicating what Fu Jen should be doing as a Catholic university.

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