

Honorary Fellow A Citation



Dr Nancy E. Chapman, BA, MA, PhD

New Asia College and The Chinese University of Hong Kong as a whole have reason to be deeply grateful for the Yale-China Association. For over fifty years the Association has enriched the College and the University in numerous important ways. From buildings, such as our University Health Centre, to educational and cultural exchange programmes, we can see the founding ideals of generosity and service that first took young Yale graduates to China over a hundred years ago. Nobody embodies these ideals more comprehensively than Dr Nancy E. Chapman, the current Executive Director of the Yale-China Association. Not only did Dr Chapman write the centennial history of the Association, most of her adult life has been devoted to the advancement of United States-China educational and cultural exchanges.

Much of this work has been in the service of the Yale-China Association. As a fresh graduate, Dr Chapman spent two years in the late 1970s as a Yale ELI, or English Language Instructor, working in the English Department of this University. ELIs, who have been historically known as “Bachelors”, are selected by the Association to come to China to teach and in the process to learn about Chinese culture. Most of them, like Dr Chapman, come with academic distinction; she herself had just won the White Prize in History and the Berkeley Fellows Prize. All of the Yale ELIs come with idealism and a spirit of adventure and generosity in an age in which even fresh Yale graduates can elsewhere command handsome starting salaries. They bring their strong educational backgrounds, their excellent language and communication skills and their high academic standards to their teaching, which they extend to our students in ways that reach out into co-curricular activities, enriching the learning environment of the English programme at this University in countless significant ways. As I speak, two Yale ELIs are leading a small party of our students on a literary and cultural tour of the UK.

When she completed her two years as an ELI at the Chinese University, Dr Chapman volunteered for more. She went to teach in Changsha in Hunan Province, where the Yale-China story had begun at the turn of the twentieth century. There is a photograph in the *Centennial History* of Dr Chapman and her fellow Yale Bachelor preparing an English-language tape-recording for student use at Hunan Medical College. These were the first two Bachelors to teach there since Yale-in-China left Changsha in 1950. Their presence was important in the re-establishment of the Association’s work in mainland China following the end of the Cultural Revolution. After her time there, Dr Chapman became Assistant Field Staff Director at New Asia College, CUHK, where she helped the Bachelor programme in Changsha to triple in size in two years.

In 1994 Dr Chapman became Executive Director of the Yale-China Association, a position she has filled with particular distinction and success. Under her leadership, the Association has established various new programmes. Since 1994, for example, eight Chinese University students participate every year in the New Asia College/Yale University Student Exchange Programme, in



which they and eight Yale counterparts make two-week reciprocal visits to each others' campus. They discuss some broad and important issue of human values; in 2007 the theme was ethics and morality. This programme has had evident impact on the academic, personal and professional lives of its alumni on both sides, as many of the students have continued to engage with these issues and with each other. Another programme initiated under Dr Chapman's leadership is the New Asia-Yale Summer Community Service Exchange Programme, where students are given the opportunity to work as interns in various social service agencies both in the US and in Hong Kong.

What animates Dr Chapman's leadership is a conviction of the importance of the Yale-China mission. As she explains it, this is "to promote mutual understanding between Chinese and American people through teaching and service." She believes in the power of one-on-one contacts to effect change. It is a belief that "individuals – and individual organizations, no matter how small – can be a force for making the world more peaceful and humane." Dr Chapman is proficient in both Mandarin and Cantonese and is herself a significant scholar. She holds an MA and PhD in East Asian Studies from Princeton University, where she was awarded a University fellowship and a National Resource Fellowship. She is also the recipient of a Scholarly Edition and Translation Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Her scholarly interests include Chinese and Japanese history, the history and practice of philanthropy, educational and cultural exchange between China and the US and between China and Japan, American religious history, and the history of slavery in the Americas.

Apart from her work with Yale-China, Dr Chapman has served as the founding Director of the Institute of International Education's office in China, as Program Officer for East Asia at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Program Director of the Lingnan Foundation and Assistant Professor of History at the University of Utah. Currently she serves as a trustee and Vice Chair of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, as an advisor of Lingnan College at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, and as a Fellow of Timothy Dwight College at Yale.

Mr Chairman, Dr Nancy E. Chapman has been an important facilitator of educational and cultural exchange between the United States and China, and it is my privilege to present her to you for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.