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EDWARD H. HUME AND THE  
HARVARD-YENCHING INSTITUTE:  
THE POSITIVE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

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# **Edward H. Hume and the Harvard-Yenching Institute: The Positive Power of Friendship**

by

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## ***Introduction***

Edward Hicks Hume (1876-1957) is best known for his pioneering role in founding and leading the Hsiang-Ya (湘雅) Medical School, Nursing School and Hospital as part of the Yale-in-China (雅礼) initiative. A Yale graduate who had been born in Ahmednagar, India of a multi-generation medical missionary family, Dr. Hume was serving in Bombay as a member of the U.S. Public Health Service when he was invited in 1905 to join the newly established Yale Mission in Changsha. Initially reluctant to leave the familiarity of India for parts unknown, Hume was ultimately persuaded by the opportunity to pursue in China his dream of building a world-class university medical school – a prospect that appeared unattainable in India, where government medical schools were already well established.

In 1906 Edward Hume founded Yale-in-China, and for the next two decades devoted himself to the project of developing in Changsha, Hunan a university medical school on the model of Johns Hopkins, where he had received his own medical degree. Respected for his administrative ability as well as his medical expertise, Hume served for many years as President of the Yale-in-China Colleges. This was a politically tumultuous time in China, particularly in Hunan, where anti-foreign sentiments were pronounced. As president of an American-sponsored institution, Hume sought to respond to the nationalist upsurge by replacing foreign faculty and administrators with Chinese colleagues – an effort that did not sit well with the Yale-in-China Trustees back in the U.S. In 1926, exhausted by the political turmoil in Changsha and dismayed by what he viewed as a lack of understanding on the part of the American Trustees, Hume resigned his position with Yale-in-China. He left behind a pathbreaking contribution to the development of medical education in China.

These aspects of Edward Hume's biography, sympathetically recounted by Jonathan Spence in his study of influential Western advisers in China, are well recognized (Spence 1969). Less known than his involvement with Yale-in-China is the role that Edward Hume would later play as a Trustee of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (哈佛燕京学社). In that capacity, too, Hume was a strong advocate for indigenizing Western philanthropic initiatives so as to render them more attuned to the actual needs of Asian societies.

### ***Joining the Harvard-Yenching Institute Board of Trustees***

In the spring of 1934, Dr. Hume was chosen to succeed Dr. James L. Barton (foreign secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and a trustee of Yenching University) as one of three designated representatives of Yenching University on the nine-person Harvard-Yenching Institute (HYI) Board of Trustees (HYI Minutes, April 30, 1934; April 8, 1935; Fan 2014: 12). At the time, Edward Hume was serving as Secretary Pro Tem of the China Institute, which had been founded in New York in 1926 by Hu Shih, John Dewey and others to promote understanding of China in America. The HYI Board of Trustees was (and is still today) comprised of nine members, including at the time three representatives of Yenching University, three representatives of Harvard University, and three representatives of the estate of Charles Martin Hall, the founder of the Aluminum Company of America and original benefactor of HYI.

As an HYI Trustee, a position that Hume would hold for more than twenty years, he

played a pivotal role in helping to direct funding to what he saw as especially worthy causes in both China and India. In the process, Edward Hume contributed to an evolving conception of the Harvard-Yenching Institute's mission to advance higher education in Asia that was at once empathetic and expansive. He achieved this not only by force of argument, but through persistent and personal engagement and example. As his HYI colleagues would note after his death, "Doctor Hume's skills were not only professional; he had unusual capacities for personal friendship. One could hardly find a section of the world with which Dr. Hume had not some personal touch" (HYI Minutes, March 26, 1957).

The HYI Board of Trustees had first become familiar with Edward Hume thanks to his tireless efforts to obtain support for Hua Chung (华中) University in Wuchang. Hua Chung (Central China) University had recently been formed as an umbrella consortium of several previously independent Christian colleges, including Yale-in-China in nearby Changsha. As President of Yale-in-China Colleges, Edward Hume had supported the multi-institution amalgamation, and he took a special interest in its subsequent development. Hume was particularly enthusiastic about Hua Chung's first Chinese president, Dr. Francis C.M. Wei, a noted Christian educator who took office in 1929 (Lautz 2012).

Hume's respect for and friendship with Francis Wei prompted him to intercede in support of Hua Chung's efforts to strengthen its offerings in the field of Chinese studies. In the fall of 1933, Hume submitted to HYI an appeal for \$3,000 for a period of three years, to begin in February 1934, for the purpose of adding two qualified Chinese teachers to the Hua Chung faculty. Hume emphasized in his request to HYI that Hua Chung had already shown a serious commitment to the study of China, with a rigorous entrance examination in Chinese required of every student and a curriculum that included 23 courses offered by the Chinese Department in subjects ranging from poetry to philosophy and philology. Hume also stressed the strategic geographical location of Wuchang and the fact that Hua Chung, as the only Christian university in central China, was a vibrant confederation of five educational institutions in four cities with a shared commitment to the promotion of Chinese culture (Letter from Hume to HYI, November 7, 1933).

The initial reaction of the rather conservatively inclined HYI Board of Trustees was guarded. In their discussion of Hume's request, the Trustees affirmed interest in forging a

relationship with an institution located in central China, stressing however that the unusually turbulent political situation in that part of the country had prevented their doing so to date. Hume's own Yale-in-China, they noted, would surely have been selected as one of the original colleges (along with Yenching University, Shandong Christian University, Fukien Christian University, Lingnan University, Western China Union University, and the University of Nanking) to receive regular annual grants from HYI "if it had not been practically ruined by the Communist uprisings." The Trustees expressed high regard for the President of Hua Chung, Dr. Francis Wei. Even so, they cautioned that the Institute's endowment was showing the strain exacted by the recent Great Depression and in the end voted to postpone a decision on providing aid to Hua Chung pending further deliberation (HYI Minutes, November 13, 1933).

Having struck out on his first attempt, Hume adopted a more personal approach. In March 1934, he decided to raise the matter again, planning to present Hua Chung's case directly to Eric M. North, president of the American Bible Society and a longtime HYI Trustee representing Yenching University. Since both men were then working and living in New York, Hume suggested he might pay Dr. North a personal visit. Upon learning that North had come down with the flu at just the time of his proposed visit, Dr. Hume sent his considered medical advice instead: "Choose a good doctor, stay flat in bed, drink fluid by the gallon (of the right sort!), read an exciting detective story, and presto! You will be well." Once North was "quite well," Hume promised to reinstate the Hua Chung appeal (Letter from Hume to Eric North, March 14, 1934).

On April 9, 1934, the HYI Trustees met to consider a follow-up letter from Hume, renewing the request for a grant to strengthen Chinese studies at Hua Chung University. Although the continued adverse impact of the Great Depression again decided the Trustees against making an immediate grant, this time they agreed to get in closer touch with Dr. Hume with an eye toward providing future support to Hua Chung. Once again, the Trustees noted the attractiveness of Hua Chung as a union of several colleges located in central China, where HYI at the time enjoyed no institutional connections (HYI Minutes, April 9, 1934).

The friendship (complete with timely medical advice!) that Dr. Hume had extended to Yenching Trustee Eric North soon bore fruit. On April 30, 1934, Hume was invited to attend an HYI Board meeting at which he was elected an HYI Trustee (HYI Minutes, April 30, 1934).

Nominated by the Executive Committee of Yenching University to fill the vacancy created by James Barton's sudden resignation, Hume was expected to hold office only until a permanent successor from Yenching could be identified and elected (HYI Minutes, April 8, 1935). As it happened, however, Hume's endearing personality won him a permanent seat. He would remain on the HYI Board of Trustees for more than two decades, until his death in March 1957.

### ***Edward Hume's Contributions as HYI Trustee***

Over the next twenty years, Edward Hume served as an engaged and energetic Trustee of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, offering input on a range of academic and administrative matters. His experience as a college president in China, his professional expertise in medicine as well as in Chinese studies, and his deep personal connections to both India and China made Hume an unusually informed and perceptive source of advice to the Institute at a decisive time in its history. His recommendations helped steer HYI through a series of unprecedented challenges presented by the second world war, the establishment of a Communist regime in China, and the closure of all the Christian colleges in China.

Only two months after joining the HYI Board of Trustees, Hume returned to China at the invitation of the Nationalist Government to conduct a survey of medical facilities throughout the country. Based at the Chinese Red Cross Hospital in Shanghai, he took advantage of his return to familiarize himself with HYI activities in various parts of China. As a designated representative of Yenching University, Hume naturally took a special interest in that institution. But he did not confine his purview to Yenching. He reported in a letter to HYI, "I am in constant touch with President Leighton Stuart and hope to visit each of the institutions to which grants are being made by Harvard-Yenching Trustees" (Letter from Hume to HYI, October 26, 1934).

Hume's concerns extended beyond the existing HYI network. He continued to lobby on behalf of Hua Chung University, enlisting the involvement of Francis S. Hutchins (the future president of Berea College who was then overseeing the Yale Mission in Changsha) to help make the argument for adding Hua Chung to the roster of regular HYI grantees (Letter from Francis Hutchins to Eric North, September 25, 1934). Hume's supplications on behalf of Hua Chung were soon followed by a letter from President Francis Wei himself, requesting HYI support on grounds that Central China College was the only Christian university in all central China. Wei emphasized that his motive in seeking an official affiliation with HYI was not simply financial; Hua Chung, he

observed, had “lost face” in the eyes of the other Christian colleges by failing to gain formal HYI recognition.

Now that Edward Hume was himself a member of the HYI Board of Trustees, the Board proved more receptive to Hua Chung’s needs. Reiterating their desire to support an institution in central China, the Trustees voted to inquire of President Wei whether there was a specific project that HYI might underwrite with “only a small expenditure” (HYI Minutes, November 12, 1934). In reply, Wei suggested aid for either of two projects: (1) a chair in Chinese history at a cost of \$1,500 for 5 years; or (2) an annual grant of \$500 for 5 years for the upkeep of a 4,000-volume library collection from the late Professor Williams of Yale, bequeathed to Yale-in-China. When Yale-in-China was incorporated into Hua Chung, Yale had approved the transfer of the books to Hua Chung on condition that they would be properly housed and maintained. At its April 8, 1935 meeting, the ever-cautious HYI agreed to fund the less expensive library project (HYI Minutes, April 8, 1935). A year later, however, President Wei reported that Yale had postponed transfer of the Williams collection to Hua Chung, prompting the HYI Trustees to withhold the promised annual grant of \$500 until it could be ascertained that the books were actually on their way from New Haven to Wuchang (HYI Minutes, March 9, 1936). Hua Chung University would have to wait another year and undergo profound disruption and displacement due to the Japanese invasion before it would finally “gain face” by procuring HYI funding. Upon relocating to its wartime refuge in Yunnan, Hua Chung received substantial HYI support for the study of ethnic cultures in the Southwest borderlands (Ma and Wu 2019).

Meanwhile, Edward Hume turned his attention to other worthy causes. As an HYI Trustee, Hume was determined to strengthen Chinese studies at all HYI’s partner institutions, including Harvard. Aware of the importance of regional variation in any serious study of China, he urged the procurement of complete sets of Chinese local gazetteers (many of them rare editions) for the Harvard-Yenching Library. He also spoke up for Lingnan University in Guangzhou, which had embraced an unusually expansive view of Chinese studies that highlighted the contributions of Overseas Chinese (HYI Minutes, November 9, 1936). Not surprisingly, as an official representative of Yenching University, Hume reserved his most effusive praise – and grandest entreaties – for Yenching. In early 1935, after a visit to its beautiful campus on the outskirts of Beijing where he met with his friend President John Leighton Stuart, Hume gushed that

Yenching was “doing a scholarly piece of work so significant that the Harvard-Yenching Board would do well to provide more grants for it . . . I am so impressed with what is done at Yenching on a high level of scholastic achievement that I raise the question whether added books there, added funds for salaries there, strengthening of their total program, may not be a wise way of advancing” (Letter from Hume to Dean Chase, February 19, 1935). Despite his special concern for the development of Chinese studies at HYI’s namesake institutions, Hume harbored a more ambitious vision for the Institute: “the service of the HYI to China is something greater than the participation of Yenching University only and greater than the participation of Harvard University only; it is a service which will last on through the decades if it consists in setting the standards of scholarly research and adequate teaching . . . far beyond anything that has hitherto been attempted” (Letter from Hume to Elisseeff, November 19, 1940).

As was evident from his own deeply informed scholarship on Chinese medicine, Edward Hume’s interest in Sinology was sincere and serious (Hume 1940). But as a practicing physician, his greatest pedagogical passion was for medical training rather than Chinese studies per se. In June 1935, Hume reported to the HYI Trustees on a discussion with West China Union University (WCUU) Chancellor Joseph Beech concerning medical education. Dr. Beech had confided to Hume the challenges he faced in trying to consolidate medical facilities in Sichuan due to barriers of nationality, gender, and church affiliation. In Chengdu, Beech explained, women missionaries of the Methodist Church were intent upon retaining a separate women’s hospital, arguing that women ran hospitals “more efficiently and noiselessly” than men, and concerned that the proposed consolidation would lead to male domination. In Chongqing, Chinese staff in both men’s and women’s Methodist hospitals feared that a union with Canadians would lead to foreign domination inasmuch as the Canadian hospital there was “overstocked” with foreign missionaries. Since the Canadians opposed the idea of a university hospital in Chengdu, Beech intended to tap into British and American Boxer indemnity funds in addition to support from the Chinese government that had been promised by Chiang Kai-shek himself. In recounting this conversation in such detail to the HYI Trustees, Hume most likely harbored hopes that the Harvard-Yenching Institute could be persuaded to broaden its scope beyond pure Sinology to offer support for medical instruction, but he did not directly raise that possibility. Instead, he limited his appeal on behalf of WCUU to a request for a \$5,000 annual grant to cover the salary



of Dr. David Graham, curator of the university's museum whose valuable collection of local artifacts had been largely procured with HYI funding (Letter from Hume to HYI, June 19, 1935).

While his personal priority was the advancement of medical education, Edward Hume had a genuine appreciation for the value of Chinese studies. And he was not above applying his missionary-like zeal to Sinology as well as to medicine. After visiting several HYI grantee universities, he reported “[t]he study of Chinese history, philosophy, institutions and art seems to me so significant that it has depressed me to discover that certain universities were giving far more attention to other fields of thought and placing little emphasis on these distinctly Chinese fields. I have been able in several places to urge that the institution concerned make a new and more scholarly approach to the entire group of Chinese studies” (Letter from Hume to HYI, September 19, 1935). At the same time that he championed Chinese studies, Hume did not believe that HYI funds needed to be directed exclusively to traditional departments of Chinese culture (Letter from Hume to HYI, September 27, 1935). Unimpressed with erudition for erudition's sake, Hume favored a less traditional and more inclusive conception of Chinese studies than the classical Sinology then being promoted by HYI Director Serge Elisseeff. In a manner that today seems surprisingly contemporary and cosmopolitan, Hume observed approvingly that a number of leading Chinese scholars in Nanjing, Jinan and Beiping were “neither archeologists or philologists, but deeply concerned with cultural studies.” He expressed admiration for these “more modern scholars of China” who lived “in a world of broad scholarship” in contrast to “the older type of scholars . . . whose chief concern seemed to be to write a perfect Chinese style” (Letter from Hume to HYI, May 25, 1937).

In administration as well as in scholarship, Hume championed a more open approach that afforded greater latitude for indigenous control and local interpretation. By the same token, he advocated for a less intrusive, less paternalistic attitude on the part of HYI toward its Chinese beneficiaries. Having served as president of Yale-in-China, Hume appreciated the pivotal position of the university president in encouraging diverse interpretations of Chinese studies, singling out John Leighton Stuart at Yenching and Francis Wei at Hua Chung for special commendation in this regard (Letter from Hume to Dean Chase, February 19, 1935). Indeed, Hume never wavered in his admiration and affection for Francis Wei. In August 1949, on the eve of the Communist takeover, Hume underlined Wei's outstanding leadership as a reason for continuing HYI aid to

Hua Chung, referring to the university as “one of the best led institutions in China” (Letter from Hume to HYI, August 24, 1949).

Acutely aware of the nationalist sentiments attached to the field of Chinese studies, Edward Hume consistently cautioned HYI against assuming an unduly interventionist role toward its beneficiary institutions in China. On the eve of the Japanese invasion, Hume advised that the Harvard-Yenching Institute should exercise less detailed supervision of its sponsored programs in Chinese studies than had been its practice in the past, noting that the Chinese government was itself playing a more prominent part in overseeing the universities (HYI Minutes, November 9, 1936). Hume’s recommendation for more of a hands-off approach was clearly intended as a not-so-subtle reproach of HYI Director Serge Elisseeff, whose tendency to micro-manage HYI programs both at Harvard and in China was already well established.

Although more of his career was spent in China, Hume retained an abiding interest in India that also shaped his positions as an HYI Trustee. In the winter of 1937, having visited more than 200 hospitals in 14 provinces in China over the preceding three years, Edward Hume returned to India for a three-month project to suggest ways in which health programs could be integrated with government administration “towards a new philosophy in the ministry of healing” (Letter from Hume to HYI, Christmas 1937 from Bombay, India). During his time in India, Hume took the opportunity to visit Allahabad Agricultural Institute, which had been receiving regular support from HYI (thanks to personal connections between Allahabad’s founder, Samuel Higginbottom, and some original members of the HYI Board of Trustees). Upon his return to the U.S., Hume reported favorably on the “very commendable” work that Allahabad was doing on problems of soil and nutrition (HYI Minutes, April 11, 1938).

As in the case of Chinese studies, Hume’s support for Indian studies encompassed the humanities as well as more practical fields. He recommended that the HYI-sponsored Sino-Indian Institute in Beiping, which focused on comparing Sanskrit and Chinese versions of Buddhist sutras, be kept open after the death in 1937 of its director, Baron Alexander von Stael-Holstein (HYI Minutes, April 11, 1938). When the HYI Board of Trustees eventually decided to close the Sino-Indian Institute due to the difficulty of finding a qualified successor to von Stael-Holstein, Hume inquired whether the library of the Sino-Indian Institute might be donated to Yenching University. HYI Director Elisseeff, who had his eye on the valuable collection of rare Buddhist

sutras for transfer to the Harvard-Yenching Library, countered that no one at Yenching had shown even “the slightest interest” in Buddhism, charging that Yenching’s President, John Leighton Stuart, had been “unenthusiastic” about the Sino-Indian Institute because he felt it should have been established as part of a university rather than as a freestanding research entity. Elisseeff further claimed that Mongolians, Tibetans and Lamas would not want to go to Yenching, a Christian university, to study Buddhist scriptures (HYI Minutes, April 10, 1939).

Elisseeff’s unsupported arguments, intended to benefit Harvard at the expense of Yenching, did not sit well with Hume. In a private, handwritten note to fellow Trustee Eric North soon after the April 1939 HYI Board meeting, Hume complained of Elisseeff’s “cynical influence” in suggesting that Buddhists would feel unwelcome at a Christian university such as Yenching. Defending the academic integrity of Yenching’s president, Hume rejected Elisseeff’s accusation: “I should think Leighton would resent this vigorously” (Note from Hume to Eric North, May 22, 1939). In his more restrained typewritten response to the draft minutes of the recent Board meeting, Hume dismissed Elisseeff’s charges by stressing that scholarly collaboration depended upon scholarly spirit and welcome, not on religious affiliation. President John Leighton Stuart, he noted pointedly, had welcomed all scholars to Yenching University regardless of faith. Distancing himself from Elisseeff’s apparent ethnocentricity, Hume concluded “We must not assume too great superiority in America, for China has been developing in a remarkable way” (Hume Letter to Miss Bayley at HYI, May 20, 1939).

Edward Hume was a firm believer in the benefits of ecumenical cooperation, but he also had a realistic appreciation of the obstacles to successful inter-denominational and inter-university collaboration. Local pride and desire for autonomy, he understood, could often trump a call for consolidation. When the HYI Board of Trustees proposed offering a sizeable grant of \$20,000 as an incentive for the Shanghai-area Christian colleges (Hangchow, Soochow, Shanghai and St. John’s) to create a joint program in Chinese studies, Hume was quick to point out that these universities – each of which was sponsored by a single Protestant denomination and none of which had any connection to HYI – were all supported by loyal Chinese alumni who would steadfastly resist amalgamation (HYI Minutes, November 14, 1938). As Hume predicted, the proposal was not embraced by any of the targeted beneficiaries and had to be abandoned.

Having made his own career in medicine, Edward Hume was inclined toward a more applied, socially engaged model of scholarship than the arcane brand of Sinology endorsed by HYI Director, Serge Elisseeff. Thus in 1942, when the Institute considered the possibility of discontinuing its annual grant to Allahabad Agricultural Institute on grounds that it did not fit with the HYI profile of supporting humanistic studies of China, Hume proposed writing to the Commissioner of Agriculture of the Government of India to vouch for the significant value of the crop investigations and food experiments being conducted at Allahabad (HYI Minutes, November 9, 1942). His intervention helped to protect HYI support to Allahabad for many more years.

The establishment of a Communist regime in China marked a major turning point in the history of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (Fan 2014). It also offered an opportunity for Edward Hume to advocate more vocally for his own long-cherished goals. Shortly after the founding of the People's Republic of China, when the closure of the Christian colleges forced HYI to rethink its presence in Asia, Hume suggested it might be an opportune moment for the Institute to expand its purview beyond the humanities and social sciences to include support for medical and agricultural education (HYI Minutes, April 16, 1951). Moreover, until such time as it would be possible to return to China, Hume believed it might make sense for HYI to shift its primary focus of attention to India: "Perhaps we can do something there while we wait for the red tide to recede."

In hopes of furthering these multiple objectives, Hume approached Wallace Donham, Dean of the Harvard Business School and Chair of the HYI Board of Trustees, to inquire about the possibility of a grant to the medical college at Vellore in South India. Vellore had recently been recognized as a university by the Madras government, and Hume proposed that HYI make a five-year grant for the purpose of inviting a "Chinese teacher of distinction" to join the Vellore faculty. He further suggested a non-recurring grant to build up the Vellore library collection (Letter from Hume to Wallace Donham, May 4, 1951). The response to Hume's attempt to expand the HYI presence in India was disappointing, however. Donham replied that, while he was not opposed to "medical gifts," the agricultural work at Allahabad seemed of greater practical priority (Letter from Donham to Hume, May 9, 1951).

Rebuffed in his effort to secure funding for the medical college in Vellore, Hume

presented another proposal to support scholarship in India – this one more in keeping with HYI’s traditional preference for the humanities, and yet in some respects even closer to Hume’s own heart. In 1951, Hume introduced Dean Donham to an Indian friend of his: Dr. Bhaskar P. Hivale, a 1928 Harvard PhD who had taught as professor of philosophy in Bombay and more recently had served as founder and first president of Ahmednagar College – a Christian institution supported by American mission boards and located in the very district of India where Hume had been born and raised. Hume noted that under Hivale’s leadership Ahmednagar was developing a “fascinating” program that combined the teaching of Sanskrit and Persian with history, philosophy, modern sciences, physical education, and rural education (Letter from Hume to Donham, November 27, 1951). He suggested that HYI might wish to provide a grant to Ahmednagar, which in contrast to Allahabad “would not expect to be a permanent drain on HYI funds” (Letter from Hume to Donham, October 28, 1952).

Just as he had once importuned repeatedly on behalf of Hua Chung University, which had incorporated his cherished Yale-in-China, so now Hume registered a similar series of pleas in support of Ahmednagar College. In making the case for Ahmednagar, Hume again emphasized the importance of an enlightened indigenous college president who was both an inspiring religious leader and a respected scholar. The parallel with Francis Wei at Hua Chung was clear, and underscored by the fact that Bhaskar Pandurang Hivale of Ahmednagar – like Francis Wei – had studied philosophy and theology at Harvard. Lest Hume be suspected of favoritism in promoting a university located in his birthplace, he hastened to explain that “It is not because of my association with that city that I write, but because the College seems to me to afford Harvard-Yenching to bring a definite contribution from the West to India” (Letter from Hume to Donham, April 17, 1953).

Hume’s recommendation of Ahmednagar as a worthy recipient of HYI support received the enthusiastic endorsement of Daniel Ingalls, Harvard’s newly appointed Sanskrit specialist, who had recently returned from an HYI-funded inspection tour of Indian universities. Ingalls reported back to the HYI Trustees that Ahmednagar was in urgent need of funds for buildings and equipment. Unlike HYI’s longtime beneficiary, Allahabad, which was now receiving Ford and Rockefeller grants to support its agricultural program, Ahmednagar had few other potential benefactors. In response to Ingalls’ report, the Trustees in November 1953

approved for Ahmednagar a non-recurring \$50,000 grant for library and classroom construction and science equipment, along with a \$10K grant as a revolving fund (HYI Minutes, November 9, 1953). Over the next thirteen years, HYI provided three additional grants to Ahmednagar in a pattern of recurring philanthropy that outlived Hume himself. With its final grant in 1966, HYI had contributed a total of \$138,500 to Ahmednagar College for campus facilities, teaching expenses, books and other resources, (HYI Minutes, 1953-66). In this same period, HYI continued to make annual grants to Allahabad Agricultural Institute of approximately \$11,000 a year. In short, although HYI's principal focus was always on East Asia – with special attention to China and Chinese culture – over the years it also provided significant multi-purpose support to South Asia. Hume's timely interventions on behalf of esteemed friends were an important catalyst for a more comprehensive interpretation of HYI's mandate to advance higher education in Asia.

### ***Conclusion***

Even as Edward Hume advocated for a more inclusive conception of HYI's mission, he remained loyal to the Institute's old friends. In 1951, Hume's continuing concern for John Leighton Stuart was reflected in his suggestion that HYI offer a pension to Stuart in the event that the U.S. State Department should fail to provide adequately for its recently retired ambassador (Letter from Hume to HYI, June 7, 1951). Hume also argued for involving Stuart in the process of rethinking and redesigning HYI's activities in Asia after the Communist takeover had necessitated a fundamental change of direction (Letter from Hume to HYI, May 22, 1953). Unsuccessful though these particular efforts were, they were a poignant reminder of the abiding value that Hume placed on personal relationships.

Edward Hume attended his last HYI Board meeting in November 1955. He had not been feeling well and the trip to Cambridge was apparently too much for him; he suffered a stroke immediately afterward. Ten months later, when Hume had still not recovered, fellow HYI Trustee Eric North wrote to Mrs. Hume to inquire about her husband's condition and to ask whether it was really wise for him to continue his service on the HYI Board (Letter from North to Mrs. Hume, August 30, 1956). Lotta Hume wrote back immediately, pleading that her "gravely ill" husband who so deeply "cherished this connection" be permitted to remain on the HYI Board of Trustees. She expressed "terrible remorse" that she had permitted her

husband to attend the last Board meeting “which proved so fatal to him.” Although she acknowledged that the stroke might have happened anyway, she obviously believed that Edward Hume had sacrificed his health in service to the Harvard-Yenching Institute (Letter from Lotta Hume to Eric North, September 2, 1956). In deference to Mrs. Hume’s wishes, Edward Hume remained an HYI Trustee until his death.

Unlike the college presidents in China and India for whom he expressed such admiration – John Leighton Stuart, Francis Wei, and Bhaskar Pandurang Hivale in particular – Edward H. Hume was neither a minister nor a theologian. And unlike his own father and grandfather, who had also served as medical doctors overseas, he did not go to Asia as an officially appointed missionary sent by a church mission society. Yale-in-China was interdenominational from the start and by the 1920s had already distanced itself from its religious roots; in 1934, it officially registered as a secular institution. For much of his career, Hume worked as a public servant in the employ of various governments (American, Chinese, and Indian). Nevertheless, as the obituary on Edward Hume compiled by the Harvard-Yenching Institute noted, Hume was “a devoted Christian” who was committed to the struggle for social justice. His religiously-inspired dedication to improving the lot of others shone through Hume’s academic and administrative service alike: “His scholarship extended beyond the field of medicine and his interest into every enterprise that carried promise of increasing human welfare” (HYI Memorial Minute 1957).

Yale University, in soliciting contributions for an annual lectureship to be established in Edward Hume’s name, made a similar point about Hume’s life of service: “He brought honor and luster to the name of Yale both in this country and in Asia where in dedicated family tradition, he pioneered in the work of Christian medical education . . . . No one of Yale’s sons has given more in the cause of his fellow men without regard for race, color or creed.” Indicative of Hume’s global reach, the Committee of Sponsors for the Yale lectureship, in addition to his old friend and fellow HYI Trustee Eric North, included such luminaries as Hu Shih, H.H. Kung, Kenneth S. Latourette, Henry R. Luce, and Pearl Buck. The stated purpose of the Hume Memorial Lectureship (first delivered by John King Fairbank in 1960 and which I was honored to present in 1990) is to highlight “the contributions of the Chinese people to civilization in the creative arts, science or philosophy” as a “reaffirmation of Dr. Hume’s faith

in the ultimate destiny of the Chinese people” (Yale University, February 9, 1957). Edward Hume’s enduring influence on the Harvard-Yenching Institute is fully in keeping with the empathetic and optimistic vision that animated his entire career.

## References

**Note:** “HYI Minutes” refer to Minutes of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Board of Trustees Meetings. These materials, as well as the personal correspondence and other primary sources referred to in this paper, are found in the Harvard-Yenching Institute Archives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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