

FOREWORD

SCHOLARS and teachers have traditionally been held in high esteem in Chinese society. Educators have been regarded as pillars of civilisation. Yet education was traditionally the preserve of men, beyond the reach of all but a few Chinese women, until pioneer work was initiated by missionaries. So it came to pass that one of the very first Anglo-Chinese girls' schools in Hong Kong was established by the Church Missionary Society in 1906. It was St. Stephen's Girls' College.

Since its foundation, St. Stephen's Girls' College has devoted itself to the education of women. Many among the school's founders and teachers spent a lifetime at their calling. The success of St. Stephen's is also a tribute to the forward-looking parents who sent their daughters to the school in its early days; by doing so, they opened the way for women to play a new role in Hong Kong society generations later. Apart from local students, St. Stephen's also accepted boarders from overseas. In addition, it sent some of the first women students to the University of Hong Kong and ran the first women students' hostel. Through the decades, students of St. Stephen's have made their mark at the highest level in government and politics, in the arts and in the professions and business, as teachers and perhaps in the most influential role of all, as educated wives and mothers.

My association with St. Stephen's Girls' College dates back to 1924 when I became a student. Later my son, my daughter, and my grandson also followed in my footsteps. In my long association with the school, I have experienced its vicissitudes through war and peace, closing down and reopening, building expansions and developments. Like myself, many past students and well-wishers take a personal interest in the school. On the occasion of its 90th Anniversary this year, it is only befitting that the history of the school be properly researched and recorded as part of the celebration.

The history of St. Stephen's Girls' College has long been looking for an informed author. Now it has found one, who in the past four years has brought to this undertaking the same care and zeal with which she addressed her job as a modulator of education policies in Hong Kong and as Principal of the college for thirty years.

Dr. Ellen Li Shu Pui, C.B.E., LL.D., J.P.
Formerly Vice-Chairman of the College Council
December, 1996

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PREFACE

AS St. Stephen's Girls' College celebrates its 115th Anniversary, I am happy to offer my congratulations and best wishes.

After my retirement as Principal in 1991 I was glad to spend time researching and writing *Change and Continuity, A History of St. Stephen's Girls' College, Hong Kong*. Now that the School Council has very kindly planned to have a Reprint Edition, it is my honour to write its Preface.

Inevitably there were some errors in the first edition — mostly, but not all, minor ones. Most numerous were in the captions to photographs when the names of those pictured were unknown. I had, too often, been forced to resort to '?'. Over the years I have been grateful when some of my errors and omissions have been pointed out to me by past teachers and students. I kept a careful list and all the errors made known to me have been put right. Regrettably both the dates of some illustrations and the names given in the captions may still sometimes be in error, but at least some have now been corrected.

In proof-reading this Reprint Edition, in December 2020, I realised that the Matters of Congratulation on pages 300 to 304 were clearly very out of date. The sort of research necessary to list the achievements of past students in the years since 1996 would now be beyond my capacity. I can only hope that another history of the school will one day be written which will do justice to the many more achievements of the school and its graduates.

However, for Appendix II—Membership of the St. Stephen's Girls' College Council and Appendix III—Chairwomen of the Parent-Teacher Association, it was clear that it would be possible and meaningful to bring the records up to date. Mrs. Louisa Yim has very kindly undertaken this task.

Though not a historian, I tried to set the school and its development in its historical context, from its gradual transformation from a tiny Church Missionary Society (now Church Mission Society, C.M.S.) school with five young pupils, to its full range of Kindergarten (Private), Primary School (Subsidised) and Secondary School (Grant) all governed by the legally incorporated **St. Stephen's Girls' College Council**. I was also interested to trace the gradual devolution of missionary endeavour onto the local church, the **Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui** (中華聖公會).

Because all pre-war records were lost during the Japanese occupation of 1941–45 I was dependent for the story of the early years mostly on the Archives of the C.M.S. held by Birmingham University. **The Revd. Dr. Joyce Bennett** generously gave me access to the five hundred personal letters which she had written to her parents during the period 1949 to 1960 and which, unbeknown to her, they had preserved. For romanisation of Chinese words I normally used Pinyin. A Glossary of most of the names in the text was appended.

Finally — some words of sincere thanks.

To the School's present Principal, **Ms. Maggie Chau Wai Chu**, for her encouragement in this project.

To **St. Stephen's Girls' College Council** for approving the necessary funding.

To **Mrs. Louisa Yim Yam Oi Lai** for her patience in coordinating all the work involved.

To **Dr. Anny Wong Oi Yee** for her expertise in helping with proof-reading.

To **The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press** and their representatives for their professional work in the publication of this Reprint Edition.

As before I dedicate this Reprint Edition of the history of St. Stephen's Girls' College to all in the past who have lived and served, taught and studied within its doors. May they and the school **IN FAITH GO FORWARD!**

Kathleen E. Barker
Cambridge, England
January 2021