

# *Prof. Rex Li's Writings*

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**Title:** What Do I Learn From Hwa Chong Institution's (HCI) Early History

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**Summary/ Abstract:** Hwa Chong Institution is a top school in Singapore. I study its early history and learn much from it.

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## What Do I Learn From Hwa Chong Institution's (HCI) Early History

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### (A) Short History (1919 – 1990)

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|-----------|--|
| 1919      | Founded by a group of overseas Chinese businessmen with a heart from Chinese education in Singapore, named as Chinese High School (華僑中學).  |
| 1926      | Some financial problems led to temporary close down.   |
| 1927 - 40 | Lots of support from Chinese businessmen, the seedbed of progressive patriotic Chinese teachers / students.  |
| 1942 - 5  | Close down by Japanese occupation  |
| 1946 – 48 | Restarts and continues its progressivism under British colonial rule   |
| 1948 – 68 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation together with Singapore</li> <li>• Formation of national identity</li> <li>• Under management of professional educators / scholars</li> </ul>  |
| 1968 – 90 | Supporting and following government policies / initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1974 Establishes HC Junior College to meet demands for post-secondary (1 to 1 matching fund)</li> <li>• 1979 Chinese High School (CHS) joins government special assistance plan (SAP) to support government's language policy (bilingualism)</li> <li>• 1988 Ministry of Education (MOE) chooses HCI to be an independent school with more autonomy.</li> </ul> |

### (B) Vision / Objective / Motto

?	全面育人(p. 27) – 校旨
1937	自強不息(p. 27) – 校訓
1987	Excellence in education (p. 102)
1990	己立立人，己達達人(p. 104)

### (C) Early Founders and Movers

Tang Kah Kee 陳嘉庚 (1874 – 1961)	Lee Kong Chian 李光前 (1893 – 1967)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 華僑・僑領</li> <li>b) 從商・捐教育</li> <li>c) 捐助成立華中(1919)・廈門大學等</li> <li>d) 參加國內政治 ( 捐款 )</li> <li>e) 反日 / 逃至印尼</li> <li>f) 通過連繫大力捐助反日 反蔣 / 出任政協</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 陳嘉庚女婿</li> <li>b) 來自福建・後創業成為「橡膠大王」</li> <li>c) 1926 年接手支持華中</li> <li>d) 抗日時身在美國</li> <li>e) 捐助成立南洋大學</li> <li>f) 創立李氏基金會 1962 年任新加坡大學校長</li> </ul>
薛永忝 (1889 – 1951)	鄭安倫(1910 – 1998)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 華中蔡元培</li> <li>b) 早年在中國福州讀書・後到美國密芝根大學獲碩士</li> <li>c) 1937 年出任華中校長・政策：開明・說服・校訓：自強不息</li> <li>d) 1937 – 42 } 校長 1946 – 48 }</li> <li>e) 抗日期間先處理好校務及遣散</li> <li>f) 抗日後 – 民主牆</li> <li>g) 1948 – 支持學生舉行“五四”紀念會・受非議而辭職</li> <li>h) 1950 年加入昆興企業・因輸出橡膠到中國・出現「昆興案」・被英殖民政府拘捕審查・保外就醫後死亡。</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 幼年從內地新加坡・畢業於工商小學</li> <li>b) 因華中 1925 年關閉・無法升中・陳嘉庚安排工商小畢業生回廈門升中・早受華中恩惠</li> <li>c) 廈門 → 南京 → 北京 (集美) (鐘南) (清華人類學)</li> <li>d) 1937 – 39 回新加坡在華中任教</li> <li>e) 1939 – 48 在國內多所大學任教 (雲南大・西北大)</li> <li>f) 1948 獲李光前委為華中校長</li> <li>g) 1948 - 68 推動華中</li> </ul>

## **(D) Lessons / Observations**

- (1) HCI was founded by overseas Chinese. They made donations because they were concerned with education.
- (2) These patriotic Chinese businessman wanted better education for the next generation. They were from China and much related to Chinese politics.
- (3) HCI could be seen as an elite Chinese school and seedbed of progressive ideas in 1920 – 1950 (democracy, anti-colonialism, anti-Japan). Principal (薛永泰) was an example.
- (4) Under the principalship of a scholar (鄭安倫), HCI was moving on a professional path; the school board leadership of Lee Kong Chian put HCI closer with business and government.
- (5) By 1965, (Independence of Singapore), HCI forges a new national identity, moving to be part of government / MOE.
- (6) The success of HCI lies in:
  - a) Taps on the elitist Chinese tradition and name (華僑中學).
  - b) Gets a lot of resources from Chinese community.
  - c) Grows along a professional path
  - d) Supports government policy and becomes part of it (1970 – 1990)
  - e) Continues to move on, like its motto (自強不息)
  - f) Keeps a team of pioneering elitists of Chinese ethnic background and dedicated to education excellence.
  - g) As in 2009, the CEO of HCI espouses: (Ang Wee Hiong, 洪偉雄, p. 29)
    - Education excellence
    - Forward looking
    - Pioneering
    - High intellectual potential
    - Nurture future leaders
    - More forward / global age