

A Glimpse of National Taiwan University (I): Reminiscing the Past

National Taiwan University / November 15, 2008

The history of National Taiwan University extends all the way back to the early years of the 20th century. Let us travel back through the tunnel of time as we walk down the azalea-dotted Royal Palm Boulevard.

Eighty years ago, in 1928, the first university in Taiwan was founded under Japanese colonial rule and named Taihoku Imperial University. It was the seventh university among nine schools in the Imperial University System of Japan. At that time, the system of Tutorial Program Chairs was adopted and the academic year lasted from April to March the next year.



(Taira Shidehara)

The first president of Taihoku Imperial University was Mr. Taira Shidehara. The school sat on the site of the Taihoku Senior School of Agriculture and Forestry..

In the early years, the university had only the Faculty of Literature and Politics and the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, besides the affiliated Technical College of Agriculture and Forestry. On April 30, 1928, the first class of students were admitted, and 46 of them graduated in March 1931. In 1936, after the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine and the Affiliated College of Medicine, a comprehensive university system took form.



(Sadanori Mita)

In September 1937, Mr. Sadanori Mita, the Dean of Medicine, succeeded as the president. In 1938, the university incorporated the Taihoku Hospital, later known as the National Taiwan University Hospital.



[\(Masatsugu Ando\)](#)

In April 1941, Mr. Masatsugu Ando, the Dean of Literature and Politics, was elected the third president of the university. In May 1943, the Faculty of Engineering was founded, as the fifth college of the university.



[\(Kazuo Ando\)](#)

Mr. Kazuo Ando, the Dean of Engineering, took office as the fourth president of the university at the end of spring 1945. On August 15 that same year, Japan surrendered and the National Government from China set up the Restoration Assistance Committee for Taiwan's Education. Mr. Tsung-lo Lo, who had studied in Japan, took over the university from President Ando. The imperial university's colleges of literature and politics, science, medicine, engineering, and agriculture, 114 lecturers, three institutes of research, one preparatory school, and one affiliated College of Medicine formed the basis of National Taiwan University.



[\(Tsung-lo Lo\)](#)

The transfer from Japanese to Chinese guardianship was formally completed on November 15, 1945, which has since become the birthday of National Taiwan University.

Soon after the takeover, the school reopened in January 1946. President Lo's principles concerning the takeover included retaining distinguished Japanese scholars in large numbers, preserving the preparatory school to maintain the quality of university students during the transitional period, and continuing operations of research institutes on Southeast Asian cultures, resources, and tropical medicine. These have proven President Lo's extraordinary vision for the university.



(Tse-hong Loh)

On August 13, 1946, Mr. Tse-hong Loh took office as the 2nd president of the university.

In January 1947, the Taiwan Provincial College of Law and Commerce, located on the Xuzhou Road Campus, was merged with the university. The first issue of the National Taiwan University Bulletin was published on October 1 and initiated the tradition of regular report about school affairs. The old University Anthem was posted on the cover page of the first issue and the first university games were held on December 29.



(Chang-kung Chuang)

In June 1948, Mr. Chang-kung Chuang succeeded as the third president in June 1948.

President Chuang made great efforts to reform the university but before long resigned on December 7.



(Ssu-nien Fu)

On January 20, 1949, Mr. Ssu-nien Fu succeeded as the fourth president.

President Fu made intense efforts to better the university, creating a vibrant atmosphere on campus. On April 16, the first school-wide University Affairs Meeting was held, which has since become the top decision making body of the university. In July, the university took over the First Model Forest, which is now known as the University Experimental Forest. On the fourth Anniversary Celebration, President Fu exhorted the students to follow the principles of "Integrity, Diligence, Fidelity, and Compassion," which were adopted as the school's motto afterwards.

On December 20, 1950, President Fu passed away due to sudden cerebral hemorrhaging, a loss deeply mourned by all inside and outside the university. His ashes were buried in the Botanical Garden, later re-named Fu Garden, and the Fu Bell was cast in his memory. Both the Fu garden and the Fu Bell have become important emblems on campus and President Fu has come to symbolize the NTU spirit.



(Shih-liang Chien)

After President Fu's death, Mr. Kang-Po Shen, the Dean of the college of Liberal Arts, acted as president. In March 1951, Mr. Shih-liang Chien, the Dean of Academic Affairs, succeeded as the fifth president of the university.

In July 1954, the university worked together with the forerunners of current National Taiwan Normal University, National Cheng Kung University, and National Chung Hsing University to hold collaborative recruitment exams for new students, which later became Taiwan's Joint College Entrance Exam. On February 7, 1966, the administrative meeting agreed to create the Ph.D. Program of Chemistry and receive new students starting in March, marking the beginning of Ph.D. education in the university. The new University Anthem was announced in December of 1968 and is still currently sung.



(Chen-hsing Yen)

In June 1971, Mr. Shih-liang Chien was appointed the President of Academia Sinica, and Mr. Chen-hsing Yen succeeded as the sixth president of the university.

In 1971, the Defending Diaoyutai Islands Movement organized by the NTU students inspired student involvement in social movements island wide. In April 1979, the university established a sisterhood relationship with Pennsylvania State University and signed an agreement on academic collaboration, thus launching a new era where the university actively seeks international exchanges.

During the term of President Yen, the university encouraged the founding of many student service clubs to reach out to all corners of society and thereby to strive together through this challenging period in Taiwan.



(Chao-chung Yu)

In August 1981, Mr. Chao-chung Yu succeeded as the seventh president of the university.

President Yu, a pioneer in general education, made efforts to develop new curricula and announced the Subjects of Liberal Education in September 1982; NTU thereby reached a new stage in holistic education. The NTU Emblem was announced during the Anniversary Celebration of 1982 and became the symbol that unites the spirit and energy of the whole school.



(Chen Sun)

In August 1984, Mr. Chen Sun became the eighth president and also the first alumni president.

In June 1987, the College of Management was founded, the first expansion of the university since 1945. Between 1990 and 1991, faculty and students were actively involved in social movements, such as the Wild Lily Student Movement, etc. to push Taiwan toward a fully democratic society. At the end of 1992, the University Affairs Meeting passed the organization guidelines for the President Selection Committee of NTU, making the university the first in Taiwan to elect its own president.



(Wei-jao Chen)

In February 1993, after Mr. Chen Sun was promoted to the Minister of National Defense, Mr. Guang-hsiung Kou, the Dean of Academic Affairs substituted as the acting president. On June 22, Mr. Wei-jao Chen, the first president elected by the faculty, succeeded as the ninth president of the university.

Beginning in August 1993, in order to respond to academic trends and developments, the College of Public Health, the College of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, the College of Law, and the College of Life Science were founded successively. The university also enhanced academic exchange with international universities in an active manner, signing cooperative agreements with about 187 universities abroad. The university also expanded to include the Shui-Yuan Campus, Zhu-bei campus, Yun-lin campus, and Yi-lan Seaside Work Station.



(Si-chen Lee)

On June 22, 2005, when President Chen fulfilled his term, Mr. Si-chen Lee became the president.

With his board and far-sighted vision, the incumbent President Dr. Lee is leading the university to consistently surpass benchmarks and transform into a truly top-notch academic institution by ardently implementing the “Forward to Excellence” Project sponsored by the Ministry of Education. In addition to academic achievements, he puts special emphasis on humanistic values and social responsibilities. Under his auspices, the Center for Art Promotion was founded and the NTU Museums network initiated, showing fully NTU’s determination to promote holistic education.

(Conclusion)

Since the founding of Taihoku Imperial University in March 1928 by the Japanese, four presidents had administered the university for 17 years. Despite being affected by the southward-expansion colonial policy, the imperial Taihoku university left a legacy of high-quality equipment, faculty, and academic performance. In 1945, when Taiwan was restored, the university was taken over by the National Government and renamed National Taiwan University. The ten presidents and two acting presidents since 1945 together have transformed the university into one with a highly respectable reputation. The number of students has dramatically grown from 60 during the Japanese colonial period to 33,000, while the size of the university has expanded from two colleges to 11 colleges and two schools. Looking toward the future, the university pledges to hold onto the motto, "Integrity, Diligence, Fidelity, and Compassion," and continue to excel in educating students, conducting research, serving the society, and contributing to the sustainable development of the globe, thereby distinguishing itself as a genuinely world-leading university.