

## About President Chao Nee, 1905-1996

By Marian Tsu-Tsun (Nee) Chou

Chao Nee was born on March 1, 1905, in FuYang, AnHui, China. His first 10 years of study was under the traditional Chinese educational system, so called 私塾學館 in his home village, and later in city TianJing 天津. His teachers were all Qing Dynasty scholars, taught and required students to study, memorize 詩經, 書經, 左傳, 古文觀止, 史记, 漢書, plus Newspaper reading for current affair, daily practice calligraphy, and weekly Essay writing. He then began to appreciate knowledge, enjoy studying, & new ideas were inspired. Among his many teachers, he was mostly appreciative Mr. Qin-He Yang, who taught him history, geography, English and Mathematics, preparing him for passing the entrance examination of TonJi High School.(同濟大學附中) in Shanghai.

1922 Fall, Chao Nee started his five-years long modern education at TonJi High School, with the curriculum much emphasizing German language & literature. Students were busy study to increase German vocabulary, practicing conversations, translation, essay writing besides other subjects like Chinese, mathematics, History, Geography, Biology, English, Physics, Chemistry, Art & Ph.Ed. Only the subject Chinese was taught in Chinese language, all other subjects were in German language. Faculty members included both German and Chinese. 1923 Fall, the high school was able to move into the newly expanded beautiful campus at 吳淞, Shanghai, together with the TongJi University. TonJi High school later transformed into a 6-years school, with 3-yrs Junior High & 3-yrs Senior High, before he graduated from the Sr. High.

TonJi High School carried the same curriculum as the high schools in Germany, so a TonJi H.S. graduate will be accepted by German engineering colleges & universities. Tuition at TonJi High, plus room & board, was very expensive, he was very grateful for the financial assistance from Nee family uncles to allow him the best possible education at the time.

Summer of 1927, he graduated from TonJi High, and directly entering the Civil Engineering Dept., of TongJi University. Freshman year emphasizing factory internship, which helped a lot for engineer training. Sophomore year curriculum included Applied Mechanics, Hydraulics, Calculus, Physics, Chemistry, Cartography, Technology. Junior year: Mechanics of Materials, Differential Equation, Surveying, Construction, Mechanics, Internship in Measurement. Senior years: Water Conservancy, Railway Engineering, Road

Construction, Alignment & Geotechnical, Sanitary Engineering, Structural, Steel & Wood Structure, RC, Electrical Engineering, Material Test, Basic Engineering, Construction appraisal. All professors were German, spoke German in the classroom. BS graduation required a thesis and all course work passing grades.

July, 1933, Chao Nee had a memorable graduation trip with one German professor and seven other graduating classmates, touring NanJing, BeiPing, JiNan, QinDao, visiting Yantzi River Water Resources Commission, JinPu Railway, Yellow River Railway Bridge, Xiaoqinhe Shiplock, Forbidden City, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven, Great Wall, QinDao municipal construction & port project, Sewage treatment plant. This trip was an opportunity to contrast the actual engineering with the theory learned in the classroom. Returned from the trip, he started writing thesis: Design of Reinforced Concrete Bridge, and finished writing in October, formally obtained his B.S. degree in Engineering.

TonJi Univ. changed to National TonJi University, with lower tuition than before, but he still need to pay two hundred Silver dollars per semester. In his memoir 八十自述, Chao Nee mentioned more than once how very much appreciative he was for the financial assistance from his Nee Family uncles, allowing him to obtain the best possible education, paving a smooth path to his future.

Chao Nee worked as Teaching Assistant at TonJi Univ. for two more years. He was then selected as a recipient of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Scholarship to study engineering at Hanover University, Germany. When arrived at Germany on June, 1935, he worked four months as Highway Intern before arriving at Hanover Univ. on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and immediately requesting the university that his BS degree in Engineering from TonJi Univ. be equivelanced to the Dipl.Ing. from German Engineering College, to allow him going direct for Doctor of Engineering program. His request was not approved; instead, Hanover Univ. only allowed him to take the Dipl.Ing. test after he had attended class course work for two semesters. When he finally finished & passed the Dip.Ing. test, Prof. Blum was assigned to be his advisor, guiding his Doctor of Engineering thesis, which had a title: Research on China's Railway Network. When he obtained his Doctor of Engineering degree in 1937, China's war against Japan already began, he decided to return to his motherland. At this time, he met Ms. Ting-Wen Lee, a Mathematics graduate student at Munich University in Southern Germany. He paid her a happy month-long visit, and with the consent of both family, they held an

engagement ceremony in January, 1938 before Chao Nee returned to China. Six months later, Ms. Lee also returned to her homeland.

Heavy bombing forced Tongji Univ. moved her campus to different cities five times during the war against Japan. July 1938, Dr. Chao Nee started his teaching career at Tongji Univ. when the university campus was located at KangZhou. He was involved & witnessed the moving from KangZhou, to BaBu to Kunmin, YunNan. He and Miss Lee were married on Feb. 8, 1939, beginning their 50-years long happy married life together. In KunMin they welcomed their first son, Tsu-Wei. When TonJi Univ. moved to YiBing /LeeZhuang campus by the YanTze River, in SiChuan province, their daughter Tsu-Tsun joined the family in 1942.

In the Spring of 1944, Dr. Chao Nee left teaching career for an Inspection Engineer job at the Hydraulics Department in the Executive Yuan of central government. He was assigned a mission project, traveling with a team from ChongQing, SiChuan province to XinJiang province in China's northwest. He worked hard for 8 months there, visiting north, central, west and south of XinJiang, inspecting the hydraulic potentials and development. He also observed local racial and cultural diversity situation. He gained first-hand knowledge of XinJiang's important impact in politics, economics and defense, which resulted in two books he wrote based on his observation there: Remembrance and Thoughts on the Inspectional Journey to XinJiang and Hydraulics in XinJiang. His second son, Tsu-Jie, was born in NanJing in 1947.

Dr. Chao Nee and his family moved from NanJing to Tainan, Taiwan at the yearend of 1948. This move marked the beginning of his 30-years teaching career and a deep relationship with NCKU. At the time, the university was still called the Provincial Taiwan Engineering College, with one campus, 6 engineering departments, and 500 students. The Civil Engineering Dept. was a small two-story wooden building with a few offices and classrooms, several drafting labs, and some survey instruments. During his administration as Civil Engineering Department head from 1949-1966, he established Hydraulics Lab., Survey Research Lab., Environmental Study Lab., Structural & Material Sciences Lab., Soil & Highway Engineering Lab. He helped to lay the foundation encouraging professors to simultaneously responsible for teaching, research and carrying cooperative project with the industry. He established the undergraduate & graduate programs for the Hydraulics Engineering Dept.,

Survey Engineering Dept., & Environmental Engineering Dept. in the 1950s and 1960s.

1949, Dr. Nee, Civil Eng. Dept. head, together with Mr. Guan-Cai Zhu, Central Hydraulics Laboratory Division Head, to request a large sum of available fund to establish a Hydraulics Laboratory in Civil Eng. Dept.. The wind tunnels, back flow tanks, plane pools to drum waves and other equipment, enriched the experiments of hydraulics and fluid mechanics courses at Civil Eng. Dept., Hydraulics Dept., Mechanical Eng. Dept., Open ocean harbor engineering model experiments, wave mechanics research experiments, allow students to obtain theoretical and experimental proof.

From 1953-54, Dr. Nee was among the first group of exchange scholars at Purdue Univ. in West Lafayette, Indiana. This 6-years long exchange program not only enriched professors' experience via teaching method, research method, course work and text book selection, improvement in research Lab. and factory lab. equipment and facilities. Dr. Chao Nee, also visited several other universities across USA and in Germany. This experience enabled him to see the differences between the American & German higher educational systems.

1965 Dr. Chao Nee was appointed as NCKU's Dean of the Engineering College, and Director of Engineering Science Research Center. He worked hard to increase the presence of the research and engineering departments, successfully promoted engineering cooperation projects between NCKU, Taiwan University, & Jiao Tong University. Using his sabbatical leave, he visited Aachen Univ., in West Germany for a month, researching Aachen City Planning and Transportation, as well as reconnecting with his old professors at Hanover University.

In 1971, Dr. Nee was appointed as the President of National Cheng Kung University. Tainan region, where NCKU located, with good economy and rich cultural history. GaoXiong Medical School Hospital was the only medical school with teaching hospital to serve the entire southern Taiwan's population of 6,000,000. Seriously sicked patients would have to travel north to Taipei seeking medical treatment. President Nee saw the urgent need to establish a medical school in NCKU, with a hospital to serve the medical need of southern Taiwan's population. At the time, NCKU had four Colleges: College of Science, College of Arts, College of Business, and College of Engineering. President Nee first consulted with medical experts in Taiwan, following by

visiting medical schools in America, Germany & Korea, some of those universities had newly established medical school with teaching hospital. He wished to learn and borrow their experience in the operation, funding & management. After the trip, he organized facilitation symposiums to further arouse social attention. Symposium summarization: the Medical Center must cooperating with the establishment of a medical school and a teaching medical hospital. President Nee delivered the "Establishment of Medical School at NCKU Plan" to Ministry of Education.

President Nee worked hard to strive for using the nearby abandoned Artillery Training Center land, which belonged to the Dept. of Defense, for location of the medical school & a hospital with modern facility. He learned NCKU had to pay NT\$70 million relocation compensation for using the land, & held meetings with Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education. Ministry of Defense, insisted the transfer fee must be included in the NCKU education budget and paid to the Ministry of Defense. Until Oct. 3, 1975, at the Legislature's 56<sup>th</sup> meeting, with the help of legislator Chao Mu to raise question to the Executive Yuan, suggesting to establish a medical school in NCKU to improve the health care in the southern Taiwan. The Compensation Office of the Executive Yuan only allowed NT\$70 million. In compensation for the Artillery Training Center to be incorporated into NCKU budget, which was then handed over to the Ministry of National Defense. In 1977, NCKU received this land from Ministry of Defense, and named it Jian Guo Campus (建國校區), designated as a Medical Center site.

Due to the government was in financial difficulties at the time, and medical center establishment was very costly, he presented the Plan the second time in May, 1978, suggesting using loan or cooperation method for the construction. Only the teaching portion of the medical school be compiled into the national budget, which could be easier for approval. The Ministry of Education still postponed the discussion of the plan report, which means that it will only be considered until after YangMing Medical College in Taipei completely finished its enrollment. This was the reason he decided to establish Cheng Kung Culture Foundation, a non-profit tax-exempt foundation that could do fund-raising through donations from the public.

In 1978, President Nee heard the Labor Insurance Bureau will use the labor insurance fund NT\$3,000,000 to build a labor insurance hospital in Tainan. President Nee, accompanied by Dr. Wen-Da Yang, to negotiate with the Labor Insurance Bureau for a cooperation project with the Labor Insurance Bureau,

suggesting the construction cost be responsibility of the Bureau, while NCKU responsible for the land of the Medical Center. This hospital would carry its purpose serving labors as well as fulfilling the purpose of a teaching hospital for the NCKU medical school students. Labor Insurance Bureau agreed with the proposal, willing to cooperate. The project would start once the Labor Insurance Fund Committee approved the proposal.

August, 1978 Dr. Chao Nee retired as the President of NCKU, and President Wei-Nong Wang continued the negotiation of cooperation project.

November 11, 1978, at the NCKU alumni luncheon, Tainan City Mayor Nan-Chen Su indicated to President Wang that Tainan will construct a modern City Municipal Hospital, and willing to use it as the teaching practicing hospital for NCKU Medical School students. CEO of Labor Insurance Bureau, Jia-Quan Wang indicated formally on the April 15, 1979 Zhong Hua Daily Newspaper that the soon to be finished construction of Labor Insurance Hospital would be the teaching hospital for NCKU medical school students to practice. Now, the establishment of Medical Center in NCKU started to show the light at end of tunnel.

July, 1980, Dr. Han-Ming Xia became NCKU President following by the passing of President Wei-Nong Wang while Tainan Municipality Hospital construction already started. President Xia and Tainan City Mayor Su went to the Minister of Education to request the approval for establishing NCKU Medical School. In 1981 50 legislators jointly suggesting the Executive Yuan to have budget for establishing a medical school at NCKU, to improve the medical care of southern Taiwan people. Mr. Yun-Xuan Sun, the Executive Director, immediately agreed, let the Ministry of Education reported it to the Executive Yuan for approval. NCKU received the official document for the approval of medical school on July 31, 1981. The Preparatory Work Planning Committee was launched, & the medical expert Dr. Kun-Yan Huang was hired as the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Committee. The method of cooperating with the Labor Insurance Bureau to build a hospital has also been changed from a joint project to a loan. The Bureau of Labor Insurance lends the labor insurance fund to NCKU, who compiles the principal and interest on an annual basis. The hospital belongs to NCKU, and several beds are set aside for labor insurance. This arrangement was good for both.

In 1984, Guo-Hua Yu's fourteen economic construction plans listed the NCKU Medical Center as one of health care, and all the funds were borne by the government. The NCKU Medical School and the Internship Hospital were optimistically achieved. Dr. Kun-Yan Huang was appointed as the professor and Dean of the Medical School. Dr. Dong-Yuan Dai was appointed as the Dean of the Hospital. In March, 1984, began to enroll the first batch of medical students. Aug., 1988, Dr. Zher-Ru Ma succeeded as the NCKU President, and the teaching hospital of NCKU officially opened to the public in the same year. Jan., 1989, the first batch of medical school students graduated. So far, the idea of establishing a medical school has been realized.

Dr. Nee hoped the NCKU Medical Center will move towards these three goals in the future:

to cultivate doctors with both skills and morals, to study the improvement and innovation of medicine, to properly serve the public health care so as to bring endless benefits to the people & the country.

Dr. Chao Nee strongly believed in the importance of education, not only for receiving knowledge, skills, but also can be inspired and guided to make adaptations and creations, a life out of ignorance. Education cultivates kindness, compassion and courage.

Dr Chao Nee and Prof. Ting-Wen Lee Nee created the "Nee Lee Scholarship" fund in 1971 to carry out their dedication to education. In 1977, President Chao Nee initiated and established the Cheng Kung Culture Foundation (CKCF) in Tainan, Taiwan, along with the help from 77 NCKU faculty, staff and alumni. Since then, CKCF has managed the "Nee-Lee Scholarship" fund, and starting in 1990, the "Prof. Ting-Wen Lee Nee Memorial Scholarship" fund. Both scholarships have benefited many students in Taiwan as well as in mainland China. After the passing of Dr. Chao Nee in 1996, the "President Chao Nee Memorial Scholarship" fund was established by his three children, also to be managed by CKCF. The designated recipients of this scholarship are college students residing in North America, and are descendants of NCKU faculty, alumni and staff. For detail please see "About President Chao Nee Memorial Scholarship".