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Chang Mei-hui A Legend of the Transition from Taihoku Imperial University to National Taiwan University and Its Dark Reversal

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Editorial note. 2018 marks NTU's ninetieth anniversary. Looking back over those ninety years, from the establishment of Taihoku Imperial University in 1928 to its reorganization as National Taiwan University in 1945, there were both ruptures and continuities. What turns did students then enrolled at the university face amid the changes in the larger world? In the setting of sixty or seventy years ago, the educational path, emotional choices, and life circumstances of Chang Mei-hui, the first graduate of this department, were unusual and remarkable, yet also traced the course of an age. We invited Professor Zhou Wan-yao to tell this alumna's story, leaving a vivid record for the ninetieth anniversary. Some archival images used here were supplied by the NTU Library, Archives, and Personnel Office; we offer our thanks.

After August 1945, Taiwan underwent a major change of rule. The new regime, deliberately using the power of the state, severed Taiwan from its past. For more than half a century after the war, Taiwanese schoolchildren could not study Taiwan history at school. As a result, many people who now occupy influential positions know little of Taiwan's history. NTU too forms part of this severe rupture in historical understanding. Although the university traces its history back to 1928 and celebrates its ninetieth anniversary this year, do NTU people possess a basic knowledge of that ninety-year history? If you randomly asked someone on campus: “Did Taihoku Imperial University admit women? If so, do you know who its first female student was?”, what answer would you receive? To narrow the scope: if you asked history-department alumni, “Who was the earliest graduate of the History Department? A man or a woman?”, I guarantee that the overwhelming majority could not answer. We therefore introduce here this department's first graduate, also the only graduate of the first class of the College of Liberal Arts after the war, in July 1947—and she was a woman.

This woman was Chang Mei-hui (1924–2008). She was the only woman in the Southern Asian History specialization of Taihoku Imperial University's Department of History, and perhaps the earliest person in Taiwan to write an article using Dutch sources. “Earliest,” “only,” and “woman”: in an era in which feminism receives some attention, she is surely worth knowing. Chang was born on 9 September 1924 (Taishō 13). Her registered home was Ruifang Township, Keelung District, Taihoku Prefecture. Her father, Chang Wen-ban (1898–?), and mother, Hsieh Han, had her as their eldest daughter, followed by two sons and three daughters. Chang Wen-ban graduated from the Taiwan Government-General Medical School and opened the Penglai Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital in Dadaocheng; Hsieh Han graduated from Jingsiu Girls’ School. The family was Catholic and traced its ancestors to Quanzhou, Fujian.

Born into a physician's family, Chang received a notably complete education in Taiwan. She entered the Private Taipei Kindergarten in 1929 for two years; in April 1931 she entered the elementary school attached to Taipei First Normal School; and in April 1937 she entered Taipei First Higher Girls’ School, a four-year school. At that time, for a Taiwanese woman even to have graduated from a higher girls’ school was highly unusual. Chang went further: in April 1941 she entered the Sacred Heart Women’s College in Tokyo (renamed

in 1944 without the word “Higher”), spending one year in the preparatory course and two in the main course. She entered the Japanese-literature department and later transferred to history. This was a school in the Catholic Sacred Heart system; Empress Michiko was also its graduate. In 1948 it became the University of the Sacred Heart, the first women's university under Japan's new educational system.

On 1 May 1942 the Chang family changed its name, taking the Japanese surname Hasegawa. Chang Mei-hui became Hasegawa Mie; “Mie” is the Japanese pronunciation of Mei-hui. Her brother Chang Kuan-min (1926–2014) became Hasegawa Hiroshige. In 1944, during her third year at the Sacred Heart professional school, Chang applied to the Department of History at Taihoku Imperial University. Her decision to apply there and to choose Southern Asian History followed a slightly winding path.

Before the war, Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial Universities did not admit women. Tōhoku and Hokkaido Imperial Universities and Kyushu University did, but in very small numbers. Taihoku Imperial University also admitted women. Its first “exceptional female student admitted” was Ōmori Masatoshi, admitted to the English-literature section of the Faculty of Letters and Politics in 1931 (Shōwa 6), after graduating from Dōshisha Women's Professional School in Kyoto; at the time she was the subject of lively newspaper coverage. From 1928 to 1945, Taihoku Imperial University formally admitted nine women as regular undergraduates, in addition to sixteen auditors and four elective-course students. Three of the nine undergraduates were Taiwanese: Lin Su-chin, in Western philosophy; Chang Mei-hui, in Southern Asian History; and Tseng Li-chen, in botany. All entered in 1944.

While at Sacred Heart, Chang had already shown promise for scholarly research and won the appreciation of Kanaseki Takeo (1897–1983), professor of anatomy in Taihoku Imperial University's Medical Faculty. Kanaseki was one of the founders of *Minkan Taiwan* [*Folklore Taiwan*]. From its April 1942 issue, Chang published “Family Life in Taiwan” in three installments, followed by “On the Death of My Grandmother.” In the “Refreshments” column she also responded briefly to an article by Kokubu Naoichi (1908–2005), “The Sunken Bell,” pointing to material concerning Catholic missionary activity in Taiwan. Her “Family Life in Taiwan” attracted notice. Before the war, very few women published in a journal of this type, much less an article with scholarly implications. When she returned to Taiwan that summer to visit her family, Kanaseki and the editorial staff gave a banquet in her honor, to her astonishment. Later, when Kanaseki came to Tokyo he contacted her and invited her to exhibitions; he thought highly of her.

When she considered attending university, Kanaseki recommended Kyoto Imperial University, his own alma mater, but Kyoto and Tokyo did not then admit women. Chang was interested in Japan's foreign relations in the early modern period and in East Asian contacts; Iwao Seiichi (1900–1988), newly awarded the Imperial Academy Prize, held the Taihoku chair of Southern Asian History. She therefore chose to apply there. In oral-history interviews, Chang said that she had cited an article by Iwao in a class report, and her Sacred Heart teacher Ebizawa Arimichi (1910–1992) encouraged her to apply to Taihoku Imperial University.

When Chang applied in 1944, she expected to graduate from Sacred Heart in September. The Faculty of Letters and Politics file “Application Forms for Admission, Academic Year Shōwa 19” contains Hasegawa Mie's recommendation letter and related material. The letter was written by the school's president, Sister Yoshikawa Shigenika (1906–1970), a noted educator of women, and addressed to Andō Masatsugu (1878–1952), president of Taihoku Imperial University. Dated 21 June 1944, it states: “The above-named wishes to enter the Department of History in your university's Faculty of Letters and Politics. Since she possesses sufficient scholarly ability and can fulfill the duties incumbent upon a student of your university, I hereby recommend her.” The file also contains a medical examination, transcript, and detailed report signed and sealed by Yoshikawa. Her marks were excellent, almost all *yū* [excellent], then the highest of three grades—excellent, good, and pass.

On the form, one field asked applicants to rank departments within the same faculty and provided ten spaces. Hasegawa filled only three: Southern Asian History, National History, and Oriental History, in that order. In other words, she entered history chiefly to study Southern Asian History. Curiously, after she entered Taihoku Imperial University she seems to have used her original name, Chang Mei-hui, for reasons unknown. In principle, after a name change the new name was the official one, and government documents would no longer use the old name.

Chang and her brother Hasegawa Hiroshige (Chang Kuan-min) entered Taihoku Imperial University at the same time; he studied in the Medical Faculty. By 1944 the war was in its final phase and normal instruction was difficult. Students admitted on 1 October 1943 entered military service two months later and spent very little time at the university. Six students, including Chang, were studying Southern Asian History in 1944. Only Chang has grades recorded; the grade columns for the other five, all men, are blank, without notation of whether they entered military service. One can imagine how lonely her classes were. In March 1945, Taihoku Imperial University "closed," and she too was set adrift. She needed an institution at which to be registered—that is, a place to work. The director of the Red Cross Hospital, Horiuchi Tsugio (1873–1955), had taught her father at the Taiwan Government-General Medical School. She was thus able to undertake medical administrative work there.

After the war, Taiwanese society experienced immense change, and Taihoku Imperial University was part of that transformation. Chang's life was drawn into these unforeseeable changes, with consequences beyond imagining. Between the announcement of the war's end on 15 August 1945 and the Japanese military's formal surrender, there was a "vacuum" period. To maintain public order, Kuo Hsiu-tsung (1918–1950) and others formed a Student League. Kuo was an upperclassman of Chang's brother Kuan-min in the Medical Faculty and was a close friend, frequently visiting the Chang family hospital. To support the male student corps, a women students' corps was also organized, with Chang as captain. This reveals her readiness to assume responsibility.

Kuo, born in Shilin in 1918, had in 1940 established the Shilin Association for Mutual Aspiration with several comrades, including Tsao Yung-ho. Tsao (1920–2014) mentioned him repeatedly in his memoirs. At the start of the White Terror, in May 1950, Kuo and his wife Lin Hsueh-chiao (1925–) were arrested. On 28 November that year Kuo, Hsu Chiang (1913–1950)—associate professor in NTU's Medical College and head of internal medicine at NTU Hospital—and thirteen others were taken to Machangting and executed. Lin received a ten-year sentence. After completing it, she changed her name to Lin Chih-chieh; after release she taught and translated, including the two-volume *Complete Fiction of Lü Heruo*.

On 15 November 1945, the new authorities, acting for the Allied forces, took over Taihoku Imperial University. This is the origin of NTU's present anniversary date; before the war, Taihoku Imperial University's commemorative day, equivalent to an anniversary, was 17 May. Taihoku Imperial University thereby became National Taiwan University. Since Chang had not completed her studies, she remained to continue them. The university underwent numerous institutional changes and conflicts over senior personnel, which need not be rehearsed here. Soon after the February 28 Incident in 1947, Lin Mao-sheng, acting dean of the College of Liberal Arts as a university-affairs commissioner, disappeared and is widely believed to have met with misfortune. In the grim political atmosphere, by late March no Taiwanese students came to the university. The university announced that classes would formally begin on 26 March and that registration would close on the twenty-fifth; students who failed to appear by that deadline would lose their student status. Our knowledge of this episode remains insufficiently concrete and detailed.

After the war NTU established the South China Humanities Research Institute. Chou Hsien-wen, dean of the College of Law, concurrently served as its director. On 1 April 1946 it appointed two teaching assistants, Chu Chia-kuei and Pu Hsin-hsien, both Zhejiang natives and graduates of Shanghai's Jinan University. Pu had

graduated from the History and Geography Department of its College of Liberal Arts; Chou had formerly been a professor in its Economics Department, and that connection may have brought the two young men to Taiwan. On 16 November the institute was dissolved. Chu left Taiwan for mainland China, while Pu became a teaching assistant in the History Department, working in its Southern Asian History research room. Chang graduated in July 1947 and was appointed a departmental teaching assistant in August (the department was later renamed the Department of History). The two became colleagues and fell in love.

We must briefly return here to Chang's studies. She had initially worked under Iwao Seiichi, but at the end of 1946 Iwao returned to Japan. She then studied the history of East-West communications under Professor Kuwata Rokurō. In June 1947 she submitted her graduation thesis, “On Ming-Period Sino-Siamese Relations in *Dongxiyang kao*,” and graduated successfully. Chang was a concrete example of the transition from Taihoku Imperial University to NTU: after reorganization she was a third-year student, and two years later became the first graduate of the History Department and the only graduate of the first class of the College of Liberal Arts at NTU.

At about six in the evening of 8 December 1947, Pu Hsin-hsien was “lured out and disappeared” from his bachelor quarters in NTU's Shōwa-chō (roughly today's Qingtian Street area). On the eleventh, the university wrote to Peng Meng-chi, commander of the Taiwan Provincial Garrison Command: because the matter concerned “the safety of all faculty and students,” it requested an investigation of its teaching assistant Pu's whereabouts. On 2 February of the following year, when Pu had been missing almost two months, Peng officially informed NTU that “your university's teaching assistant Pu Hsin-hsien has been transferred to the court for trial in a Communist Party case.” The letter explained: (1) Pu, a History Department teaching assistant, had joined the Communist Party and served in an important position; when interrogated by this command, he confessed without reservation; (2) Pu and the case file had been transferred to the Taiwan High Court Procuratorate for legal processing; (3) please take note. NTU accordingly dismissed Pu under the law governing disciplinary action against public educational personnel.

No documents record Pu's subsequent experience. The author therefore asked Lai Yung-hsiang, an old acquaintance of the couple, whose generous reply makes it possible to reconstruct a little of it. After Pu's arrest he was soon dismissed. “Everyone who knew Pu Hsin-hsien pretended to have no connection with him; Chang Mei-hui particularly had to do so in public. Once Pu's sentence was fixed, the prison allowed Chang Mei-hui to visit and correspond with him.” Pu was imprisoned for one year and two months, released in February 1949, and married Chang that May. This was soon after the February 28 Incident, when Taiwanese–mainlander marriage was generally unacceptable in society; such attitudes were still reported into the 1980s.

On whether their marriage encountered opposition, Lai said: “Pu Hsin-hsien came to Taiwan alone. He and Chang Mei-hui were both History Department assistants, got along well, and fell in love. While Pu was in prison, Mei-hui remained steadfast. For his beloved daughter's sake, her father accepted it; but many of Chang Mei-hui's friends and colleagues opposed it and even felt resentment.” After his release, Pu spent a period without work, then found employment as director of the night division of the Taipei Municipal Commercial School. We still know little of the details, but Chang's fidelity to love and courage in making her choice emerge vividly.

Chang possessed not only an interest in scholarship but a strong drive to publish. In December 1951 she published “Trade by Chinese in Siam during the Ming Dynasty” in issue 3 of the *National Taiwan University Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*. Also in December 1951, under the pen name Hsin Ching-nung, she published “A Brief Study of Kuo Huai-i's Resistance to the Dutch” in the inaugural issue of *Taiwan Folkways*; it appeared in three installments through February 1952. This was probably the first postwar article by a Taiwanese person to use Dutch sources. In 1952 Lai Yung-hsiang invited Chang and Pu to write

the “Foreign Affairs” section of volume 3, “Political Affairs,” of the draft *General Gazetteer of Taiwan Province*. Their impending departure abroad delayed the work; it was not published until 1960, and received favorable evaluations.

As noted, Chang's prewar “Family Life in Taiwan” had attracted Kanaseki's appreciation. Taihoku Imperial University professor Miyazaki Kōjirō also cited it in his article “The Institutions of the Chinese Family and Its Clan-Property System in Ecological China.” Chang was still a Sacred Heart professional-school student, not yet a university student. Southern Asian History was her chosen interest, and the language preparation she made for the field remains extraordinary even today. English was her first foreign language and German her second. She later learned Dutch from Iwao Seiichi, Spanish from Yanai Kenji (1910–), and, during the war, French from Takemura Takeshi of the Taipei Economic Professional School (formerly Taipei Higher Commercial School, renamed in 1944). In all, Chang knew English, German, Dutch, Spanish, and French, in addition to Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese. From the standpoint of how difficult it is to cultivate an outstanding scholar, it is deeply regrettable that she later had no opportunity to develop her abilities.

In 1953, recommended by Father Arturo Rodriguez, Chang received a Spanish-government scholarship for married couples and began preparing to leave Taiwan. She was promoted from teaching assistant to lecturer in August 1954, but submitted a resignation letter at the end of that year. With punctuation added by the author, it reads:

> ***Respectfully submitted: Since my graduation I have been retained to serve at my alma mater for more than seven years. I have received the profound care of my superiors and their thorough guidance, for which I remain deeply and unforgettably grateful. In September I received a scholarship from the Spanish government and intend to proceed to that country to study Southern Asian History and collect materials, in the hope of benefiting my alma mater. All procedures for my departure have now been completed and I shall shortly depart; I therefore cannot continue my work at the university. I respectfully request permission to resign and terminate my appointment.***

If we read only this letter, we would think Chang resigned in order to go abroad. That was not so. She had hoped to retain her post while away, but in the end was compelled to resign. She had expected to leave before September, but did not receive permission to leave Taiwan until December. Her scholarship was consequently interrupted, and she lived in hardship in Spain.

Pu Hsin-hsien and Chang Mei-hui left Taiwan on 26 December 1954 and arrived in Madrid on 1 February of the following year. In June 1956 Chang completed doctoral coursework at the University of Madrid (though she did not receive the doctorate) and became an unpaid researcher in an academic institution, while Pu worked at the Republic of China embassy. Their eldest son was born in October 1959. In 1972 Chang and Pu respectively became lecturers in Japanese studies and Sinology at the University of Madrid. In March 1973 Spain established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and severed them with the Republic of China; the embassy closed, Pu lost his job, and they both lost their university posts. To make a living, the couple opened a Chinese restaurant at the end of June 1974 and operated it until the end of June 1994—exactly twenty years. Chang died in 2008.

Chang was one of the three Taiwanese women undergraduates at Taihoku Imperial University. Whether viewed within the colony or across the Japanese empire, she reached the highest level then available to a young woman intellectual. Before the war she had a strong Han Chinese consciousness: a Han Chinese person among “Japanese” in the broad sense, who wished to become a “Japanese” no inferior to Japanese people. In

this light, her postwar experiences are especially ironic. NTU was associated with many unhappy memories for her. While she was at NTU, a professor plagiarized her work; when the couple were in Spain, the same professor also plagiarized Pu's work. In later years she said painfully: “Before the end of the war everything went smoothly. After the end of the war, once I became a ‘Chinese person,’ my fate became chaotic. … I too automatically became a ‘Chinese person,’ and from then on it was chaos all the way.”

Some consolation lay in the fact that she did not entirely sever her relation with the past and with Southern Asian History. In Spain she was visited by Iwao Seiichi, Yanai Kenji, and her Sacred Heart teacher Ebizawa Arimichi. When she visited Japan in 1982, she was welcomed by her former teachers Professor Aoyama Sadauo (a part-time Sacred Heart lecturer who later became a leading specialist in Tang–Song history and Chinese historical geography) and Ebizawa; she also met classmates from elementary school, higher girls’ school, and Sacred Heart. She visited Japan again in 1986. In 1996 the Japanese critic Kawamura Minato criticized the character of *Minkan Taiwan* in *The Fiction and Reality of Greater East Asian Folklore Studies* (Kōdansha), touching on Kanaseki Takeo, who had then died. Chang strongly disagreed, believing Kawamura could not understand Kanaseki's real intentions. In December 1997 she published “Kanaseki Takeo, *Minkan Taiwan*, and Taihoku Imperial University” in *Nihon Rekishi*, vigorously defending Kanaseki and repaying the warmth of his earlier recognition.

Wu Zhuoliu's novel *Orphan of Asia* once bore the title “The Distorted Island” (*Yugamerareta shima*). Not everyone on the island endured this distortion, of course. But Chang and many of her contemporaries, such as Kuo Hsiu-tsung, encountered after the war a future they could never have imagined—or no future.

Postscript. The materials used here are listed in Zhou Wan-yao, “The Chair and Specialization in Southern Asian History at Taihoku Imperial University and Their Postwar Legacies (1928–1960),” *NTU Historical Review*, no. 61 (June 2018). The account of Chang Mei-hui's life has been supplemented with Professor Tokoro Jun's oral-history records and seminar slides, and with Lai Yung-hsiang's email reply to the author. I record my gratitude. Lai also provided photographs, while Kawamura Setsuo and Tseng Chiu-hsiang offered guidance on Japanese; I offer them my sincere thanks.

Note

1. Based on Lai Yung-hsiang's email reply to the author of 13 June 2018. Lai, born in 1922, graduated from the law department of Tokyo Imperial University. He served as head of the reading-services section of the NTU Library, then as associate professor and professor in its Department of Library Science. He went to the United States in 1972, became assistant director of the Harvard-Yenching Library in 1973, later deputy director, and retired from Harvard in 1995. A former colleague and close friend of Tsao Yung-ho, Lai may be counted among the author's senior teachers. While she was writing on Southern Asian History at Taihoku Imperial University, he generously gave her scans of Chang Mei-hui's Japanese articles and tirelessly answered her questions, for which she remains deeply grateful.