

A Cup of Coffee with the Former University President

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If you've ever hung out near the Heien Coffee Shop located next to the Family Mart on campus, it's possible you spotted former Tamkang University President, Yea-hong Chen. Former President Chen was also an honored professor of the Department of Spanish. In the year 1956, he was an exchange student abroad. Born in 1934, the former president still gets a sparkle in his eye as he remembers his days abroad. He laughed while explaining, "In those days, the biggest pastime in Europe was just hanging out and chatting in the coffee shops after class."

Since that time, Yea-hong Chen, has developed a taste for being around coffee shops. He stated, "At the time the former King of Spain, Juan Carlos Vellido, was my classmate. He was very friendly and from time to time would join us for a cup of coffee." He continued, "In the 1950's Taiwan and Spain had a very close relationship. The King of Spain in that day gave funding for Taiwanese students to study abroad." Initially Yea-hong Chen was in his second-year of study in the Department of English. Even though he had no Spanish speaking ability, once he heard the news about funding for Taiwanese students studying abroad, he dropped everything and made a trip to Spain.

"I didn't know anything about Spain aside from what I learned high school. But the first time I went I ended up staying for 15 years." He stated. "It wasn't that I didn't want to come back, but at the time regulations for entering and leaving Taiwan were quite restricted." I travelled to other countries like Germany and made a living fixing and repairing things." In 1971, Yea-hong Chen returned to Taiwan and became a teacher for the next 45 years. He spent much of his time working with Spanish students and personnel. He was the TKU president from 1986-1989. An amazing story from a man that you might notice the next time you get your cup of joe. (article written by (Qi Zhuo)

