

A TALE TO TELL WHEN FIVE-TIGER HILL STATUE UNVEILS

英文電子報

Along with the opening of the newly built Shao-Mo Memorial Gymnasium on June 2, a unique Statue of Five Tigers (Wu Fu Pei) was unveiled by the Founder, Dr. Clement Chang. He led the students, staff and faculty to walk up the 64 steps (Five-Tiger Steps) to reveal the statue that depicts five tigers chasing each other in a circle, which symbolizes the fearless spirit of Tamkang University. After the ceremony, Dr. Chang gave a speech recounting the stories, entitled Five-tiger Saga, regarding the establishment of the university and Five-tiger Hill where the university is sitting on. The following is the speech:

Tamkang was built fifty-six years ago on Five-Tiger Hill that was covered by a stretch of literal wilderness. In retrospection, Tamkang's development can be divided into four stages, or Four Waves. The first wave, the Foundation Period, refers to the time starting from 1950 to 1980, when Tamkang laid down the necessary foundation to grow into a full fledge comprehensive university amid great hardship. In these 3 decades, Ying-chuan Road, Ke Nan Steps, and Chinese Palace-style classrooms were completed. Many mature trees we see on campus today, which provide us wonderful shade in summer, were all carefully planted then. Through dedication and hard work, Tamkang had progressed from a three-year college to a liberal arts and science college and then onward to a full fledge comprehensive university with several evening degree programs in this period. Despite the expansion in student number and campus size, Tamkang ensured to enhance its quality as well, for instance, the university pioneered implementing computer-aided teaching methods to all classes when computer technology became available.

The second wave started from 1980 when Tamkang was upgraded to a university and ended in 1996 with the completion of the Chueh Sheng Memorial Library.

It is known as the Positioning Period. During this time, Tamkang invested heavily on the establishment of quality administrative systems and quality academic research by first of all installing Total Quality Management (TQM) system in running the university's day to day business, and secondly awarding Key Status to certain departments who would receive heavy subsidies to conduct research, publish research papers and hold as well as attend international conferences.

The completion of the Library in 1996 also marked the beginning of a digital age for TKU, which signaled the beginning of the third wave that is known as the Up-lifting Period. During this time, TKU endeavored to push for Globalization, Information-oriented Education, and Future-oriented Education, which in turn boosted TKU's international reputation as well as its international academic exchanges. In 2005 with the first recruit of students at Lanyang Campus, Tamkang entered the fourth wave, known as the Transition Period.

In this period, we not only need to take stock in what Tamkang has accomplished, but also to envision a future policy that will carry TKU to the next height. So far, TKU has developed from one campus to four that include a "City of Knowledge" Tamsui Campus, a "Sea of Knowledge" Taipei Campus, a "Garden of Wisdom" Lanyang Campus, and a "Territory of Exploration" Cyber Campus. In terms of teaching, TKU has moved from traditional time and location-bound teaching methods to unconventional teaching methods on the cyber space in the past 50 odd years. With so many positive changes, it does not mean TKU should rest and count its blessings. On the contrary, TKU should and will continue to evolve in order to strive in this fast changing time. To date, TKU has been a university with a great diversity, but in the future it will strive to integrate the diversity to instill a spirit of "Integration with Diversity." To date, 80 per-cent of TKU budget has been spent on "hardware", that is, buildings and any tangible facilities, yet in the future the same amount of budget will be spent on "software", that means augmenting the quality of

students and the research prowess of the university.

To reach that, TKU needs to adopt a brand new way of thinking. For instance, in the past, when continuities were expected, it was important to consider “consequences” while planning and implementing policies. Today, it is vital to have “foresights” in the age of discontinuities. Hence, over the years, the various stages of TKU’s development have been a string of continual evolution that stresses on “cultural heritage”, “history legacy” and “institutional missions”. Yet, as we have moved in an age of discontinuities, the fourth wave, unlike the previous three waves, follows a sigmoid curve that allows a better flexibility for future changes. In light of this, apart from respect for history and tradition, “modern imperatives”, “entrepreneurial management” and “future visions” will be necessary to guide TKU to conquer any challenges that may lie ahead of us. All the above six elements encapsulate the principles that have steered the changes the university has experienced. In other words, the development of the four campuses in fact has followed the trajectory of moving from the times of continuities to those of discontinuities, a curve that also reflects the changes of educational philosophy—from distinction, to competition, to conflicts, to compromises and finally to integration—has adopted to fit the various periods.

More specifically, in the times of continuities, when time moved slower, it was essential to be conservative, while in the times of discontinuities, when time moves in high speed, creativity is the key for survival. In the past, knowledge that addressed culture, faith and tradition were emphasized, whereas in modern time, knowledge that explores the universe, technology and future will be highlighted. In the past, the focus of education was on creating a “whole person”, while in modern time, the focus will switch to managing “knowledge economics” which entails that space, time and resources can be easily exploited as assets instead of liabilities. In the past, money could not buy time, but today money can buy time if we look at successful businesses such as DHL and Taiwan High Speed

Rails. The importance of speed was best captured by Bill Gates' adept observation that says businesses in the 80' s emphasized on quality, re-engineering in the 90' s, but speed in the 21st century.

Tamkang' s has sprawled from Five-Tiger Hill to Mt. Lin-mei in Chiao-hsi, and from one campus to four distinctive campuses. Today, we are going to integrate four campuses back to one university—we will integrate the distinctiveness of each campus, such as the elite Oxbridge styled that is the signature strength of the Lanyang Campus, the market-oriented American styled education and the Chinese whole-person styled education that has been practiced both at the Tamsui and Taipei campuses. They will be united under the Tamkang Academic Kingdom to complement one another so as to create a better future. No doubt that Tamkang is on a roll right now, yet in the natural course of things, it would surely drop if we were not proactive enough. We need to re-organize the way we think and do things, and we need to speed up changes if we want to reach another peak and be successful in our fourth wave.

Today I ask myself what to do as universities in Taiwan are currently experiencing a fiercely competitive time that resembles the two notoriously unstable periods in Chinese history—the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring Time Period. An innovative way of thinking is definitely called for. I have come to the conclusion that we should exercise a leap of faith that requires bypassing the age-old, instinctive way of engaging in vicious competition in which only a win-lose situation is allowed. Instead, we should replace it with a “win-win” solution that can only be incurred through constructive competition which entails co-operation from all parties involved. To fulfill that, Tamkang will continue to strengthen its overseas academic ties as well as promoting better co-operation among the national and private universities in Taiwan.

Five-Tiger Saga has lasted 56 years that sustains a “Tamkang Culture” which is the foundation of the Academic Kingdom we witness today. This

Kingdom has yielded over 200,000 graduates, who have scattered all over the world contributing their skills to the communities they are living in. They are good citizens wherever they are and we are proud of them. I have the same expectation to our future students who, I urge to follow the footsteps of their predecessors literally and spiritually. Spiritually, they will, like all the TKU students in the past 56 years, to emerge into Tamkang's hard-working and forward-looking culture that has been collectively created by everyone who has been here. In a physical sense, they will have to climb the 132 steps of Ke Na Steps when they first enter the university and the 64 steps on Five-Tiger Steps when they graduate. This is our culture and in this way the saga will live on.

