

Close collaboration among our predecessors in academia—Transcending sectoral boundaries

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Introduction

Being only a jurist, I would like to fulfill my responsibility as a contributor to this journal by introducing the struggle of our predecessors in law and chemistry who worked together for the benefit of universities and science.

One such predecessor was Nobushige Hozumi (1855-1926). Born in the Uwajima domain, western Japan, Hozumi entered Daigaku Nanko, a forerunner of Tokyo Imperial University, in 1870 as one of the young students nominated by feudal clans (*koushinsei*). Unfamiliar with western learning, Hozumi learned English, literally starting with ABC. He started all over from elementary education, learning from foreign teachers the four arithmetical operations, algebra, geometry, geography, history, etc. Among his fellow *koushinsei* was Mitsuru Kuhara, the founder and first president of the Chemical Society, a forerunner of the Chemical Society of Japan.

Another predecessor was Joji Sakurai (1858-1939). After studying at the school of English studies run by the Kanazawa clan, Sakurai passed the entrance examination for Daigaku Nanko in 1871. Originally one year junior to Hozumi and Kuhara, Sakurai was admitted to the second year thanks to his educational background in the Kanazawa domain, joining the two.

In 1876, Hozumi and Sakurai were selected as students to be sent abroad by the government and left Japan for Great Britain. They shared a ship's cabin on their way and found themselves on the same wavelength. According to an anecdote, they loudly mimicked the voices of Kabuki actors in their cabin, inviting complaints from people in the next cabin. At any rate, this voyage provided them the opportunity to become lifelong friends.

Part 1: A puzzling note left by Nobushige Hozumi

The time was 1906. No surprisingly, both Hozumi and Sakurai were now professors at Tokyo Imperial University. Hozumi was already a heavyweight, having served as the Dean of the College of Law (corresponding in rank to dean of a faculty or graduate school in today's world). Sakurai had only one year to go before becoming Dean of the College of Science. The then Dean was Kakichi Mitsukuri. The President of the University was Kenjiro Yamakawa.

Shigeyuki Hozumi, a grandchild of Nobushige, introduced an interesting note in his recent book, "The State and Universities a Century Ago: Nobushige Hozumi and Kiheiji Onozuka" [in Japanese], published in February 2009. The author said that in the summer of 1992, he found this note, titled "Summary Proposal on the University Plan," from a pile of documents his grandfather had left. Quoted below are, inter alia, items from the note that concern the budgeting and accounting system for universities, the central aim of his collaboration with Joji Sakurai.

- A university fund shall be established, first at Tokyo Imperial University and then at other universities, to achieve financial independence.
- The amounts of funds need not be equal among universities. Tokyo Imperial University shall aim for an amount that will generate 1.5 million yen every year in revenue.
- Each University fund shall be financed by the national treasury over a period of ten years.
- Annual budget allocations shall be appropriated to university funds as a continuing expenditure by an imperial edict, so that each fund will achieve the targeted amount in the tenth year.
- Under the Special Account Law, the council shall determine the annual fund expenditure, allowing for ade-

quate flexibility in allocations. The surplus shall be transferred back to the fund.

In short, these items were aimed at achieving independence in university finances. Although the special account system was already in place at universities, this did not mean independence in fundamental finances as in the case of national school special accounts. Hozumi's intention was to change that situation.

This note, dated May 1906, was addressed to Professor Onozuka from Nobushige Hozumi. That means that the note was neither meant for an official document nor intended for publication. Rather, the note was a draft of a personal letter to Professor Onozuka "or a copy for recording purposes" (page 7 of the book above).

Nobushige Hozumi pinned his hopes on Professor Onozuka, considering him the most promising figure on whose shoulders the future of Japanese universities would rest, although Onozuka was then a young political scientist, a graduate of 1895.

At any rate, it remains to be seen whether concrete steps were taken to make this plan a reality.

Part 2: Establishment of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)

The time was 1932. On December 28, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science was established.

The establishment resulted from a meeting for exchange of opinions on the establishment of an institution for promoting scientific research on January 1931, organized by heads of the Imperial Academy; that is, Joji Sakurai, president; Kiheiji Onozuka, Chairperson of Section

I; and Koi Furuichi, Chairperson of Section II. The meeting, attended by 101 people, decided to set up a Planning Committee made up of these three leaders to come up with concrete steps.

Developments leading up to the establishment of JSPS are detailed in Sakurai's essay, "The Foundation of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science" in *A Posthumous Collection of Writings of Joji Sakurai: Numerous Memories published in 1940 [in Japanese]*.

Sakurai, the founding president of JSPS, wrote: "the establishment of the RIKEN Foundation" in 1917 "... was no more than the realization of only part of my dream regarding the promotion of general sciences in Japan." For financial reasons, he had considered it impossible to expand the scope of this institute to cover general sciences. Sakurai had long thought that "selecting talented researchers" at universities and other institutions "and subsidizing their research activities would help promote scientific research across academic communities without having to secure colossal funds at once."

Yet, because of the do-nothing government, "I, together with leading heavyweights in our academic community, became more and more convinced that promoting general sciences was the only fundamental policy for the state. To this end, "we called a meeting of more than one hundred representatives from diverse academic communities at the main building of the Imperial Academy to discuss the issue" in January 1931 as noted above. "After exhaustive discussions, the meeting set up a planning committee and commissioned it to come up with a proposal to address the issue." A general meeting on May 29 of representatives from academic communities fully endorsed the proposal from the planning committee. "The meeting commissioned" anew "the three members of the committee (Furuichi, Onozuka, and me) to attain the goal."

"More than a year and a half after launching the movement," however, "there was no prospect of success." "An Imperial message came unexpectedly on August 20, 1932 that 1.5 million yen would be granted to partially finance the plan to promote and encourage scientific research. This promoted the government to provide 0.7 million yen per year. Thanks to these funds, JSPS was launched as a foundation.

Part 3: Passing the baton to Kiheiji Onozuka

It is quite reasonable to assume that the people Sakurai referred to as leading heavyweights were Furuichi and Onozuka, with whom Sakurai organized the meeting of January 1931 and who constituted the Planning Committee. (At the Imperial Academy, they supported Sakurai, the President, as the Chairpersons of both sections.) Furuichi, born in 1854, was four years older than Sakurai. He was 77 at that time and died three years later. Born in 1870, Onozuka was much younger. He must have worked as Sakurai's right hand, despite his hard work as President of Tokyo Imperial University (from 1928).

As discussed earlier, Hozumi entrusted the task of securing independence in university finances to Onozuka. Hozumi's plan must have been communicated to Sakurai as well. Sakurai thought that achieving the plan was totally impossible. As a first step, Sakurai managed to establish the RIKEN Foundation in 1917. Earlier, in 1916, Sakurai had said that he was planning to establish "an independent research institute," because universities were "extremely inadequate in funds and facilities," at a lecture he gave at The Tokyo Chemical Society (see "The Establishment of the RIKEN Foundation [in Japanese]" in the above-mentioned posthumous collection of writings by Sakurai). The RIKEN Foundation was indeed a metamorphosis of Hozumi's plan. The inability to expand the scope of this research institute to cover general sciences as noted above made it inevitable to further metamorphose the plan—establishing a research-promoting institution rather than research institutes to promote general sciences.

Onozuka received the baton, but a more severe situation awaited him. Independence in university finances and a new research institute were pipe dreams. The right wing and the military directed their attacks on universities. The worst crisis during his office as President of Tokyo Imperial University concerned military officers attached to schools. In June 1933, the military broke the rule that the appointment and dismissal of such officers to imperial universities were subject to prior approval of university presidents. In protest, at the University Council, Onozuka expressed his intention to resign as President. Shigeto Hozumi, the eldest son of

Nobushige, Dean of the Faculty of Law, insisted that resignation from the presidency would not solve the problem. He said that all-out resistance was the answer and that he "wanted to fight under the leadership of the present President." Immediate support came from Keita Shibata, Dean of the Faculty of Science, who said, "the whole university should stand up." Shibata was a professor in the course of plant physiological chemistry and brother of Yuji Shibata, a chemist. Thanks to the front line formed by political scientists, jurists, chemists, and biochemists joining forces, the university gained an all-out victory, forcing the Military Minister to write a letter of apology.

And now

Since then, such close collaboration has never been heard of. Now, universities and academic communities are competing with one another to gain so-called "competitive research funds" to compensate for the curtailed budget. It seems that academics are too busy serving their own interests to think about the benefits for universities and sciences as a whole. That is my biggest concern.

Current circumstances remind me of Dr. Takashi Mukaibo, former President of the University of Tokyo. Being an applied chemist, Dr. Mukaibo made significant contributions to the establishment of nuclear engineering in Japan. I served him for more than three years as Aide to the President and otherwise. I strongly felt that Dr. Mukaibo was an academic in the real sense of the word. Indeed, Dr. Mukaibo taught me a lot of things. My regret is that I do not have the capacity to play a part in handing them over to the next generations.

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