

THE ANNALS OF THE HITOTSUBASHI ACADEMY

Vol. VI. No. 1 October 1955

IN CELEBRATION OF THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HITOTSUBASHI UNIVERSITY

Hitotsubashi University is celebrating in October of this year the eightieth anniversary of its founding. Its original shape was a small private institute called "Institute for Business Training" established in 1875. In 1884, the institute came into governmental operation under the name of "Tokyo Commercial School." The name was successively changed to "Higher Commercial School" in 1887, to "Tokyo Higher Commercial School" in 1897, and to "Tokyo University of Commerce" in 1920, and then during World War II to "Tokyo University of Industry." Needless to say, with names changed, the institution itself grew in work and size. The present name of Hitotsubashi University was selected anew when our University made the remarkable restart in 1949, with the four faculties of Commerce, Economics, Law and Social Sciences newly instituted, in line with the reform of the university system of this country after the War. At present, the University, with a graduate course for each faculty and the Institute of Economic Research directly attached to it, holds a unique position as a general university of social sciences in Japan.

The history of Hitotsubashi University is at the same time the history of the economic society of Japan. Though in fact the Institute for Business Training came into existence chiefly out of necessity in carrying on foreign trade, it was exactly what the economic condition in those days of early Meiji needed. In the period from the Commercial School to the Higher Commercial School, the educating of captains of industry was the aim. It may be taken to signify the need of the rising Japanese capitalism in the early part of the present century. Since it became the University, the aim spontaneously shifted from the practical to the academic side. Accordingly, the study of economics, laws and business administration became the center of interest and importance was given to the methodology of social sciences.

This was logically because the Japanese society at length came to step on the new level of culture. The disastrous war brought about tremendous changes to Japan. But the new makeup of Hitotsubashi University is heartening as the crystalization of efforts to answer the challenge of the country in her course of reconstruction after the War.

The mere lapse of eighty years is never what one may boast of as the life of a university on a world level. However, granted the modernization of Japan started with Meiji Restoration (1868), this history of eighty years coincidentally covers about the history of the modern culture in Japan. If the significance of economic and social changes taking place during the while is fully evaluated, the period may count for as much as several hundred years of some other country. In the course of the eighty years, the population of Japan increased to twice and a half. National income went up more than ten times. Education spread so thoroughly that illiteracy hardly remained. They certainly proved phenomenal development. But, on the other side, the quick growth was accompanied by numberless difficulties and hinderances. The gap between the living standard and the production standard widened. Population pressure enlarged the peril of hidden unemployment. Progressive culture had to battle with the persevering feudalism. The history of eighty years was, in a word, a history of battle against the contradiction born of development. The history of a school makes no exception. While our institution grew larger, changing in name and structure, we had to overcome numbers of difficulties. Financial difficulty was one. It persisted even after the institution came into the care of the state. Administrative difficulty was another. The root of the difficulty, it must be pointed out, lay in the outmoded feudalistic idea that commerce and economics are no matter of academic study. The institution had successful battles with these difficulties and today has established itself on an immutable position. But it is not that all the difficulties were removed. As long as Japan has to remain at grips with the growing contradiction of development, it may be imperative that all Japanese universities should courageously face the challenge of the problem. We are aware of our difficulties. Nevertheless we are not frustrated. In order to attain the ideal of Japan as a cultural state, let us pledge ourselves, fully conscious of the increasing importance of the jobs universities should undertake, to expend more efforts for realization of the purpose of our University centering on freedom and independence.

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