

HISTORY OF TAISEI

【 Part 1 】 TAISEI GIRLS' SCHOOL before the end of World War II

I. Taisei girls' sewing school (1907 - 1919)

○The Forerunner of Taisei

In December 1907, a newly married couple, Mr. and Mrs. NUKAGA, opened a private sewing school in the central district of Mito, Torimicho (the present Izumicho). They had an earnest wish to found a girls' school, which would support young girls through all-round education from general to vocational subjects.



Mr. Saburo Nukaga and Mrs. Kiyo Nukaga

Previously, Mr. Saburo Nukaga, born in Ishioka town, the present Ishioka city, had learned at Kokugakuin in Tokyo and worked for YAMATO news company as a journalist. Mrs. Kiyo Nukaga, originally from Ogawa village, the present Omitama city, had learned at Tokyo sewing school, the present Tokyo Kasei University, and opened a sewing school in her hometown.

In those days in our country, the educational standard for girls was quite low, and many girls had to stay at home helping their mothers running households till their marriages would be arranged. There were some private sewing schools at that time, because sewing was one of the important skills for both working women and housewives. But there were few girls' high school in the central area of Ibaraki. The only one was public Mito Girls' Highschool in Omachi, the present Mito 2nd Highschool, whose capacity was too limited for girls eager to learn.

The alumnae list of this school has eleven names of students from that time. One of them was Ms. Fuku Machida, who later married a doctor and worked as a hogoshi, a part-time judicial official helping rehabilitate sentences criminals. Another one was Ms. Chiyo Saruta, who later became the first female journalist in Ibaraki, and also the eminent poet with the penname of Gyoko Komatsubara. The founders' all-round education-oriented way of teaching seemed to gather bright girls from all over this prefecture.



Ms. Chiyo Saruta

○The Establishment of Taisei

Mr. and Mrs. NUKAGA bought a site in Fujisakacho (the present location of Taisei Girls' Highschool, Gokencho), that was adequate for a school building and they applied to the prefectural office for a permission to open a girls' high school. They were granted the permission by the prefectural governor and opened Taisei girls' sewing school in 1909. This was the first approved private school in this prefecture.



The first building of Taisei 1908

The school had three courses. One was honka, the 2-year regular course where both general and homemaking subjects were taught equally. Another one was 2-year senka, where more homemaking subjects, especially sewing were taught. The third one was kateika, the 1-year advanced course for graduates of the regular course, where more sewing skills were taught.

The school started with 13 students. Although the graduates of primary schools could enroll, there were more senior girls than new primary school graduates. A lot of students were from areas far from Mito, some were from outside of this prefecture. There was a dormitory on the school's premises. The girls and the principal's family shared the building, and everyone seemed to enjoy living and studying together.



One dormitory room "plum room"

○The Name of "Taisei"

The name of Taisei comes from the word "shutaisei" used by Mencius, a famous Chinese philosopher. Mencius described Confucius, the greatest philosopher in China, as "shutaisei," meaning "a man of great virtues." The founders wished their school to be a desirable environment where girls could cultivate their characters, refine their skills and grow up to be virtuous women.

○The School Crest of Taisei

The Taisei crest of a five-petaled flower called a pink (lat. Dianthus) dates back to June 1912. Since ancient times in Japan, this flower has symbolized a beautiful Japanese lady or an adorable child. One of the school founders and the first principal, Mr. Saburo Nugkaga hoped his students would become respectable and educated young ladies with the help of their teachers.

The crest's original design, depicting the simple outline of a five-petaled pink whose shape was similar to the kanji character "tai" and the character "sei" inside it, has been reshaped according to some revisions of school system.



○The School Color

Green, symbolizing freshness and growth, was chosen as the school color of Taisei in 1919 and has been adopted for the color of the school crest.

○The New School Building

Gradually the number of students increased and they needed more classrooms. New school buildings were constructed in 1912, 1916, and 1919.



Students in front of school building in 1918

II. Mito Taisei Girls' School (1920 - 1929)

○The Change of School System

During the World War I, the war industry was quite active and Japanese industry shifted from light to heavy. Owing to such business boom, the number of parents who wanted their daughters to continue their education in general subjects grew.

Then Taisei girls' sewing school went through system change. The new school, Mito Taisei Girls' School, offered 3-year honka, the regular course, 2-year senka, the sewing course, 1-year kenkyuka, the teacher-training course, and 1-year kateika, the advanced sewing course.

All teachers were extremely dedicated and devoted to their students. One of the teachers was Ms. Fuyu Toyoda, the former teacher at Tokyo Women's College of Education (the present Ochanomizu Women's University) and the first nursery teacher in this country. She dedicated the latter half of her life to girls' education.



Ms. Fuyu Toyoda

○The First School Uniform

For 15 years after the school foundation, students wore what they liked. School uniform was adopted in 1924. It consisted of a navy blue kimono, a haori (a kind of jacket worn over kimono), a hakama (a kind of long pleated skirt) in students' favorite color (wine color was popular at the time), and black short boots. Most students sew their own uniform by themselves. Their sewing skills seemed to be quite excellent.



Students before the uniform was adopted



Students on a school trip in the first school uniform

○School Excursion

In 1921, the school excursion was introduced. Freshmen and sophomores visited Mt. Tsukuba, Oarai beach, or Sukegawa beach by train on a one-day trip. Third-grade students went to Matsushima in Miyagi prefecture on a two-day trip.



School trip to Matsushima in 1926

○School Building Extension

In the 1920's, the number of students kept increasing. In 1924, the school rented a neighbor's house and used as a kitchen for students. In 1926, an extension was built and the school building area now took up to be 6,561 square meters. Unfortunately the whole area burnt down in an air raid in 1945 during the WWII.



school building in 1926

○School Anthem, School Motto

In March 1929, the school anthem was born. The words were written by Mr. Hikojiro Kaneko, a professor at Tokyo College of Education (the present Tsukuba University), and an editor of a textbook of Japanese adopted at Taisei. He was a friend of the principal Nukaga. The music was composed by Mr. Eiichi Hagiwara, a professor at Tokyo Music college (the present Tokyo University of the Arts), a friend of Mr. Kaneko's.

The words clearly express the aim of our school; the students here, surrounded by beautiful nature, have to study hard to become virtuous women, in close cooperation with classmates, always having a "sincere, frugal, and diligent" heart.

“Sincere, frugal, diligent” were adopted to be the school motto. Later as the time changed, the second ‘frugal’ was replaced by ‘cooperation.’

1

To become wise supporters for our enlightened leader
we will succeed the historical heroins’ spirits
filled with their eternally remarkable achievements
and will together attend to our studies

2

In the rich and beautiful nature of Tokiwa region
a noble pine tree stands as the paragon of grace
we will honor it as a shining example of wise women
and will together attend to our studies

3

The path of sincerity , cooperation, diligence,
we will keep treading with the pledge to mature virtuously
and will together attend to our studies

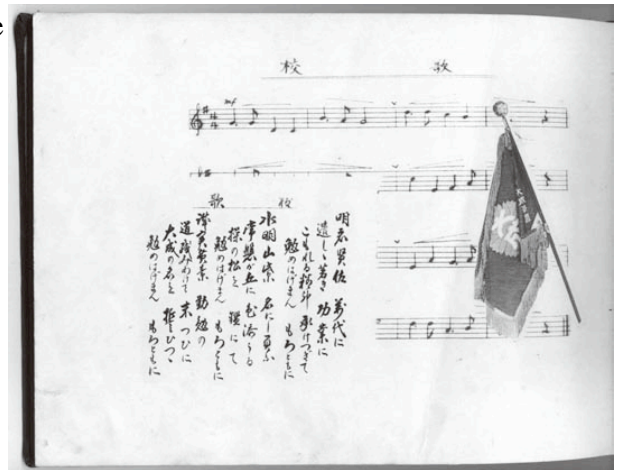
○New School Uniform

In 1928, the new western-style uniform was adopted. It consisted of a sailor-collared jacket and a pleated skirt. The jacket was in navy blue for winter and white for summer. The navy blue necktie had two diagonal white lines. The students in kateika, the advanced sewing course, made the uniform for all students.

III. Taisei Girls’ High School (1929 - 1939)

○Social Situation

In the midst of the depression after the World War I, the Kanto Earthquake hit Tokyo, the capital of Japan, in 1923. In addition, the financial crisis followed. In such a situation, the government emphasized the importance of education evenmore. Since the promulgation of Girls’ Education Law in 1899, more and more girls and their parents hoped for more advanced education for girls.



School Anthem in a school album in 1934

One student wrote the words in calligraphy for the album.



○ Taisei Girls' High School

In 1929, Mito Taisei Girls' school opened Taisei Girls' High School (Taisei Koto Jogakko) with a 4 year- coursed honka (regular course), and a 1-year hoshuka (additional course for to-be teachers). Taisei Girls' High School offered more general subjects which now added up to 2/3 of the all the classes taught weekly, this change made it closer t the school system for boys. In the first year, 40 girls enrolled after passing the entrance examination. At first, the number of students was 200, and 7 years later it increased to 400, furthermore, and 10 years after, it went up to 600.

Teachers were in great demand , and so a lot of new bright teachers helped students make their dreams come true. Some students later became specialists, such as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, teachers, which were quite prestigious jobs especially for women of that time. Others developed their physical abilities and played active parts in some athletic meets, volleyball tuornaments or track-and-field meets, for instance.

○School Building Extension

With the increase of students and courses, the school bought a lot (2,053 m2) and built a new 2-storied building for the high school and a gymnasium in 1931. The telephones and school bells were installed. School ground were enlarged in 1935, and in order to accomodate increasing students, some more buildings were added until 1943, just before the fierce battles were repeated in the end of the WW II.

Students enjoyed brand-new facilities such as well equipped house-keeping study rooms, and the music room with a grand piano.



○The 25th anniversary

The 25th anniversary ceremony was held at the gym on February 28th, 1932. The congratulatory addresses were made by the Minister of Education, Ichiro Hatoyama, the prefectural governor, and the mayor of Mito city. The representatives of teachers and students also made spechs and some teachers of distinguished achievements were honored. The ceremony was closed with the school anthem sung by all students.

After the ceremony the new school buildings were shown to guests and students sewing works were exhibited. Next year, a framed work of calligraphy done by the Minister of Education was presented to the school and displayed in the new manner room.



○The school flag

On December 23, 1933 the royal prince (the present emperor) was born. In order to commemorate his birth, teachers and students had talked and decided to design the school flag. Everyone donated to the cause for a period of three months and commissioned one to an authentic flag maker in Kyoto. On January 18th next year, a flag ceremony was held with the shinto priest from Mito Hachimangu shrine. The school flag would be raised at various school events until the early 1980s. The present school flag is a gift from the graduates in 1986.

○The school events

Students would go on walks to the water gate over the Naka river, or to Oarai beach, Mt. Tsukuba by train. In June 1932, senior students took part in the 1st united tour for junior high schools of Ibaraki. More than 800 school girls from 5 public schools and a private school, Taisei, traveled around Nagoya, Toba, Nara, Osaka, Kyoto and Nagano in 8 days. It seemed like a tight scheduled trip. The tour would be held every year until 1941.

Sports days were held at the school ground in 1937 and 1938. From 1940 to 1942 at the prefectural Suifu ground, the united sports festivals for junior high schools were held and students participated together with boys' school students. In 1943, Taisei individually held sports day there.

In 1932, basketball class tournament was held and one of junior classes won. The tournament seemed to be held twice every year.

The exhibitions of students' works were shown to soldiers and bereaved families around the 1930s. In 1940, the exhibition was hosted to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Taisei. It was the last one before the end of WWII.



United tour in Nara 1930s



United sports festival in Suifu ground 1940



The bulletin "Nadeshiko" before WWII

○The students' council

The next year of school foundation, 1910, the students' council was organised and the bulletin named "Nadeshiko" was first issued. It has been reporting various school news ever since. Around 1925, the magazine club was in charge of the bulletin which was published twice a year, in July and December. The issue in 1932 described the 25th anniversary ceremony in the detail with some photos.

Besides the magazine club, a several clubs such as a movie club, a lecture club, a gardening club, an aid club, a club responsible for students' meetings, and an accounting club were formed. The movie club had a projector and would often show 9.5mm, 16mm, or 35mm movies. The gardening club would order good-quality flower seeds to a famous retailer in Tokyo and take care of the flower beds on the school premises. In 1934, a greenhouse with a big heater was built and various flowers were planted there.



The summer training lodge "Nadeshiko house"

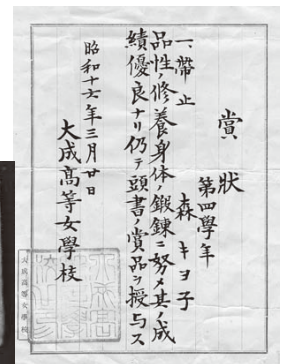
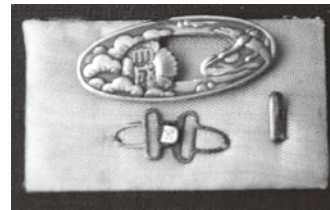
An athletic club also started their activities in 1930. Girls would do track and field, swim, play basketball, volleyball, tennis and table tennis. Next year in May, the prefectural sports association was founded and it started to hold sports meets for junior high school students. Every student in Taisei athletic club trained hard to win in the sports meets. In July, Taisei opened a summer house “Nadeshiko house” in Oarai beach as a training lodge. Some students, the members of the track and field club and volleyball club would run to the 10km distance between the school and the lodge as practice. Some students won prizes in the meets, and advanced to the Meiji Jingu Shrine Meet, where the winners from 7 prefectures in Kanto area would take part in. In the 1940's, Taisei track-and-field and volleyball clubs became the regular teams in the meet.



Taisei volleyball team in 1940

○Prizes for excellent students

The students who excelled here in both their studies and sports were awarded memorial prizes. One student received a belt buckle with the school crest, another one a lacquer brush case made of paulownia wood. The best student in Ibarki prefecture in 1939, Ishi Hiratsuka, won the prefectural governor prize and was awarded a small dressing table.



A certificate and the memorial prize - a belt buckle

IV. During the war time (1940 - 1945)

○The Social Situation

Since the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the education of Japan had been gradually influenced by wars. After Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the influences grew stronger and all resources, from natural to human, were utilised with the sole purpose of winning the consecutive wars. National mobilization Law in 1938 severely limited civilians' lives and mandated students' labour. According the notification by the Ministry of Education made In 1941. students engage in agriculture. In 1943. all subjects' textbooks were replaced by one nationally censored textbook, in which patriotism was strongly emphasised. At the same time, every junior high school student had to work in war plants. Even school buildings were utilised as such plants. In May, 1945, all the regular classes were dismissed in every junior high school so that students could devote to work. Elementary school students were evacuated to rural regions and separated from their families.



Sewing buttons on soldiers' uniforms in 1938



Tea picking at school farmland in 1939

○School Situation in Taisei

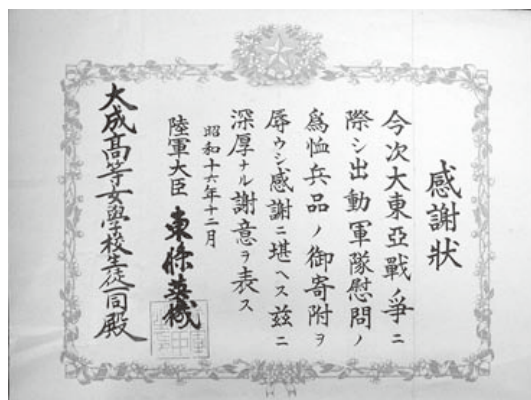
During that time, school events in Taisei were colored with national war system. The year albums show various war time activities such as morning service dedicated to worshiping the royal family, cleaning shrines, sewing soldiers' uniforms, farmwork, house keeping in the war bereaved people' homes. Visit of the members of the royal family or soldiers from allied countries were often seen during that time. In 1938, the delegates from Germany, the young Nazis, toured around Japan and they payed the visit to Mito. Some of Taisei's excellent students joined the welcome events at the Kairaku Park. They were all aimed to encourage patriotism among both young and elderly Japanese. In 1941, Taisei was presented with the letter of appreciation from the then Military Minister, Hideki Tojo, who was executed upon the ruling of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East after WWII.



Welcome ceremony for a royal lady in 1934



Welcome event for young Nazis in 1938



An appreciation letter from Tojo in 1941

○School lives in Taisei

Until 1941, students could often enjoy their school lives as before. They could join the united students' tours around Kyoto, school excursions to Kashima shrine or Katori shrine by train, movie watching at the downtown theater.

The 30th anniversary ceremony was held in 1940, when the 2600th national anniversary was celebrated. The history book of Taisei 30th was made, memorial service was offered and students' works were exhibited.



Making a line in front of a theatre in 1940



30th school anniversary in 1940

○Transition of students' number

After the foundation of Taisei Girls' high school in 1929, the number of students in both the Girls' school and the Girls' high school increased every year.

In 1941, the number of graduates of the Girls' school for 32 years was 3,122. While the Girls' high school for 12 years was 398.

Students came to school from all over Ibaraki prefecture, some were from Fukushima, Tochigi, and farther areas. There were a lot of students lodging near the school or in the school dormitory.

Mito Taisei Girls' school in March 1941								
	freshman		sophomore		senior		total	
	class	students	class	students	class	students	class	students
honka	3	115	2	84	2	92	7	291
senka	2	90	2	90			4	180
kaseika	1	16					1	16
total	6	221	4	174	2	92	12	487

Taisei Girls' High school in March 1941										
	freshman		sophomore		junior		senior		total	
	class	students	class	students	class	students	class	students	class	students
honka	3	165	2	110	2	110	2	98	9	483
total	3	165	2	110	2	110	2	98	9	483

○The uniform in those days

During the war time, people were obliged to be frugal and showy styles were strictly controlled. In 1940, Kokumin-fuku, the national clothing for men, was introduced and the next year, Hyojun-fuku, the national clothing for women. Hyojun-fuku was a navy-blue belted jacket with a small collar. In 1942, clothing goods were rationed and students had to manage with the rationed clothes or secondhand ones for their school uniform. Owing to the lack of goods, the freshmen's skirts had no pleats and later all students wore work pants reformed from other clothes. They also lacked shoes so most of them wore geta, traditional wooden sandals with V-shape straps.



Some students were in Hyojun-fuku & geta

○The school war plant

As the war condition became worse, in May 1944, students were sent to war plants in Hitachi or katsuta, the neighboring cities famous for machine industry. At first, they could study at school once a week, but later, they had to commute to the plants everyday. In August, for fear of the air raids, war plants were evacuated to schools nearby, and any rooms in Taisei, containing corridors or entrance hall, were occupied with machines. Each girl worked all days manufacturing weapons,

from machine guns to bullets, with a tag of “volunteer corps” on her arm, a piece of cloth showing her name, grade, address and blood type on the chest part of her jacket, a bag containing a stuffed hood and meager first aid medicines on her back.

In summer 1945, all ceilings were taken away and desks and chairs were moved to safer regions. All important documents were entrusted to teachers and students whose houses were in rural areas far from central Mito, which was under the risk of air raids.

In those days Japan lacked nurses, then Taisei started training students to become nurses according to the decree of the prefectural government.



Students with an arm tag

○The air raid

At the midnight of August 2nd 1945, the central area of Mito was hit by a terrible air raid and a lot of people suffered under allied bombing. About 300 people were killed and most buildings were burnt down. Taisei also lost all the 5 school buildings, more than 3,000 square meters, except a stone warehouse and stone walls. Teachers and students living at the dormitory on the school premises were fortunately safe because they had evacuated to the bank of Naka river.

After the fire was brought under control, teachers started cleaning rubble and ashes away. It was really disappointing that the only building that withstood the bombing, warehouse, could not protect the things inside because of the intense heat which caused everything burn. Alumnae address books, school albums, a grand piano, and other valuables were all lost. Students helped their teachers well. While all were working hard to restore the school and keep it secure, the war at last ended on August 15th.



A stone warehouse which survived

Before the traffic system was restored, some branch schools were operated by parents in the outskirts of Mito. Students from the same area gathered at one of the student's house and enjoyed talking and studying.

In April 1946, a humble office and a principal's house were built beside the warehouse and in time, small dormitory rooms for several students were also built. But school buildings were still not completed yet. So students would go to the temporary school complex, the former barracks of the 37th unit.

○Life at the temporary school

All the classes and activities were given at the former barracks, the present Ibaraki University premises. Some other schools which also lost their buildings from the air raids stayed, so a lot of students of Mito junior high school (the present Mito First High School), Ibaraki girls' high school (the present Mito Second High School), Mito girls' high school (the present Mito Third High School), gathered there. Most of the students walked from Mito station toward the site and some rode bicycles along bumpy roads from Ibaraki town, Naka town or Ishitsuka village which often took more than 1 hour.

Makeshift facilities such as those with broken windows, no ceilings, humble floorboards would often be stressful on the students there. Without desks or chairs, each student sat directly on the floor and studied using a small board hung from the neck with a string. Some students could not take their lunch because of the lack of food. The clothing situation was also poor. Many students would wear trousers which were made from fathers' old trousers. Some students had bags made

from mothers' sash belts. Teachers would also wear used soldiers' clothes so it was hard to tell whether they were man or woman.

Then in November 1946, the Showa emperor visited Mito and observed the temporary school to encourage students. They exhibited their hand works and told their school lives to the emperor.