

KEIO 1945

Keio and World War II: Exhibition III

Preface

This year marks the 70th year since the end of World War II. The passing of time has caused us to lose war time items and records, as well as the vividness of war time memories. The aim of our project is to combat these losses by gathering information, about every detail that relates to Keio.

This exhibition “Keio 1945” is the third opportunity for us to share our work with the public. “1945” is not just one year in the calendar but marks a critical period when World War II drew to an end, ushering in the confusion of the post-war era. We can only present a small part of all the conditions and circumstances that encompassed Keio at that time. However, discussions of the war tend towards oversimplification and we hope to remind our audience how extremely complex and multi-faceted it was. If this modest exhibition allows you to reflect on what still connects the present day to those past events and what does not, it may give an idea of the “legacy” we have inherited after 70 years.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of those contributors who made this exhibition possible.

June, 2015

Keio and World War II Archive Project

Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies,
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1 Air raid

Keio is regarded as the Japanese educational institution most damaged by the air raids.

Mita Campus lost about half of its buildings in the so-called Great Yamanote Air Raid, from May 24 to 25 (including its buildings removed just before). Affiliated Schools, such as Futsubu (The Middle School) and Shoko Gakko (The Commercial and Technical School) lost their main buildings. The University's facilities, such as the Library (currently called the Old University Library), the Great Auditorium and Fukuzawa's Former Residence were burned down. However, thanks to the strenuous action of the staff on overnight duty, the book storeroom in the Library was saved from the fire and precious documents remained unscathed. Yotsuya Campus (Shinanomachi) lost about sixty percent of its buildings on May 25, including most of the wooden buildings and the Hospital's main building. Hiyoshi Campus was attacked during the Kawasaki City Air Raid on April 15, and although the First Building (the present Senior High School) among others survived, eighty percent of the wooden buildings of the Faculty of Engineering, were destroyed. Yochisha (The Elementary School) in Tengenji survived with only a warehouse burnt.

As a result, Keio lost approximately half of its facilities.

2 War dead

Up to the present time more than 2,200 individuals with connections to Keio have been confirmed among the dead in World War II (research by Keio University Professor Emeritus Atsushi Shirai). Of these, 32 (Army 4, Navy 28) belonged to the Aircraft Special Attack Units (commonly known in English as "kamikaze"), while five were members of the *kaiten*, or human torpedo units (one died in training accident). Here, we focus on the members of Special Attack Units of the Army and the Navy, as well as those of the Navy *kaiten* units. A range of material (such as documents, letters, and recorded voices) makes evident the complicated feelings of both the men themselves and those close to them as they faced their deaths.

3 The Aftermath of War

Keio was greatly affected by World War II.

Not only did the air raids destroyed Keio facilities, but Keio President Shinzo Koizumi was himself injured in one raid on May 25, 1945. He was in a critical condition and, although he survived and was released from hospital in December, was afterwards obliged to undergo long-term medical treatment. Although there were some within Keio who criticized him for his share in responsibility for the war and for the stagnation of university management, the Keio Board of Councillors resolved to extend his appointment, while Seiichiro Takahashi was chosen as Deputy President in April 1946. That same year, the university conducted investigations into the qualifications of faculty members. A further crisis in management was provoked when these investigations were extended to the councillors, almost half of whom were failed.

Meanwhile, Keio officials struggled to rebuild faculty buildings, eventually managing to erect temporary classroom in Keio's various sites. Demobilized students, though suffering from food shortages, gradually made the student culture bloom again. In 1947, under the guidance and leadership of New President Koji Ushioda, a commemorative ceremony for the 90th anniversary of Keio was held, which marked the first major step in the institution's revival.

4 Evacuation

Following a cabinet decision of June 30, 1944, schoolchildren living in cities such as Tokyo were evacuated in large groups. Before this the government had encouraged the evacuation of schoolchildren to the homes of relatives in the countryside. Group evacuation was introduced so that schoolchildren attending elementary schools who were unable to make use of such relatives could be evacuated in a more organized way. In the case of Yochisha (The Elementary School), approximately 350 pupils older than third grade who still not been evacuated were moved in August to Shuzenji Town, Shizuoka Prefecture (now Izu City) as part of such a group evacuation program. They were evacuated again in July, 1945, as there was a possibility of US forces landing. This time they moved to Kizukuri Town, Aomori Prefecture (now Tsugaru City). By October, all of them had come back home safely.

5 Mobilization

After 1944, in line with the government policy of 'Labor as Education', all students above junior high school age were subject to student labor mobilization, and it was hardly possible for classes be conducted. Students were assigned to a wide variety of occupations, including labor in factories, assisting to evacuate buildings and clear away air raid damage, helping in farms where there was a shortage of male labor. The details of actual situations are not necessarily clear. Teachers at Keio paid close attention to the labor environment to which students had been mobilized, and in many cases, students were pulled away from duties following decisions made by their supervising teachers. In the case of Toyokawa Naval Arsenal in Aichi Prefecture a major air raid resulted in a large number of victims in August, 1945. However, more than 100 students from Kotobu (The College of Liberal Arts) who had been assigned there were pulled out a week before this raid, due to the worsening incidence of such raids and all of them were safe. There was one case, that of a student at Shoko Gakko, of a fatal accident during student labor mobilization.

On the other hand, faculty members were required to concentrate on research that related to the war. The curriculum was made to adjust as well. For instance, commercial studies were changed to courses in engineering that were of more use in wartime, and Shoko Gakko (The Commercial and Technical School) and Shogyo Gakko (The Evening Commercial School) became Kogyo Gakko (The School of Engineering). The Fujiwara Institute of Technology, (located in the same Hiyoshi Campus) which was from the time of its foundation intended to be donated to Keio to avoid being included in the government's system of university reorganization, was annexed to Keio and became the Faculty of Engineering ahead of schedule on August, 1944.

During this time when the teaching load was lightened, attempts were made to expand academic studies across Keio as a whole. The plan to establish a Faculty of Agriculture was one such scheme. However, it was not realized because of objections from the Ministry of Education.

6 Occupation

In the last stages of wartime, Keio rented part of its facilities at Hiyoshi Campus, where student numbers had decreased due to mobilization for battlefield and labor, to the (Imperial Japanese) Navy. After that, as is well known, massive underground facilities were constructed there.

On September 8, 1945, while the process of returning the remaining buildings was underway, Hiyoshi Campus as a whole was suddenly requisitioned, this time by the US Army. In addition to losing more than half of its buildings at Mita Campus and Yotsuya Campus, and about eighty percent of the wooden buildings of the Faculty of Engineering at Hiyoshi Campus due to air raids in April and May, 1945, losing all of the remaining solid-built facilities of Hiyoshi Campus meant that Keio as a whole could not use half of its remaining buildings and only about one fourth of those buildings available for use before the war could now be used. Needless to say, this was a big blow to the institution's revival. Keio had no other choice but to rent facilities in various places and make them branch schools or temporary school buildings as stopgaps.

At a time when students were returning to school one after another and when there were only limited facilities and an unstable university management, the fact that the commemorative ceremony for the 90th anniversary of Keio was held at Mita Campus in the presence of Emperor Showa provided a tremendous boost to revival. As a result of persevering negotiation, the release of Hiyoshi campus was finally realized at the end of another four years, which led to a great improvement in the previously limited facilities. Even after that, however, Keio, which had limited funds at the time, was unable to afford to construct new buildings. This led alumni and other interested parties to unite in the goal of commemorating the 100th anniversary of Keio in 1958. In the meantime, it was not until 1972 that Faculty of Engineering, after leaving Hiyoshi during the last stages of wartime, was finally able to return to Hiyoshi (Yagami).

Limiting enrollment of students from service academies to ten percent and the Graduates of 1949

Formerly, the University Preparatory School was established as a three-year course, and although it changed to a two-year course as a result of legislation during the last stages of wartime, it returned to a three-year course after the war. As a result, there was a one year gap in the intake into the University Undergraduate Course, which led to the recruitment of undergraduate first-grade students from universities around the nation. A lot of those attempting to enter university education were young men who had graduated from service academies such as the Military Academy and the Naval Academy. General Headquarters (GHQ) required each university to limit enrollment of students from service academies to less than ten percent of their intake. Although there seemed to have been a general tendency to avoid taking students from service academies as they were assumed to be militarist, it is said that Keio welcomed a relatively large number of such students. Among such students, there were those who remained as faculty members and contributed to Keio and its academic development after the war. These were the students who graduated in March, 1949 (1430 graduates), and organized alumni association, Mita-kai Class of 1949 (Chairperson Mr. Tadashi Ishikawa).