

PEOPLE

Honoring a Legacy: 10th Anniversary Memorial Exhibition of Academician Yung-Ho Tsao

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The special exhibition attracted students and faculty from within the school, as well as scholars from outside the institution, to visit and explore.

Academician Yung-Ho Tsao (1920-2014) is celebrated as an autodidact pioneer in Taiwan's academic community. Despite having received only a high school education, Tsao embarked on an arduous journey of self-study from library assistant at National Taiwan University (NTU) to highly esteemed academician at Academia Sinica. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from NTU and received numerous international accolades, including the Order of the Netherlands Lion, conferred by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, for his research on the 17th-century activities of the Dutch East India Company in East Asia. Tsao was also honored by the Japanese government with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, in recognition of his dedication to preserving historical archives and advancing research in East Asian maritime history, which strengthened academic exchanges between Taiwan and Japan.



In addition to a wealth of books, manuscripts, documents, and photographs, the venue also continuously played a documentary about Tsao Yung-Ho.

NTU's extensive library resources and distinguished faculty provided an ideal environment for Tsao's journey of self-study. In particular, he attended history lectures by Prof. Rokuro Kuwada and helped organize Taiwan-related materials, deepening his expertise in archival research. Tsao's library duties involved cataloging foreign-language books and periodicals, which motivated him to master a number of languages. Through dedicated self-study, he became fluent in Japanese, English, and Dutch, and proficient in Spanish, German, and Latin. His mastery of Dutch archival materials enabled him to produce pioneering research on Taiwan's early history, and his "Island Perspective of Taiwan History" introduced a unique framework for conducting Taiwan's historical studies.

To mark the 10th anniversary of Tsao's passing, NTU Library hosted a special exhibition to celebrate his life and work from October 26 to November 27. The exhibition highlighted Tsao's perseverance, his impressive accomplishments as an autodidact, and the determination required to carry out complicated scholarly research. It further showcased his contributions to historical studies, including his work on *The Daily Records of Fort Zeelandia*, *The Taiwan Documents Series*, and *Ryukyu Historical Archives*. This exhibition allowed visitors to explore the precious resources Tsao utilized in his research and systematically shared NTU Library's various collections with a broader audience.



Ishikawa Yoshino's collection, *Historical Materials of Taiwan: Dutch Documents*, inspired Tsao Yung-Ho to diligently teach himself Old Dutch during his spare time in order to understand the historical texts.



The original edition of *Taiwan Indigenous Administration Records* by Inō Kanori, along with Tsao Yung-Ho's handwritten replica, showcases Tsao's dedicated and meticulous approach to academic research.