



SHENG, Ching-Lai

Ching-Lai Sheng was born in 1919 at Chiahsing in Chechiang Province. In 1933, he entered the Shanghai High School at the age of 15. He graduated from Shanghai High School in 1936. Most engineering students at the time aimed to enter Chiao Tung University, and Sheng was no exception. It was his goal to study electrical engineering at Chiao Tung University. His summer preparations did not go smoothly however. As there were 30 places for electrical engineering and 40 places for mechanical engineering, Sheng decided to apply for mechanical engineering instead, as it improved his odds by 30%. Thus began Sheng's lifelong association with Chiao Tung University.

At the end of 1944, the Ministry of Education held an exam for overseas scholarships. Having only the electrical engineering lecture notes provided by lecturer Tsao Feng-shan at his *alma mater* to study with, Sheng managed to pass the scholarship exams even though it was not his major. In 1945, he traveled to the U.K. on a government scholarship, where he first interned for a year at 克朗頓派金森(Crompton Parkinson). In the following year, he began studying for a degree at the University of Edinburgh.

In the fall of 1948, he completed his Ph.D. degree and returned home. In the fall of 1949, he became a lecturer with the Department of Electrical Engineering at National Taiwan University. When an effort was made to re-establish Chiao Tung University in Taiwan was launched in 1958, Sheng was at the time the head of the Electrical Engineering Department at NTU. A committee of sixteen leading figures and university alumni was established to support the establishment of the Graduate Institute of Electronics. Former president Ling served as the chairman, Li Hsi-mou the deputy chairman while Sheng was one of the committee members.

In 1962, Sheng moved to Canada with his family of eight after being invited to teach at the University of Ottawa. He returned to Taiwan in 1971 and became a guest professor at NTU for one year. NCTU President Liu Hao-chun passed away during this time and with the support of school alumni, faculty and students, Sheng was appointed Dean of Engineering at his *alma mater* on August 8, 1972. This proved to be a critical moment in the development of NCTU in Taiwan.

During his six years as college dean, Sheng devoted himself to his role. He was particularly visionary in his planning and development of the university's affairs. The purchasing of land for the Kuangfu campus, plans for expanded facilities and new

departments were all planned and put into motion during his term. His efforts provided a sound blueprint for NCTU's development in Hsinchu over the next decades and he certainly deserves the title "leading educator of his time".

It was Sheng's motto that one should "know the past and present, understand the East and the West, and combine science with literature". This became not only his approach to administration but also his ideal in education.

(By Yen Kuo-I, Class of '96, Management Science)

