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Historical Background

Tohoku University was founded in 1907 as the third Imperial University of Japan, following Tokyo Imperial University and Kyoto Imperial University. From its start, it displayed to the world an unwavering commitment to an "Open Door" policy. Departing from the norms of other imperial universities, it accepted graduates from technical schools and higher normal schools, and despite opposition from the government at that time, became Japan's First University to admit female students in 1913 (admitting three in that year).

At the time of its founding, Tohoku University was able to attract a group of young and brilliant researchers who had trained around the world to serve on its faculty. For this reason, a "Research First" principle was established, calling upon scholars to not only pursue highly productive research but to also put their findings to work in the teaching of their students. In addition to this, Tohoku University has nurtured a tradition of "Practice Oriented Research and Education," in which the results of cutting edge research are being put to use for the good of society and the improvement of living standards. Evidence of our pioneering practice (before the Second World War) includes the establishment of local venture businesses which have contributed to regional industry, and our status as the nation's center for research on family law; the domestic branch of law which is closely associated with our daily lives.

This spirit, which continued strongly through World War II and the rapid economic growth of the postwar period, remains alive and can be seen in today's new era of advanced globalization.