

The NTNU School Tree

Indian laburnum is also known as "Persian Soap Pod". It is indigenous to India; its scientific name is *Cassia fistula* L from the family Fabaceae and it is a deciduous tree. The tree grows to a height of around 8-12 meters, the leaves are formed by around 4-8 pairs of leaflets. It was introduced to Taiwan and cultivated by the Dutch in 1645.

In early summer, the flowers are produced in racemes which grow fully from the branches. Under the blue midsummer sky, the golden flowers bloom. The fluttering petals are like golden raindrops and fall everywhere on campus. The flowering season is from May to July. From summer to the end of winter, the 30-60 cm long seed pods turn from light green to dark green to deep purple as time passes, almost like a smoked sausage being dried from a pole.

The poet Yu Guangzhong described Indian laburnum thus: "One after the other, in a string, the series of brilliant golden lamps, are hung with such carelessness in early summer, above the passersby's heads, so that all the eyes, looking up in surprised wonderment, like bees flying into a fairytale, are dazzled and lose their way."

Huang Jin-Lung, lecturer from the College of Arts, completed two oil paintings with laburnum as the subject in 2005, titled "Shida's Flower I" and "Shida's Flower II".

The reason that the laburnum is the School Tree has never been confirmed. One theory is that the long seed pods closely resemble the whips used by teachers in the olden days!



Winner of the School Tree Laburnum New Poetry Competition

The Shape of Memory

If memories have a shape
They should be similar to you, laburnum.
In that summer charged with life
We took pictures together before you, to remember our
friendships.
That color etched in the light
Is kept always deep in our hearts, illuminating time's
Meaning of true preciousness.

But memories do not have a shape.
I searched in my dreams, but never saw
The path back to bygone days.
Familiar scenarios turn blurry.
The faces of old friends change and dim through each
passing year.
But only you remain unchanged, by yourself you grow buds
By yourself you blossom, by yourself
You wilt and repeat as of old
Beauty from the past, warm nostalgia.
Faced with a view which gives me a sense of déjà vu
I will happily be drunk to drink in time.

In the blink of an eye, summer comes near.
Again new life emerges from its cocoon to stand before you
To leave behind the shadow of youth.
Such beauty! When youth stands tall beside you
Wishing to be as the flourishing blossoms.
As if a prophecy made us willing to go forth
And seek the same beautiful ending.

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