Cover: A scene from Tamamo-no-Mae, a story from Otogi Zoshi (folk story books), which is held in the Kyoto University Library.

From the 14th to the 17th century, illustrated short story collections called Otogi Zoshi were popular among the general populace in Japan. Some of the stories remain well-known to this day.

Set some 850 years ago, it is the story of a court lady at the palace of the ex-emperor Toba named Tamamo-no-Mae, who was both incomparably beautiful and extremely learned. In reality, however, she was a several-hundred-year-old fox spirit who had assumed human form.

She caused the ex-emperor to fall ill, and was eventually exposed as a fox spirit by an onmyoji (master of astrology and divination), and subsequently killed. This well-loved story in Japan has been depicted in noh and kabuki theatre, traditional woodblock prints, and, more recently, in video games.

This book is among the many rare books and other materials that can be accessed via Kyoto University rare Materials Digital Archive.

Kyoto University states its mission to sustain and develop its historical commitment to academic freedom and to pursue harmonious coexistence within the human and ecological community on this planet.

Kyoto University will generate world-class knowledge through freedom and autonomy in research that conforms with high ethical standards.

As a university that comprehends many graduate schools, faculties, research institutes and centers, Kyoto University will strive for diverse development in pure and applied research in the humanities, sciences and technology, while seeking to integrate these various perspectives.

Within its broad and varied educational structure, Kyoto University will transmit high-quality knowledge and promote independent and interactive learning.

Kyoto University will educate outstanding and humane researchers and specialists, who will contribute responsibly to the world’s human and ecological community.

As a university committed to a broad social engagement, Kyoto University will encourage cooperation with local and national society, and will disseminate knowledge informed by the ideals of freedom and peaceful coexistence.

As an international institution, Kyoto University will promote foreign academic exchange and thereby strive to contribute to the well-being of the world.

In order to enhance the free development of learning, Kyoto University will pay due respect to the administrative independence of each of its component institutions, while promoting cooperation among them.

Kyoto University will conduct its administration with regard for the environment and respect for human rights and will be accountable to society at large.