

History and Culture

Kyoto University was established over 100 years ago, and its history has been colored by the unique cultural heritage and philosophy of Kyoto City.

Renowned as a culturally rich city, Kyoto was Japan's imperial capital for approximately 1,000 years following its founding as the city of Heian-kyo in 794. Throughout its 1200-year history, Kyoto has been the center of Japanese culture – both traditional and new. Even after the transfer of the capital to Tokyo with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Kyoto continues to be regarded by many Japanese as the country's cultural capital and spiritual heartland.

Consisting of three campuses spread over the urban and suburban districts of Yoshida, Uji and Katsura, Kyoto University is surrounded by beautiful scenery and historic sites where the old architectural style and designed picturesque gardens are hailed throughout the world.

Kinkaku-ji Temple, known as the Golden Pavilion, is located west from the Yoshida Campus, and is one of the most famous among the 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Kyoto. Standing over a large pond, the building is literally decorated with gold leaf. Its presence is highlighted by picturesque view as it changes from season to season.

Byodo-in Temple situated in Uji City – a suburb of Kyoto City – is also a popular world heritage site. The main building, Phoenix Hall, has a pair of mythical Chinese Phoenixes embellishing the roof, while the building itself is also said to resemble to the shape of the mythical bird just before flight. This image is inscribed on the Japanese ten-yen coin.

Katsura Imperial Villa in the Katsura district, southwest of Kyoto city, has long been favored by garden and architecture lovers. The tea rooms designed for moon viewing provides an excellent view of the moon that is pleasing to the eyes.

These are only a few examples of the rich cultural history in the area, the basis upon which stands Kyoto University.



Kinkaku-ji Temple in autumn, the first completion 1397



Byodo-in Temple completed 1052(above) Japanese 10 yen coins(below)



Katsura Imperial Villa completed early 17th century (view of Shokin-tei from Geppa-ro)

Academic

Although it is famous for its rich traditional culture, Kyoto is also well known as a modern city with a progressive outlook. This side of Kyoto is reflected in the rare examples of early 20th century architecture that can be found on some of its high streets, or the ultra-modern glass and steel structure of Kyoto Station. One of the newest cultural spots in Kyoto is the Kyoto International Manga museum, which is dedicated to the phenomenon of manga comics, which have become an internationally recognized symbol of modern Japanese culture.

Such elements of Kyoto reflect the fact that it has long been a city of academics, and a university town with a large student population. Of the approximately 1,460,000 people living in Kyoto, approximately 10% are college or university students attending one of the city's thirty-seven universities and colleges.

The city's unique academic atmosphere has influenced and inspired the distinctive academic style pursued by Kyoto University since its founding. Characterized by academic freedom and frank dialogue, Kyoto University's academic approach is founded on the concepts of self-reliance and self-respect (written in Japanese as 自重自敬 *jichō jikei*). Guided by those concepts, the university encourages its scholars to be independent and creative, and to make the most of their own originality and individuality.



“Self-reliance and self-respect”
Calligraphy by Professor **Hiroji Kinoshita**,
founding president of Kyoto University.

Innovative

In Kyoto, the headquarters of world famous information technology and electronics companies are located a stone's throw from the headquarters of centuries-old traditional craft industries such as pottery and porcelain companies. Many innovative companies have been developed by fusing advanced technology developed at Kyoto University with the tried and tested techniques of traditional industry.

While advancing its education and research, Kyoto University also places a great emphasis on making a significant contribution to society. The contribution is manifested in many forms, such as collaborative undertakings with industry and government, assisting with the development of governmental policy, or providing state-of-the-art medical treatment at the university's affiliated hospitals.



President **Hiroshi Matsumoto** with the prefectural governor, the city mayor, the president of the Consortium of Universities in Kyoto, and the president of the Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Photo taken in 2009.