

## Establishment of Kyoto University

Kyoto University was established in June 1897 as the second national university in Japan. It was established to accommodate the increasing number of people seeking to enroll in the University of Tokyo, Japan's only imperial university at that time, and also to cultivate the talented leaders urgently needed by a rapidly developing industrial nation.

## History of Kyoto

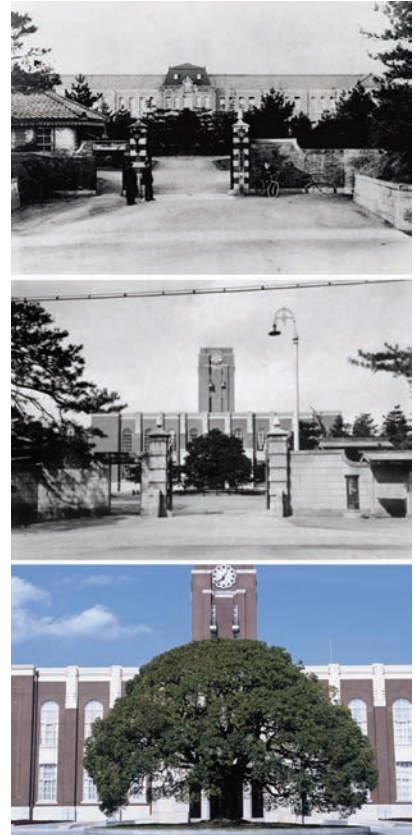
Kyoto was the capital of Japan from 794 to 1868. At the time of its establishment by the reigning Emperor Kammu, the city was named Heian-kyo, which literally means the “peaceful and tranquil capital.” The city is flanked by mountains on its northern, western and eastern sides. Due to weather effects of this geographic feature, the people of Kyoto are able to enjoy nature in its four very distinct seasons. This is reflected in the city's rich traditions of seasonal events and festivals that are practiced to this day.

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the capital was transferred to Edo, which was renamed Tokyo soon thereafter. The sudden change caused a dramatic drop in the Kyoto's population, and the city experienced a temporary depression. But Kyoto soon flourished again, now not as the seat of the nations politics, but as a cultural, educational and economic center with a progressive industrial sector.

Kyoto was the location of Japan's first elementary and junior high schools, its first kindergarten and first public library. It also had the nation's first hydroelectric power plant and tram system, and was the venue for Japan's first industrial exposition.

## Kyoto: The Old and the New

As the city is so deeply associated with history and tradition, Kyoto citizens are often perceived as rather conservative and somewhat prone to nostalgia, but in fact they also tend to be innovative and open to new ideas. Although it may seem like a contradiction, Kyoto has two complimentary sides: one characterized by its rich history and enduring importance as a cultural center, and the other characterized by its status as a modern city with a progressive outlook, which is home to numerous high-tech international companies. Kyoto's traditional and modern sides both owe a great deal to the fact that it has long been a city of academics, and a university town with a large student population. Of the approximately 1,470,000 residents of Kyoto, some 10% are students at one of the city's thirty-seven universities and colleges.



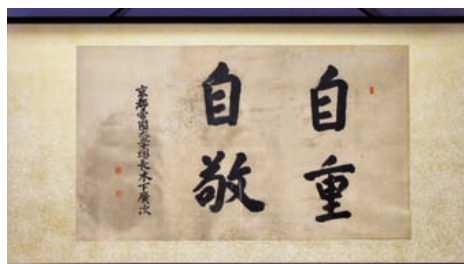
Transition of Kyoto University Main Gate  
[top] The first main building of Kyoto Imperial University and the Main Gate before 1912

[middle] The Clock Tower, as seen in 1925  
[bottom] The Clock Tower at present

\*Photos are preserved in the Kyoto University Archives

## Style and Characteristics

Kyoto University is a national university, which places particular emphasis on its traditions of academic freedom and self-reliant learning. In his speech at the university's official opening ceremony, the first president of Kyoto University, Hiroji Kinoshita, asserted that "this university is neither a branch nor a small-scale model of its forerunner, the Imperial University of Tokyo," and went on to describe his vision of the ideal university, emphasizing that it should have a unique character, academic freedom and an educational system centered on student autonomy. His vision has endured to this day, and its values have been passed on to each of our students and inspired the lives of many.



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

## Kyoto University Archives and Historical Exhibition

The Kyoto University Archives was established in 2000 to collect and preserve archival materials relating to the university, such as historic records of the university offices and departments, and documents donated by former presidents and faculty members. The Archives serves as a significant resource for both research and administration, and functions as a research institution for archival science, the history of the university and higher education in Japan.

The Archives manages a permanent exhibition on the history of Kyoto University in the Historical Exhibition Room of the Clock Tower Centennial Hall. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a model of Yoshida Campus as it stood in 1939. The model is surrounded by a thematically arranged exhibition of documents and photographs, which form a portrait of the university spanning from its foundation to modern times. The exhibition also features a full-scale model of a pre-war student dormitory room and booths for viewing video materials. The exhibition aims to inspire visitors to not only think about Kyoto University's past, but also its present and future.

The University Archives Reading Room is located next to the exhibition room. The reading room enables visitors to access and search the documents held by the Archives, including the materials that are on display in the exhibition room.



The Historical Exhibition Room,  
 located in the Clock Tower



A Scale Model of Yoshida Campus in 1939