

# Kyoto, the University and the City



## 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 University in autumn and winter  
[top] The Clock Tower in autumn  
[middle] The Clock Tower in winter  
[bottom] The Documentation and Information Center for Chinese Studies

## 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.

## 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 Museum

The collections of the Kyoto University Museum contain over 2.5 million items relating to the arts, sciences, and education. The items have been collected and studied by Kyoto University over the past one-hundred years. The collections are significant not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality. They include, for example, numerous national treasures, important cultural assets, and internationally significant specimens relating to cultural, natural and technological fields.

The mission of the Kyoto University Museum is to preserve and administrate those primary samples in one location with appropriate facilities, promote their practical use for research and education by national and international research institutions and communities, and facilitate their access by the public.

To pursue those aims, three sections have been established within the museum;

- (1) The Section of Field Survey and Collection Management
- (2) The Section of Material Examination and Technical Services
- (3) The Section of Documentation and Multimedia Information Services

In conjunction with Kyoto University's other facilities, the museum supports the research and education needs of its graduate schools, faculties, centers, and institutes, and provides access to the available collections for study and other purposes.



license with a red seal from a legendary  
shogun general, Nobunaga Oda



Naumann's elephant (left)  
Asian elephant (right)