

## FEATURE

# Getting to Know the Many Facets of Japan

## Kyoto University's Rich Tapestry of Research

If you want to get to know Japan from many different angles, Kyoto University is the place to visit. This issue of Research Activities introduces only a small part of the research projects under way at the university. We hope that you will find something here that grabs your interest, and stimulates your curiosity to find out about the many other research activities going on at Kyoto University.

### JAPAN MODERN HISTORY

## Where do our images of Kyoto and Japan come from?

*Collaborative Research on Kyoto, Japan's Ancient Capital, and other Historical Cities.*



The Hō-ō-do Hall of Byōdō-in Temple (Uji City), an established image of Kyoto in modern history

We are accustomed to seeing the city of Kyoto represented by graceful and elegant images, such as exquisitely crafted Japanese cuisine and confectionary, traditional craftwork such as *Nishijin* textiles and *Kiyomizuyaki* pottery, and the scenery of old temples and shrines or the Higashiyama mountains. You may be surprised to learn, however, that such images of Kyoto did not evolve naturally over time, but were contrived and created in modern times for political reasons.

In order to “catch up” with powerful Western nations and become one of the world’s “the first-rate countries,” the nation-state of Japan, which had been established during the Sino–Japanese and Russo–Japanese Wars, adopted a national

policy to employ *kokufu bunka* (Japan’s traditional national culture) as the image for Kyoto City and a symbol of national identity. *Kokufu bunka* refers to the Japanese historical culture that flourished in the late Heian period (10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century), during which the Hō-ō-do Hall (Phoenix Hall) of Byōdō-in Temple was built in Uji city, and much of the nation’s classical literature, including *The Tale of Genji* was produced. During the period of the Japanese Empire, from the 1910s onward, when Japan occupied Korea, the nation harked back to its “Age of Discovery,” and Kyoto’s image and identity became associated with the culture of *Azuchi Momoyama*, which flourished in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and which is characterized by the introduction of Western culture and the lavish pictures on room partitions dating from time of the Toyotomi Hideyoshi Shogunate. In a similar way, the 20<sup>th</sup> century also saw old castle towns such as Kanazawa and Sendai begin to express local and national pride as the hometowns of the first feudal lords of the Sengoku (Warring States) period, such as Maeda Toshiie and Date Masamune.

Researchers at Kyoto University’s Institute for Research in Humanities are engaged in research into the way in which the histories of culturally important cities are developed in modern times. Their findings have been published in *Kindai Kyoto Kenkyū* (*Research into Modern Kyoto*) (Kyoto: Shibunkaku

Shuppan, 2008), jointly edited and published by Profs. Hiroshi Maruyama, Tsutomu Iyori and Hiroshi Takagi, and *Kindai Nihon no Rekishi Toshi: Koto to Jokamachi (Historic Cities of Modern Japan: Ancient Castle Towns)* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2013), written and edited by Prof. Hiroshi Takagi. A new English-language volume titled *Kyoto's Modern Revolution*, jointly edited by Profs. Maruyama, Takagi, and Prof. John Breen, is scheduled for publication in 2015.

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**WEB** [kyouindb.iimc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/e/T2oH](http://kyouindb.iimc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/e/T2oH)



## MUSEOLOGY

# A Treasury of Human and Natural History

*Japan's first university museum.*



*Chinretsukan*, shortly after its construction

Japan's first university museum was founded a hundred years ago when Kyoto Imperial University established a museum called *Chinretsukan* (Exhibition Hall) in the Liberal Arts College to store specimens and utilize them for research and education.

The Liberal Arts College collected and stored approximately 500,000 historical specimens in *Chinretsukan* for use in research on human history. Kyoto University was the first institution in Japan to offer archaeology courses, and accordingly, the museum boasted the nation's

largest collection of quality archeological materials. The university's large collection of ancient documents is also well known among scholars. The collection takes advantage of the university's location in Kyoto City, which was Japan's capital for over 1,000 years from 794 to 1868.



## The Building of the *Chinretsukan*

After three extensions to the original building, which was constructed in 1914, the *Chinretsukan* (Exhibition Hall) reached its final form as a square building surrounding a courtyard in 1929. The old brick building was partially reinforced with concrete during its final extension, but it remains a representative Kyoto University building of its time. The building was co-designed by Jihee Yamamoto, who designed many structures for higher education institutions and hospitals at the time, and Kyozeo Nagase. Yamamoto and Nagase later became the first and second directors of the Department of Engineering of Kyoto Imperial University. In addition to being a place for research and education, the *Chinretsukan* was an "open space" for the public exhibition of historical materials. Being equipped with a reception room, it also served as a place to receive guests until the Clock Tower was built in 1925.



*Chinretsukan's* exhibition room



Ancient Egyptian materials  
Limestone Stele of Nefer-hetep-seneb  
(12<sup>th</sup> Dyn., Abydos, Egypt)



Stibnite (Ehime, Japan)

A notable characteristic of the *Chinretsukan* was that it contained specimens and materials from a wide variety of areas around the world: from Korea and China to Southeast Asia, India, Afghanistan, Europe, and America. Among the items it formerly housed, the ancient Egyptian materials sent by Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie, who is known as the father of Egyptian archeology, have been receiving attention from international researchers in recent years for their high academic value.

The *Chinretsukan's* collections were transferred to the Kyoto University Museum following its establishment in

1997. The museum was established to deepen our understanding of the world, including human history. With the addition of various specimens, including animals, plants, and minerals, there are over 2.6 million items in the museum's collection. Specimen-based research is continually being carried out in the museum, yielding many new discoveries. Along with its research activities, the museum holds exhibitions and other events to widely publicize its latest research results. One recent exhibition, "Masterpieces of the Kyoto University Mineral Collection," featured the first public display of world's largest collection of the beautiful mineral stibnite, attracting many visitors.

The specimens stored in the Kyoto University Museum are valuable academic materials that deepen our understanding of humanity and nature. The museum seeks to utilize these assets for the benefit of society, and pass them on to future generations.

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**WEB** [www.museum.kyoto-u.ac.jp/index\\_e.htm](http://www.museum.kyoto-u.ac.jp/index_e.htm) (Kyoto University Museum)



## Special Exhibitions at the KU Museum

In addition its permanent exhibition, the Kyoto University Museum regularly hosts special exhibitions. The following are currently scheduled special exhibitions:

### ◆ The Will to Heal: *The Development of Medical Knowledge to Save Lives*

This special exhibition presents the achievements of the forerunners of modern medicine who devoted themselves to the development of medicine in and after the Edo period. Focusing primarily on the Kansai area, the exhibition gives an overview of the development of medicine, nursing, midwifery, drug discovery, and medical technology from the Meiji period up to the present day. The exhibition also takes a look at today's cutting-edge medicine.

**Exhibition period: February 11–April 12, 2015**





## BIODIVERSITY

## The 4<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Asian Vertebrate Species Diversity

*Understanding of Japanese Biodiversity with Asian Network.*



Japanese endemic species: *Elaphe quadrivirgata*  
(Japanese four-lined snake)



Japanese endemic species: *Bufo japonicus formosus*  
(Eastern Japanese common toad)

Japan is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, with a large number of diversified vertebrate species, including many endemic to Japan. This is mainly the result of alternating periods of geographical isolation and connection with the continent over millions of years. Comprehensive studies involving counterpart species in continental Asia are essential in elucidating the origin and evolution of species diversity in Japan. For these important and large scale endeavors, it is necessary to promote academic exchange and cooperation among Asian vertebrate researchers, and also to train young researchers through the Asian multilateral research framework. To pursue this challenging endeavor, the Kyoto University Museum is conducting the JSPS Core-to-Core Program B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms *Asian Vertebrate Species Diversity Network Platform with Combining Researchers, Specimens and Information*.

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Asian Vertebrate Species Diversity under the framework of the JSPS program was held on 18–19 December 2014 at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Former symposia in the series have been held annually by the Kyoto University Museum since 2011. The 4<sup>th</sup>

### ◆ Unearthing Cultural Treasures: *Clay Figures Excavated on the Kyoto University Campus*

Kyoto University's Center for Cultural Heritage Studies carries out comprehensive research on cultural artifacts unearthed on the university's campuses. Over a period of thirty-five years, the center has been engaged in the analysis and preservation of cultural property excavated from a combined area of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This special exhibition presents a selection of artifacts from the Tumulus period which were excavated from Kyoto University's Yoshida Campus.

**Exhibition period: February 18–April 19, 2015**

**WEB** [www.museum.kyoto-u.ac.jp/index\\_e.htm](http://www.museum.kyoto-u.ac.jp/index_e.htm) (Kyoto University Museum)





The 4<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Asian Vertebrate Species Diversity on 18–19 December 2014.

Symposium featured forty oral and poster presentations by over seventy researchers from eight Asian countries. Opening addresses were delivered by Dr. Terufumi Ohno, director of the Kyoto University Museum, and Dr. Mohd Amin Jalaludin, vice-chancellor of the University of Malaya. A guest speech emphasizing the importance of biodiversity research was delivered by HE Dr. Makio Miyagawa, ambassador of Japan to Malaysia, and special lectures on the most current developments in Asian vertebrate species diversity research were delivered by Prof. Masafumi Matsui of Kyoto University and Emeritus Prof. Hoi-Sen Yong of the University of Malaya. In accordance with the symposium's policy of providing young researchers with an opportunity to present their ideas and research results on an international platform, most of the symposium's oral presentations were made by younger researchers.

Discussion sessions focused on the importance of maintaining a specimen network and of incubating the next generation of specimens. After the symposium, a two-day field excursion to the University of Malaya's Ulu Gombak Forest Reserve was organized, providing the participants with an opportunity to exchange field survey techniques and research ideas. The symposium served to underline the importance of academic exchange and research collaboration in Asia in understanding vertebrate species diversity in Japan. The 5<sup>th</sup> symposium will be held in December 2015 at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.



Japanese endemic species:  
*Chimarrogale platycephalus*  
(Japanese water shrew)

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**WEB** [www.museum.kyoto-u.ac.jp/acore/](http://www.museum.kyoto-u.ac.jp/acore/)



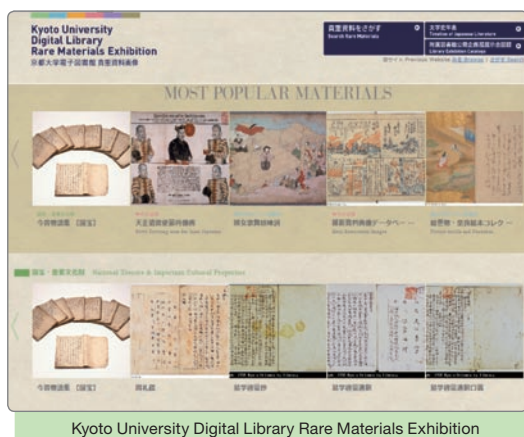
#### LIBRARY AND DIGITIZATION

## Kyoto University's Rare Materials

*One of the largest collections in Japan.*

### ◆ Restoration of rare materials

Kyoto University's library holdings include a large quantity of culturally and historically important rare books, Chinese and Japanese classics, and other materials. These include a designated national treasure and numerous other important cultural properties. Unfortunately, many of these documents are in poor condition due to age, poor handling, or damage by book lice. The Kyoto University Library Network has been restoring these documents to ensure that they can be accessed for research and education purposes, prioritizing those that are most urgently in need of repair.



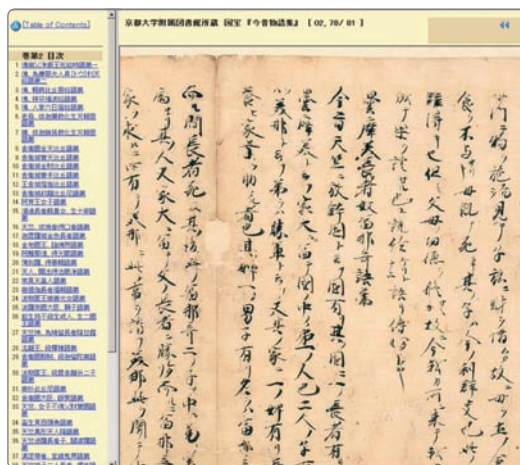
Kyoto University Digital Library Rare Materials Exhibition



## ◆ Digitizing rare materials and making them available online

The Kyoto University Library Network is engaged in digitizing its academic materials, including rare manuscripts and old books, and making them available online in order to preserve them and contribute to international scholarship and cultural development. The university now has one of the largest digital collections in the country, comprising over 4,000 items, including a manuscript of the *Konjaku Monogatari-Shu* (*Anthology of Tales from the Past*) that has been designated as a national treasure, as well as forty other designated important cultural properties.

**WEB** [edb.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/exhibit/index.html](http://edb.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/exhibit/index.html)



A digital image of the *Konjaku Monogatari-Shu* manuscript, available online together with data and an explanation of the text



Image of the colorful picture scroll *Sanjurokkasen-Zo*



*Tsukumo-gami*



## KYOTO-U OpenCourseWare

Kyoto-U OpenCourseWare (OCW) is Kyoto University's initiative to make its course materials available online and provide members of the general public with the opportunity to access actual university lectures. The OCW, including many lectures on different aspects of Japanese culture, are available from the following website:

**WEB** [ocw.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en](http://ocw.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en)

