

KYOTO UNIVERSITY

2008 / 2009
PROFILE



Kyoto University was founded in 1897 in Kyoto, a city with a cultural heritage of over 1,200 years. First, the College of Science and Engineering was established, and then other colleges followed, such as the Colleges of Law, Medicine and Letters, developing the university into an increasingly comprehensive institution with a characteristic emphasis on research rather than educating future government officials. In recent years the university has been making efforts to integrate the academic fields which are most vital for the future of humanity. At present, Kyoto University has 17 graduate schools, 10 faculties, 13 research institutes and 29 education and research centers and facilities. Currently, there are approximately 9,300 graduate and 13,400 undergraduate students, 2,900 faculty members and 2,500 administrative staff members.

Kyoto University's academic style is characterized by free-thinking, self-reliance and dialogue. Many students take the initiative to pursue study and research based on their own personal interests and concerns, and researchers are challenging uncharted frontiers and achieving innovative results. Among its alumni, the university counts five Nobel Prize laureates in fundamental natural science fields.

As declared in the mission statement, Kyoto University continues to emphasize and encourage fundamental and applied research. Many distinguished researchers' groups are taking unconventional and thought-provoking approaches, resulting in cutting-edge world-class achievements. The broad scope of research in science and technology at Kyoto University encompasses subjects as diverse as physics, chemistry, biology, medical sciences, pharmaceutical sciences, engineering, energy sciences, informatics, agricultural sciences and environmental studies. Currently, chemistry and regenerative medicine, such as stem cell research and cell-material sciences, are particularly highlighted fields at Kyoto University. Maintaining a close relationship with industry, Kyoto University is involved in collaborative research in such diverse fields with many companies and other research organizations.

In the humanities and social sciences, Kyoto University has established unique international research centers that reflect the philosophic traditions of Kyoto. Our approach to these fields is

distinguished by language- and history-consciousness. A variety of disciplines flourish and interact, ranging from archeology and classical studies to analyses of modern life.

The thriving culture of creative dialogue on our campuses is rooted in the university's rich history of pioneering fieldwork, enduring examples of which are our area studies centering on Southeast Asia and Africa. Our research into the tropical rainforest ecosystem and the work of our Primate Research Institute are acclaimed world-wide.

In recent years, an increasing number of joint research activities have been successfully conducted across the boundaries which conventionally divide the natural sciences and the humanities. This trend is symbolized by the establishment of the Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere in 2003 and the opening of the Kokoro Research Center in 2007.

The spirit which drives such flexible education and pioneering research is reflected in the fact that Kyoto University has been selected by the Japanese government for twenty-three 21st Century Center of Excellence (COE) programs, twelve Global COE programs and one World Premier International Research Center Initiative (WPI) program. The launch in 2007 of the Institute for Integrated Cell-Material Sciences (iCeMS) marked the first step of the WPI program, and soon afterwards the institute was internationally lauded for its breakthrough research into induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells.

Advances in science and technology coupled with environmental upheaval have changed the ways in which humanity and nature are perceived and understood. Our Mission Statement declares our intention to pursue harmonious coexistence within the human and ecological community on this planet. In this context, the term "community" includes the Earth's plants and animals, mountains and rivers, sea and sky, and even its lithosphere and surrounding inter-planetary space. Inspired by the lofty ideals of this Mission Statement, we aim to offer students and researchers from around the world the opportunity not only to exceed the goal of becoming a specialist in their chosen field, but also to endeavor to address the issues most urgent for the global community.

October 2008



Hiroshi MATSUMOTO





Kyoto Imperial University was founded in 1897 and the College of Science and Engineering was established at that time (see the chronological table in the accompanying Facts and Figures booklet). In the following year, the basic organization was completed with the opening of the College of Law, the College of Medicine, the University Hospital and the University Library. In 1919 the colleges became faculties, and with the passing of a new law in 1947, Kyoto Imperial University was renamed Kyoto University. Since then, new faculties, graduate schools, research institutes, centers and other new facilities have continued to be established. At present, Kyoto University consists of seventeen graduate schools, ten undergraduate faculties, and more than forty research institutes and centers. In recent years Kyoto University has come to place a greater emphasis on graduate level studies and has established several new graduate schools to tackle emerging issues expected to be of critical importance this century.

As a university that is comprised of many graduate schools, faculties, research institutes and centers, Kyoto University strives for diverse development in pure and applied research in the humanities, sciences and technology, while seeking new and varied interdisciplinary perspectives. During its long history, the university has devoted much of its energy to developing scholarly discussion in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Creative research in venture businesses for information technology and electrical engineering has been initiated, and substantial progress in advanced applied research fields, such as biotechnology and energy science continues, thus assuring that our efforts truly have an impact on society.

Yoshida Campus, the main campus of Kyoto University is near the centre of Kyoto City. The facilities at Yoshida Campus are housed in century-old red brick buildings which stand side-by-side with state-of-the-art laboratories. Uji Campus, where the university's natural science and energy research facilities are located, is about twelve kilometers to the south. Katsura Campus, seven kilometers west of the main campus, opened in October 2003. This campus, named after the region in which it is located, is made up of four clusters of buildings, and aims to merge technology and science disciplines to form a "Techno-Science Hill." The Graduate Schools of Engineering and Informatics are currently in the process of moving to Katsura Campus from Yoshida Campus.





■ Two of Kyoto University's Nobel Prize laureates, Hideki Yukawa, seated second from the left, and Sin-Itiro Tomonaga, seated third from the left.

With “self-reliant learning” as its motto, Kyoto University values critical thinking in the classroom. Within its broad and varied educational structure, the university will transmit high quality knowledge and promote independent and interactive learning. Consequently, our students are free to choose a field of interest outside their major very early in their university life. Low enrollment-capped seminars are open to students to encourage their interests in diverse subjects, irrespective of their faculty affiliation. We encourage students to expand their horizons and deepen their initiative through the eye-opening opportunities provided by these seminars. Furthermore, we aim to provide the facilities and curricula which will endow students with the language skills and informational literacy indispensable for success in today’s global society. Distance-learning lectures are another avenue that the university is actively exploring.

Kyoto University aims to generate world-class knowledge through freedom and autonomy in research that conforms to high ethical standards. As a research-oriented university, Kyoto University has produced five Nobel Prize laureates and various world-class researchers in a wide spectrum of fields. The “Kyoto School of Thought” is well known in the field of philosophy. In other disciplines, our field work techniques yield trailblazing results, while large-scale surveys and other research allows for steady progress to be made in vital areas relating to the global environmental problems of the 21st century.

Kyoto University will educate outstanding and humane researchers and specialists who will contribute responsibly to the world’s human and ecological community. The existing research sections at the university’s institutes and the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies work together in an attempt to find solutions to global problems which are becoming increasingly urgent. We are seeking the answers to difficult questions relating to energy, food, life and welfare. In the field of natural disasters, the graduate schools’ related research sections, research institutes, and centers cooperate to actively develop international joint research projects for the protection of property and lives. We have established overseas research stations to carry out very efficient traditional field work. The Center for Southeast Asian Studies has established liaison stations in Bangkok (Thailand) and Jakarta (Indonesia). The Bangkok Liaison Station, established in 1963, has been developing a large research base that encompasses all of Thailand and its surrounding countries. Additionally, the Jakarta Liaison Station, set up in 1973, is not only for information gathering but also serves as a base for joint projects by researchers from both countries, and provides Indonesian researchers and students with the opportunity to come to Kyoto and other locations in Japan to further their studies.



■ Contact Office of Research and Education of Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies Hue, Vietnam.

In December 2002, the Shanghai Research Center was founded at the Graduate School of Economics, and the following year, in January 2003, a branch office was established at Fudan University, China. The center's main focus is research on present-day China and its relation to East Asian economies. There is a faculty exchange program between Kyoto University and Fudan University, and an educational program to train top-level specialists in fields relating to the economy of East Asia is underway. For example, lectures are given in analyzing the economies and management systems of China and Japan. In October 2005, Kyoto University's Graduate School of Engineering launched an endowed project of the Japan-China Cooperative Research Laboratory on Environmental Technology. This joint project conducted in conjunction with Tsinghua University will be based at the Cooperative Research and Education Center for Environmental Technology of Kyoto University & Tsinghua University, which is located on the campus of Tsinghua University. We expect this program to become a locus of joint research and education between Japan and China in the field of environmental technology as well as a focal point for industry-academia partnerships.

The cutting-edge research undertaken at Kyoto University is highly respected both internationally and domestically, and correspondingly expectations are high for current projects such as the university's MEXT^{*} COE^{**} Program projects. Almost half of Kyoto University's 23 COE initiatives have established overseas research stations. Additionally, the Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere and the Center for Ecological Research have set up observatories and field stations in Malaysia and Indonesia to engage in research surveys. In the near future, these overseas stations (currently 32 in total) will form a network which will function as local admissions offices in addition to conducting research.

In 2007, the proposal for Kyoto University's Institute for Integrated Cell-Material Sciences was adopted for inclusion in MEXT's World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative, an initiative providing priority support for projects aimed at creating world-class research centers.

Note:

* MEXT: the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

** The Centers of Excellence (COE) Program aims to elevate the standards of education and research at Japanese universities. Its priority is the formation of world-class research and education centers based on the principle of excellence as judged by third-party evaluators. In 2002 MEXT began implementing the 21st Century COE programs to assist Japanese universities in competing internationally at the world's highest standards. Based on an assessment of the 21st Century COE Program, and with the intention of continuing its fundamental principles, MEXT established the Global COE Program in 2007. Kyoto University currently has 12 programs which have been adopted as Global COE Programs.



■ Participants of the Kyoto University International Symposium in Indonesia, during their field trip to a volcano, near Bandung. July 2007.





With the advent of the Internet, the development of information and communications technology has soared to new levels. It is now a simple matter to communicate with anybody on earth from one's home. However, face-to-face communication builds mutual trust and remains highly valued.

Kyoto University is engaged in numerous academic exchange programs in various scientific fields and has concluded agreements with many research-oriented universities and institutions worldwide, representing our country among the universities of the world. Exchanges of both information and human resources with the world's academic institutions are increasing because forums and symposia have merged the traditional fields of the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences with energy science, information science, and life science. The university has become the site for pioneering research backed by the MEXT COE Program and other initiatives, and is continually forming links with first-rate researchers overseas. In fields related to science, engineering, and agricultural studies, efforts are made to support developing countries through cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other organizations.

Kyoto University is cultivating human resources to meet the needs of the world in the 21st century. Among our university's student exchange programs is the Kyoto University International Education Program (KUINEP), a half-year or one-year program that offers lectures in English on subjects such as life sciences, environmental studies, biotechnology, statistics, physics, economics, information science, politics, social studies and the arts. Bilateral academic exchanges in science and technology and other fields are also an ongoing engagement. The university is deeply involved in the development of multilateral ties within the Asia Pacific region through its involvement with international organizations and university alliances such as the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) and the Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU). In 2008 Kyoto University began a two-year term as the chair university of AEARU.





■ APRU 12th Annual Presidents Meeting in Tokyo, June 2008.



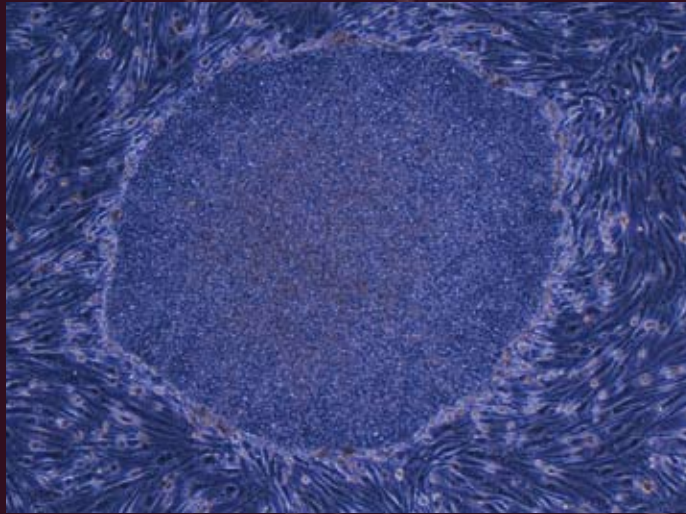


Kyoto University makes a concerted effort to disseminate the results of its research overseas, and Kyoto University International Symposia have been held in various countries with the intent of expanding the two-way flow of research information through exchange and discussion among prestigious researchers. These symposia have enabled participants in countries such as the United States, England, Canada, Singapore, China, Thailand and Indonesia to gain valuable experience in many diverse fields, including information science, economics, energy science, psychology, life science and plant science.

To enhance our international exchange and cooperation activities, Kyoto University established the Organization for the Promotion of International Relations (OPIR) in April 2005. The principle guiding our international exchange endeavors is the improvement of mutual benefits for both Kyoto University and our partners. In addition, our exchange undertakings are intended to encourage activities that are original and creative, and in so doing, enrich our university's international reputation. The activities of the OPIR are based on the following four themes: (1) A shift in information flow, from a "receiving mode" to a "disseminating mode;" (2) Progression from the enrichment of bilateral exchanges to the development of multilateral exchanges; (3) Focused support for exchange activities in specially designated fields; and (4) Enrichment of the university's international exchange infrastructure.

Our Mission Statement declares that "as an international institution, Kyoto University will promote foreign academic exchange and thereby strive to contribute to the well-being of the world." Kyoto University continues to develop outstanding academic facilities, and provide opportunities for scholars, researchers and students, worldwide to collaborate in the pursuit of education and research of the highest standards. In so doing, the university has established itself as a hub of knowledge and a center for international exchange and communication.





■ Provided by Prof Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University.







International Affairs Division,
Kyoto University
Yoshida-Honmachi, Sakyo-ku,
Kyoto 606-8501, JAPAN
Tel.+81-75-753-2047 Fax.+81-75-753-2042
<http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp>