

Kobe University Newsletter "Kaze"

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風

SPOTLIGHT

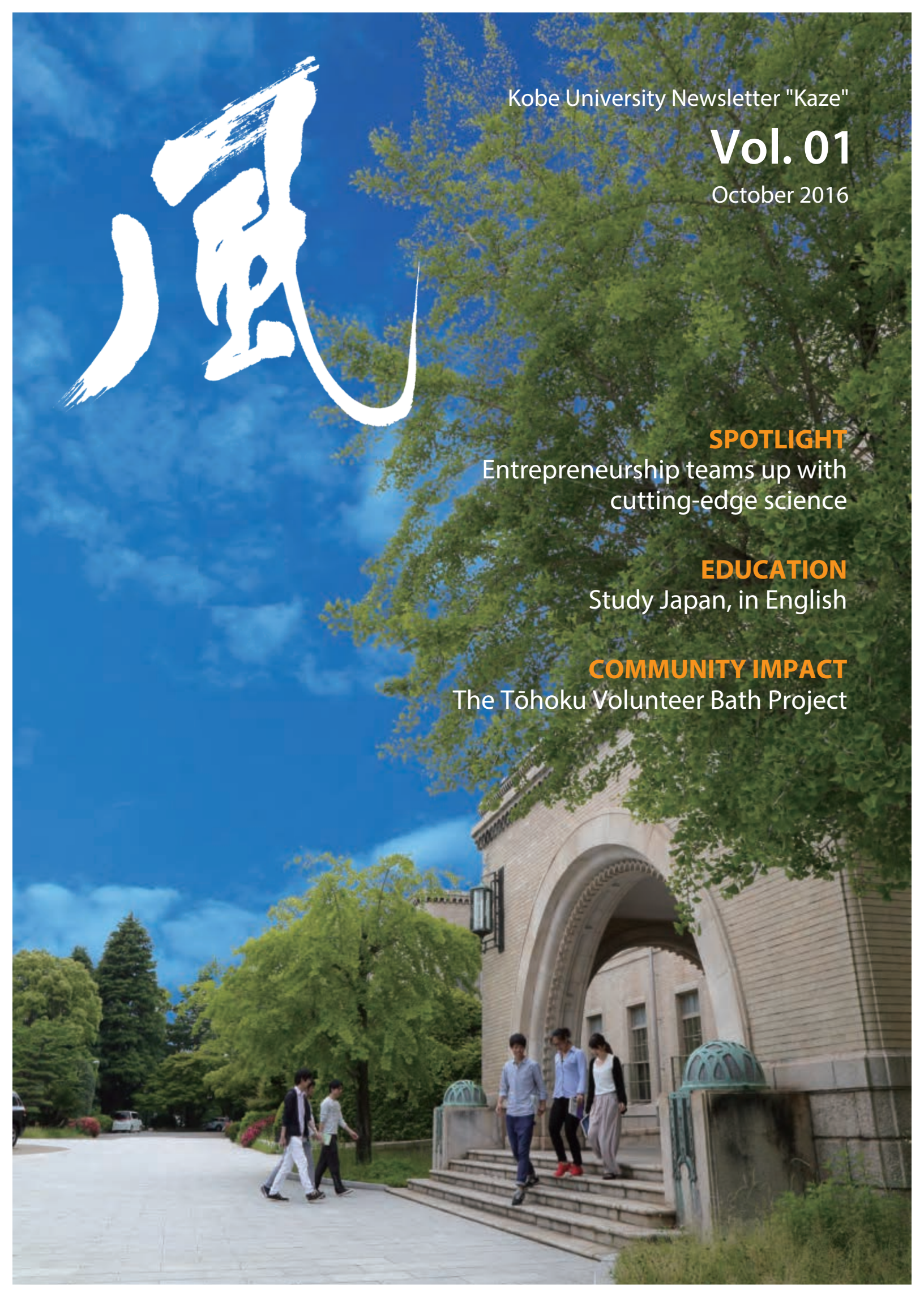
Entrepreneurship teams up with cutting-edge science

EDUCATION

Study Japan, in English

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Tōhoku Volunteer Bath Project



Kobe insights

Mount Rokko and the Five Villages of Nada

At the foot of Mount Rokkō, between Kobe's Nada district and Nishinomiya to the east, there are many sake breweries. These breweries are known collectively as the Naga-Gogō – the “Five Villages of Nada”. The sake made here is dry and robust, which led it being labelled “male sake” (otokozake).

The foot of Mount Rokkō is also famous for its water. Praised by sailors worldwide as “Kobe Water”, it comes from the rainwater that falls on the mountain range and is filtered down as spring water. You can see several of these springs by just walking down the hill from the university. This famous water, a key ingredient of the sake brewed in the Five Villages of Nada, is known as Nishinomiya no mizu or miyamizu for short.



In order to brew a flavorsome sake you need water with as low an iron content as possible, because the enzyme that converts rice starch into glucose, which is then converted into alcohol, doesn't respond well to iron. With barely any iron content, miyamizu is ideal for brewing sake. The low iron content in miyamizu is thanks to the Rokkō mountain range – made of granite, which has a low iron content. We'd also like to note that these mountains were formed one billion years ago after a huge volcanic eruption. In other words, the famous sake of Nada is a creation of our volcanic archipelago.

Miyamizu is also a hard water, rare in Japan. This hardness explains the dry quality of the sake. The Five Villages of Nada are located in a sandy area with a lot of shells, and hard water is created when calcium from these shells dissolves in the subsoil water from the mountain rains.

Something to think about the next time you're enjoying a cup of sake. Cheers!



Why “Kaze”?

There are two main concepts behind the title “Kaze”, meaning “wind”. Firstly, Kobe University's goal to innovate, creating a wind of change. Secondly, our location at the foot of Mt Rokkō, an area known for the invigorating wind of Rokkō-oroshi that blows down from the mountain range.

The calligraphy on the cover of “Kaze” was created by Professor Emeritus UOZUMI Kazuaki, a researcher of calligraphy at Kobe University.



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神戸大学

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SPOTLIGHT

Entrepreneurship teams up with cutting-edge science

Interview 1: Professor KUTSUNA Keiji, Deputy Dean of the Graduate School of Science, Technology and Innovation

A new Graduate School formed of four advanced science divisions, but in pivotal position is the single humanities division of entrepreneurship. We interviewed Professor KUTSUNA Keiji, Deputy Dean of the new Graduate School and an authority on entrepreneurship in Japan.

How to use breakthroughs

To start with, let me say a few words on the definition of entrepreneurship. Narrowly speaking, entrepreneurship is the actions and mindset that accompany starting a business, but there's actually a slightly broader meaning. It's about looking at things from a different perspective, considering whether you can give them new social or economic value, and then taking meaningful action. Regardless of whether you found a company or not, this way of thinking and acting is called entrepreneurship. For example, say a scientist has invented an amazing technology. We

call this a breakthrough, but this alone will not start an enterprise. The academic field of entrepreneurship deals with what can give this invention social and economic value – in other words, realizing innovation.

Why did you start to research this field?

This will get a bit specialist. When I entered graduate school and was thinking about what to study, a field had just emerged called “economics of information”. I was studying finance, but until that point, the neoclassical school's approach was based on the premise that information instantly spreads and makes decision-making efficient. But the reality is that in general one side has information that the other side lacks. We call this information asymmetry. In financial terms, there is probably more information asymmetry when an entrepreneur is raising business funds than when a large company borrows money from a bank. At the

time, hardly anyone was researching the finances of unlisted companies, and I thought it was an interesting field of study.

interviewee
KUTSUNA Keiji



The new Graduate School of Science, Technology and Innovation

Does interdisciplinary education keep you fit?

The new graduate school is interdisciplinary, but your students are all from science-based fields. Do you have any concerns about this?

If you ask “Do you think society will accept research that cannot be used by anyone and pay you a salary?” I think science students will understand straight away. It's not just about research; it's whether you can innovate. That is what will contribute to society and lead to a high salary.

Until April 2016, there was only one entrepreneurship course in the School of Business Administration. In the new Graduate School there are now eight courses a year. I believe this is the most comprehensive graduate school in Japan for studying entrepreneurship, covering the three areas essential for business: people, things, and money. Every week on Monday, students from the four natural science fields head to the Rokkodai social sciences campus and study entrepreneurship.

As for me, I've been at Kobe University 15 years and hardly ever visited the natural sciences campus, but recently I've been climbing up and down the stairs between campuses a lot, sometimes even three times a day [laughs]. Since April my main focus has been the new graduate school. Right now, I only share teaching for one class in the School of Business Administration.

How do you link cutting-edge research fields to entrepreneurship?

From the second half of the first year to the first half of the second year, I

advise students on making business plans for their research field. During the final half of the year they write their graduation theses, but these must be more than natural sciences research. If they don't include a part on how to commercialize their research, they do not fulfil the requirements of the course. In other words, the students in our new graduate school always have to think about what is needed to commercialize their research.

Why has the University started a company?

We've heard that you founded a company linked to the new graduate school.

In January 2016 we founded “Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Co., Ltd.” The company office is on the natural sciences campus.

We decided to create this company because when we were preparing to open the new graduate school, several natural sciences professors brought up the topic. We got comments like “I tried to commercialize my results, but I didn't make much progress”.

Actually, for over 20 years, I have been preparing to start a company with these members. I didn't think of it as being connected to Kobe University, but we decided to create it within the university and redesigned its framework, including funding.

Can we think of it as venture capital to be invested in new projects?

Venture capital is when a fund is created using contributions from outside investors. Our company will provide capital, but we will not create

a fund. It's a “seed accelerator”: a company which combines a small amount of investment with start-up mentoring and advice.

Our company president has asked private venture capitalists to join. The company is managed by three professors from the new graduate school: myself and two newcomers to Kobe University, Professor YAMAMOTO Kazuhiko (previously a venture capitalist) and Professor SAKAI Takayuki (involved in business-academia technology transfer for many years). With the addition of specialist copyright lawyers, we now have a team of nine members to carry out screening for research commercialization.

Training human resources who won't lose to AI

What sort of people can students studying at this graduate school hope to become?

Of course we expect that some graduates will aim to start businesses, but more importantly I want to train individuals who can practice innovation in any field. There is no doubt that these sorts of human resources will be in demand. In these cutting-edge times, I think that people's jobs will be lost to artificial intelligence and robots. But if we can consider things from a different perspective and create new values for them, maybe humans will still have a chance [laughs]. If you want to become such a person, I will be glad to see you at Kobe University.

interviewee
KONDO Akihiko



The new mission and outlook for Kobe University explained by Professor KONDO Akihiko, Dean of the Graduate School of Science, Technology and Innovation.

A tough curriculum

What is special about this graduate school?

Professors carrying out world-class advanced research in four different fields, laboratories, and entrepreneur specialists representing Japan such as Professor KUTSUNA have all gathered to train a new kind of science-focused individual. I believe this is the first experiment of its kind in Japan.

Students will carry out in-depth research into advanced science and

technology. It is the same difficulty level as an average master's degree, but they will also learn about entrepreneurship. In other words, we aim to give people the skills connected to innovation that will enable them to achieve a breakthrough.

Do the classes for the four fields take the same format as other graduate schools?

No, we are using an independent curriculum. Students concentrate on one of the four fields, but they study the other fields and we teach them to widen their perspective in the sciences. Practical experience with industrial technology is also a unique feature of our courses. There are not many graduate schools in Japan that offer practical training. Every student

Interview 2: Professor KONDO Akihiko, Dean of the Graduate School of Science, Technology and Innovation

experiences this training in all four fields.

In other words, the new graduate school is not just about interdisciplinary learning between social and natural sciences, it is also about cross-disciplinary studies between different fields. Innovation happens when different fields combine. For example, when the K supercomputer is used to simulate cells, combining biotechnology and IT. Facilitating this sort of interdisciplinary work is one of the largest goals of our new graduate school.

Encouraging a mindset that celebrates difference

What is the significance of combining disciplines?

Science-focused researchers can do the research, but they can't put together a business plan. Unfortunately, we haven't taken classes in entrepreneurship. I'm even thinking about dropping into the Monday classes [laughs].

Japan does not have enough people with the skill to start new businesses. We are very strong in large businesses in the same [science-based] research fields, but we are the weakest country in the world when it comes to creating new start-ups.

I think this is related to the

different mindsets – Japan does not forgive mistakes, whereas the US views mistakes as steps towards success. In the United States, students act dynamically. For example, students who studied natural sciences as undergraduates switch to social sciences for graduate school. This is a weak point for Japan: even after graduation, we just carrying on moving up in a fixed path [laughs]. I think that Japan lacks the dynamism for trying out new challenges.

Have you noticed a cultural gap between sciences and humanities?

They are quite different, yes. The research is completely different. I think if we start to criticize each other the list would be endless [laughs]. But this is because of our different definitions of "science". We have to start with respect. Respecting and complementing each other in order to create something amazing.

On the other hand, understanding that our cultures are completely different can itself be very stimulating and become an opportunity to broaden our perspectives. Wherever they go, the students must create businesses with many different kinds of people, and it's very important for them to have these collaborative mindsets.

The merits of starting a business at a university

What sort of hopes do you have for the seed accelerator company?

Creating businesses near where education is happening is very important. Students are influenced by their surroundings. For example, Stanford University in the US is in the middle of Silicon Valley, an area where lots of ventures begin. There are many examples of students there who started businesses and became billionaires. In these situations, the best and brightest students will start ventures and become entrepreneurs.

I believe that a culture of encouraging people to start new business must also be nurtured in order to change Japan. In Kobe, projects are starting such as the Biomedical Innovation Cluster and the [RIKEN] Research Complex Program. Various new businesses are being started, and maybe it will become the silicon valley of Japan. In that case, maybe Kobe University would become Japan's Stanford [laughs]. For this to happen, the most important thing is training human resources. I want to make the new graduate school the core of this movement.



The Kanebō Collection after being digitalized and rebound

Research at Kobe

Interdisciplinary knowledge brings old manuscripts back into the light

From 2015-2016 the Japanese drama *Asa ga kita* ("Here comes Asa") broadcast with record high viewer ratings. Heroine Shiraoka Asa is based on real-life historical businesswoman Hiro-oka Asako, and Associate Professor TAKATSUKI Yasuo from Kobe University's Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration was in charge of background research for this series. A specialist in economic history, he studied the Dōjima Rice Exchange in Osaka. Now he's working on a new interdisciplinary initiative. What sort of project involves applying humanities and sciences to economic history? With high expectations and some nerves, we visited his office.

interviewee
TAKATSUKI Yasuo





A long-held acquaintance with the Hiro-oka family?

What made you start researching the Tokugawa period?

When I was an undergraduate I specialized in financial engineering. Then I read somewhere that the world's first futures market was the Dōjima Rice Exchange in Osaka, and I thought, "how interesting, I'd like to research that". So I started to study history and read old manuscripts when I began a master's degree at Osaka University. After that I continued to the doctorate program at Tokyo University, and I heard that a company connected to the Hiro-oka family had documents dating from Tokugawa (1603-1868) to the post-war era. Alongside my research on Tokugawa-era rice markets, I analyzed the Hiro-oka family's documents.

That's how I was asked to do background research on *Asa ga kita*. I heard that a descendant of the Hiro-oka family had some related documents, and I found masses of old manuscripts, photos etc., all dating from Tokugawa (1603-1868) to Meiji (1868-1912). We decided to temporarily store some of them at Kobe University.

What is the value of these documents for you?

The *daimyō* (local lords) of the Tokugawa period obtained money using two methods. First, each domain issued rice certificates that could be exchanged for the rice stored in their Osaka warehouses. The rice brokers could have submitted their rice certificates to the warehouse and received real rice in exchange. However, in reality they mainly sold the certificates in the secondary market: the Dōjima Rice Exchange. In this sense, rice certificates have characteristics similar to the stocks in modern financial markets.

The other method of raising funds was borrowing money from banks. Thanks to these documents I was able to look more closely at banking, the other pillar of *daimyō* finances.

Bankers who screened feudal lords

I heard that daimyō often defaulted on their loans.

That's just one side of it. It's true that at one point *daimyō* couldn't pay their debts and a lot of bankers started going bust. But other families – like Kōnoike and Hiro-oka – did very well for themselves during that time. They carried out strict screenings, and lent money at low interest rates to the domains that qualified.

The Tokugawa period is thought of as being a slow-tempo era for society, but in regards to finance they were creating a surprisingly sophisticated system. After the Meiji era Japan achieved rapid industrialization, but this was notably due to domestic rather than foreign investors. This was possible because they already had the skills to manage banks and stock markets in addition to the capital accumulated in Tokugawa. They say that Japan's modernization started with Commodore Perry's ships [in 1853], but they were warming up for it during Tokugawa.

Even messy handwriting is OK?

It's not your specialist field - what exactly is this interdisciplinary project you're working on?

We analyze handwritten documents. Most people can't read documents written in cursive – including the Hiro-oka family documents.

I was talking with two other professors, and we decided that we should digitalize these handwritten documents and make them searchable. I could more or less read the documents, so I didn't get it at first, but they both said "It's not enough to just have the documents". So Professor KAMIHIGASHI Takashi visited the Graduate School of System Informatics to find a partner for this project. That's how CHEN Jinhui joined me as Assistant Professor in the Research

Institute. He just graduated this March from the Graduate School of System Informatics as a specialist in image recognition.

I see, it's a job that goes beyond the humanities. How do you make handwritten documents searchable?

Using the digitalized documents, we make the computer recognize the cursive script patterns, for example the "Asa" from Hiro-oka Asako. When you can search for these patterns using a computer, you can easily sift through a huge amount of documents to find the "Asa" character. Then you just have to read that part, or hire someone to read it for you.

We are currently analyzing the Kanebō Collection held at the Integrated Center for Corporate Archives. This includes lots of handwritten documents dating back to the Meiji era. Unlike the Tokugawa era there is no systematic style, which can be awkward. Still, we're starting with these less stylized characters and then I'd like to expand to other characters, or Tokugawa cursive style.

Chasing the giants

Kanebō was a company that existed until quite recently, wasn't it?

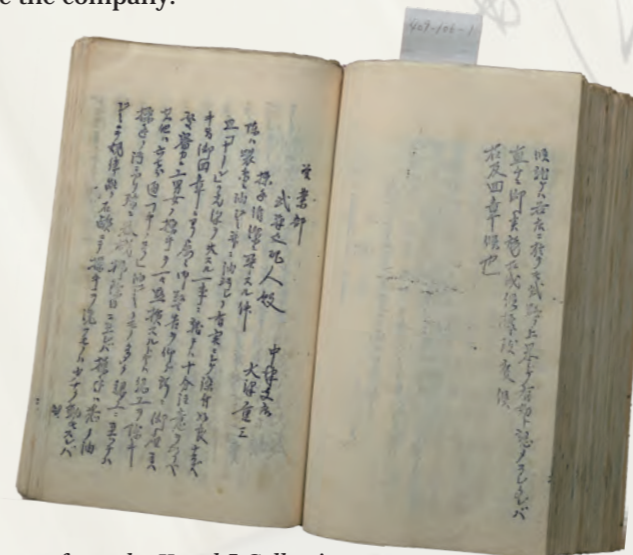
Yes, so it has many documents about the diversification of a large company. The minutes of all the meetings are there, so you can even read about what they discussed inside the company.

The contents of the documents are still not searchable, but the Kanebō Collection is already viewable online. Until now, our mindset towards valuable documents in the humanities has been "Let's store them carefully until someone needs them". Of course, preservation is very important, but it is a waste if they are not used. Kobe University started as a commercial high school, so business research is a key part of our teaching and identity. I want to be able to store a one-of-its-kind document and turn it into a digital image. Even if you can't read cursive script, our research institute will make it searchable using keywords. Using this project, my dream right now is to create a hub for business history research.

What about the educational side?

Japan chased after the giants, then at one point realized that it had become a giant too. I wonder how many students are rolling up their sleeves for one more dash after America and China. Speaking just from my own teaching experience, they're in the minority.

In which case, I think it's worth looking at Japan when it was pausing before it started the chase. In terms of GDP, Tokugawa-era Japan was so small it could not be compared to Western powers, but now "Japan's special something" is valued worldwide. Many of Japan's unique strengths originated in Tokugawa. Why not look at the Tokugawa era, when Japanese people had more breathing space than Meiji? That's what I want to tell my students.



An extract from the Kanebō Collection: a report from Mutō Sanji, the man who managed Kanebō from 1868 to 1926. The full Kanebō Collection is available on the RIEB homepage (Japanese language only). <http://www.rieb.kobe-u.ac.jp/>

CHEN Jinhui



Assistant Professor, Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration

During the PhD. candidate stage, I focused on pattern recognition, specifically facial expression recognition. At first it may seem that face-based and script-based recognition tasks are completely different, yet they both belong to pattern recognition. They are the same research field. In both tasks, we try to extract image features and use these features based on algorithms to recognize the contents in images. However, in handwritten images every character is unique. Moreover, there are enormous numbers of characters, so it is difficult to design a universal classification framework to recognize each character.

In RIEB, we try to implement an image auto-retrieval system that can retrieve images containing key information from historical literature – the Kanebō database. I think image retrieval targeting ancient literature is a challenging but very constructive research topic. Especially in Japan, which holds many precious historical literatures, this study is meaningful. While we need to note that professional knowledge differs between humanities and sciences, I believe we can bridge the gap between disciplines. Because here in the RIEB, we have a common language—mathematics. Therefore, I believe our humanities-sciences cooperative project will achieve success.

Study Japan, in English

Kobe University Educational Program on Current Japan

The Kobe University Educational Program on Current Japan (KU-EPOCJ) is an English-taught program newly established in April 2016, with the full program starting from October 2016. It is open to overseas exchange students at both undergraduate and graduate levels (special auditing students whose institutions have a student exchange agreement with Kobe University).

As global interest in Japan continues to grow, this program aims to respond to the needs of those who wish to carry out Japan-related research without in-depth knowledge of the Japanese language. The course focuses on current issues in Japan covering a broad range of disciplines, including social sciences, humanities, and part of the natural sciences. Through this course we aim to provide opportunities for a deeper understanding of Japan from various perspectives.

The program can be combined with students' chosen research topics at each faculty or graduate school as well as Japanese language classes at the Kobe University Center for International Education.

Kobe University has brought its strong connections with outstanding overseas universities into play in organizing this program. An innovative and outward-looking city in the heart of the Kansai region, Kobe is an ideal setting for students to immerse themselves in the study of current Japan.

The three key features of the program:

1. Focused on current issues and phenomena in Japan
2. Taught entirely in English
3. Covers a wide range of disciplines: social sciences, humanities and part of the natural sciences

About the course

Certification will be provided based on credit acquisition. Most of the program courses are part of the quarter system (one or two classes a week for eight weeks). Some courses are offered as semester courses (one class a week for sixteen weeks). Students earn one to two credits for each successfully completed course.

| Course list | Humanities | Intercultural Studies, Law and Economy Business Administration | International Cooperative Studies Natural and Medical Sciences | Fusion Course |
|----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Under-graduate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Comparative Study of Japanese Cultural Industry I (a)(b) • A Comparative Study of Modern Japanese Society and Culture I (a)(b) • Global Active Learning I • Seminar in Comparative Thought I (a)(b) • Seminar in Contemporary Thought I (a)(b) • Seminar in Global Communication I • Studies in Global Humanities (a)(b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Seminar (Japan and Immigration) • Cultures and Societies in Japan I-IV • EU-Japan Comparative Seminar I-III • Japanese Economy • Japanese Legal System I-II • Seminar in Constitutional Law | | <p>Risk beyond Borders and Global Humanities (a)(b):</p> <p>How does the Japanese academic sphere and intellectual activities deal with risks in current society?</p> <p>Risks beyond national borders, global risks, and the risks beyond specific disciplines: risks beyond borders manifest in many ways.</p> |
| Master | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Advanced Comparative Study of Japanese Cultural Industry (a)(b) • An Advanced Comparative Study of Modern Japanese Society and Culture (a)(b) • Global Active Learning II • Seminar in Comparative Thought II (a)(b) • Seminar in Contemporary Thought II (a)(b) • Seminar in Global Communication II (a)(b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Supply Chain Management • Comparative Economy • EU-Japan Comparative Seminar IV • Japanese Legal System I-II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Disaster Law • Advanced lectures in lifestyle-related diseases I • Demography I • Infectious Diseases Special Lecture I • International Health Cooperation Special Lecture I • International Practices Fieldwork • Issues in Peace and Development • Japanese ODA • Law and Economic Development • Local Government • Public Finance • Medical Anthropology Special Lecture I • Special Lecture on Institution Building • Transcultural Family Health Care Nursing | <p>This Fusion Course at Kobe University provides a comprehensive and integrative educational course that shows various ways in which the Japanese academic sphere and intellectual activities are dealing with global issues such as Disaster and Community Restoration, Law and (Dis)Order, Conflict, Migration, Environment, Food, and Infectious Diseases.</p> |



KU-EPOCJ classes in progress

KU-EPOCJ Kick off Symposium

On Sept 23, the KU-EPOCJ Kick off Symposium was held at Kobe University in conjunction with the Fourth Annual Conference: the Forum for Leaders of Japanese Studies. The event was co-hosted by Kobe University Educational Program on Current Japan (KU-EPOCJ), the Center for Asian Academic Collaboration, and the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS).

Professor INOUE Noriyuki (Executive Vice President in Charge of International Exchange and Director of the Institute for Promoting International Partnerships) gave the opening speech, expressing his hopes that this event would be an opportunity to deepen connections with overseas universities, increase researcher collaborations, and contribute to the advancement of scholarship across diverse fields.

This was followed by an introduction to the philosophy and structure of KU-EPOCJ from Professor YUI Kiyomitsu (Executive Assistant to the President in Charge of International Collaboration), emphasizing the interdisciplinary aspects of the new program. He also spoke on the importance of expanding "Japanese studies" beyond the traditional fields of language, classical culture and history to include more diverse choices and approaches.

The keynote speech was given by BEN-ARI Eyal from Kinneret University on the subject "Japanese Studies in Comparative Perspective: How are Area/Regional Studies Constructed?" and the event continued with the Forum

for Leaders of Japanese Studies, moderated by Professor OGATA Yasushi (Director of the Center for Asian Academic Collaboration). The Forum featured six presentations from leading Japanese studies professors at major Asian universities.

To finish, a roundtable discussion took place on the theme of "Japanese Studies as Public Goods". Members of the KU-EPOCJ administrative committee, guest researchers who presented in the Forum for Leaders of Japanese Studies, and researchers from EAJS all participated in the roundtable. The discussion was moderated by Professor SEKINE Yuki (Graduate School of Law). During the discussion, participants actively debated the new definition of Japanese studies in the modern world, including the importance of Japan-focused research from the perspective of first-world aging societies and sustainable development.

KU-EPOCJ official site:
<http://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/intl-prg/epocj/english/>

Roundtable at the KU-EPOCJ Kick off Symposium

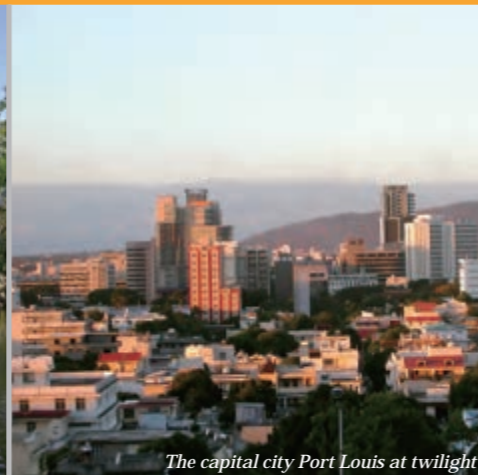


International voices

Approximately 1,200 international students from countries around the world are currently studying at Kobe University. In this corner, our international students introduce their native countries and give us their perspectives on studying abroad in Japan.



The Botanical Garden in the district of Pamplemousses



The capital city Port Louis at twilight

Building bridges between Mauritius and Japan

For this issue we interviewed Graduate School of Economics masters student Thierry PELLEGRIN. He's very enthusiastic about Japan – what's his take on Kobe University?



Thierry PELLEGRIN

Graduate School of Economics, Masters Student
Born in Mauritius, arrived at Kobe University in October 2015. Favorite Japanese word: 道 (way). JLPT 1.



Allo!

"Hello" in Mauritian Creole

What did you do before coming to Kobe University?

I was an undergraduate at the University of Sydney in Australia, where I studied the history of Franco-Japanese relations. My interest in Japan started when I watched quiz shows on French TV as a child. A Japanese man won – even though it was all in French, he passed every round – and I remember being very impressed. At the end of the show, after saying something in Japanese, he added, "If you want to know what I just said, please study Japanese". That really stuck with me.

After graduating, I wanted to learn about relations between Mauritius and Japan. I had studied Japanese for a long time, so I decided to do my research in Japan. I applied for a Japanese government (MEXT) scholarship for international research students.



Mauritius

Officially the Republic of Mauritius, a nation in Africa and part of the British Commonwealth. It used to be a stopover for European merchants on their way to India after circumnavigating the African continent, and over half the population are of Indian origin. A former colony of France and the UK. French, English and Mauritian creole are the main languages. Population is approximately 1.3 million.

What are your favorite places on campus?

Kobe University is at the foot of Mt Rokkō, so the views are amazing. I like the views from Centennial Hall, Academia Hall and Frontier Hall. It's surrounded by mountains, and if you look out from the buildings, the undulating landscape down to the sea is so beautiful it takes your breath away. You can see the mountains, the greenery, the port, and the islands.



View of Kobe Port from Centennial Hall



View of Mt Rokko from Academia Hall

What is your current research topic?

I'm researching the economic history of Mauritius. Until around 2000, the biggest industry was sugar exports. Mauritius was originally an uninhabited island, then during the subsequent French then British colonial eras, people from the African continent, Madagascar, India, China, France and the UK moved there, whether voluntarily or not. So it's a very multicultural country. Now our beaches are famous tourist spots. This isn't widely known, but the textile industry is famous too. When you next buy clothes, check if it's "Made in Mauritius". Right now I'm reading books on Mauritius history, and writing reports for my supervisor. My main focus is research.



Mauritian curry with chutney

What surprised you after arriving in Japan?

The combination of different foods. For example, the custom of eating rice with salad. In Mauritius, we eat salad with bread. Also, the cold winters and very hot summers here. The temperature range in Mauritius is relatively small. Last year my hands and feet froze – it was bad. This year I'll be more prepared.

What are your hobbies?

Radio – listening to the latest Japanese music while I'm cooking and cleaning.

Karaoke – My mp3 player has lots of Japanese rock and songs. I like kayō-kyoku, but it's difficult so I don't sing it often. On my birthday this year I did all-night karaoke with friends [laughs]. I love it!

Have you made friends with other Kobe University students?

Just after I'd come to Kobe University I was taking photos outside Centennial Hall, and a student turned to look at me. I thought he might tell me off for taking photos, but he said "I want to be friends with international students". He wanted to practice English, we started meeting a lot, and he became my first Japanese student friend. He's part of the soccer team, so through him I made friends with other people in the team.

What challenges have you set yourself?

I want to do something that only I, as a Mauritian, can do. For example, while I'm in Japan I can introduce the good points of my native country to Japanese people, and talk about the similarities and differences between Japan and Mauritius. I want to bring them Mauritian tea, coffee, sweets, soap and tell them "Mauritian food and drink is tasty, and we have a lot of nature".

What do you like about Japan?

The decorated train that runs on the Hankyu Kobe line, "Kaze". There are four versions, and my favorite is the Mt. Rokkō one. When I see the "Kaze" train it makes me very happy. Recently I walk to university, so sadly I don't have more chances to see it.



Hankyu Railway Kobe line decorated train "Kaze"
(c) Watase Seizō/APPLE FARM INC.

Tell us about your dreams for the future

I want to strengthen ties between Japan and Mauritius. That's also one of the reasons I applied to a Japanese university. We have political and economic partnerships, but cultural ties are weak. Speaking from experience, I had no chances at all to engage with Japanese culture, history or language in Mauritius. I want to make a base for cultural and artistic exchange in Mauritius, like the Japan Foundation. I want to teach Japanese and talk about Japanese culture in my home country. Many Mauritians like Japan. I want to work hard to create closer ties between both countries.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Emotional care for disaster survivors: the Tōhoku Volunteer Bath Project

“We can still do a lot for reconstruction.” Student volunteers talk about the importance of remembering, and of providing close support through sustainable action.

5 years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. Although recovery efforts continue, many people remain anxious about the future. The “Tōhoku Volunteer Bath Project”, set up by Kobe University students, began directly after the disaster in April 2011. They are divided into two groups, covering Rikuzentakata and the Kamaishi-Ōtsuchi areas in Iwate prefecture. Every two months, for a 5-7 day period, volunteers visit both areas to support residents through activities such as foot baths, massages, and craft workshops. We asked members of the group about the current conditions in the affected areas, their activities, and future plans.



Tōhoku Volunteer Bath Project leader:
INABA Kosei
(Faculty of Engineering,
Department of Architecture, 4th year)

Deepening bonds with those affected by disaster

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, the “Tōhoku Volunteer Bath Project” began when our first members headed for Iwate prefecture from Kobe carrying a bathtub. Since then we have been involved in activities that focus on mental care for disaster survivors.

As of now, a cumulative total of 1000 students have participated in this project. On each trip, between 10 and 20 members visit Rikuzentakata and the Kamaishi-Ōtsuchi areas and set up foot baths, massage sessions and craft workshops. Encouraged by comments like “I feel very comfortable” and “I can

forget the disaster while I’m doing this”, we have continued these initiatives for five years. Sometimes we collaborate with local volunteer groups in the Kamaishi-Ōtsuchi area, and in Rikuzentakata – which already had a local collaboration partnership with Kobe University – there are opportunities to help out at festivals and other local events. Some of our members also exchange letters and emails with people affected by the disaster, or go to meet them individually. We can feel our ties with everyone deepening from day to day.

Better ways to provide sustainable support

Our philosophies are “don’t forget” and “close support”. Five years on from the disaster, in some areas you can see the move from temporary housing to more permanent accommodation. This is a welcome development, but there are also concerns that leaving familiar places would cause disaster victims mental stress, and in the worst cases lead to depression or suicide.

As volunteer groups visiting the Tōhoku region decrease in numbers, we can offer support by continuing to visit these areas. As well as those who remain in temporary housing, we don’t forget the people who have moved to permanent accommodation, and we work to create close ties with all. In order to provide better support, it is essential that we look again at our

activities and actively respond to feedback from members and what other groups are doing. I’m also participating in the recovery efforts after the Kumamoto earthquake in April this year. For the first time I set up foot baths and massages in evacuation areas, and once again I realized the significance of creating a relaxed atmosphere. I believe that applying the knowledge and experience gained from Iwate to Kumamoto and vice versa can positively influence our activities. We plan to continue providing emotional support to disaster victims, holding meetings, and using what each of our members has learned.



After each visit, students publish a magazine-style report



Visit to a children’s center linked to an elementary school

Visiting people at home

Craft activities in a meeting hall

Rikuzentakata group



YOSHIDA Akari
(Faculty of Law,
Department of Law, 2nd year)

Continuing to visit is the first step

This year in March, I visited the disaster-hit areas for the first time. When we held a tea party for people living in temporary housing, I heard people say “My house was washed away by the tsunami”, and “My relatives died”, and my chest felt tight. I participated in the city residents’ meeting and learned that even areas not directly hit by the tsunami had a lot of issues, like destruction of neighborhood facilities by the earthquake, or lack of public transport.

The disaster has left its mark on everyone in the area. I still don’t know

the right way to go about recovery, or what kind of support will make a difference for those affected. But there have been many times when I could feel that we are providing support. For example, during this visit a person who said she was lonely smiled at the tea party. Next I am going to suggest some new activities, like go and shogi competitions that male participants can enjoy – they are still in the minority. I’d like to continue with our initiatives in the affected areas, and learn what kind of support is truly needed.

Kamaishi-Ōtsuchi group



MORI Taiki
(Faculty of Intercultural Studies,
Department of Intercultural Studies, 2nd year)

Even just listening helps

We often set up foot baths and massages in temporary housing, but not everyone joins these events. So I started visiting each house individually. When I ask, there are some people who hesitate to join because of reasons like “my health isn’t good” or “I have bad hearing”. There are also people who were happy to be visited, telling me, “I want to join, but it’s hard to get involved. It’s good to be able to talk to someone for the first time in a while”. It’s a small thing, but I realized that even just by listening to them I was helping.

When I first participated, I wondered if there was anything I could

really do, but now I’ve realized there are lots of ways I can make a difference. Recently I’m in the middle of making learning support systems for elementary and middle school children. Some children are pessimistic about the future because of the disaster. As well as supporting their studies, I want to use the specialist knowledge I’ve gained at university and inspire them to have hope for the future.

International Collaboration

Joint symposium commemorating the establishment of
Kobe University Liaison Office in Kraków

Visit to the Marine Simulator
(Erasmus+ staff mobility program)

Erasmus+ staff mobility program

Kick-off symposium for the Honolulu Office of Kobe University

Americas

New overseas office in Honolulu

On June 30, 2016 Kobe University established the Honolulu Office of Kobe University (HOKU) within the Japan-America Institute of Management Science (Fujitsu-JAIMS). The new office is a base for academic collaboration with the Americas. It is Kobe University's sixth overseas office and our first in the United States, following the China Office (2008), the Brussels European Centre (2010), the Hanoi Liaison Base (April 2015), the Liaison Office in Kraków (December 2015) and the Kobe University and Beijing Foreign Studies University International Collaborative Research Base (April 2016).

The United States is the most popular destination for our researchers to conduct research or study abroad. We are convinced that this office will promote further collaboration in international research and education. In addition, we hope this liaison office can become a core center for international activities not only in the Americas but also in the pan-Pacific region.

A kick-off symposium for the new office was held in conjunction with the unveiling ceremony. At the opening of the symposium, President of Kobe University Professor TAKEDA Hiroshi expressed his hopes that our new office would play a stellar role in US-Kobe collaboration (the

abbreviation of the Honolulu Office of Kobe University, HOKU, means "star" in the Hawaiian language). The symposium was divided into two sessions: applied econometrics and particle physics. Both research fields are the focus of joint projects between Kobe University and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (one of our partner institutions). Each presentation kept attendees focused on every word and was followed by active discussions expressing their hopes to further enhance international cooperation and increase research collaboration between Japan and the United States.

Kobe University recognizes the importance of academic collaboration with the Americas, a key region for cutting-edge research activities. We are strengthening our institution's global competitiveness using the core body established in 2013: the Office of the Americas. The Office held the US-Japan Collaboration Fair in March, 2014 in Kobe with researchers from 9 universities in the United States, aiming to generate international industry-academia-government collaboration. As an outcome of this event, we concluded bilateral agreements with two universities. Kobe University will use the new base to further strengthen ties between our University and the Americas.

Asia

Kobe University strengthens ties with Beijing Foreign Studies University

On April 1, Kobe University, in cooperation with Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), opened the Kobe University and Beijing Foreign Studies University International Collaborative Research Base. In accordance with the Agreement of Academic Cooperation between the two universities concluded on November 3, 2008, this Base was opened with the objective of further fostering academic exchange and cooperation between the two institutions.

Kobe University and BFSU have been expanding their exchange activities in research and education. In May 2010, BFSU's Beijing Center for Japanese Studies concluded an Agreement on the implementation of joint master's programs with Kobe University's Graduate School of Economics and in September 2014 it also

concluded an Agreement on the implementation of double degree master's programs with Kobe University's Graduate School of Humanities.

This research base aims to expand and strengthen research collaboration between both universities. One of its specific goals is to promote the discovery and cultivation of outstanding young researchers. Following this aim, during the First Beijing Foreign Studies University - Kobe University Joint Symposium (held on June 18-19 and organized by BFSU in Beijing) PhD candidates from both universities gave presentations on their research in the social sciences and humanities. Both universities agreed to host annual symposia for strengthening collaboration. Next year's symposium will be hosted by Kobe University in Kobe.

Europe

Joint symposium with Jagiellonian University

On May 17, Kobe University held a joint symposium commemorating the establishment of the Kobe University Liaison Office in Kraków under the theme of "New Research Perspectives from Japan and Poland". This event was co-organized with Jagiellonian University and held within their Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations.

The new office was established to strengthen collaboration and partnership with Central and Eastern Europe countries by offering research and study exchange opportunities to universities and disseminating information about Kobe University.

The Jagiellonian University is one of Kobe University's active exchange partner universities in Europe. Since 2013, both universities have expanded collaborations into the social sciences and joined the EU-Japan Advanced Multidisciplinary Master Studies project (EU-JAMM) consortium. This network offers double degree master programs and student and faculty mobility among selected partner universities in the EU and Japan, supported by MEXT in Japan and the European Commission.

EU-Japan Relations, one of the themes of the symposium, is one of the key concepts behind expanding our collaboration in social science. To explore our collaborations in natural science, we organized a session on Biology with the cooperation of researchers from both universities who have already conducted joint research.

In conjunction with this event, Professor OGAWA also visited Professor dr hab. Stanisław Kistryn (Vice-Rector for Research and Structural Funds). They exchanged opinions on joint research, researcher exchanges, and business-academia cooperation.

Collaboration through Erasmus+

Kobe University is actively participating in the Erasmus+ program with several partner universities.

As a part of an Erasmus+ staff mobility exchange program with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU), Dr. Arvydas Rimkus (Department of Bridges and Special Structures, VGTU) visited Kobe University for six days from May 23. During his stay in Kobe, Dr. Rimkus gave lectures to freshman students at the Department of Architecture (Faculty of Engineering) and graduate students at the Department of Architecture (Graduate School of Engineering) and the Graduate School of Human Development and Environment.

In September, we welcomed Ms. Marta Ganobis - Bendnarska (Head of International Student Office), and Ms. Katarzyna Wojczuk (Independent Administrative Referent, International Student Mobility Office) from Jagiellonian University; and Dr. Kai Schwedtmann (Chair of Inorganic Molecular Chemistry) from the Technical University of Dresden on the staff mobility program. During the one-week program, our guests participated in seminars related to international affairs, visited university research facilities such as the Marine Simulator, and traveled to Kobe and Kyoto for cultural experiences. This program aimed to deepen our visitors' understanding of Kobe University and Japanese culture for future collaborations.

A student exchange agreement through Erasmus+ has also been concluded, starting from the autumn semester.



The First Beijing Foreign Studies University
- Kobe University Joint Symposium



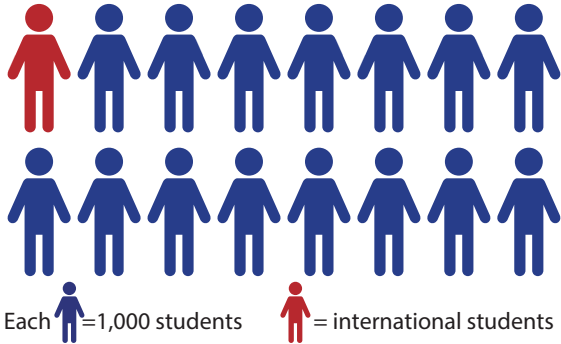
Unveiling ceremony for the Kobe University and BFSU
International Collaborative Research Base



KOBE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1902

4 campuses | 11 faculties | 15 graduate schools



16,356 students

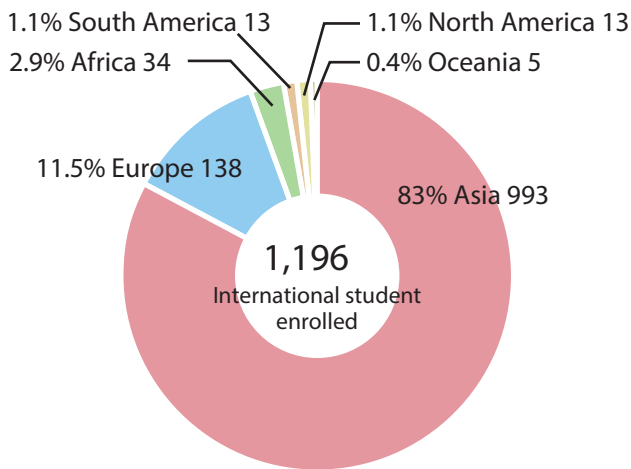
including 1,196 international students comprising over 85 nationalities

2,583 staff

including 1,319 teaching staff
1,145 administrative staff

119 faculty staff in attached schools

Regional distribution of international students



Faculties and Graduate Schools

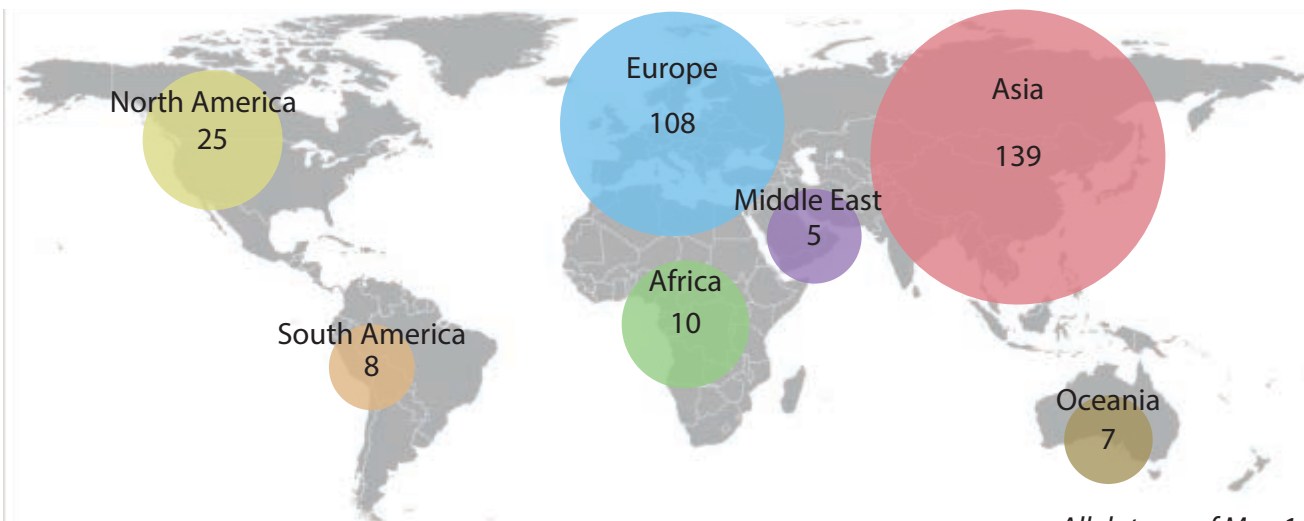
- Letters / Humanities
- Intercultural Studies
- Human Development / Human Development and Environment
- Law
- Economics
- Business Administration
- Science
- Medicine
- Health Sciences
- Engineering
- System Informatics
- Agriculture / Agricultural Science
- Maritime Sciences
- International Cooperation Studies
- Science, Technology and Innovation

Alumni networks in 14 countries



Partner Universities

Kobe University currently has 302 partner institutions in 54 countries/regions.



All data as of May 1, 2016