

The Faculty of Letters at Kyoto University was established as the College of Letters within Kyoto Imperial University in 1906. The College of Letters was expanded to include the divisions of History, Literature, and Philosophy as well as lecture courses. It was in 1912, precisely 110 years ago, when these three divisions, the forerunners of today's courses, were organized. The three divisions of History, Literature, and Philosophy formed the conceptual foundation of the Humanities in Japan from the Meiji era onward. Later, a fourth division, Behavioral Studies was established in 1992 at Kyoto University, in 1995 the system of large-scale course was introduced, and then in 1996 the existing four divisions were reorganized into five new courses: Philology and Literature, Philosophy, History, Behavioral Studies, Contemporary Culture and several new departments were established, and various disciplines were further reorganized, creating today's system.

The term "Faculty of Letters" is the English translation used for the Bungakubu at Kyoto University, but the use of the word "letters" as a translation for the Japanese word "*bun*" needs some explaining.

Bungakubu in Japanese originally referred to the fields of learning that involved studies characterized by use of Chinese characters. The meaning of the Chinese character read "*bun*" is not simply that found in the concepts such as *bunkei* (cultural) or *bunka* (culture); it represents spheres of learning unique to East Asia. Even if limited to vocabulary used in contemporary Japan, words that contain the character *bun* (also read *mon* and *mo*) include, for example, *moji* (script), *bunshō* (writing), *bungaku* (literature), *tenmon* (astronomy), *bunshoku* (rhetorical embellishment), *bunga* (elegance), in which the character is used with varying connotations. In general, one might assert that the character encompasses all phenomena that can be observed and analyzed by systems of learning grounded in scholarship and civilizations constructed by human beings, with the exception of military matters. Of course, since Kyoto University also uses this word in the sense determined by the context of the modern academic system, Law and Economics, as well as the Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and Pharmacy have all now become disciplines outside the concept of "*bun*." Another word that can be used to describe the academic fields we cover is Jinbungaku, or Humanities.

The Center for Research in the Humanities at Kyoto University is designed for those who choose to make the Humanities their major field of study. It is closely related to our Faculty of Letters. Classes of the two institutions have always maintained a cooperative relationship. The Faculty of Letters and the Center for Research in the Humanities are both advanced research organizations playing leading roles in the Japanese 'Humanities' and have repeatedly produced unexcelled results in research.

In regard to sites for study and research, the value of online operations has been dramatically enhanced due to Covid-19, however, the foundation of the study of Letters are books, the treasure houses of knowledge written in script. In this the Faculty of Letters, we boast a vast library unequalled elsewhere in the university, which supports our academic endeavors.

Consider studying with us in the Faculty of Letters, upholding both tradition and innovation.

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