



Nishogakusha University MEXT-Supported Program for the Strategic Research Foundation at Private Universities

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Nishogakusha was founded as a *Kanbun* studies academy by Mishima Chūshū on October 10, 1877. This is the 140th year since the university's founding. Recently, our university was selected for the MEXT-Supported Program for the Strategic Research Foundation at Private Universities (SRF) for the five years between 2015 and 2019 for our efforts at explicating the spirit of founding schools for the education and research of *Kanbun*. In that connection, we are now working on “The Formation of Knowledge in Modern Japan through *Kanbun* Studies.”

Nishogakusha's SRF project is the successor to our 2004–2008 World Organization for *Kanbun* Studies with the 21st Century COE Program. Through the 21st Century COE Program, we established a database and international network organization for cataloguing Japanese *kanbun* materials and, as a pillar for the revival of *kanbun* education we created seven research groups. This writer was in charge of the group studying the early modern and modern eras. Several years after the end of the program, I was officially appointed to chair The Department of Japanese *Kanbun* Instruction and Research in the Institute for East Asian Studies. At the same time, I came once again to anticipate external funding for research on Japanese *kangaku*, which led to our being selected for SRF.

The term *kangaku* in the current project refers to the learning of *kanbun* in the broad sense. People tend to believe that in general, *kangaku* was replaced by *yōgaku* (Western studies) in the 19th century and that *kangaku* declined, but this is not the case. Actually, with development of the modern education system, *kangaku* metamorphosed into Chinese studies and Oriental studies in terms of scholarship, and in terms of learning, *kanbun*, like *kokugo* (Japanese language arts) became reconfigured and absorbed as learning related to language and ethics. Further, this system of scholarship and

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learning also influenced other nations in East Asia. Thus, the process of dissolution and reconfiguration of *kangaku* as scholarship and learning can be examined chronologically and from various angles. We realized that we wanted to investigate the characteristics and issues of modernization in Japan and East Asia from *kangaku*.

There are now four scholars from Nishogakusha University and from outside our university heading up four research groups: scholarship research (Makisumi Etsuko), research on learning (Etō Shigehiro), early modern literature (Yamaguchi Tadayoshi), and research on East Asia (Machi Senjurō). Committees are organized for carrying out research activities under each group chair.

As the fundamental directionality common to our entire project, we are focusing on “Japan in East Asia” to contribute to the internationalization and profundity of the research environment of our university overall. For that reason, we constantly consider research trends related to East Asian countries and on Japanology in Western nations. We have held many types of symposia to engage in a wide range of related research and to promote person-to-person interaction.

Further, the SRF project is being conducted in cooperation with graduate school education within the university as a whole. To foster future scholars in the field we have striven to train young researchers through the hiring of research fellows, research support personnel and assistants, and to support various types of research.

We are expanding our database of information on images, texts, and people in *kanbun* materials, focusing on early modern and modern Japanese *kangaku* as a way to transmit various kinds of information about Japanese *kangaku*. We are also moving ahead in publication of materials based on our different areas of research. This includes a series on facsimiles of *Kanbun*, a collection of modern *kangaku* materials, lectures on modern Japan and *kangaku*, and monographs on biographies of Scholar of *Kangaku*. We look forward to the support and encouragement of all of the members of the Society for Cultural Interaction in East Asia and all other individuals concerned.