



Global Center of Excellence for  
Education, Research and Development  
of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation  
of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities

## Newsletter No.12

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December 2008



## To potential applicants

### - Introduction to Ritsumeikan University' s Program for Nurturing Professionals in "Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities" -

At Ritsumeikan University's "Global COE for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities," we are accepting applications from researchers who wish to investigate methods of protecting cultural heritage from disasters. The protection of important cultural heritage items from natural disasters for future generations is newly emerging as a field of study. There are now numerous opportunities to apply your ideas and research activities in investigations at actual sites and in the field. "Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities" is one of the main research fields at Ritsumeikan University's College of Science and Engineering. We encourage students seeking professional advancement in a global society to consider our doctoral program. We also welcome international researchers who wish further their professional capabilities. Those already working in the area of cultural heritage conservation can improve their skills in and knowledge of disaster prevention, while those working in the area of disaster prevention can learn about the conservation side in more depth, thus advancing professional skills of all participants.

This program is open to candidates who have no legal limitation or hindrances

- We offer various internships and study abroad programs to hone your practical abilities.
- Students can acquire hands-on experience in international research through the UNESCO International Training Program.
- In addition to science and engineering subjects, students also have the opportunity to take classes in the liberal arts and social sciences.
- Students will have the opportunity to learn various cultural heritage and conservation techniques through on-site experiences.
- Excellent students are eligible for research grants and research assistants.
- Grants are also available for presenters at international conferences.

to be admitted to Ritsumeikan University under the immigration and refugees' authorization laws of Japan. Candidates must fulfill at least one of the following:

- (1) Be of non-Japanese nationality having completed master's program (or expecting to complete master's program by March 31, 2009) schooling outside of Japan which is judged as being equivalent to 18 years of schooling in Japan.
- (2) Have graduated master's program from Japanese universities with "College Student" visa (or expecting to graduate by March 31, 2009).

Besides, we require sufficient English or Japanese language proficiency.

Candidates will be selected on the basis of submitted materials. Examinations and interviews will be conducted on February 13, 2009; applications must be received by January 28. For more details, please see the university website. Applicants wishing to study at the Promotion Center must contact either our G-COE office or one of its members as soon as possible.



On-site Training



Workshop



## ■ Research topic ■

## Age of columns used in a traditional wooden building

Dr. Kazuyuki Izuno

(Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Science and Engineering)

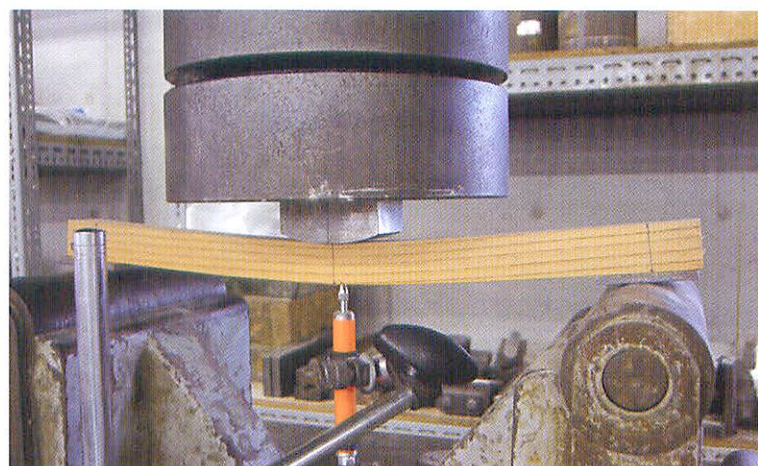
Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto includes a structure known as “Oku-no-in”, which was built in 1633. During the repair of the building in 2005, the age of the Japanese cypress used as one of the columns was estimated using the carbon dating technique. As a result, it was found that the age of the tree, which has been used as a column for at least 370 years, was approximately 720 years old.

In other words, when first used as a material for the construction, the tree’s age was approximately 350 years. Workers at Kiyomizu Temple now cultivate trees that will be used 400 years in the future. From this example, we can see that protecting cultural heritage also means protecting people and forests from disasters to maintain specific items of cultural heritage.

The results of strength tests on this 700-year-old tree were comparable to those for a newly harvested tree. We were impressed with the superb quality of this tree as a structural member.



“Oku-no-in” of Kiyomizu Temple



Strength Test of Wood Building Materials



## Kickoff meeting

On August 23, 2008, the kickoff meeting for the “Global COE for Education, Research and Development of Strategy on Disaster Mitigation of Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities” was held at Ritsumeikan University's Kinugasa campus.

Following a speech by Dr. Kawaguchi, President of Ritsumeikan University, Dr. Okubo, Program Leader of the G-COE group, presented the outline of the program. Professor Takeshi Nakagawa of Waseda University then gave a speech entitled “International Cooperation to Save Angkor Wat and Japan's Role”, which underlined the importance of international cooperation, and presented his expectations for the Promotion Center's activities.

This was followed by the presentation of activity plans by each project group and the International Cooperation Committee, as well as various reports on domestic and international activities concerning the protection of cultural heritage from disasters. To conclude this event, Professor Yoshiteru Murosaki of Kwansei Gakuin University spoke about his expectations and requests for the activities of the G-COE.



View of the Conference Hall



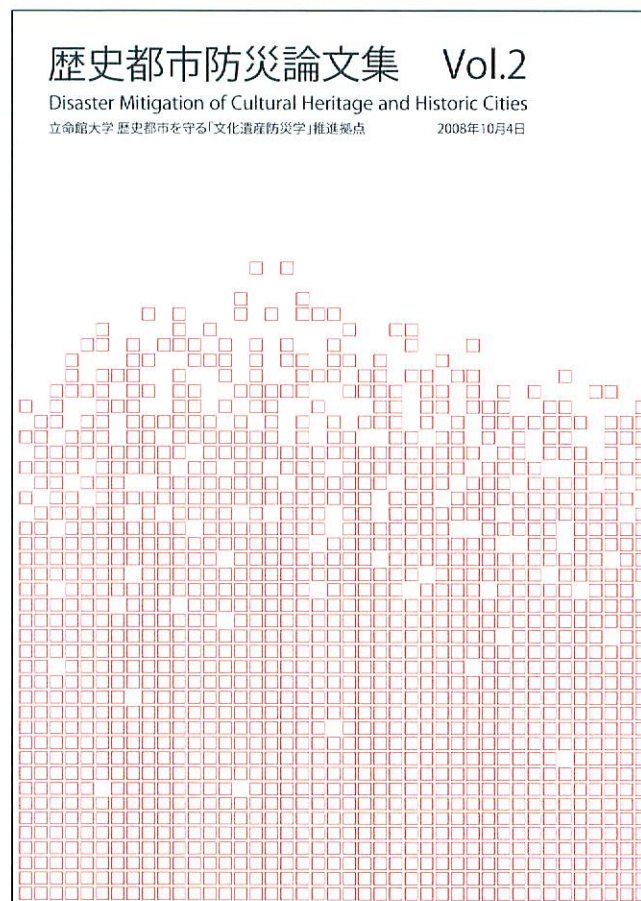
Speech by Dr. Kawaguchi, President of Ritsumeikan University

## Conference on Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage '08

On October 4, 2008, the Conference on Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage '08 was held at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. Twenty-five peer-reviewed papers on disaster mitigation for historical cities and their cultural heritage were presented, followed by active discussions.

During the general forum, a panel discussion was coordinated by Dr. Okubo and presented by the representatives of project groups in order to exchange views concerning the framework and contents of the Counteraction Package for Disaster Prevention for Cultural Heritages. As many as 64 participants from both inside and outside of the university attended the forum, indicating a high level of interest in this theme.

Papers presented at the symposium were published as "Proceedings of the Conference on Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities, Vol.2." We would be pleased to send you a copy if you are interested. Please contact our G-COE office.



"Proceedings of the Conference on Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities, Vol.2."



## “Introduction to Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage”

The 21st Century COE Program of Ritsumeikan University “Center of Excellence for Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage” was completed at the end of last year. “Introduction to Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage (in Japanese)” was published for the purpose of returning the fruits of this program to society.

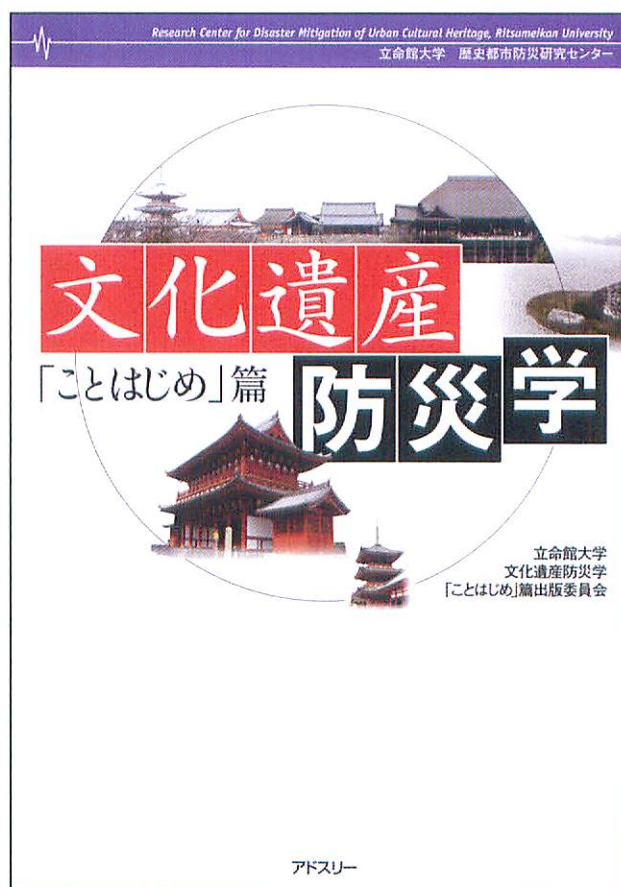
The first section, “Studies on Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage 1.0” discusses how studies on disaster mitigation for cultural heritage came to be established, how the 21st Century COE Program was constructed based thereon, and the significance of these studies. The second section, entitled “Gaps Between the Conservation of Cultural Heritage and Research on Disaster Prevention” discusses study results of research by dividing the city of Kyoto into five areas. The third section, entitled “Major Research Themes in Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage”, discusses various aspects of the subject matter. The last section is the “List of Research Achievements in Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage 1.0.”

“Introduction to Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage” should be available at your local bookstores.

Author: Ritsumeikan University,  
Introduction to Disaster Mitigation for  
Cultural Heritage Publication Committee

Publisher: Adthree Publishing Co., Ltd.

Price: ¥2,000 plus tax



“Introduction to Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage”

## Design Contest for Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage

We plan to solicit designs not only for disaster situations but also for non-disaster periods for protecting cultural heritage items as a design contest, in the hope of finding excellent design concepts. The results of this contest, including the discussions of an open examination and task settings, will be published.

Study areas will be designated, and proposals for urban designs addressing the reproduction, restoration and prevention of damage to historical cities and cultural assets, as well as for damage prevention systems that can contribute to the enhancement of touristic value, will be solicited. We are currently working on the final details of the contest, which is scheduled to take place between February and May 2009.

We will be announcing the start of the contest on our website and posters, and look forward to receiving many entries.



Image of the Open Examination (A Scene in the Diploma Design Review in the Department of Architecture and Urban Design in Ritsumeikan University)

## Conference on Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage '09

The Conference on Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage '09 will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2009, at Ritsumeikan University's Kinugasa Campus (Kyoto), and "Proceedings of the Conference on Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities, Vol. 3", will be published as a result. The invitation for peer-reviewed papers will be issued around March 2009. Your participation will be very much appreciated.



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