

Museum Collections

The Tohoku Gakuin University Museum opened in November 2009 in order to display various academic achievements and research conducted by scholars from the Department of History. The university holds a variety of historic archives and artefacts used to carry out historic research. However, local residents have had in the past very few opportunities to view these materials. The additional importance is placed on the role of the University Museum to present collections of historical importance to the general public.

The main ambition of the museum is to provide a bridge to link the local community with examples of cutting-edge historical research. The museum relates with the fields of history, archaeology, folklore studies and material culture. Covering a diverse collection which includes earthenware and stoneware items excavated from ancient ruins, medieval stone monuments offered to the Buddha on which commoners carved their supplications, administrative records left behind by Edo-period bureaucrats, everyday commodities used by common folk during the pre-modern period, and various implements and amulets used as charms against illness. Our exhibitions are rotated sequentially across a six months to two year period.



"Earthenware with human face rendered in India ink"



"Stupa collected from ocean floor off Matsushima and Ojima islands"

Exhibits introduction

Otukamori burial mound

Members of Tohoku Gakuin University's Archaeology Seminar conducted an excavation project on the Otsukamori burial mound. In Japan during the 4th century – the era in which these mounds were being built – a period when the Yamato Throne was expanding its power. Both the burial mounds (Kofun) and the burial items unearthed convey precious information that helps us to learn about the sphere of influence of the ancient Japanese people. The Otsukamori burial mound is located at the most Northernmost extremity in their location and distribution. The team found many items closely connected with the Yamato Throne among the earthenware and burial items exhumed from the mound. One discovery – a type of lacquered quiver for arrows known as a yugi – is especially rare; only a few examples of been discovered as being made from wood are of a highly perishable nature.



General view of the Otsukamori burial mound.



The Otsukamori burial mound excavation team.

Oshirasama

Oshirasama is a representation of a divine image peculiar to North-Eastern Japan. People pray to, and worship, this deity in hopes of ensuring household prosperity, and also believe it to be a deity that also relates to agriculture and sericulture. These figures were made by using the branches cut from a mulberry tree, with heads sculpted in the male or female form, or even that of a horse. Each would be draped every year with a piece of cloth or garment by the woman of the household where the figure was displayed and worshipped, or by an independent religious intermediary. The Oshirasama in the Tohoku Gakuin University collection were consigned within the Daijo Temple in Ishinoseki, Iwate Prefecture, and said to have been originally used by an independent religious intermediary. The inscription, which dates back to 1608, was written in Indian ink. Even by national standards this cultural treasure is old and precious.



Oshirasama

Education

The University Museum provides a unique training environment for undergraduate students seeking to acquire certification and qualification leading to Museum Curatorship. Students are required to demonstrate a wide range of specialist skills when conducting historical research. These skills include knowledge of how to preserve and care for collections, create catalogues, take documentary photographic evidence and to plan for an exhibition. Students are able to acquire these skills with the opportunity to handle original historical objects. This practical education underpins the training necessary to be a curator who can be an immediate asset to future employers.

Postgraduates are attached to the museum as researchers. They contribute to the museum as mediators who explain the cutting-edge research undertaken by our faculty to the general public through a clear and understandable interpretation. By being involved in actual exhibitions or writing explanatory texts, postgraduate students improve their skills as curators while at the same time taking on the role of teaching the students in their faculty, and as leaders of undergraduate community. Both undergraduates and postgraduates work on exhibition development and plan various events, including one for school festivals, and open campus for high school students. As to the museum's outreach activities, efforts are being made to improve the institution's planning, operation, and presentation capabilities. These activities convey the fulfilment and satisfaction in undertaking historical research to a general audience, while at the same time serving to stimulate their own appetite for learning.



Training activities.