

October 2, 2020

Keio University

Mita Media Center (Keio University Library) to Publicly Exhibit the Oldest Transmitted Manuscript of the *Analects*

At the 32nd Keio University Library Exhibition of Rare Books, “Japanese Reading in Ancient Times and the Middle Ages,” the Mita Media Center (Keio University Library) will publicly exhibit the *Lunyu shu* (論語疏; Elucidation of the Analects), the oldest transmitted manuscript of the *Analects* for the first time. (Dates: October 7 (Wed.)–October 13 (Tues.), 2020; Venue: 4F Gallery, Maruzen/Marunouchi Main Store).

1. About the *Analects*

The *Analects* is a book traditionally believed to have been posthumously compiled by disciples of Confucius (552 BC, or 551-479 BC), based on his sayings as well as dialogues with his leading adherents. Confucius was a Chinese thinker of antiquity known as the progenitor of Confucianism. According to the *Record of Ancient Matters* (古事記) and *Chronicles of Japan* (日本書紀), this book was first transmitted to Japan in the 16th year of Emperor Ojin’s reign. In ancient times and the Middle Ages, it was studied meticulously as a core cultural text by court nobles and samurais before becoming more widely read among the Japanese populace during the Edo period. It has continued to be passed down and read by many people in the intervening period through to the modern day. Only volume six of the *Lunyu shu* which will be displayed for the event is extant, with analysis by a research group at Keio University having indicated that it can be presumed to predate the Nara-Heian Periods, making it the oldest transmitted manuscript of the *Analects* copied outside of Japan, excluding excavated materials.

2. Points of interest of the *Lunyu shu*

While the core philosophy of Confucianism is set out in the *Analects*, many annotations were created based on this core text. The *Lunyu shu* which is to be exhibited is one of these annotations. The *Lunyu shu*, formally referred to as the *Lunyu yishu* (論語義疏; Elucidation of the Meaning of the Analects), is a book which compiles readings of the *Analects* from the Six Dynasties Period in the form of a re-annotation of the *Analects* by Six Dynasties Scholar

Huang Kan 皇侃 (488–545) of the Liang dynasty, which are in turn based on the annotations in the *Lunyu jijie* (論語集解; Collected Explanations of the Analects) by He Yan 何晏 of the state of Wei. The book only exists in Japan in its transmitted form, having subsequently been scattered and lost in China, and is widely known as the only surviving example of the long “lost text.”

The following three points about the *Lunyu shu* that is to be exhibited are worthy of note.

① Believed to be the oldest transmitted manuscript of the *Analects* produced in China (excluding excavated materials)

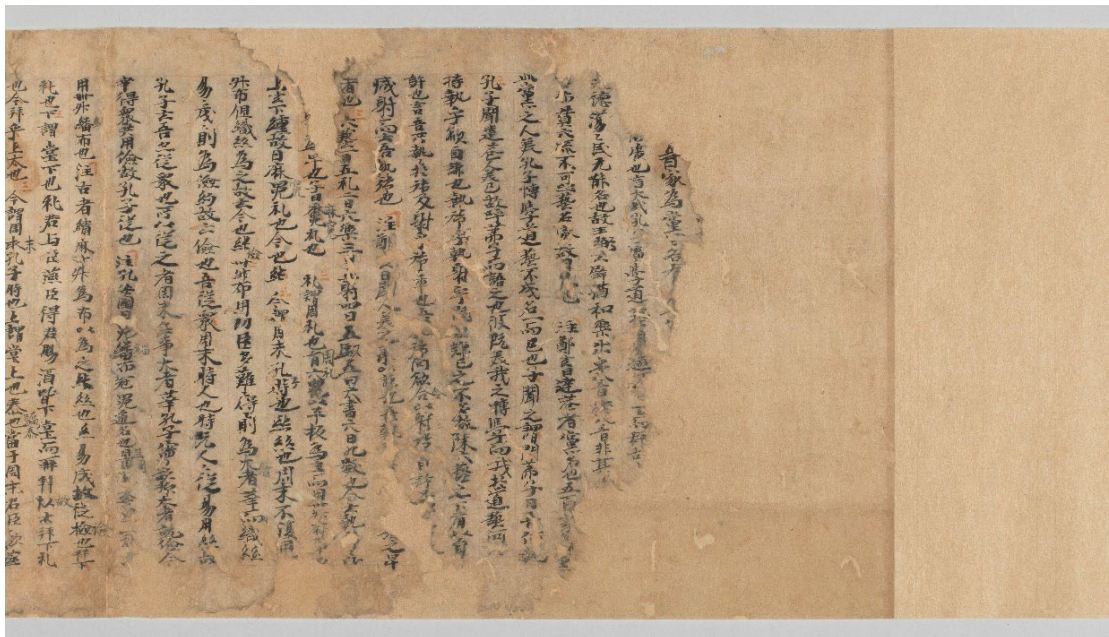
As a result of a detailed comparison and scrutiny of the lettering and ideograms used in the book, it is assumed that the book is a pre-Sui Chinese manuscript brought over to Japan by Japanese envoys to the Sui and Tang dynasties of China. It is one of the oldest extant example of a manuscript comprising bound sheets outside Buddhist scripture.

② Has been handed down in Japan over a long period since ancient times

As indicated in ①, this book has been passed down in Japan over a long period of time, having been transmitted to the country in the pre-Heian period. While the seal of Fujiwara is visible on the book, it is unclear who was in possession of the volume during the Middle Ages. Sadamoto Fujiwara’s *Koko-zakki* (好古雜記; Chronicle of Antiquities) records that it was in the collection of the Mibuke household, which oversaw management of general affairs and official documents of the Imperial Court during the Edo period.

③ Materials whose location was unknown after the late Tokugawa shogunate were discovered

This book, the location of which was unknown for a long time, was discovered in recent years and came to be in the collection of the Keio University Library. A team of researchers from various fields, including bibliography, Chinese literature, Japanese literature, and Japanese history was convened on campus and has been conducting research since 2018. It seems certain that this book has considerable potential to stimulate fresh discussions on the current history of Chinese thought and Japanese scholarship of the Chinese classics, and serve as a basis for advancing research.



3. Exhibition overview

The Mita Media Center (Keio University Library) has held an exhibition of rare books at the venue of a Maruzen store gallery co-sponsored by Maruzen Co., Ltd. (now Maruzen-Yushodo Co., Ltd.) since 1985. This exhibition is an opportunity for a wide audience comprised of members of the public, not confined to persons associated with Keio University, to view holdings of rare and valuable books from the Keio University Library through their public display at an off-campus venue. To mark the 32nd exhibition, with the theme of “Japanese Reading in Ancient Times and the Middle Ages,” we will present carefully selected resources from the collection of Chinese classics in the holdings of the Keio University Library. The *Lunyu shu* introduced in this press release is being publicly exhibited for the first time as a central resource of the current event.

32nd Keio University Library Exhibition of Rare Books “Japanese Reading in Ancient Times and the Middle Ages”

Dates: Wednesday, October 7–Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Venue: 4F Gallery, Maruzen/Marunouchi Main Store (free admission)

Exhibition times: 9:00–21:00 (16:00 on final day of exhibition)

Host: Keio University Library

Co-Sponsor: Maruzen-Yushodo Company Limited

Overview of exhibition:

Chinese classics were a mainstay of reading material in Japan in ancient times and the Middle Ages. How then did the Japanese study and apply these esoteric volumes? We will trace the aspects of readers from ancient times through to the Middle Ages through the books in the Keio University Library.

Gallery Talk (Japanese language only):

Friday, October 9, 18:00– /Sunday, October 11, 15:00–

Speaker: Michio Sato, Professor Emeritus, Keio University (supervisor of this exhibition)

*First-come, first-served advance registration system for up to 20 persons at a time

Keio University Library Rare Books Exhibition (website)

https://libguides.lib.keio.ac.jp/mit_annual_exhibition

*Please direct any requests or inquiries for coverage to the contact information provided below in advance.

[Inquiries regarding this press release]

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