



February 21, 2022  
Keio University

## Century Akao Collection × Institute of Oriental Classics (Shido Bunko) Identifying Hands: Attributional Culture and the *Kohitsu Family* (April 18 - June 24)

In the Edo period (1603-1868), the *Kohitsu family* was established to serve as vocational appraisers and curators of the calligraphic arts coinciding with the popularity of appreciating and collecting “*Kohitsugire*,” fragments of old writings and calligraphy which were seen as works of art in their own right.

The Century Akao Collection, which was donated to Keio University by the Century Cultural Foundation in 2021, contains a vast amount of materials and records accumulated by the *Kohitsu family* over a period of about 300 years from the early Edo period to the Showa period. While sorting and arranging these materials is an ongoing process, they are of immeasurable academic value. This exhibition will introduce visitors to the work of the members of the *Kohitsu family* and the culture of calligraphic appraisal, with displays of works from Keio University’s own holdings, while also exhibiting a sample of the *Kohitsu family’s* materials for the first time.

### 1. Basic information

Dates: Monday, April 18—Friday, June 24, 2022. Closed on weekends and holidays.

\*Exceptions: Open on Saturday, May 14, and Saturday, June 18. Closed on Monday, May 16, and Monday, June 13.

Venue: Keio Museum Commons (Mita Campus East Annex)

Open: 11:00-18:00

Admission: Advance reservation required (free of charge)

Organizers: Keio Museum Commons, Institute of Oriental Classics (Shido Bunko) at Keio University

Collaborators: Keio University Mita Media Center

Related event: Symposium to be held on Saturday, May 14, 2022

Details: <https://bit.ly/3gX3tgS>

\*Times may be subject to change according to the situation regarding the spread of COVID-19. Please check the exhibition’s website for the latest information. ( <https://bit.ly/3gX3tgS> )

### 2. Exhibition overview

Countries which have traditionally used brushes as writing instruments have a deep history of appraising and appreciating calligraphy. Japan is no exception. In the Edo Period (1603-1868), “ancient calligraphy” known as *kohitsu* experienced a renaissance. Collecting *kohitsu* became popular and *kohitsugire*, cuttings from old collections of calligraphy, were often appreciated and displayed as art. The convention of classifying and organizing these writings by their calligrapher led to the establishment of a family whose vocation would be the appraisal of these *kohitsu*. Taking their specialty as their family name, the *Kohitsu family* was at the center of this world and often referred to as the “*Kohitsu-Honke*” or “Main Family” to distinguish themselves from other branches in their lineage.

The Century Akao Collection contains a vast amount of materials and records that were accumulated by the *Kohitsu family* over a 300 year period, spanning the early Edo period through to the Showa period. Correctly identifying a calligrapher can be a Sisyphean task. This exhibition is divided into five sections which include materials from the Institute of Oriental Classics (Shido

Bunko) and Keio University Library, in order to introduce and understand how the successive generations of the main *Kohitsu family* worked and struggled in this task.

The organizers are also planning on holding workshops so that participants can get a closer look at how *kohitsugire* are made.

### 3. Main Exhibits

#### Section 1 Appreciating calligraphy

1. Folding Screen of Poem Strips, Kamakura–Edo period (13th–17th century)
2. Attributed to Kodai no Kimi (Ko-ōgimi), Part of Chapter 8 of the *Reika-shū* (Kōshi Fragment), Heian Period (11th century)

#### Section 2 Work called calligraphy appraisal

3. Collections of Famous Calligraphy Fragments, 8 manuscripts, Late Edo period (19th century)
4. Collections of Famous Early Calligraphy, 7 woodblock-printed books and 1 manuscript, Edo period–Shōwa era (19th–20th century)

#### Section 3 The individuals of the *Kohitsu Family*

5. Calligraphy by KOHITSU Ryōshin, Illustrations by Yukihiro Yasuda, Portrait of the Calligrapher KOHITSU Ryōsa, Taishō era (early 20th century)
6. Illustrations and Calligraphy by KOHITSU Ryōi, Self-portrait, mid-Edo period (18th century)

#### Section 4 The various books of calligraphy appraisal

7. The Catalogue of Exemplary Calligraphy *Moshiogusa* (British Seaweed), Album, Late Edo period (19th century)

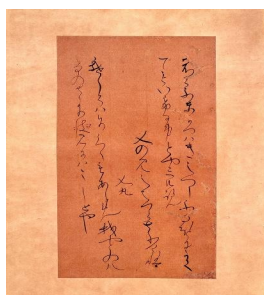
#### Section 5 Creating segments from old books

8. Attributed to Shimizutani Saneaki, Part of the *Later Collection of Gleanings* (Jimmyōin Fragment), Nanbokuchō period (14th century)

\*Collections: item 1. is from the Mita Media Center (Keio University Library) collection while items 2.-8. belong to Keio University (Century Akao Collection)



1. Folding Screen of Poem Strips



2. Attributed to Kodai no Kimi (Ko-ōgimi), Part of Chapter 8 of the *Reika-shū* (Kōshi Fragment)



3. Collections of Famous Calligraphy Fragments

5. Calligraphy by KOHITSU Ryōshin, Illustrations by Yukihiro Yasuda, Portrait of the Calligrapher KOHITSU Ryōsa



7. The Catalogue of Exemplary Calligraphy *Moshiogusa* (Brinish Seaweed), Album



6. Illustrations and Calligraphy by KOHITSU Ryōi, Self-portrait

4. Venue information

Venue: 3rd Floor exhibition room of the Keio Museum Commons

Address: Keio University Mita Campus East Annex, 2-15-45 Mita, Minato Ward, Tokyo 108-8345

Access: Tamachi Station (JR Yamanote Line/JR Keihin-Tohoku Line) 8-minute walk

Mita Station (Toei Subway Asakusa Line/Mita Line) 7-minute walk

Akabanebashi Station (Toei Subway Oedo Line) 8-minute walk



Keio Museum Commons  
Exterior of Mita Campus  
East Annex

\*Please direct any requests or inquiries on press coverage to the contact information provided below.

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