



# BELGIAN ECONOMIC MISSION TO JAPAN



In the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium,  
Representative of His Majesty the King

and

Ministers and Secretary of State,

Professor Luc Sels, Rector of KU Leuven, Professor Vincent Blondel, Rector of UCLouvain  
and Professor Nagahiro Minato, President of Kyoto University

request the honor of your presence  
at the Academic Symposium

**“The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1920s Book Donation by Japan to the University of Louvain: The Interwar Period Belgian-Japanese Relations, Cultural Diplomacy and Japanese Book Collections in their Global Context”**

on Friday, December 9, 2022  
from 11:15 to 13:00 - Doors open at 10:30, no entry after 11:05

at

Kyoto University Memorial Hall of Centennial Clock Tower,  
Kokusai Koryu Hall, 2F ([36 Yoshidahonmachi, Sakyo Ward, Kyoto, 606-8317](#))

**Registration : Please inform us of your presence by completing following registration form:**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bos3cG8ZHcitrkTuKAA-34ujzjl2APHdKIV9qBnsNTc/edit?pli=1> by December 1, 2022.



## Academic Symposium on:

### Japan's Book Donation to the University of Louvain

Did you know that one of the greatest but most forgotten cultural common heritages of [KU Leuven](#) and [UCLouvain](#) Belgium is the 1920s Japanese book collection? This collection is among the most remarkable and systematic collections of premodern Japanese books outside of Japan.

It consists of almost 3,200 Japanese titles comprising about 14,000 volumes, along with several maps and works of arts and was part of the international effort which was launched to rebuild the library of the University of Louvain destroyed in 1914 during the First World War. Since then, the old University of Louvain, founded in 1425, split into two separate major universities, KU Leuven and UCLouvain who together cherish this joint heritage and now have major plans with it.

This academic event will shed light on the historical background of this spectacular donation with two presentations by Prof. Dr. Naraoka Sōchi (Kyoto University) and Prof. Dr. Jan Schmidt (KU Leuven) and contextualize the content of this book donation with a third presentation by Prof. Sasaki Takahiro (Keio University). Prof. Naraoka, eminent historian of foreign policy and diplomacy of Japan, will introduce the importance of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 for the Belgian-Japanese relations and Prof. Schmidt will explain the process leading to the actual donation as part of cultural diplomacy, while Professor Sasaki will compare the donated books with other prominent collections outside of Japan to emphasize the immense – and hitherto unrealized – potential and value of the donation.

A selection of the books is currently on display in the special exhibition "[Japan's Book Donation to the University of Louvain](#)". Japanese Cultural Identity and Modernity in the 1920s", curated by Prof. Schmidt, in collaboration by the KU Leuven Libraries and UCLouvain. The exhibition also highlights Japanese society and culture in the 1920s in the context of global modernity, through film clips, photographic material and objects. It also includes a number of unique loans from the National Museum of Japanese History, the Ohara Institute for Social Research and the National Film Archive of Japan, which will be **on display in Europe for the first time ever**.

## Program

- 10 :30 – 11 :05** Registration, no entry after 11:05
- 11 :15** Arrival of HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium and Ministers and Secretary of State
- 11 :20** Opening & Welcome
- 11 :30 – 13 :00** Symposium

Organizers: Prof. Dr. Jan Schmidt, KU Leuven and Prof. Dr. Naraoka Sōchi, Kyoto University

Discussant: Prof. Dr. Dimitri Vanoverbeke, Tokyo University