

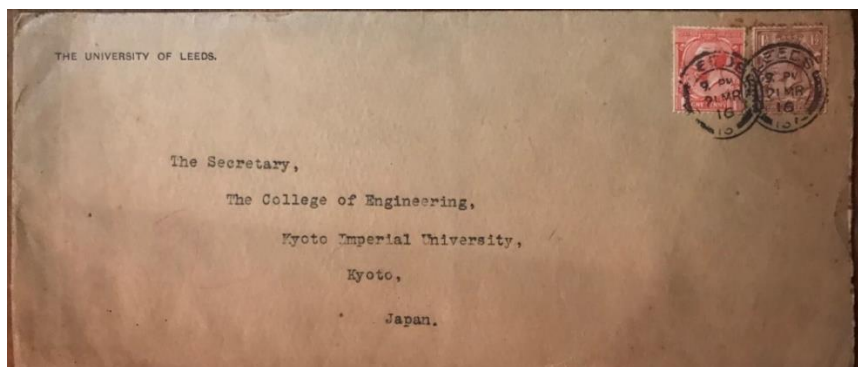
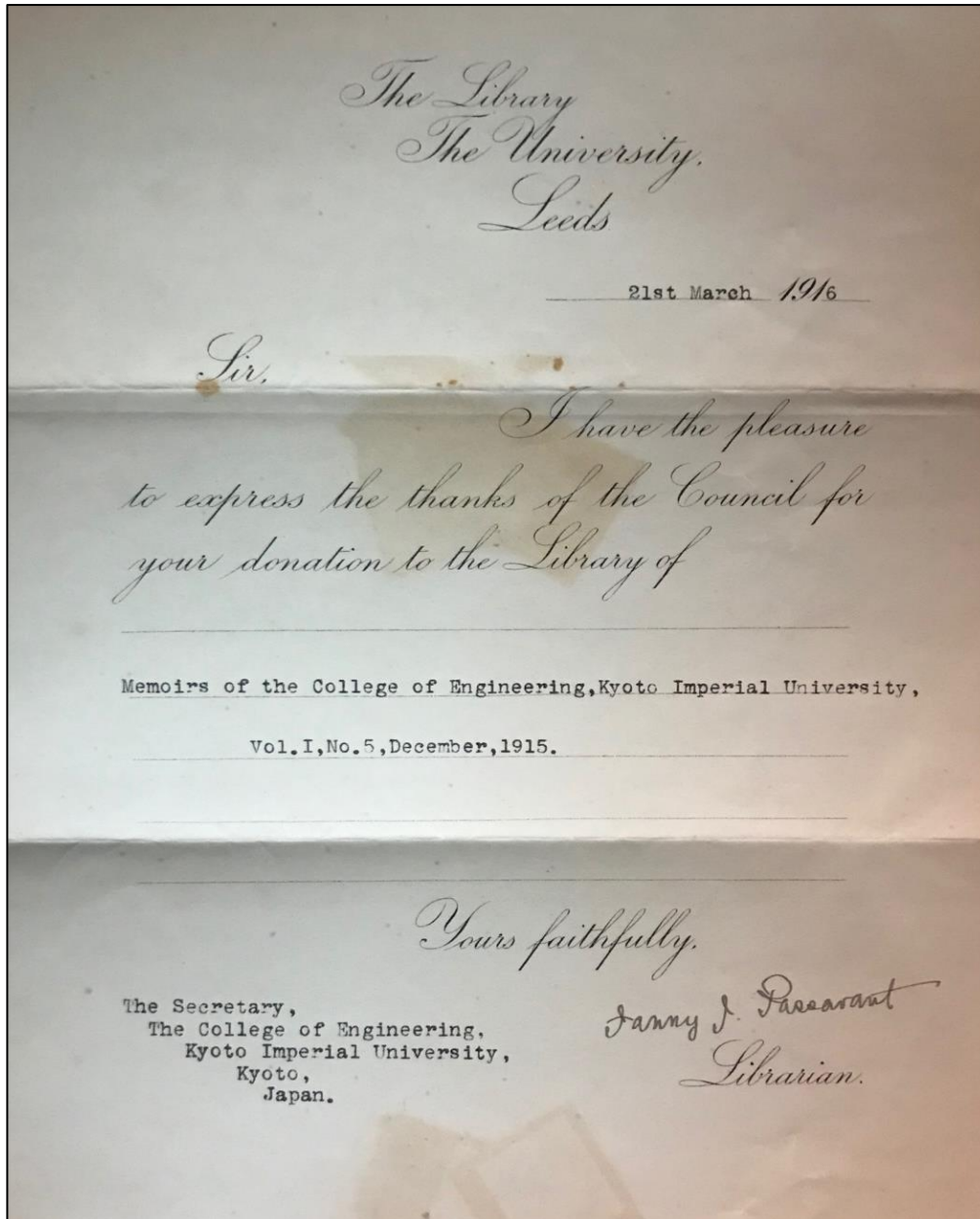


京都大学
KYOTO UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

A letter from the University of Leeds Library to the College of Engineering, Kyoto Imperial University on 21st March 1916.



This letter was found in a storage room of Dr Sakuro Tanabe (1861-1944) by Prof. Yoshikazu Takahashi, who is participating in this symposium. It was sent to Kyoto Imperial University by the University of Leeds Library to express their appreciation for a donated copy of the Memoirs of the College of Engineering, which was published in 1915. This letter indicates that good relations between the faculties of engineering of our two universities had already been established over 100 years ago.

From 1914 to 1918, Dr Tanabe was the dean of the College of Engineering, Kyoto Imperial University. He was a civil engineer who contributed to the rejuvenation of Kyoto through "Lake Biwa Canal" project (1885-1912) in Meiji Era. For the achievement of the project, the Telford Medal was awarded to Dr Tanabe by the British Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in 1894. The medal and the letter from ICE are placed on exhibition in the Lake Biwa Canal Museum at Kyoto City.

What is Lake Biwa Canal?

After "Lake Biwa Canal Museum" <https://biwakososui-museum.jp/en/>

"Lake Biwa Canal," one of the greatest industrial heritage sites in Kyoto, is a facility that is still actively in use. It consists of three major canals. "The First Canal" extends from Kannon-ji, Otsu City to Horizome-cho, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto City and it is approximately 20 km long. "The Second Canal" is approximately 7.4 km long and it runs in a complete tunnel along the north side of "The First Canal". The third canal is called "Canal Branch", which is 3.3 km long and it is divided from Keage area, Sakyo-ku and reaches to Kita-Shirakawa.

The 3rd Kyoto Prefectural Governor, Kunimichi Kitagaki was depressed to see Kyoto declining due to a decreasing population with the capital having been transferred to Tokyo after the Meiji Restoration. Then, he planned the construction of "Lake Biwa Canal" as a reconstruction measure aiming for industrial development using the power of water irrigated from Lake Biwa. The construction launched with Sakuro Tanabe, who had just graduated from the government's engineering academy in Tokyo (the current Tokyo University), took four years and eight months, and was completed in 1890 (Meiji 23rd year). Hydraulic power generation and waterwheel power utilizing Lake Biwa Canal led to significant development in the industry, and ship transportation brought more people and materials coming and going, providing new vitality to Kyoto.

20 years later, the second canal was constructed to pursue a more abundant volume of water, and maintain the water supply. In addition, expanding the road width and starting operation of the first municipal electric railway in Japan established the foundation for town development of the current Kyoto. For more than 120 years, Lake Biwa Canal has continued to bring life water to Kyoto.