

Message

The 2nd International Symposium Organizing Committee
Kanagawa University 21st Century COE Program

A study of human culture covers a wide range of evidence that is not limited to written materials. This important factor is the focus of the Kanagawa University 21st Century COE Program's "Systematization of Nonwritten Cultural Materials for the Study of Human Societies," which has now entered its fourth year. We will hold our second international symposium to share with the public the results of our joint research efforts so far.

Last year we held our first international symposium on the theme of "What Are Nonwritten Cultural Materials?" to which we invited researchers who have been pioneering in the study of nonwritten cultural materials in Japan and abroad. They presented reports on their recent studies, providing valuable information that served to establish a firm foothold for our research. We have chosen "Interpreting Human Culture through Nonwritten Materials: Perspectives on Illustrated Material, Folk Implements and Landscape" as the theme of this year's symposium, during which we plan to present the findings of our joint research up to date and invite comments from the participants.

The symposium will consist of four sessions. The first will focus on methodological issues involved in the study of nonwritten materials. The following sessions will focus on the three areas – illustrated material, folk implements and landscape – and will be aimed at what can be read from those nonwritten materials. The symposium will close with a discussion on how nonwritten materials can be systematized into a comprehensive, integrated form to be shared by all.

We hope to welcome many knowledgeable people who are interested in these studies and to make this opportunity to strengthen our belief in the potential of this new field in the study of human culture.