

Research Branding Project for Private Universities Progress Report for the 2017 Academic Year

Number of Educational Corporation	261009	Name of Educational Corporation	Shinshū Otani Gakuen		
Name of University	Otani University				
Title of Project	Creation of an International Buddhist Research Network and the Promotion of “Human Studies” based on Buddhism				
Application Type	Type B	Grant Period	Five Years	Student Capacity	2995 students
Participating Organization	Faculty of Letters, Graduate School of Letters, Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute, Library, Museum, The Eastern Buddhist Society				
Project Outline	<p>The excessive rationalization of modern society has resulted in the “sense of meaninglessness.” Critical attempts to reexamine the early modern and modern ages have already been made. However, it is becoming increasingly urgent to find solutions to fundamental problems concerning the environment, human rights and bioethics. Buddhism has the potential to provide solutions to these important problems. In this project, we will create an international research center based on Buddhism and promote “human studies” unique to our university. We will unfold a strategic branding project for making the world recognize once again the importance of Buddhist studies.</p>				
① Aim of the project	<p>About a hundred years ago, Max Weber made the important point that the increasing rationalization of modern society will bring about the “sense of meaninglessness.” Subsequently, especially after the two world wars, various attempts have been made to reexamine modernity critically. But as if to mock such attempts at reexamination, the secularization of modern industrial society is proceeding at a greater pace and people are increasingly caught up in the globalized market economy. Under such circumstances, the problems of the “sense of meaninglessness” such as ecology, human rights and bioethics are becoming even more severe. Moreover, the market principle has pervaded the academic world of the universities. As a result, research that are believed to “contribute” to society in concrete ways, such as the applied sciences, have come to be overemphasized while research in the humanities and theoretical sciences have been curtailed. However, at present, when people are faced with the fundamental problem of the “sense of meaninglessness” and the need to overcome it is extremely urgent, the humanities, and Buddhist studies in particular, have become increasingly important, as it has the potential to provide answers to these problems.</p> <p>Therefore, our university has made the following four points the central pillars of its branding project. First, we will create the foundation for engaging in research from an international perspective on the basis of the knowledge of Buddhism we have accumulated in the past. Second, we will conduct joint research with scholars from America, Europe and Asia. Third, we will promote academic exchange among scholars and students. Fourth, we will make Buddhism, the intellectual heritage of world, available to society at large in the form of “human studies” unique to our university. In other words, we will offer to the world a humanities that is based on the core spirit of Buddhism—to face the actual problems of society squarely, to seek after the truth and to establish a firm ground for living our lives—in the form of “human studies” unique to our university. In this way, our university, even while it will still retain the traditional philologically-based study of Buddhism at the center of the university curriculum, will also actively engage in studies conducted from the perspective of clinical Buddhism that can contribute to the fields of sociology and education, as well as studies than can respond to the needs of society. In this way, we will create a brand image of Otani University as a “university of human studies” having the mission to nurture an independent person who can discover a way to live his or her life with firm resolution in modern society.</p>				

<p>② Goal and Implementation Plan for the 2017 Academic Year</p>	<p>① Goal and Implementation Plan concerning Branding Project [Goals to be Achieved]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile of Otani University in the field of Buddhist studies by giving academic papers overseas. • Conducting joint research projects with overseas collaborative institutions. <p>[Implementation Plan]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raising the profile of Otani University in the field of Buddhist studies by giving academic papers overseas: International Conference of the European Association of Japanese Studies (Lisbon), Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Toronto), Academic Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (Musashino University, Tokyo) ○ “<i>Tannishō</i> Translation Workshop” to be held in association with University of California at Berkeley’s Institute for East Asian Studies and Ryūkoku University Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures (August and March). ○ Joint Projects with Collaborating Institutions. ○ Lecture on Japanese Buddhism (intensive course) by an Otani professor at Eotvös Loránd University (March). ○ Publication of the papers presented at joint symposium “Buddha’s Words and their Interpretation” held with Eotvös Loránd University in the 2016 academic year. ○ Presentation a paper at the “Academic Conference on Shaolin Temple and Buddhism in the Northern Dynasties” as part of a joint research project with China on Buddhism during the Northern Dynasties. <p>② Goal and Implementation Plan concerning Branding Activities [Goals to be Achieved]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Laying the foundation for research branding strategy and announcement of the selection of the research project. <p>[Implementation Plan]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Announcement of the transfer of all the activities of The Eastern Buddhist Society to Otani University. ○ During the open campus, a booth will be set up to introduce research and a trial survey will be carried out. (To be carried out in March.) ○ Trail presentation of research activities at the nationwide PTA meeting. ○ Creation of a website (in Japanese). ○ Press release concerning the adoption of the branding project (carried out in Japan, China and Vietnam). ○ Dissemination of information concerning adoption of the branding project on the university website and SNS site.
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<p>③ Results for the 2017 Academic Year</p>	<p>① Results Achieved concerning Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○Research was carried out under the auspices of the Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute. ○Papers were presented at International Conference of the European Association of Japanese Studies (Lisbon), Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Toronto), Academic Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (Musashino University, Tokyo). “The <i>Tannishō</i> Translation Workshop” was held in association with University of California at Berkeley’s Institute for East Asian Studies and Ryūkoku University Research Center for World Buddhist Cultures (August and March). In these ways, it was possible to raise the overseas profile of Otani University in the field of Buddhist studies. By sponsoring the panel on “Benefitting Others in Modern Shin Buddhist Doctrinal Studies of the Otani-ha” at the Academic Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, it was possible to conduct a sustained inquiry into one of the central doctrines of Shin Buddhism. These papers, modified in light of the questions raised during the question-and-answer period, were published in English (in <i>Annual Memoirs of the Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute</i>, vol. 35). ○Cooperative research with collaborating institutions was carried by sending a professor of Otani University to hold a lecture course on Japanese Buddhism (intensive course) at Eotvös Loránd University (March) and by presenting a paper at the “Academic Conference on Shaolin Temple and Buddhism in the Northern Dynasties” as part of a joint research project with China on Buddhism during the Northern Dynasties. ○The papers presented at the joint Otani University-Eotvös Loránd University symposium “Buddha’s Words and their Interpretation” held in the 2016 academic year are still being edited for publication. ○In addition to the academic activities that had originally been planned for this year, papers were presented at a workshop “Pure Land Buddhism in the Nara Schools” (held in Montreal) and at an international symposium “Sufism and Zen in the Modern Western World: Spiritual Marriage of East and West or Western Cultural Hegemony?” (held in Scotland), helping to strengthen ties with overseas scholars. <p>② Results Achieved concerning Branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○A notice concerning the adoption of the branding project was received from the Ministry of Education on November 7, 2017. Meetings of the Education and Research Support Committee and the Working Team on the Research Branding Project were held on November 29 and December 14, respectively. These meetings served as a forum for sharing information about the notice concerning the adoption of the branding project and about the steps to be taken to lay the foundation for research branding strategy. ○It was possible to lay the foundation for the research branding strategy and to disseminate information concerning the adoption of our branding project through the following means: announcement of the transfer of all activities of The Eastern Buddhist Society to Otani University, opening a booth during Open Campus to introduce the branding project and trial survey (in March), trial presentation of research activities at the nationwide PTA meeting, creation of a website (in Japanese), dissemination of information concerning adoption of the branding project on the university website and SNS site and the issuing a press release to the media through the University Press Center.
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<p>④ Self-evaluation and Outside Review for the 2017 Academic Year</p>	<p>(Self-evaluation) ○A self-evaluation was conducted during the meeting of the Working Team for Research Branding Project held on May 24, 2018. In addition to the items listed in “③ Results for the 2017 Academic Year,” the following points can be evaluated favorably: the ways in which to subscribe to <i>The Eastern Buddhist</i> was increased, making it easier to subscribe to the journal; <i>The Eastern Buddhist</i> was included in JSTOR from 2017, making it possible for academic institutions and libraries worldwide to access the journal (number of access: 1224). In addition, the possibility of using other means besides publications of academic volumes to disseminate information effectively overseas (such as in Vietnam) and the introduction of objective standards through which to evaluate the research and branding activities are under consideration.</p>
<p>⑤ Status of the Use of the Subsidy for the 2017 Academic Year</p>	<p>(Outside review) ○An outside review by the Outside Review Committee (consisting of Shengkai [Associate Professor, Qinghua University, China], Professor Gandya [National University of Mongolia], Professor Yunwen [Chinese Academy of Social Sciences History Division] and Professor Hamar Imre [Eotvös Loránd University, Hungary]) is planned for July.</p> <p>○The subsidy was used to defray the cost for the activities listed in “③ Results for the 2017 Academic Year” (including transportation costs and registration fees for attending international conferences, as well as expenses related to the publication of <i>The Eastern Buddhist</i> such as costs for printing and binding of the journal, fees for business consignments, commissions and advertising fees).</p>