



# Drawn to Manga

Increasing numbers of young people overseas are studying Japanese pop culture such as manga and Japanese-style animation, genres that are being popularized around the world. Kyoto Seika University is a leading place of education in these fields and has a large number of overseas students. Osamu Sawaji of the *Japan Journal* visited the university.

**K**yoto Seika University was Japan's first university to set up a manga faculty, in 2006. The Faculty of Manga is divided into the manga and animation departments. The manga department offers courses in cartoon art, comic art and manga production, and will launch new courses in gag manga and character design

from April 2013. Manga faculty professors are prominent Japanese manga artists, animators and editors, who teach everything from the basics of drawing a line with a pen to the practical study of story production. Some students make their debut as manga artists while still in the school.

Out of a total of 820 students in the Faculty, 70

hail from overseas, mainly from Asia, including South Korea, China and Taiwan.

"I fell in love with Japanese manga when I was in elementary school. I was especially obsessed with *Slam Dunk*," says Shin Daegy, a second-year animation department student from South Korea. "When I was in junior high, I saw *Ghost in the Shell* and was genuinely amazed by the realistic images."

Shin started to consider becoming an animator when he was in high school. He decided to go to school in Japan, the home of manga and animation that he had so admired since elementary school. After studying extremely hard in Seoul, his wish came true and he was able to enroll in Kyoto Seika University.

"It's great that we can learn various things like acoustics and 3D that are needed to become an animator," says Shin. "I would like to work at a Japanese animation company after I graduate, and in the future, I would like to produce my own work."

### A Bridge between Japan and Italy

Daniela Russo, a third-year student enrolled in the



Shin Daegy works on an animation.

manga story development course, also became captivated by manga when she started to watch Japanese animated television shows broadcast in her own country and read manga translated into Italian. Russo especially likes *shojo* manga.

"The story line is interesting in Japanese manga. The pictures are also very unique," says Russo. "In Italy, manga is considered to be a thing for children, but I consider it a form of art."

Russo decided to study manga in Japan when she was in high school. She moved to Japan after graduating from high school, studied Japanese in a language school and entered Kyoto Seika University. It did not take her much time to assimilate since Japanese students there were also fans of manga, and she is now completely immersed in her life in Japan.

"It might be difficult for me to become a manga artist because there are a lot of people who are more talented than I am. But I would always like to be involved in some way with manga," Russo says. "If I can't become a manga artist, I would like to serve as a bridge between Japan and Italy by introducing more beautiful manga from Japan to Italy."



Daniela Russo holds up one of her manga creations.