



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Emily Dickinson Museum Announces Major Gift from Kaneka Corporation of Japan**

AMHERST, Mass.—The Emily Dickinson Museum announced today that it has received a \$50,000 gift from the Kaneka Corporation of Japan for capital improvements to the Dickinson family homes in Amherst. Kaneka's gift marks the first corporate contribution to the Emily Dickinson Museum's campaign fund and also represents the first major donation to the Museum from outside the continental United States.

"The Kaneka Corporation of Japan is proud, in this, the 175th anniversary year of Emily Dickinson's birth, to become the first corporate donor to the growing Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, Mass.," said Kaneka President Masatoshi Takeda. "This gift shows that Kaneka Corporation is dedicated to providing funds to institutions that contribute to cultural growth."

The Osaka-based corporation is a \$4 billion producer of chemical products including PVC resins, electrical material, pharmaceutical intermediaries, food supplements, synthetic fibers and fine chemicals. Established in 1949, it has subsidiaries in Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. Kaneka's corporate philosophy states that it strives to create a broad spectrum of life-enhancing products and services that work in harmony with people, society and the environment.

The \$50,000 gift by the Kaneka Corporation will be matched by funds from a federal Save America's Treasures grant. This program, administered by the National Park Service, provides matching grants for projects that preserve outstanding examples of America's diverse history and culture. In 2004, Save America's Treasures awarded the Emily Dickinson Museum a grant of \$200,000 for restoration and infrastructure improvements at the two historic Dickinson homes on Main Street in Amherst.

"The Kaneka Corporation's generous gift to the Emily Dickinson Museum comes at a vital moment for our young institution," said Polly Longworth, Museum chair and Dickinson biographer. "We're happy, too, to be forging one more link in the strong association between Dickinson and Japan."

Japanese fascination with Emily Dickinson began with the appearance of the poet's work in Japanese studies of American Literature as early as the 1920s. In the 1960s *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, created a swelling of Japanese scholarly criticism of the poet's work. By 1973, all Dickinson's poems had been translated and Japanese scholars began work on her letters. The Emily Dickinson Society of Japan, founded in 1980, is celebrating its 25th year, boasting nearly 100 members, 20 of whom also claim membership in the Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS). The 2007 annual convention of the EDIS is scheduled to take place in Kyoto, Japan.

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, two historic houses in Amherst, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. The Dickinson Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson. Merged into a single museum in 2003, both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. For more information, please visit the Emily Dickinson Museum's website.

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