

# Chapter 1.

## The Philosophy and Aims of Ritsumeikan University as seen in The Ritsumeikan Charter

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# Chapter 1.

## The Philosophy and Aims of Ritsumeikan University as Seen in The Ritsumeikan Charter

Each university has its own distinct philosophy and aims. Those of Ritsumeikan University are stated in The Ritsumeikan Charter, adopted in 2006. The Charter applies to the whole of the Ritsumeikan Academy, including Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University and the affiliated senior and junior high schools and elementary school. For Ritsumeikan University, the Charter serves as the cornerstone of all education and research activities.

The Ritsumeikan Charter is a short passage of text, but it encapsulates the history of Ritsumeikan University since its establishment, together with the principles fostered in the course of this history, which all members of the Ritsumeikan community are expected to uphold. This chapter expands on the ideas in The Ritsumeikan Charter. It is divided into three sections: the first covers the time from the establishment of Ritsumeikan to the formation of its founding spirit and educational philosophy; the second looks at the multi-faceted development of the university in accordance with this founding spirit and educational philosophy; the third sets out the various initiatives pursued since the establishment of The Ritsumeikan Charter.

We faculty and staff members believe that The Ritsumeikan Charter is not simply a formal document drawn up by the university and academy as an organization; it is something that each individual member of the Ritsumeikan community, students included, should understand and share. We hope that the material in this chapter helps readers understand how Ritsumeikan University got to where it is today, what we have cherished thus far (and continue to cherish today), and what we are seeking to achieve in the future.



Stone monument with the inscription "To believe in the future, to live for the future", 1981

# 立命館憲章

## THE RITSUMEIKAN CHARTER

Ritsumeikan traces its roots to Prince Saionji's private academy of the same name, established in 1869. It was officially founded in 1900 by his protégé, Kojuro Nakagawa, as the Kyoto Hosei Gakko (Kyoto School of Law and Politics), later to take on the name "Ritsumeikan." The name is derived from a passage in the Jinxin chapter of the Discourses of Mencius, and means "a place to establish one's destiny through cultivating one's mind."

Ritsumeikan's founding ideals are "freedom and innovation" and reflecting upon its wartime experience, it committed itself to a core educational philosophy of "peace and democracy" after World War II.

Ritsumeikan has faced the challenges of the times by pursuing an independent path to rise above adversity and has become the comprehensive private educational institution that it is today through extensive cooperation and support from both within and outside Japan.

Ritsumeikan, as a Japanese institution located in the Asia Pacific region, is committed to sincerely reflecting upon history and to building an institution where many cultures coexist in the spirit of international mutual understanding.

Ritsumeikan will build relationships of trust, through research and education, as well as sports and cultural activities, and establish its roots in the local community, to create an academic institution open to international society.

Ritsumeikan will strive to strengthen links with society and promote its institutional development by fully utilizing the characteristics of a private academic institution, the participation of its faculty, staff and students, and the support of alumni and parents, while respecting the principles of autonomy, democracy, transparency, non-violence and justice.

Ritsumeikan will pursue the creation of universal values based on academic freedom and search for solutions to the pressing issues facing humankind, with its educational endeavors based on its founding spirit and educational ideals, bearing in mind "to believe in the future, to live for the future."

Ritsumeikan will foster learning and the development of individual talents in order to nurture just and ethical global citizens.

Ritsumeikan, as an institute of education and research, pledges to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development in Japan and throughout the world, in keeping with the spirit of this Charter.

The Ritsumeikan Trust  
July 21, 2006



## I How Ritsumeikan University Was Created

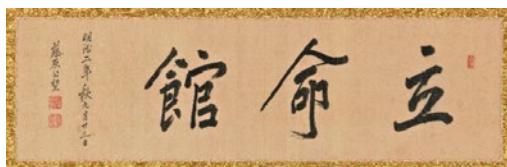
What is the purpose of studying history? Surely one of the most significant aims is to apply the wisdom of the past to the present and to the future. We learn about past societies, economies, and cultures, about the people who succeeded within them, and sometimes about those who failed. This knowledge is then utilized for our own growth.

By learning about the history of the academic institution “Ritsumeikan,” we can gain an understanding of the spirit of our university and the knowledge passed down within it, and use that understanding to build our future. We hope you will join us on this journey to learn about the path that Ritsumeikan has taken, and move with us towards the future that Honorary Chancellor Suekawa Hiroshi envisioned in his words “believe in the future, live for the future.”

### 1. The Birth of Ritsumeikan: Saionji Kinmochi and Nakagawa Kojūrō

Known as “the last of the genrō”<sup>1</sup> Saionji Kinmochi (1849-1940) was born in Kyoto, Yamashiro province (in present-day Kyoto City) as the second son of Tokudaiji Kin’ito, a member of the imperial court nobility. At the age of two, he was adopted into the household of a relative, Saionji Morosue, and eventually succeeded Morosue as the head of the Saionji household.

In September 1869, Saionji Kinmochi opened a private academy for the training of young leaders for Japan’s new era. Located in the gardens of the Kyoto Imperial Palace, the academy was named “Ritsumeikan.” The name was taken from the Jinxin chapter of the Discourses of Mencius, and means “a place to establish one’s destiny by cultivating one’s mind.” A number of leading scholars of Chinese classics and artists taught at this academy, including Tomioka Tessai (1837-1924)<sup>2</sup> and Ema Tenkō (1825-1901).<sup>3</sup> Ritsumeikan appears to have been an educational institution that opened its doors to more than just members of the aristocracy. Just six months after opening, however, the government of Kyoto ordered the academy to close, interpreting the vigorous discussion among young pupils at the academy as a sign of potential political unrest. Saionji himself was unable to intervene, as he was far away in Nagasaki at the time, preparing to depart for studies in Europe.



Calligraphy panel with the characters “Ritsumeikan”, 1869

In 1871, Saionji arrived in Paris, a city facing turbulent times following France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Living in Paris at the height of the Paris Commune<sup>4</sup>, Saionji was transformed into an intellectual shaped by democratic ideals. This experience would be strongly reflected in Saionji’s subsequent political and educational activities in Japan. Returning to Japan after more than a decade studying at the Sorbonne, Saionji launched his career as a politician. His international expertise was highly valued at the time, and he cooperated fully with Itō Hirobumi’s initiative to draft a constitution for Japan. After serving as Minister of Education and then Minister of Foreign Affairs in Itō’s cabinet, Saionji led his country’s government as Japan’s 12<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister in 1906 and 14<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister in 1911.

Let us turn the clock back several years to 1894, when

Saionji was appointed Minister of Education. Saionji selected a ministry bureaucrat, Nakagawa Kojūrō, to be his secretary, and placed him in charge of the establishment of Kyoto Imperial University (now Kyoto University). Below we look back on Saionji’s relationship with Nakagawa, who was born in the village of Umaji in Minamikuwada District, Tamba Province (in present-day Kameoka City, Kyoto Prefecture).



Saionji in his first term as Prime Minister, 1906 (Meiji 39)

During the Meiji Restoration, the young court noble Saionji was appointed as the general in charge of placating the San’indō region<sup>5</sup> immediately after the Battle of Toba–Fushimi in 1868. As his first stop during his travels for this role, Saionji stayed overnight in the village of Umaji. Among the squad of local soldiers on duty at the time, known as the Tamba Kyūsen-gumi, were Nakagawa Kojūrō’s biological father Rokuzaemon and adoptive father Nakagawa Buheita. When Saionji served as a governor-general in the subjugation of the Tohoku region, members of the Nakagawa family from Umaji were again drafted to participate. This was the point when Saionji encountered the Nakagawa family, and the origination of Ritsumeikan.

After graduating from the First Higher School (pre-university course), Nakagawa Kojūrō entered the Department of Law at the Imperial University Law School, now the University of Tokyo Faculty of Law, then transferred to the Department of Political Science the following year. Among Nakagawa’s contemporaries in the pre-university course were Yamada Bimyō (Taketarō), Masaoka Shiki, and Minakata Kumagusu.



Nakagawa Kojūrō in 1897 (Meiji 30), when he was Counselor of the Ministry of Education

Nakagawa was on especially friendly terms with the author Natsume Sōseki (Shiohara Kinnosuke), who wrote of his interaction with Nakagawa in his discourse *Rakudai (Failure)*<sup>6</sup>. While at university, Nakagawa paid a visit to Saionji, with whom he was already communicating. Nakagawa took up a position in the Ministry of Education upon graduating, and was promoted to the post of secretary when Saionji assumed leadership of the Ministry.

### 2. Ritsumeikan Grows: Establishment of the Hosei Law School, Promotion to University Status, and the Takigawa Incident

Working under Saionji’s direct command in the Ministry of Education, Nakagawa Kojūrō formulated the plan to establish Japan’s second imperial university, Kyoto Imperial University. In 1897, he took up a supervisory role in the new university’s operations as Secretary-General (the first administrative director-general).

Once Kyoto Imperial University was set up, Nakagawa left the Ministry of Education and entered the business world. He served as an inaugural director of the Kajima Bank<sup>7</sup>, vice president of Asahi Life Insurance, and in several other posts. These experiences made him painfully aware of the need for higher education institutions that could be accessed by young people unable to follow the official route to university entrance through government Higher Schools. Nakagawa thus began planning for the establishment of a new school of law with the cooperation of Kyoto Imperial University. He was aided in this task by the personal connections he had made during

the process of setting up Kyoto Imperial University, and with the approval of Saionji Kinmochi. Nakagawa procured the funds required to establish the new school through the sale of his own real estate, and from sources including the Kajima family and Sumitomo Tomoito. In June 1900, the Kyoto Hosei School opened its doors to the first cohort of 305 students. It operated as an evening school for professional legal training, with classes running from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm in makeshift classrooms in Seikirō, a restaurant situated on the banks of the Kamo River in Kyoto. The school soon gained popularity among young working adults.



Seikirō

Nakagawa harbored hopes that this evening school for lawyers would eventually become a “comprehensive academy” encompassing all stages from secondary education through to university. He resolved to call this academy “Ritsumeikan,” the name of the private academy founded by Saionji. When he founded Seiwa Normal School (later Ritsumeikan Middle School) in 1905, Nakagawa formally requested Saionji’s permission to use the name “Ritsumeikan,” and Saionji assented.

The idea of “establishing one’s destiny” in the aforementioned Jinxin chapter of the Discourses of Mencius, which is rightly seen as Nakagawa’s foundational principle, is an idea deeply rooted in Eastern philosophy. Meanwhile, the modern ideas of liberalism and internationalization that Saionji had adopted while on his studies in France formed the spiritual foundations for the Ritsumeikan Academy’s own destiny. Thus, Nakagawa aimed to create an academy brimming with a spirit of freedom and innovation with a background that blended ancient Eastern philosophy and Western modernist ideas.

Nakagawa went on to appointments including administrative officer of Karafuto (South Sakhalin) Prefecture in 1908, and vice president (later president) of the Bank of Taiwan in 1912. He became Chancellor of Ritsumeikan the following year, and changed the university’s name from Kyoto Hosei University to Ritsumeikan University. Because Nakagawa inherited the name of a private academy originally founded by Saionji, today we refer to Saionji as the “Founding Father” and Nakagawa as the “Founder” of Ritsumeikan and we strive to perpetuate the founding spirit of freedom and innovation that both men pursued.

In 1922, Ritsumeikan University gained official recognition as a university under the University Ordinance, and the College of Law (Departments of Law and Economics), Graduate School, and Preparatory Course were established. The following year saw the establishment of a Professional Training Division (Departments of Law and Economics) and Preparatory Course. Departments of Letters and Commerce were added to the Professional Training Division in 1927, creating the foundations for the university that exists today.

Let us pause here to relate one episode from the realm of extracurricular activities at this time. In the fall of 1927, the Ritsumeikan University Baseball Club emerged as the undefeated champion of the fourth Kyoto Intercollegiate Baseball Championship, and selected Taiwan as the destination for its first overseas trip. This choice was based on the extensive personal networks that Nakagawa had cultivated in government and business sectors in Taiwan. The choice distinguishes the history of baseball at Ritsumeikan from those of Tokyo-based universities such as Waseda and Keio, whose baseball clubs tended to visit places such as Hawaii and the U.S. mainland. This history is closely connected with the path taken by Ritsumeikan University thereafter.

In July 1932, Kyoto Imperial University Faculty of Law Professor Takigawa Yukitoki gave a lecture at the Chuo University Faculty of Law. Officials in the Ministries of Education and Justice viewed the lecture as problematic since it dealt with anarchistic subject matter. The following year, the Ministry of Internal Affairs banned the sale of Takigawa’s book *A Reader in Criminal Law*, and the Ministry of Education demanded that Takigawa be dismissed from his post at Kyoto Imperial University. When the university refused to do so, the Ministry proceeded to impose a disciplinary suspension of employment on Takigawa.

Many faculty members of the Kyoto Imperial University Faculty of Law resigned in protest over the Ministry’s action. These included, in addition to Takigawa himself, two individuals who later became Chancellors of Ritsumeikan University: Sasaki Sōichi and Suekawa Hiroshi. Of the 21 faculty members who resigned overall, 18 moved to Ritsumeikan University. It is said that the acceptance of these faculty members was made possible by the interaction between Nakagawa Kojūrō, informed by the wishes of Saionji Kinmochi, and Oda Yorozu, a former Dean of the Kyoto University Faculty of Law and Honorary Chancellor of Ritsumeikan University. This incident is remembered today as a threat to academic freedom and university autonomy, but it also occasioned a new leap forward for Ritsumeikan.

### **3. Ritsumeikan and War: Establishment of the Technical School and Complicity with State Policy**

In 1914, a group of like-minded faculty members of the Kyoto Imperial University Faculty of Science and Engineering established a school to train electrical technicians, the Private Electrical Engineering Training Institute, within their department of electrical engineering. The aim eventually was to relocate this Training Institute outside the university campus and reorganize it as an independent technical college. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 led to greater demand for hands-on technicians in heavy industries, and Nakagawa sought to establish a technical training school. In October of the same year, Ritsumeikan’s Board of Trustees resolved to establish such a school. In April of the following year, 1938, Ritsumeikan took control of the Private Electrical Engineering Training Institute, which became part of a new Ritsumeikan Higher Technical School, a college for the training of electrical engineers located on the Kitaoji Campus, which was also home to Ritsumeikan Middle School and Ritsumeikan Commercial High School. The new school offered three-year programs and had five departments: civil engineering, architecture, mechanical engineering, applied chemistry, as well as electrical engineering. Second divisions were also established in the departments of mechanical and electrical engineering.

The Ritsumeikan Higher Technical School had initially been established as a technical school, equivalent to a technical training college. However, in response to the growing demand for technical training following the 1932 establishment of the state of Manchukuo, the school was expanded and relocated to a site on the north side of Toji-in Temple in 1939, where it was re-named the Ritsumeikan Nichiman Higher Technical School.

This school had a total of seven departments—mechanical engineering, automotive engineering, a e r o n a u t i c a l engineering, electrical engineering, applied chemistry, mining and metallurgical engineering, and c o n s t r u c t i o n



Nichiman Higher Technical School, 1939 (Showa 14)

engineering—as well as a forge for Japanese swords, partially for research purposes. Thus, the present-day Kinugasa Campus, and the College of Science and Engineering that was located there until 1994, developed out of Japan's international situation during the 1930s.

Ritsumeikan and other universities had begun operating their universities in line with the prevailing nationalistic climate from the late 1920s. On the occasion of the Showa Emperor's enthronement in 1928, the universities of Kyoto established military-style defense forces to protect the Kyoto Imperial Palace. Ritsumeikan University called its defense force the "Imperial Guard." This was a reflection of the university's location at the time in Hirokoji, adjacent to the Seiwa-in Gate of the Kyoto Imperial Palace. In 1941, the Ritsumeikan Institute of National Defense Studies was established, headed by Imperial Army officer Ishiwara Kanji (1889-1949)<sup>8</sup> and offering lectures in national defense studies.

Around this time there were also students from Korea, a Japanese colony, studying at Ritsumeikan University. Most of these had entered the university with the aim of moving up in society by studying an advanced academic discipline, typically law, after having spent some time in the workforce. After graduating from university, some of these students found work at public authorities such as the Kyoto and Osaka Municipal Governments. These were the minority, however, as most were employed in the private sector—especially Kyoto's traditional textile industries. Notably, a number also returned to their homeland and took up important roles in the Korean colonial government as well as major mass media outlets such as Pyongyang Broadcasting Station, Korean Broadcasting Station, and The Dong-A Ilbo newspaper.



The Ritsumeikan Imperial Guard (From the 1939 Graduation Album)

Under the so-called "student mobilization" in 1943 that involved abolishing the exemption from military service for university students, 3,149 Ritsumeikan students were sent to the battlefield, and 89 (Source: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Compilation Project) lost their lives. Although this was national government policy at the time, the fact that Ritsumeikan, an educational institution, complied with it is something that we must reflect on deeply and keep in our memories forever. 33 (Source: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Compilation Project) Korean and Taiwanese students of Ritsumeikan University were expelled for failing to join the military, but the university later restored the honor of these students by revoking their expulsion and awarding them special certificates of



Ritsumeikan students leaving for the war, 1943 (Showa 18)

graduation. In March 1996, these certificates were presented in person to nine former students from Korea and one from Taiwan whose whereabouts could be ascertained.

#### 4. A New Departure for Ritsumeikan: Suekawa Hiroshi and "Peace and Democracy"

On October 7, 1944, Ritsumeikan's founder Nakagawa Kojūrō passed away at the age of 78. His successor in the post of Chancellor was Ishihara Hiroichirō. A graduate of Ritsumeikan in the days when it was known as Kyoto Hosei University, Ishihara was an industrialist who had devoted himself to the development of Southeast Asia, and knew Nakagawa well from his time as president of the Bank of Taiwan. Ishihara had watched Ritsumeikan develop while serving as a Trustee, and soon set to work on reforms aimed to establish a new approach to managing the Academy. However, Ishihara's appointment was followed shortly by Japan's defeat.

The Second World War came to an end with Japan's unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945. The following day, the under-secretaries of the Ministries of Education and Welfare issued official notices cancelling the student mobilization. This allowed Ritsumeikan University to hold its commencement ceremony on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, and begin classes on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The first meeting of the Board of Trustees after the surrender



Suekawa Hiroshi, First Post War President and Chancellor

was held on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and it confirmed a plan to begin work on democratic education reforms. This move resulted in the abolishment of the Ritsumeikan East Asia Research Institute, the Ritsumeikan National Polity Research Institute, the Ritsumeikan Institute of National Defense Studies, and the Japanese sword forge.

Ritsumeikan University's academy-building activities during the war were seen as especially vigorous, even in the context of the militaristic atmosphere of society at the time. For this reason, in the immediate aftermath of the war, rumors arose that the Ritsumeikan organization may even be dismantled. There was a need to spell out a robust vision for Ritsumeikan's rebirth as a new type of academic institution. Ishihara outlined the need for new leadership for Ritsumeikan University. The person singled out as representative of the new Ritsumeikan was Suekawa Hiroshi, an individual who had also been held in high regard by the Ritsumeikan's founder, Nakagawa. Suekawa had fought hard to defend academic freedom during the abovementioned Takigawa incident. The decision was taken to appoint Suekawa as Chancellor so that Ritsumeikan University could contribute to the task of creating a peaceful society and enabling democracy to take root in Japan.

Born in 1892 in the village of Kuga in Kuga District, Yamaguchi Prefecture (present-day Iwakuni City), Suekawa Hiroshi completed studies in the Kyoto Imperial University Graduate School of Law, and was appointed Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the same university in 1919. For approximately three years beginning in 1922, Suekawa undertook legal research at several universities including Harvard and Princeton, and became a Professor of Kyoto Imperial University in 1925. After resigning from Kyoto Imperial University following the Takigawa incident, Suekawa was hired as a lecturer at Ritsumeikan University, then moved to Osaka University of Commerce (now Osaka Metropolitan University) in 1933, where he was promoted to professor in 1940.

A plan for the fundamental reform of the Ritsumeikan Academy was tabled and approved at an emergency meeting of the Board of Trustees on November 1, 1945. Suekawa Hiroshi's nomination as Chancellor of Ritsumeikan University was approved unanimously by the Board on November 6. These board meetings that determined the basic direction of postwar reforms and installed Suekawa as Chancellor constituted a major step forward in the transformation of the Ritsumeikan Academy. Suekawa explained: "We cannot expect autonomy or freedom of research in government-run universities. Most of the prestigious universities in the West are private. I believe that it is only in private academic institutions that we can genuinely pursue, and achieve, research that is true to our academic conscience."

In 1946, Suekawa set to work on drastic reforms of Ritsumeikan University, and adopted the words "freedom" and "democracy" as the university's educational philosophy, in line with the new Constitution of Japan and Basic Law on Education. The university formally re-launched in 1948, when it became one of the 12 universities nationwide to gain first approval under the new postwar university system. The following year saw the establishment of a new system for electing the Chancellor through representatives composed of members of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Councilors, full-time faculty and staff members, and students. The Plenary Council of the University was also created to build consensus on major operational issues. Membership of the Plenary Council was extended to representatives of all parts of the organization including the Board of Trustees, Faculty Council, Student Union, and Faculty/Staff Union. Suekawa thus made the utmost effort to expand forums for discussion between undergraduate and graduate students, faculty/staff members, and the Board of Trustees, and to advance academic affairs democratically. Suekawa's philosophy fostered what became known as "Ritsumeikan-style democracy," an approach unparalleled in other universities.

We must never forget the Wadatsumi-zo sculpture, which was erected as a symbol of Ritsumeikan University's philosophy of "peace and democracy." The statue's story begins in 1949 with the publication of *Kike Wadatsumi no Koe* (Listen to the Voices from the Sea), a collection of writings by students who had lost their lives during the war. The word Wadatsumi is a variant of Wadanokami, meaning "god who rules the sea." There was a huge response to the publication of this collection, and the Fallen Student Soldier Memorial Society of Japan, commonly known as the Wadatsumi-kai, was formed. With the proceeds from the sales of the publication, the sculptor Hongo Shin (1905-1980) was commissioned to create a memorial sculpture for the students who had lost their lives in the war. He had obtained informal consent from Nanbara Shigeru, then president of the University of Tokyo, to install the sculpture on the University of Tokyo campus. The pedestal for the sculpture was designed by then Associate Professor Tange Kenzō of the Faculty of Engineering, and preparations were made for its unveiling on December 8, 1951, the anniversary of the start of the Pacific War. However, on December 4, just before the sculpture's unveiling, the Board of Trustees, the highest decision-making body of the University of Tokyo, rejected



Unveiling of the Wadatsumi Statue, 1953 (Showa 28)

the installation of the sculpture.

Hongo created the Wadatsumi-zo sculpture as a symbol of all the people whose lives were lost due to the war. However, the work was talked about and seen by society through the narrow framework of an "idol" symbolizing "university students who were forced to interrupt their studies and died in the war due to student mobilization." The Wadatsumi-kai launched a campaign to demand its installation, but the University of Tokyo's decision remained unchanged, and no other universities agreed to install it. For the next two years, the Wadatsumi-zo sculpture stayed in Hongo's studio.

At Ritsumeikan University, the "Ritsumeikan Branch of the Wadatsumi-kai" was formed and proposed holding a "Memorial Service for All Ritsumeikan Students Who Lost Their Lives in the War" to commemorate the fallen who were connected to Ritsumeikan. An executive committee was organized by the Student Government Board, the Athletic Association, and the Faculty/Staff Union. Then on December 8, 1951, the Memorial Service for All Ritsumeikan Students Who Lost Their Lives in the War was held, and the Ritsumeikan Branch of the Wadatsumi-kai voted on a proposal to welcome the Wadatsumi-zo sculpture to the university. Chancellor Suekawa said in his speech that day, "We will not allow students to be sent to the battlefield again," and thus Ritsumeikan University's love of the Wadatsumi-zo sculpture began. With strong support from both inside and outside the university, the sculpture's unveiling ceremony was held at Ritsumeikan University on December 8, 1953, the anniversary of the start of the Pacific War.

- 1 Genrō ("principal elders") is the name given to a group of elder statesmen, active in the Japanese political sphere from the late 1800s to the 1930s, whose power had no constitutional or statutory basis. The nature of the genrō varied with the prevailing political conditions, but they eventually lost their significance and disappeared. Born into the imperial court nobility, Saionji Kinmochi was the only genrō who was not from either Satsuma or Chōshū, the two feudal domains behind the Meiji Restoration.
- 2 A painter and Confucian scholar of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Born in Sanjō-dori Shinmachi-higashi (now part of Chukyo Ward) in Kyoto, Tessai is known as being Japan's last true bunjin (litterateur).
- 3 Calligrapher, poet and physician. Born in the village of Shimosakanaka in Sakata District, Ōmi Province (now Nagahama City). Worked as principal of the private academy Ritsumeikan, and taught Confucian studies.
- 4 A revolutionary government established by the citizens of Paris. Although it was short-lived, lasting from March 18 to May 28, 1871, it was the world's first revolutionary government formed by the working classes.
- 5 San'in-dō chinbu sōtoku: a temporary bureaucratic position created at the time of the Boshin War (1868-9). In the Battle of Toba-Fushimi, Saionji Kinmochi was appointed placating officer for the northern districts, and later transferred to a position in the governor's office of Echigoguchi in charge of placating the Aizu region
- 6 Published in *Chūgaku Bungei* in 1906, this work begins as follows: "In those days in Tokyo there was only one place with the name 'middle school'...The school was divided into regular and irregular courses, with the regular offering a general curriculum, and the irregular focusing on English. The irregular course had people like Kano, who is now President of the University of Letters in Kyoto, and Okada Ryōhei, while I was in the regular course, together with the likes of Yanagiya Usaburō and Nakagawa Kojūrō."
- 7 Established in 1888 by the household of wealthy merchant Kajimaya Kyūemon. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it grew steadily into one of the top city banks, with branches across Japan. It fell into crisis during the financial crisis of the late 1920s, and closed in 1937. Its assets were transferred to banks including the present-day MUFG Bank and Resona Bank.
- 8 A military officer active in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born in the town of Tsuruoka in Nishitagawa District, Yamaguchi Prefecture (now Tsuruoka City). Author of works including *Sekaishi Daikan* (Survey of War History) and *Sekai Saishū Sensō* (The Final World War).
- 9 Founding member of the Sculpture Section of the Shinseisaku Art Society. Born in Sapporo Ward (now Sapporo City), Hokkaido. Recipient of the Noma Art Prize in 1944.

## II Development of the Philosophy and Organization of Ritsumeikan University

### 1. Conflict and a Deepening Commitment to “Peace and Democracy”: From Campus Unrest to University Reform and Academic Renewal

Japanese universities underwent immense changes in the 1960s, and Ritsumeikan University was no exception. The years around 1965 to 1967 were when children born in the first postwar baby boom of 1947-49 reached the age of university entrance. This baby-boom generation was not only large in number, but also characterized by rising university entrance rates driven by Japan’s high economic growth at the time. The generation came to experience intense competition for entrance to university, as university changed from being a place reserved for a small elite class to a destination for vast numbers of ordinary people. The student population at Ritsumeikan University, for example, rose steeply from 9,465 in 1951 to 22,407 in 1969, while tuition fees were raised once every two years up to 1963 in order to support educational improvements. Those who won through in the competition for university entrance, however, mostly found themselves studying in large lecture halls packed full of students, listening to instructors lecturing unilaterally, with little opportunity for dialogue or intellectual exchange between students and instructors. Many students were left disappointed by their university experience, and their sense of isolation and disillusionment grew. This was the context for the breakout of student unrest on university campuses across Japan. In Ritsumeikan University, the perspectives and arguments of students were respected through the Plenary Council system, which positioned not only faculty and administrative staff but also students as participants in university management, but there was unrest on campus nonetheless.



Office desks, chairs and other items strewn around Kōshinkan building on the Hirokoji campus, after occupation by student protesters

The student movement of the 1960s was a worldwide phenomenon rather than a Japan-specific one. British historian Eric Hobsbawm describes how tensions arose between the mass of students that had suddenly flowed into universities, and the university system that was unprepared for them physically, organizationally, or intellectually, how students were angered by the various limitations placed on them, and how their anger at university authority easily spread into anger at all forms of authority.

Among the key actors in the student unrest in Japan were the groups known as All Campus Joint Struggle Committees (Zenkyōtō) that were formed within each university. The philosophies and concerns of the Zenkyōtō movement cannot be summarized or assessed in simple terms, but Zenkyōtō groups engaged in violent protests arguing for “self-repudiation of the elite” and the “dismantling of universities.” On May 20, 1969, the

Ritsumeikan University Zenkyōtō tore down the Wadatsumi Statue that stood on the Hirokoji Campus. The Zenkyōtō explained that they had done so because the ideals of “peace and democracy” that the statue represented had, by 1969, become part of the logic of the established system, devoid of their original spirit and rendered hollow and insubstantial. This action, however, was widely criticized all across Japan, and Ritsumeikan University resolved immediately to install a replacement. The original sculptor Hongō Shin was engaged to re-cast the statue, and it was re-installed the following year, 1970.



The Wadatsumi Statue destroyed

Student protests later subsided, but in the process of overcoming the unrest, Ritsumeikan redefined its traditional concept of university self-government (which referred to the autonomy of the faculty council), and formulated a new approach known as “autonomy of academic creation” and “self-government by all constituents,” involving faculty, administrative staff, and students each contributing their own distinctive perspectives as proactive participants in the development of the university. These were revolutionary changes, the likes of which were not found in other universities. They provided a basis for self-motivated, democratic university reforms that enabled the implementation of educational improvements responsive to students’ needs. Ritsumeikan University thus moved toward an even deeper commitment to “peace and democracy”—the eradication of violence from university campuses and the creation of student-led learning—in the wake of the student unrest.

It is also important to note that in the 1960s the university moved to a six-college structure. Beginning the postwar period with the four Colleges of Law, Economics, Letters, and Science and Engineering, the College of Business Administration was established in 1962, and the College of Social Sciences in 1965.

### 2. Establishment of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace: Collaborating with Local Citizens, Giving Shape to Ritsumeikan’s Educational Philosophy

Under the postwar leadership of Chancellor Suekawa Hiroshi, Ritsumeikan University had proclaimed the educational philosophy of “freedom and democracy,” but its next challenge was to put the philosophy into action in education and research. This was a challenge not just for Ritsumeikan University alone, but one for the whole of Japanese society, which had moved from a system based on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan to the new Constitution of Japan, and had been striving to dismantle and overcome the imperialism of former times. The basic principles of the Constitution of Japan (protection of human rights, democracy, and pacifism) were positioned as the norms determining the direction of education and research in Japanese universities, and they were internalized in the case of Ritsumeikan University through the educational philosophy of “peace and democracy.”

The postwar world, however, witnessed the onset of the Cold War, civil war in China, the Korean War, and continued development of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race. The whole world was gripped by the fear of a nuclear showdown between the United States and the Soviet Union. These conditions led to the worldwide advancement of peace studies, peace education and peace movements as a means of securing survival for the human race. Chancellor Suekawa was one of the leaders of the peace movement in Kyoto, together with Doshisha University President Tabata Shinobu.

One of the characteristic forms of peace activism throughout Japan in the 1980s was the holding of “war exhibitions.” These exhibitions displayed artifacts, testimonies, reproductions (dioramas, replicas, models), and interpretive panels that conveyed the realities of both victims and aggressors in the Asia-Pacific War, in an attempt to preserve ordinary people’s experience of war as accurately as possible and connect it with the task of peace-building into the future. Kyoto’s first “War Exhibition for Peace” was held in 1981, and became an annual event in early August thereafter. Between 2,000 and 4,000 items were exhibited each year, and the event attracted between 100,000 and 200,000 visitors annually during the 1980s. At the end of the decade, those involved in organizing the exhibition resolved to sustain and advance its success by building a permanent “war museum for the pursuit of peace.”

Meanwhile, at Ritsumeikan University, a 1988 Plenary Council representatives’ meeting had discussed building a new student seminar house open for use by the local community, and to host within it a peace archive or peace studies center, to which the Wadatsumi Statue would be relocated. Those involved in the war exhibition movement were thus brought together with associates of Ritsumeikan University, home to the Wadatsumi Statue, and aided by a donation of 500 million yen from the ophthalmologist Nakano Nobuo, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace was opened in 1992. The inaugural Director of the Museum was Katō Shūichi, a Visiting Professor of the College of International Relations. The basic collection at the time of opening comprised around 4,000 items that had been gathered and exhibited in the Kyoto War Exhibition for Peace. The rebuilt Wadatsumi Statue was given a safe home within the new museum.

Local governments in regions with harsh wartime experiences tend to build and operate peace museums to pass these experiences on and to mourn and commemorate those who lost their lives. Examples include the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, and the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum. Ritsumeikan University’s Kyoto Museum for World Peace is a university peace museum without parallel anywhere in the world. Grounded in the principle of academic freedom, working collaboratively with the



Kyoto Museum for World Peace

university’s education and research activities, and with the cooperation of local volunteers, the museum has collected and preserved materials related to war, and used exhibits that tell the real stories of war to pose questions to wider society. Ritsumeikan University was complicit both before and during the war waged by Japan in the Asia-Pacific, and sent many students to their death via student mobilization. Operating the Kyoto Museum for World Peace can be seen as a way for Ritsumeikan University to take responsibility for these acts.



The inaugural Director of the Museum  
Mr. Shuichi Kato

In 2005, thirteen years after opening, the museum underwent a first major refurbishment, unveiling a peace-building exhibition space in addition to its war-related exhibits. Ever since its founding, the museum had operated on the understanding that “peace museums are not war museums, but places for building peace”: the 2005 refurbishment gave concrete shape to this understanding. The war-related exhibits are based on historical studies, but the exhibits on building peace are driven by peace studies. For several years in the late 1990s, Ritsumeikan University hosted Dr. Johan Galtung, known worldwide as the father of peace studies, as a Visiting Professor, and this provided a great intellectual stimulus to the university. The museum’s peace-building collection prompts visitors to consider questions of who creates peace, and how. It addresses the role of institutions including the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

More than 30 years after it opened, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace conducted a second refurbishment and reopened in September 2023. This one was centered on new ways of thinking about building peace, such as “human security” and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Informed by these ways of thinking, and with a view to raising the quality of education and research at Ritsumeikan University as a comprehensive academic institution that gives shape to diversity and inclusion, improvements were made to both “soft” features such as museum exhibits and “hard” features of the *Academeia Ritsumei 21* building that houses the museum. Moreover, the approach to curation adopted in the museum refurbishment involved (1) developing exhibits that stimulate awareness of problems: in other words, those which, through the materials on display, invite visitors to ask “why” and connect with their autonomous learning in post-visit studies and work; and (2) rethinking the notion of historical depiction: in other words, developing exhibitions that enable multi-faceted understandings of the phenomena of “war” and connections to issues in the present.

### 3. Student Involvement in University Management: The Plenary Council and Chancellor Election System

“Self-government by all constituents” is a basic principle in the management of Ritsumeikan University. This means that key matters relating the university’s operations should be decided through processes of debate and consensus-building that respect the arguments and standpoints of all actors and constituents of the university. Here, “constituents” means the Board of Trustees that oversees the university’s management, the faculty councils of each College, the Student Union and Federation of Graduate Students Associations that represent undergraduate and graduate students respectively, the faculty and staff union, and the University Co-op as an observer. It is especially important that student representatives are involved in management of the university. This may be seen as a progressive idea from the perspective of Japanese universities, but it resonates with moves by universities in Europe and North America to position students as “partners” in university operation. The principle of self-government by all constituents at Ritsumeikan University is reflected principally in two systems: the Plenary Council of the University and the system used to elect the Chancellor.

The Plenary Council of the University is a forum for the various constituents of the university—the Executive Board of Trustees (trustees and college deans), the Student Union and Federation of Graduate Students Associations (representing undergraduate and graduate students), the Faculty and Staff Union, and the Co-op (as observer)—to come together and discuss reforms and improvements to various aspects of education, research, and campus life. The Plenary Council was established in 1948 on the initiative of the Student Union, and while it has been through changes in terms of frequency and format, it remains one of the most important forums for deliberation on university policy. According to the Ritsumeikan University Plenary Council Rules drawn up in 1988, the Plenary Council discusses matters relating to (1) educational improvements and assistance for student life; (2) tuition and financial management of the Ritsumeikan Academy; and (3) major project plans for the Academy. The most heated debates are over the revision of tuition fees and the provision of educational improvements and student support commensurate to revised tuition levels, but there are also numerous cases of proposals tabled at the Plenary Council by the Student Union and Federation of Graduate Students Associations being given concrete shape in educational reforms.

The Plenary Council held in AY2022 was historically significant for two reasons. First, by enabling students and the Executive Board of Trustees to engage in exploratory discussions based on their respective ownership of the issues, we reached a new stage in the practice of self-governance by all members with an eye toward realizing the R2030 Academy Vision. Second, we were able to reaffirm the roles, functions, and value of the Plenary Council, which Ritsumeikan has always valued. At the same time, the Student Union reaffirmed and redefined its own responsibilities as follows: (1) to engage in discussions about how tuition funds are used and what forms of learning they support based on an understanding of the university’s tuition and financial policies, and (2) to work together with the university in facing the situation now and in the foreseeable future while contributing ideas for building a better university. Clarifying this position led to the Student Union’s formal declaration of a shift from its conventional Demands Realization Campaign to a Campus Co-Creation Campaign at the AY2023 Representatives Meeting of the Plenary Council. Meanwhile, at the AY2024 Representatives

Meeting of the Plenary Council, the Federation of Graduate Students Associations also expressed their desire to continue to play a role in sharing the specific challenges facing graduate students.

The Plenary Council is a consultative forum for the whole of Ritsumeikan University, but within each college there are also Five-way Discussion Meetings held periodically between college student councils and faculty members (deans, associate deans, and assistant deans). All students are expected to participate in university management through their student councils at college level and the Student Union at university-wide level. In each of the graduate schools, there is a system of Graduate School Discussion Meetings, similar to the college-level Five-way Discussion Meetings, in which the student council of the graduate school engages in discussion with the school’s faculty members (dean, associate deans, and assistant deans). At the AY2022 Plenary Council, it was confirmed that: (1) venues would be established for discussions with the Student Union concerning tuition and financial policies; and (2) multi-level forums would be created for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in dialogue on education and university development (the Five-way Discussion Meetings and discussion meetings with various organizations within the university). It was also confirmed that the discussions held in these two discussion meetings are closely connected to the concept of involving undergraduate and graduate students in the future development of education and the university itself.

The Chancellor of Ritsumeikan is the President of Ritsumeikan University, but also has overall responsibility for academic affairs of the Ritsumeikan Academy, which encompasses Ritsumeikan University, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High Schools, Ritsumeikan Uji Junior and Senior High Schools, Ritsumeikan Keicho Junior and Senior High Schools, Ritsumeikan Moriyama Junior and Senior High Schools, and Ritsumeikan Elementary School. For this reason, all faculty and administrative staff members and students (excluding junior high and elementary school students) of all the universities and schools in the Ritsumeikan Academy have voting rights, and select voter representatives in their respective electoral divisions, who then elect the Chancellor of Ritsumeikan. In this way, graduate students, undergraduate students, and senior high school students all have a say in who is elected Chancellor. A system that involves selection of a Chancellor and University President from such a wide spectrum of constituents may well be a rarity the world over. The term of office of the Ritsumeikan Chancellor is four years, so all students will experience an election once during their undergraduate degree programs.

The aim of university education is the nurture and empower students. We hope that through the Plenary Council and Chancellor elections, each and every student



The Plenary Council of the University

has a say in the kind of university education they hope to receive. In the student unrest of the 1960s, some students chose to express their objections in a violent manner. At Ritsumeikan University today, we seek to improve university education through communication and dialogue between students, faculty and staff, based on the principles of autonomy, democracy, fairness, openness, and anti-violence.

#### **4. Student Initiative in University Education: Students as Proactive Mutual Learners**

The style of learning followed up to senior high school level is often one in which a teacher teaches students the “correct” answers, and students learn from their teachers. Even so, active learning has become more popular today, so some students entering university will already have experienced a style that requires them to discover and solve problems by thinking actively for themselves. University education develops this style of learning even further. It is very rare for questions arising in the course of academic studies to have one single correct answer. Academia is a series of difficult questions that may have a number of different “provisional answers” or possibly no “correct answer” at all. The issue is how you think about the questions.

At university, students are expected to take the initiative in their learning. There are many opportunities for students to learn from one another rather than passively awaiting instructions from a teacher. The Foundation Seminar, a small-class subject for first-year students, is an important introductory class in all colleges. A number of second- and third-year students are assigned to each seminar class as Orientation Conductors, providing peer support to newly enrolled students. The Orientation Conductor system has its origins in the support activities for new students undertaken by student associations since the 1960s, which were later formalized as a university program. One of the strengths of learning at Ritsumeikan University is the “learning community” created proactively by learners themselves. People learn best when they are teaching others. Students learn not only from instructors but also from their fellow students.

This kind of learning deepens students’ specialized knowledge as well as connecting with autonomous, self-directed research activities that generate new knowledge. The Ritsumeikan Trust’s R2030 vision sets out the ideals that Ritsumeikan will aim for toward 2030, and as part of this vision, we are now working to realize the concept of a “next-generation research university.” Under this concept of the university, it is not just faculty members who engage in high-level research: each and every member of the university community has their own research topic, actively pursues research activities, and continues to generate new knowledge. We hope that all of you too, as part of this community of research activity, will take the initiative to embark on your own projects and pursue learning that generates new knowledge.

#### **5. A University that Continues to Grow through Collaboration: Partnerships with the Local Community, Industry-Academia-Government Collaboration, and International Partnerships**

The question of how to formulate relationships between universities, society and government is a complex one. Ritsumeikan University is a private university, so it has a higher degree of autonomy and independence from



Hirokoji Campus



The Kinugasa Campus shortly after consolidation



Biwako Kusatsu Campus



Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU)

government than national and municipal universities. It appeals to society, and is evaluated by society, based on its distinctive approaches to education shaped by its founding principles. We may say that Ritsumeikan is sustained by the society around it.

Ritsumeikan University was originally centered on the Hirokoji Campus (around where the Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine Library is located today), with the College of Science and Engineering on the Kinugasa Campus. The humanities and social science colleges that were on the Hirokoji campus gradually relocated to Kinugasa beginning in 1965, and with the relocation of the College of Law in 1981, the entire university was consolidated into the single campus at Kinugasa. At this point, the university was composed of six Colleges: Law, Economics, Business Administration, Letters, Social Sciences, and Science and Engineering. It is not rare for universities, in the course of responding to the talent development and research needs of society and pursuing deeper, more sophisticated and novel education and research initiatives, to expand their existing colleges and establish new ones. This often requires the development of new campuses. This was precisely what happened at Ritsumeikan University following the Kinugasa Campus consolidation.

In 1988, in order to respond to the need for more talent to lead the internationalization of Japanese society, Ritsumeikan University established its seventh college: the College of International Relations. This was the first

international relations college to be established in West Japan. Around the same time, the university moved to develop the research and educational structures of the College of Science and Engineering, whose advancement had lagged behind other universities. With the assistance of the governments of Shiga Prefecture and Kusatsu City, Ritsumeikan procured an expansive campus site in Kusatsu, and opened the Biwako-Kusatsu Campus (BKC) in 1994 with the relocation and expansion of the College of Science and Engineering. In the same year as this relocation, the university's eighth college, the College of Policy Science, was established. This new college's aim was to discover problems in society and explore different ways of solving them.

One of the effects of the opening of BKC and expansion and relocation of the College of Science and Engineering was dramatic advancement of industry-academia-government collaboration. Many manufacturing companies had factories and research institutes in Shiga Prefecture, and the relocation of the College of Science and Engineering to Kusatsu created an environment in which the college's research labs and research groups could pursue joint research and development in partnership with companies. The Shiga Prefectural Government played the role of coordinator of these connections between the university and industry, and industry-academia-government collaboration progressed. This kind of collaboration was also promoted by the policies of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. It could be said that the college relocation and opening of BKC dramatically advanced the research and education capacity of Ritsumeikan University through partnerships with local government and industry. This same approach to campus creation and advancement of new research and education through local government and industry partnerships was reflected in the establishment of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) in Beppu City, Oita Prefecture in 2000, and the opening of the Osaka Ibaraki Campus (OIC) in Ibaraki City, Osaka Prefecture in 2015. APU is sustained by the local community of Beppu City, as is OIC by the local community of Ibaraki City.

Opened in 1994, BKC became the new home for the Colleges of Economics and Business Administration in 1998, enabling the study of economics and business administration to be advanced in a locality that is rich in mercantile traditions. Meanwhile, the Department of Information Science and Engineering that had been established in 1987 broke off from the College of Science and Engineering in 2004 to become a new College of Information Science and Engineering. This was Ritsumeikan University's ninth undergraduate college, and is now one of the largest information science colleges in Japan. On the Kinugasa Campus, the university's tenth college, the College of Image Arts and Sciences was established in 2007. This college takes an integrative approach to the three fields of art, business, and technology. The following years saw a spectacular succession of expansions and developments in the fields of science and engineering at BKC. In 2008, an



Osaka Ibaraki Campus (OIC)

independent College of Life Sciences, centering on the Department of Applied Chemistry, separated from the College of Science and Engineering, while a College of Pharmaceutical Sciences was also established with close connections to the chemical and life sciences. These were Ritsumeikan University's eleventh and twelfth colleges respectively, and each one now pursues research and education focused on explicating the phenomena of life at the atomic and molecular levels and applying insights for the welfare of humankind. These were joined in 2010 by a thirteenth college, the College of Sport and Health Science, which boasts one of Japan's top teams of researchers and facilities for education and research in the sciences of the human body, exercise, and health.

The Osaka Ibaraki Campus (OIC) was opened in 2015. The College of Policy Science and College of Business Administration moved to this new campus from Kinugasa and BKC respectively. In the following year, 2016, OIC became home to the university's fourteenth college, the College of Comprehensive Psychology, which was an expansion of the former Department of Psychology within the College of Letters.

In 2018, The College of Gastronomy Management, the university's fifteenth college, was opened at BKC. Moreover, the College of Global Liberal Arts, established at OIC in 2019 as Ritsumeikan University's sixteenth college. This college is currently operating a dual degree program in cooperation with the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University (ANU), under which students can earn two degrees, one from Ritsumeikan University and one from ANU, in four years. Moreover, in 2024, the College of Image Arts and Sciences and the College of Information Science and Engineering moved to OIC.

In 2026, the College of Arts and Design, our 17th college, opened in Kinugasa. This new college will transcend the natural sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences based on the pursuit of a new kind of design studies and the technology and sensibility of art.



University of British Columbia



American University

When discussing partnerships, mention must be made of the remarkable growth in international partnerships in university education following the establishment of the College of International Relations in 1988. Naturally, individual students of Ritsumeikan have much to gain from studying abroad on their own. However, one of the main currents in recent decades has been the advancement of organized international partnerships in university education. In 1991, Ritsumeikan University launched a joint program with the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. In 1994, a Dual University Degree Program (DUDP) was initiated between Ritsumeikan University and American University. Students on this program spend two years studying at Ritsumeikan University



Australian National University



Group photograph of newly-enrolled students and others involved in the International School of Information Science and Engineering

and two at American University in Washington DC, earning two bachelor's degrees in the space of four years. Many universities in Japan operate such dual degree programs today, but the Ritsumeikan-American University program was the first of its kind in Japan when it was launched in 1994. This international partnership between the two universities was further strengthened in 2018 by the launch of the American University – Ritsumeikan University Joint Degree Program in the College of International Relations (an even more integrated, collaborative program leading to the award of a joint degree). As mentioned earlier, the College of Global Liberal Arts, established at OIC in 2019, is operated on an international collaborative basis in the form of a dual degree program between Ritsumeikan University and the Australian National University. Other notable cases of advanced international collaboration include the College of Letters' Campus Asia Program (a joint Japan-China-Korea program operated by Ritsumeikan University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and Dongseo University) and the International School of Information Science and Engineering run jointly by the College of Information Science and Engineering and the Dalian University of Technology in China.

Ritsumeikan University has made remarkable progress in internationalization since the opening of the College of International Relations. Ritsumeikan University students study at other universities all over the world, while international students from around the world come to Ritsumeikan to study as well. We could say that Ritsumeikan University is sustained by its links with the local community, Japanese society, and the global community. And our university is constantly growing through its many and varied partnerships.

## III What is Ritsumeikan University Aiming to Achieve?

In AY2025, we celebrated the 155th anniversary of the founding of Ritsumeikan and the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Academy. The messages from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor that were issued that year reflect their pride in the progress Ritsumeikan made to date as well as their strong determination to pave the way for the future.

As you read this chapter, we invite you to reflect on where Ritsumeikan stands today and where it is headed.

Ritsumeikan traces its history back to 1869 when Prince Saionji Kinmochi, a major politician and cosmopolitan of early modern Japan, founded a private academy called Ritsumeikan. Carrying on the spirit of liberalism and internationalism championed by Prince Saionji, Kojuro Nakagawa founded the predecessor to Ritsumeikan University, the Kyoto Hosei School, in 1900. Ritsumeikan would go on to overcome many hardships under its founding spirit of "Freedom and Innovation" and its educational philosophy of "Peace and Democracy," and it has since evolved into a comprehensive private academy with a highly diverse student body of approximately 50,000 students across two universities, four affiliated junior and senior high schools, and one affiliated primary school.

To realize the ideal society of the future, we formulated the R2030 Challenge Design to serve as our vision, and we are working to elaborate upon this plan, under which Ritsumeikan University aims to become a next-generation research university that creates new value for coexisting with society and a university that creates innovation and produces emerging talent, and the R2030 Academy aims to become a next-generation inquiry-based learning academy.

In 2025, which marks the 155th anniversary of the founding of Ritsumeikan and the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Academy, we must embody the spirit of the R2030 Challenge Design and use this as the guiding principle for ushering the world into a new era. Based on the concept of "Ritsumeikan for Social Impact," which depicts what shape the society of the future should take and expresses our determination to become an academy that can truly contribute to the world, we will implement a wide range of projects to solve the issues facing society.

At Ritsumeikan University, on the occasion of the relocation of the College and Graduate School of Information Science and Engineering and the College and Graduate School of Image Arts and Sciences to Osaka Ibaraki Campus, we will further promote open innovation and demonstrate new kinds of social co-creation. At Kinugasa Campus, we are deliberating and planning the establishment of the College of Arts and Design and the Graduate School of Science in Arts and Design in 2026. This new college and graduate school will transcend the natural sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences based on the pursuit of a new kind of design studies and the technology and sensibility of art. At Biwako-Kusatsu Campus, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, we have established the Ritsumeikan University Earth & Space Exploration Center (ESEC), the first-ever institute in Japan that aims to expand the humanosphere into outer space, and we are pursuing cutting-edge research to this end. Furthermore, we will implement various projects to realize our goal of becoming a "next-generation research university" by engaging in intellectual collaboration that only a comprehensive university can achieve, such as pioneering

new research areas in the field of well-being and creating startups for the future.

Meanwhile, with the opening of the College of Sustainability and Tourism, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) has declared its "second inception" under the leadership of a new president and has undertaken reforms to both education and research. Going forward, it will strengthen partnerships with science and engineering universities and strive to develop global human resources equipped with an interdisciplinary knowledge of science and the humanities. Based on its vision of producing "graduates who possess the power to change the world," APU is accelerating its efforts to build a Global Learning Community.

The affiliated schools will work to deepen inquiry-based learning at each school and further enhance integrated primary, secondary, upper secondary, tertiary, and post-graduate education that harnesses Ritsumeikan's potential as a comprehensive academy. As a leader in primary and secondary education in Japan, Ritsumeikan will develop human resources who can undertake the challenge of solving myriad social issues.

Under the banner of Ritsumeikan for Social Impact, at this major milestone, the Ritsumeikan Academy will pave the way to the society of the future by creating new value and solving global issues. We hope you will look forward to Ritsumeikan's ambitious endeavors that embody the key concept of our mid-term plan: "Challenge your mind. Change our Future"

(Source: Greeting from the Chairperson and the Chancellor, Ritsumeikan Anniversary Site)



### 1. The Ritsumeikan Charter and Communication Mark

On July 21, 2006, some 106 years after the opening of the Kyoto Hosei School, the Ritsumeikan Charter was established to ensure that those connected to the Ritsumeikan Academy share the Academy's mission and philosophy, and disseminate it to society at large. The Charter is mentioned at the opening of this chapter, and its significance and content are explained in sections 1 to 3.

In October 2007, the Ritsumeikan Academy also adopted a "communication mark" designed to "unite the spirit" of all people associated with Ritsumeikan. This mark is utilized by Ritsumeikan to strengthen communication with wider society.

The concept behind this mark is the ideal of student development expressed through these words in the Ritsumeikan Charter: "Ritsumeikan will foster learning and the development of individual talents in order to nurture just and ethical global citizens." Art director Akiyama Gugi has encapsulated this ideal in a capital letter "R" for

Ritsumeikan, designed in a gothic font to add a sense of robustness and reliability.

Ritsumeikan Academy uses this mark as a way to strengthen its communication activities with society.

## 2. Formulating the R2030 Challenge Design: Challenge your mind, Change our future

Since its inception in 1900 with the founding ideals of “Freedom and Innovation” and the educational philosophy of “Peace and Democracy”, the Ritsumeikan Academy has striven to fulfill its fundamental mission, as an institute of education and research, of promoting peace, democracy, and sustainable development in Japan and throughout the world. To this end, we have undertaken numerous reforms over the years to provide society with new value suited to the times.

Since 2011, we have pursued community service and institutional development efforts under the banner of the R2020 Academy Vision and its slogan “Creating a Future Beyond Borders”. However, society already shows signs of future monumental change and upheaval. Thus, in looking to the future, the Ritsumeikan Academy, guided by its founding ideals of “Freedom and Innovation”, and taking the realization of the R2020 Academy Vision as a firm foundation, must seek to ensure even greater freedom of thought, even greater freedom to tackle any challenge.

In the year 2030, what kind of era will we find ourselves in? The coming together of a number of complicated factors - the advancement of technology, AI and IoT for example, population issues, energy and resources, health and medical care - could potentially overturn our current value systems and methodologies. Indeed, it may not be an exaggeration to say that we will find ourselves in 2030 in an era that has developed from dramatic changes we have yet to imagine, an era palpably different from any we have known thus far, characterized by uncertainty and fluctuation.

Thus, with an eye on the year 2030, the Ritsumeikan Academy must seek approval for bold efforts aimed at painting an ideal picture of the future and turning that picture into reality, in addition to maintaining our reputation for our track record of reforms to date.

Based on this determination, we will strive to realize these initiatives under the banner of the R2030 Academy Vision.

### Challenge your mind Change our future

Going forward, the Ritsumeikan Academy will produce pioneers who can create the future according to their respective wills, and we will continue striving to be a pioneer in our own right.



We have defined six objectives in an effort to realize the R2030 Academy Vision, the ideal shape of the academy, and the ideal qualities in our people. They are as follows.

#### ① Realize The Creation of New Value

We will strive to create new value. We will paint a picture of the ideal future society, and we will support individuals who strive to create new value to realize that ideal.

- Not bound by precedents, our people will define tasks with an eye on making the world a better place. Therefore, we will develop education and research environments that encourage free thought by creating connections with a diverse array of people and knowledge so as to cultivate the ability to independently solve problems.

- Responding to changes in society and keeping an eye on the future, we will create new realms of knowledge based upon the needs of society, and provide venues for the advancement of that knowledge.

- We will enhance research environments for each stage of research (basic, applied, practical application in the real world) to help realize the creation of new value in a variety of scenarios.

#### ② Actively Contribute to Global Society

As the world grows increasingly complex in step with globalization, we will ground ourselves in our ideals, and, showing empathy for and trust in others, we will pursue the globalization of our education and research to help make the world a better place.

- The purpose for pursuing globalization shall be clearly defined as cultivating the attitude of striving to identify and solve the myriad issues that society faces now and will face in the future, and our education and research will seek to embody this notion.

- We will provide an 'assurance of learning' set to international standards and promote educational partnerships that make use of our international networks with overseas universities and other institutions as we seek to enhance our education and research in a global context.

- We will pursue globalization in our education and research in which students who hail from various countries and regions and have different cultural backgrounds can interact and learn together.

#### ③ Evolve Teaching and Research with Technology

In an age in which technology is dramatically changing society, we will appropriately utilize this ever-evolving technology to raise the level of our education and research, and to challenge ourselves to develop technology that can contribute to the creation of a better world.

- We will work to develop new educational systems that enable students to learn freely, regardless of time and place, by utilizing a variety of devices and technologies and enhancing learning support.

· As technology continues to spread at an increasingly rapid pace, we will adopt new know-how and technologies as we promote leading-edge education and research for the next generation.

· Paying heed to trends in technology, we will look to formulate designs for a future society based upon the development of new technology, and we will seek to proactively communicate our ideas to the world at large.

#### ④ Create Future Oriented Campuses

Utilizing our campuses to the fullest, we will strengthen ties with local communities and the world, and we will strive to create new value for the campuses as integral parts of society.

· We will define our campuses, which possess a wealth of intellectual and academic assets, as “model fields” for the betterment of society. Aiming to bring this future vision to life by increasing awareness of our approach on each campus, we will put the results of our efforts into practice in the real world.

· We will eliminate the border between campus and community and share the fruits of our education and research with the public as we create an attractive society for future generations and contribute to the advancement of local culture.

· The utilization of technology will enable universities and schools that choose not to maintain physical campuses to develop new kinds of learning. Amid this backdrop, we will reconfirm the importance of maintaining campuses and turn them into venues for practical application and real-world interaction for students at every level, our faculty and staff, and our alumni.

#### ⑤ Pursue Seamless Institutional Development

To enhance the infrastructure required to create new value, we will strive to offer education and research that is seamless in every sense of the word, including spatially, geographically, and temporally. Specific policies to achieve this are as follows.

· We will provide learners of various generations with opportunities to interact with a diverse array of people from different social and cultural backgrounds, and partake in broad-based learning.

· We will develop uniquely “Ritsumeikan-esque” seamless education and research that transcends the boundaries between and among: Ritsumeikan University, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, and the affiliated schools. We will also accelerate the integration of the humanities and social sciences with the natural sciences and develop new kinds of transdisciplinary education and research.

· We will pursue various cooperative activities with a range of organizations including industry, local government, and NPOs as we seek to develop new kinds of education and research.

#### ⑥ Embrace Diversity for Academy Development

We will strive to pursue Academy development that fully embraces the diversity that derives from the interplay of a wide range of individuals, including students at every level, faculty, staff, and alumni as well as a wide range of organizations.

· We will develop an administrative framework that generates value by maximizing the strengths and unique features of each university and affiliated school. and, in turn, makes the Ritsumeikan Academy stronger and more unique.

· We will cultivate a culture in which organizations and individuals complement each other's growth in value,

wherein organizations actively encourage the development and growth of individuals, and where our diverse student bodies at every level, together with our diverse faculty and staff, can express each other's strengths.

· We will pursue Academy management driven by diversity and the involvement of our wide and varied stakeholders, including alumni and parents all over the world.

These objectives are linked to the Ritsumeikan University Undergraduate Educational Mission and Vision and Postgraduate Educational Mission and Vision, published on March 2, 2018. These are sets of attributes that students should develop through their curricular studies, extracurricular activities, and all other aspects of their lives at Ritsumeikan, and acquire by the time they graduate or complete their degree programs. They are stated as follows:

#### ◆ Ritsumeikan University Undergraduate Educational Mission and Vision

(1) Embrace the values of Peace and Democracy by respecting the diverse values held by others and by emphasizing communication and cooperation.

(2) Innovate existing frameworks and break down restrictive borders by applying the global and local perspectives acquired from a broad general education and studies in a specialized major field, even as they seek out and attempt to solve the problems facing human society, following the values of Freedom and Innovation.

(3) Think and act in a responsible manner based on an awareness of their own individual roles in society and issues discovered within their own lives.

(4) Take actions stemming from lifelong learning as the greatest expression of “believing in the future and living for the future.”

#### ◆ Ritsumeikan University Postgraduate Educational Mission and Vision

(1) Exercise autonomy of thought and action, applying the high ethical standards required of scholars and professionals while giving concrete substance to core ethical values of Peace and Democracy

(2) Make full use of their expert knowledge, skills, and experience while keeping both global and local perspectives, even as they seek out and attempt to solve the problems facing human society, following the values of Freedom and Innovation.

(3) Think and act collaboratively in a dialogic and interdisciplinary manner, showing both awareness of social responsibility and a respect for diverse values, while simultaneously leading toward creation of knowledge and the accomplishment of goals.

(4) Take actions stemming from lifelong learning as the greatest expression of “believing in the future and living for the future.”

### 3. Achieving the SDGs and Realizing Diversity and Inclusion

We expect to articulate Ritsumeikan's unique intentions regarding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030, given that 2030 is the final year of the R2030 Challenge Design as well as the target year for achievement of Japan's country-level SDGs. The SDGs are also closely related to the “creation of values for social co-existence” set forth in the R2030 Challenge Design. With this in mind, we established the Ritsumeikan SDGs

Promotion Headquarters with the Chancellor as director and confirmed that we will work on the development of systems for partnership, talent development, and research toward the resolution of shared global problems. Needless to say, “SDGs” has become an important keyword in current education and research.

RIMIX is an example of an initiative that embodies this ideology. “RIMIX” is the abbreviation for “Ritsumeikan Impact-Makers Inter X (Cross) Platform,” which was established to provide a platform for supporting social entrepreneurs. The purpose of the platform is to clearly propose and support initiatives contributing to solving social issues that should be undertaken by Ritsumeikan Academy, from finding personnel and cultivating their minds, to supporting social implementation and entrepreneurship. These initiatives will be expanded through collaboration not only within the Academy but also with local communities and those outside the Academy. It is truly a “Ritsumeikan Social Entrepreneur Support Platform” that is involved in both in regular classes as well as extracurricular activities, or even all aspects of student life. Specifically, the program aims to bring about dynamic social change by enhancing the qualities and abilities necessary for social entrepreneurs (Impact-Makers) through practical educational programs at Ritsumeikan that develop leaders in achieving the SDGs. We look forward to Ritsumeikan University students actively participating in this initiative and taking on the challenge.

At the same time, “diversity and inclusion” and “global citizenship” in R2030 are the core of the ideal shape of the Academy and ideal qualities of our people, which was established to provide a clearer expression of the culture of recognizing diversity and a variety of individual preferences—a culture that has long been cherished within the Ritsumeikan Academy.

The following explanation has been provided regarding the above-mentioned ideals. An “academy dedicated to realizing diversity and inclusion” is an academy that “generates a multitude of connections while working with others and seeking to understand and respect individual points of view as premised on the range of diversity in society, including diversity among individuals, organizations, regions, countries, religions, customs, cultures and generations.”

Meanwhile, people “equipped with a sense of global citizenship” means people who “recognize that they are members of a global society, and take up the challenge of creating a multicultural society by respecting the standpoints and views of others and seeking harmonious solutions to problems.”

In addition, one of the policy objectives designed to achieve these R2030 ideals is to “embrace diversity for academy development,” which involves pursuing “Academy development that fully embraces the diversity that derives from the interplay of a wide range of individuals, including



students at every level, faculty, staff and alumni as well as a range of organizations.” Another policy objective, to “actively contribute to global society,” states that “as the world grows increasingly complex in step with globalization, we will ground ourselves in our ideals, and, showing empathy for and trust in others, we will pursue the globalization of our education and research to help make the world a better place.”

#### 4. Student Engagement and Collaboration in Ritsumeikan University

Ritsumeikan University has a long history of debate over reforms and improvements to education, research and campus life under the principle of “self-government by all constituents” of the university. The key forum for such discussion is the Plenary Council of the University, an institution established for all those who constitute the university’s “learning community”—undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, and the University (Executive Board of Trustees)—to discuss and engage proactively in reforms and improvements to education, research and campus life. Established in the 1960s, the Plenary Council and its philosophy is the kind of institution and initiative now recognized in major universities around Europe and North America as being crucial to the qualitative enhancement of learning and teaching. This gives some indication of how forward-looking Ritsumeikan’s principle of “self-government by all constituents” really was.

In terms of students’ involvement in learning, teaching, and research, many universities in Japan began providing peer support activities following the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s release of a report titled Enhancement of Student Life at Universities—Developing Universities from the Student Standpoint (the “Hironaka Report”) in the year 2000. These same activities had been underway in countries such as the United States and Canada since the 1960s, so it can be said that Japan was far behind in this field.

Ritsumeikan University first embarked on providing peer support activities in Japan at that time, almost 60 years ago, back in the 1960s. It is a little-known fact that Orientation Conductors—the students who today provide support for Orientation and in the context of first-year student education—began their peer support activities at Ritsumeikan University at the same time the world’s most progressive universities in the U.S. and Canada were also beginning to do the same. This is surely a practical example of something that everybody learning and working at Ritsumeikan University should feel proud of.

Currently approximately 3,000 students are active as peer supporters at Ritsumeikan University—a remarkably high number compared to other Japanese universities. There are close to approximately 30 peer support groups engaged in a wide variety of activities in collaboration with other organizations and faculty/staff members. Among them are the Educational Supporters (ES) who provide a range of support for in-class learning, the diverse types of “buddies” who assist international students, and student volunteers.

The specialized seminar classes offered in the university’s undergraduate colleges have always followed the principle of “students as scholars” and “students as producers.” These seminars enable students to play a role in genuine research activities, as well as taking the initiative and advancing their learning to a deeper level. Universities overseas have also been promoting a shift from the “teaching

and learning paradigm” to the paradigms of “creation” and “discovery” by engaging students in real-life research projects supported by numerous experts, getting them involved in the actual production of films, and other forms of genuine research and exploration. Here again Ritsumeikan University holds its own on the world stage, having pursued initiatives in student engagement for many years. In recent years, this approach has become known internationally as the “students as partners” model. This model, just like the abovementioned model of engaging students in the qualitative enhancement of learning and teaching, is set to become the cornerstone of a new type of relationship between students and faculty/staff in the future.

Guided by our founding spirit of “freedom and innovation” and educational philosophy of “peace and democracy,” the students, faculty and staff of Ritsumeikan University have tackled challenges, pursued discussions, and collaboratively developed a variety of progressive and democratic initiatives rivaling those of other universities the world over. Our task into the future is to continue relentlessly to tackle new challenges as we learn and research here at Ritsumeikan University.

We look forward to seeing you take the lead in shaping our future.

# Futurize.

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## 5. Ritsumeikan Academy Competency Framework

Ritsumeikan Academy “R2030 Academy Vision” aims to produce “innovative and emerging talent”. This means individuals who enhance and reframe their individuality through learning and research and create innovation through synergy with others. For students to develop these kinds of competencies, they need to understand their own value, recognize the value of others, and consider how to contribute to society by combining their values with those of others.

With this context in mind, the Ritsumeikan Academy has formulated the Ritsumeikan Academy Competency Framework so that students at every level of education can identify their own value through repeated self-reflection and proactive learning.

This framework, composed of one Core Competency and eight Competencies, conceptualizes diverse forms of growth and supports visualizing learning trajectories across the Academy, and it is therefore expected to encourage students at every level of education to engage in self-reflection and proactive learning.

The Core Competency of “RITSUMEI: establish one’s destiny through cultivating one’s mind.” means to “continue learning to understand who you are.”

The eight Competencies are as shown in the following table:

We defined these eight Competencies based on the 273 perspectives related to human resources development found in the Founding Spirit, the Educational Philosophy, the Ritsumeikan Charter, the R2030 Academy Vision, the Student Growth Goals, and the educational objectives of each affiliated school. They also reflect broader societal

	English	Explanation
R	Resilience	Learn and recover from troubles and failures
I	Initiative	Take initiative by setting your own goals and working toward them independently
T	Teamwork	Cooperate with others to achieve a goal
S	Self-efficacy	Believe in your own abilities and have confidence that you can achieve your goals
U	Understanding	Think logically and understand things clearly
M	Multitasking	Manage multiple tasks effectively by organizing and prioritizing them
E	Empathy	Imagine how others feel and respect their perspective
I	Innovation	Create change with innovative thinking

trends, including the OECD Learning Framework 2030, METI’s Basic Skills for Working People 2006, and the current National Curriculum Standards.

In celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Academy’s founding, we have created this “snapshot” to help communicate the concept of the Ritsumeikan Academy Competency Framework. This visual expresses the growth trajectories of students at every level of education in the Ritsumeikan Academy. Along with the eight Competencies, this snapshot expresses the characteristics of the Ritsumeikan Academy and the diverse growth scenarios that take place through interactions with friends, family, and students themselves within the context of each school.

We invite you to take this opportunity to reflect on your past experiences and consider the Competencies you have developed as a result of those experiences. By doing so, you may come to understand your own value, recognize the value of others, and help yourself and others lead better lives by combining these values—ultimately contributing to society.

Chapter 1. The Philosophy and Aims of Ritsumeikan University as seen in The Ritsumeikan Charter



## Reference Materials

■ **The Ritsumeikan Charter**  
<https://en.ritsumei.ac.jp/profile/charter/>



■ **United Nations Charter**  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>



■ **Ritsumeikan University Educational Mission and Vision**  
[https://en.ritsumei.ac.jp/profile/educational\\_mission\\_and\\_vision/](https://en.ritsumei.ac.jp/profile/educational_mission_and_vision/)



■ **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**  
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■ **Ritsumeikan History**  
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■ **The Ritsumeikan Declaration on Sports**  
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■ **Chancellor's Statement – Toward the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion**  
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■ **Ritsumeikan Academy Competency Framework**  
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