

Editor's Preface

It is our great pleasure to deliver to our readers the seventh volume of the Institute's annual journal, the *Journal of the Asia-Japan Research Institute of Ritsumeikan University*.

For many years, Ritsumeikan University has been actively pursuing the path of becoming a "next-generation research university," as we coined our aspiration. As part of such endeavors, the university establishes five-year plans for its research development and diligently carries them out. The academic year of 2025 is the final year of the fourth five-year plan, and we are delighted to conclude this session by successfully publishing the seventh volume of our journal, the flagship of our Institute's publications.

At our Institute, we have been seriously engaged in developing the next five-year plan by evaluating our achievements over the past five years and upgrading to a new design that will hopefully culminate in Ritsumeikan Vision 2030. One crucial issue is how to expand and strengthen our interdisciplinary research collaboration.

Last July, we participated in organizing a multidisciplinary symposium with the Ritsumeikan Advanced Research Academy (RARA) and the Art Research Center on Digital Humanities. It was welcomed by a large audience, both onsite and online, from various specialties. Professor Satoshi Tanaka, Deputy Director of our Institute and a RARA fellow, acted as the moderator. He embodies, so to speak, our interdisciplinary nature, through his engagement with numerous research projects bridging Digital Graphic Technology and Humanities. As the AI revolution accelerates its pace, we must strive to meet the frontier requirements of the global society in this era. Humanities and Social Sciences must advance hand in hand with Natural Sciences and Life Sciences.

Another critical objective is making our scientific activities and their achievements known to the world. Our two periodicals in English, this journal and the *Asia-Japan Research Academic Bulletin*, have been serving this purpose well, thanks to their warm reception by our readers and to the active participation of scholars in submitting their valuable papers. As we embark on a new phase of globalization, we are committed to continuing our mission into the next five-year plan.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this volume. It is with profound gratitude that I thank all those who contributed to our activities and facilitated the publication of this work by reviewing, advising, and encouraging us. I also personally owe my thanks to the staff of the editorial office.

As always, we depend on your continued support and encouragement for the coming volume. We especially appreciate the submission of your papers as research articles. We will also greatly appreciate your submission of book reviews.

As we are set to advance even further in our next five-year plan, we eagerly hope for your collaboration and cooperation. We are sincerely looking forward to receiving your prospective support and guidance.

October 2025

Prof. Yasushi Kosugi
Director of the Asia-Japan Research Institute
And Chair of the Editorial Board