

Editor's Preface

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

As we have started a new five-year plan this year, designed to culminate in Ritsumeikan Vision 2030, we would like to announce some changes to our academic publications.

We have decided to make this journal an ongoing online journal. This means that the editorial board has waived the annual submission deadline and will accept submissions of papers at any time of the year. So, when a paper is submitted and accepted by the board, it will go directly to our review process, and once the review is completed positively, it will be published online immediately. Under the traditional system we had until last year, with a submission deadline in January and publication in October, even if a paper's review was completed in three months, it would still have to wait several months for publication. So, the new way will enable the swifter dissemination of scientific findings.

This ongoing system was previously used by our sister periodical, the *Asia-Japan Research Academic Bulletin*, to supplement our Journal's annual system. However, since the Journal has adopted this ongoing process, the Bulletin appears to have fulfilled its mission, and so we have suspended its publication this year.

There is one more important change, that is, the abolition of the category of "research note." Our editorial board members questioned the wisdom of keeping this category, since it is more of a Japanese tradition and is not practiced in most international journals. A research note is, in fact, an elaborate version of a "brief research report." Neither have conclusions, since they disseminate information about research activities before completion. Instead, we decided to open a "research report" category in the Journal, so that researchers can report on their ongoing research without waiting for completion, at which time it should simply become a full research article.

I sincerely hope these changes will meet with your approval, because they will help to speed up the publication of contemporary scientific research findings. Our current review system will continue unchanged, and we would like to thank all our respected reviewers in advance for their valuable contributions.

Our Japanese publication, the *Annual Review of Asia-Japan Research*, continues unchanged this year, but we are considering adopting an ongoing publication system for this journal as well. Your feedback on this matter would be highly appreciated.

As always, we depend on your continued support and encouragement for the current and coming volumes. We are especially grateful for the submission of your papers as research articles, and we would also greatly appreciate your submission of research reports and book reviews.

As we are now in the first year of the new five-year plan, your collaboration and cooperation are much desired. We sincerely look forward to receiving your support and guidance.

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