

## Editor's Preface

It is our great pleasure to deliver to you the fourth volume of our annual journal, the *Journal of the Asia-Japan Research Institute of Ritsumeikan University*.

Since the inauguration of this academic periodical in July 2019, we have received enormous support within our university and from outside the university. We are very grateful to you all for your warm welcome and support for this new journal, which came into existence with the ambitious hope of establishing the diverse research fields of the Asia-Japan Research Institute.

We have received many submissions for this volume, and we greatly appreciate the authors' recognition of the journal and their contributions. It goes without saying that as the number of submissions increases, so does the demand for more peer reviewers from a growing number of fields. Since we maintain a strict double-blind peer review system while our journal is interdisciplinary, we need the generous help of specialists in quite a wide range of scientific fields in humanities, social and natural sciences. Therefore, we owe our sincere gratitude to all our reviewers for their wonderful efforts this year.

Though a prolonged COVID-19 pandemic is still occurring globally, the difficult conditions seem to be easing a little in this third year as we steadily overcome the obstacles it has presented. Accordingly, we have been strongly motivated to pursue our path of digital transformation (DX) as one of the major solutions to the problems brought to scientific activities by the pandemic. The pandemic certainly has changed our daily lives in many ways, as well as our understanding of how we should manage our social lives. Keeping a balance between "work and life" for researchers and scientists has become a new challenge, unprecedented in several ways. All these conditions and requirements, however, have made us more vigilant and patient. This last statement is a personal observation of this editor, with which I expect many of you may agree.

We intend to continue publishing this journal online and in hard copies, i.e., digital and analog. The online digital version facilitates quicker and wider access, while the printed version ensures an academic presence measurable by our analog faculties.

We humbly request your continued support and encouragement for this *Journal*. Especially, the submission of your papers as research articles is highly appreciated. As for the book review section, we have a special policy for this journal, different from another English periodical of ours. While *the Asia-Japan Research Academic Bulletin* accepts reviews of books in Asian and Japanese studies or Asia-Japan Research published in any language, this journal emphasizes the contribution of book reviews for disseminating information on the research works and primary sources in these fields published in Asian and Japanese languages, since the vast majority of materials in these languages are not available in English. We will fervently welcome your submission of book reviews for this purpose.

We are looking forward to receiving your prospective contributions, both from senior members of our scientific communities as well as from the next generations of researchers.

November 2022

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