

Editor's Preface

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

With the patient and enduring efforts of all academicians and educators in universities worldwide, we have emerged from the crises imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed a schedule comparable to the pre-pandemic years. One of the few positives we can take from this event is an increased consciousness of the vulnerability of globalized societies and, because of that, the importance of being able to maintain global collaboration on multiple levels of scientific knowledge production.

To overcome the difficulties of disrupted cross-border movements during the pandemic it became necessary to introduce various forms of DX (digital transformation) into our academic lives. The editing of this journal and our other academic publications was also greatly enhanced by utilizing digital methods. One such method was the holding of collective proofreading sessions online. We found that reading academic articles, research reports, book reviews, and other papers together offered unique opportunities to the researchers who participated in such sessions, especially when paying serious attention to papers that would normally fall outside of their own specialty. They discovered that the technical proofreading of academic papers provides chances to learn from various contents with an interdisciplinary breadth and depth, offering the joyful experience of intellectual encounters.

Thanks to the efforts of those who participated in such endeavors, as well as the warm support and encouragement of our readers, this volume has come out on time. We are also extremely grateful to our contributors, and to the reviewers who dedicated their precious time, energy, and expertise to making this journal academically valuable.

For the coming volume, we depend as always on your continued support and encouragement. Especially, the submission of your papers as research articles is highly appreciated. As for the book review section, we are proud of our policy of publishing book reviews that introduce research works and primary sources in Asian and Japanese languages in fields related to Asia-Japan Research, since the vast majority of materials in these languages are not currently available in English. We will fervently welcome your submission of book reviews for this purpose.

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

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