

Ritsumeikan International Affairs

Vol. 16 (2019)

立命館

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND AREA STUDIES

Brief History of Ritsumeikan University

The history of Ritsumeikan dates back to 1869 when Prince SAIONJI Kinmochi, an eminent international statesman of modern Japan, founded “Ritsumeikan” as a private academy on the site of the Kyoto Imperial Palace. In 1900, NAKAGAWA Kojuro, former secretary of Prince SAIONJI, established an evening law school, Kyoto Hosei School, which formally adopted the name of “Ritsumeikan” in 1913 and was finally given the status of a university in 1922.

The school spirit is “liberalism and internationalism” advocated by Prince SAIONJI. After World War II, Ritsumeikan adopted the educational philosophy of “peace and democracy” faithful to the spirit of the Japanese Constitution. Today, Ritsumeikan University is one of the leading universities in Japan, offering a wide range of courses at its Suzaku Campus and Kinugasa Campus in Kyoto and Biwako-Kusatsu Campus in Shiga. It holds more than thirty thousand students and two thousand graduate students in total.

The Origin of the Name “Ritsumeikan”

The word “ritsumei” comes from a passage in the Jin-shin chapter of the *Discourses of Mencius*. It states that:

“Some die young, while others live long. It is all Heaven’s will. Therefore, people should do their part and leave the rest to the Heaven, while devoting themselves to self-improvement during their lives.”

Thus, ritsumeikan means “a place (*kan*) where people do their best to improve themselves (*ritsu*) while waiting Heaven’s will (*mei*).

Institute of International Relations and Area Studies (IIRAS)

IIRAS is a research center founded in 1988 for the purpose of promoting International Relations and Area Studies. IIRAS’ research activities cover wide range of fields, including conflict and peacebuilding, human security, economic development, and transnational issues. Our area studies focus on Asia, Europe, Middle East, Africa and North/South America. IIRAS provides an important forum for visiting academics and professors as well as for the faculty members and students of Ritsumeikan University.



RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
AND AREA STUDIES