

# GURitsVoice No.3

GENERAL UNION RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY BRANCH NEWS No.3 OCTOBER 2005  
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## Ritsumeikan unfair labour practices under national spotlight

Japanese television networks and newspapers report on Ritsumeikan's threats to Rits GU members/The public engages in debate about Ritsumeikan being racist

FOR SOME PEOPLE it was a surprise to see Rits under the spotlight of national television on July 8th. There it was on the TV screen: the picture of the Rits clock tower and campus grounds, suddenly cast in a very different light while NHK and Kansai Television newscasters told the grim tale of Ritsumeikan's allegedly unfair labour practices.

It was reported that substantial charges against the university were filed at the Kyoto-Kami Labour Standards Office, and also that General Union was at the forefront before the Osaka Prefectural Labour Commission, lodging its protest against harassment suffered by four union members. "The University told the four teachers on the phone to stop their union activities or their employment contracts would be terminated, according to the union's claim", reported Japanese news agency

### **The Shokutaku Demands**

GU Rits presented eight demands to management during the summer break period Page 2

### **Broken promises at Ritsumeikan APU**

Jokin teachers were promised renewable jobs by Ritsumeikan. They packed their suitcases and moved to Rits APU in far-away Oita prefecture. Now Rits tells them the Jokin system is over and they have to go Page 3

Kyodo. Coverage by the national press was still more searching, and the following day the most important national newspapers followed up the story. *Mainichi's* headline read "Foreign teachers request help: Ritsumeikan threatens to fire them for union activities."

**"Ritsumeikan does indeed put on a good show of being *international* but if it employs academic apartheid, it is just another typical racist Japanese institution"**

**"The University told four teachers on the phone to stop their union activities or their employment contracts would be terminated"**

The *Asahi* daily wrote "Ritsumeikan allegedly lacks labour laws", while *Yomiuri's* headline read: "Ritsumeikan lacks labour laws for foreign teachers, Union says". *Kyoto Shimbun*, a local daily that has covered Ritsumeikan activities extensively in the past, went further than the rest by writing: "It is unjust to demand foreign teachers quit the Union".

*The Japan Times* reported in

English: "Foreign teacher unionists face axe". The paper also reported on General Union's accusations of Rits unfair labour practices. "Foreign teachers' contracts are terminated in three to five years at Ritsumeikan University. It should create employment regulations so they can work without anxiety," the union said in a statement."

In the meantime, half a dozen Internet bulletin boards carried lively comments from their cyber readership.

In *Japan Today's* forum, some readers debate hotly whether Ritsumeikan policies are racist.

Alex, a student from Rits APU, acknowledges the fact that language teachers "come and go" at Ritsumeikan schools, but defended Ritsumeikan policies from being labelled racist: "... Rits does have many foreign professors - language teachers or others. In fact Rits employs a foreigner as the president of its new university, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. A foreigner is also dean of the graduate school. Foreign professors teach everything from English to Economics to Business Management. The school has risen quickly on the list of hard universities to get into for Japanese students and is now sending both foreign and Japanese grads to the top corporations in the country."

Jean Colmar ripostes: "The argument of Alex is off the point because the subject is how Ritsumeikan treats its non-Japanese teachers. This is only one example out of many. Ritsumeikan does indeed put on a good show of being *international* but if it employs academic apartheid, it is just another typical racist Japanese institution."

## As the axe falls on the Jokin koshi, Shokutaku positions symbolize little more than a short cut to academic career assassination

THE DECISION MADE by Ritsumeikan this year to eliminate the Jokin scheme will eventually put more work pressure on Shokutaku teachers.

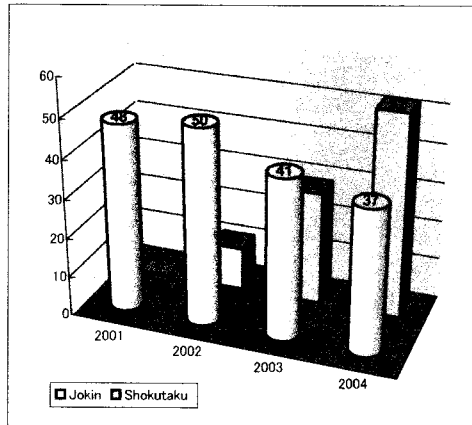
Shokutaku teachers are paid ¥300,000 per month, receive only two months' annual bonus, and are limited to five years' employment at Rits, through a series of one-year contracts. A Shokutaku teacher costs Ritsumeikan ¥2 million less a year than a Jokin.

Even though Shokutaku are contracted as full-time faculty, their labour conditions are not much better than those of Hijokin teachers. With the dissolution of the Jokin programme, it is highly unlikely that Rits' beleaguered Sennin will take over existing Jokin duties. The Jokin workload looks set to be transferred to Shokutaku teachers.

This situation represents a significant worsening of labour conditions for every full-time limited-term language teacher at Rits. Rits GU Branch thus presented the Administration with eight demands concerning Shokutaku teachers on September 6th. The Shokutaku demands are quite simple:

1. Raise Shokutaku wages to the

# The Shokutaku Demands



Jokin and Shokutaku evolution/GURits/Source: Ritsumeikan U.

level of the existing Jokin full-time instructors.

2. Abolish the limit of four contract renewals.

3. Pay the 120,000 yen/year research budget.

4. Allow Shokutaku to apply for Ritsumeikan research funds.

5. Pay the housing allowance.

6. Change the Japanese name of

the Shokutaku position to a name that reflects its full-time status.

7. Allow Shokutaku flexibility to reschedule classes to attend conferences and other events that would further their professional development.

8. Allow Shokutaku a voice in decision-making regarding their own conditions.

Rits GU Branch also explained to the Administration that with Jokin positions no longer available, Shokutaku teachers see their career prospects at the University as a virtual dead-end, a sort of academic career assassination. The issue of misrepresentation was also raised with management: many teachers signed on as Shokutaku because they were explicitly or tacitly promised Jokin positions at the time of hire, or simply because they knew they could apply for promotion to Jokin jobs.

GU Rits is still waiting for an official answer to these eight very basic, very human demands. Meanwhile, management procrastinates. Remember what happened to Rome while Nero fiddled, guys?

### RITSUMEIKAN ID CARD

#### 教職員証



教職員番号

FACULTY

言語教育センター 外国語半分嘱託講師

NAME ANGELINA JOLIE

DATE OF BIRTH 4/7/1975

VALID UNTIL 3/31/ '06

Ritz

SMALL LETTER: We will renew your contract year after year as we please until you are not longer needed

**We are terribly sorry, but even though she is a wonderful teacher, Angelina will be history as of March 31st, 2006**

# APU Jokins were promised renewable jobs, now they are told the scheme is history and they have to go

Ritsumeikan promised before and after the opening of APU that Jokin contracts could be renewed. Teachers took the job because it was renewable and moved to far-away Oita prefecture. Last July, Rits APU unilaterally announced the abolition of the scheme, breaking its own promise and leaving Jokin teachers in a situation they did not cause nor want / Jokin teachers form the APU branch of Oita Labour Union

## OITA LABOUR UNION APU BRANCH

AT RITSUMEIKAN ASIA Pacific University (APU), Jokin teachers constitute approximately 40% of all teachers (excluding Hijokin teachers). Since the opening of the University, Jokin teachers have been taking responsibility for many of the educational tasks, including developing textbooks and other teaching materials.

Now APU management is set to non-renew teachers who have done nothing wrong.

On October 24th, 1999, at a seminar for Jokin teachers in charge of Japanese who were going to work at APU, held in Ritsumeikan in Kyoto, the University explained that Jokin teachers will be able to keep on work-

Most teachers decided to take the job because it was renewable. At the end of July this year, the University unilaterally announced the abolition of the Jokin teacher scheme. It is unacceptable that the University is not keeping its promises

ing at APU. After the opening of the school it was also explained to teach-

ers in charge of English that they could be renewed. Most teachers decided to take the job because it was renewable. However, at the end of July this year, the University unilaterally announced the abolition of the Jokin teacher scheme. It is unacceptable that the University is not keeping its promises.

Many of the APU Jokin teachers got together to form the APU Branch of Oita Local Labour Union, in order to protect their educational and research activities and their livelihood. At present, they are in negotiation with the management of the University, trying to get them to withdraw the non-renewals.

Your understanding and support of our work would be appreciated.

All at the APU Branch

## APU常勤講師、就任時の更新可能の約束が反古となり、雇い止めを宣告される

### 大分地域労働組合APU分会

立命館アジア太平洋大学（以下APU）では常勤講師が教員（非常勤講師を除く）の約40%を占めています。常勤講師は開学から教科書作成・その他の教材作成なども行ない、教育業務の多くを担ってきました。APU経営者側は、何の落ち度もない常勤講師を徐々に雇い止めにしようとしています。

1999年10月24日、立命館（京都）でAPUに赴任予定の日本語常勤講師を集めて、講習会が開かれ、大学側から「常勤講師はAPUで継続して働ける」という主旨の説明がありました。開学後、英語

継続できるから着任の決意をした教員がほとんどです。ところが大学側は今年七月末に常勤講師制度の廃止を一方的に宣告しました。このような大学側の約束を守らない行為は決して許されるものではありません

担当教員も継続できる旨の説明をされています。継続できるから着

任の決意をした教員がほとんどです。ところが大学側は今年七月末に常勤講師制度の廃止を一方的に宣告しました。このような大学側の約束を守らない行為は決して許されるものではありません。

APU常勤講師の多くが自分たちの教育・研究活動と生活を守るために団結し、大分地域労働組合APU分会を発足させました。現在、雇い止めを撤回させるべく、大学の経営者側と団体交渉を行なっています。

我々の取り組みに御理解と御支援をいただければ幸甚です。

APU分会一同

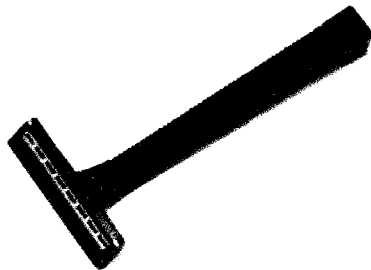
## JOIN THE *General Union*

GU is open to everybody: office staff, teaching staff and all other workers (Japanese and non-Japanese)

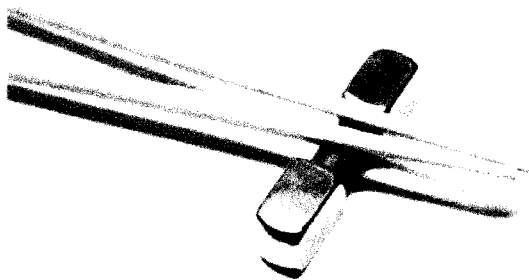
あなたもゼネラルユニオンにご加入を！  
ゼネラルユニオンは、誰でも、一人から入れる労働組合です。全ての日本人・外国人の労働者が加入できます。

Tel: 06-6352-9619 Fax: 06-6352-9630  
gu@generalunion.org

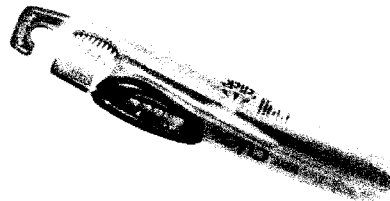
For back issues and more insight, see GU's home page:  
<http://www.generalunion.org/>



Disposable razor (used in public baths)  
使い捨てカミソリ (公衆浴場用)



Disposable chopsticks (used in restaurants)  
使い捨て割り箸 (食堂用)



Disposable toothbrush (used in hotels)  
使い捨て歯ブラシ (ホテル用)



Disposable Rits teacher (used by Ritsumeikan educational organizations)  
使い捨て立命館教師 (立命館の教育機関用)

**Why does Rits treat some teachers as disposable objects?**  
どうして立命館は一部の教師を使い捨てにするの？