

# **We ask for the lifting of the penalties of indefinite exclusion from university imposed on three Kumano-ryo residents**

18th October, 2019

The Kumano-ryo Student Council

To Juichi Yamagiwa  
Kyoto University President  
Dear Sir,

Three Kyoto University students who live in Kumano dormitory (Kumano-ryo) were indefinitely suspended from university on September 10th, 2019. The reason which motivated this decision is that they have been responsible for acts qualified as an “obstacle to the university staff’s performance of duties” and subsequently judged to be “in breach of their obligations as students” under article 32-1 of the University of Kyoto Policy.

On this matter, the Kumano-ryo Student Council disputes on two aspects :

① The lack of questioning of legitimacy of the actions carried out by the university staff :

The three students’ words and conducts they have been reproached for were aimed at denouncing the unilateral nature of the decisions taken by the university administrative body (hereafter referred to as “the administration” ) as well as at protesting against the university staff (hereafter referred to as “the staff” ) who carry out these decisions. At a time when the administration refuses all forms of dialogue with the students, the staff implacably and brutally enforces its decisions. Should a student raise her or his voice against such practices, she or he would inevitably be sanctioned.

The Kumano-ryo Student Council contends that the penalties that have been imposed on the three students must be lifted since they have been implemented on the basis that their actions obstructed the staff in their attempt to carry out the decisions of the administration but that the legitimacy of such an attempt is per se highly questionable - and yet is actually not being questioned.

② The Student disciplinary regulation of Kyoto University is such that it allows for arbitrary applications :

Those who are “in breach of their obligations as students” are liable to the sanctions provided for in the Student disciplinary regulation of Kyoto University (amended on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 by official notice No. 103), which includes “students who went against the rules or orders issued by Kyoto University” . Therefore, under this regulation, students who oppose the modalities for decision-making by the administration, or the staff practices, can be arbitrarily penalised. Accordingly, we consider that the sanctions must be lifted since they have been taken pursuant to this problematic regulation.

It should be stressed that the present case is a continuation of the authoritarian and repressive attitude by the administration towards the student body. In this connection, reference can be made to the significant tightening of tatekanban (standing billboards) regulation, the initiation of legal proceedings against Yoshida dormitory (Yoshida-ryo) residents, or its intervention in the November Festival organisation.

One can therefore easily imagine that the administration will likely continue to sanction protesting students. This is why the present case has consequences that impact not only current students, but also prospective students. This situation whereby students who show concern for the functioning of their university get deprived of their rights and autonomy cannot be tolerated, especially at a university which claims to be a place where logic and freedom of expression prevail.

The Kumano-ryo Student Council asks for the immediate lifting of the sanctions imposed on the three students and asserts that in future students should longer be sanctioned on similar grounds. Finally, the Kumano-ryo Student Council strongly urges that decisions on the management of the university be taken in consultation with the students, who are the most directly concerned by such decisions.

Sincerely,  
The Kumano-ryo Student Council