Editorial

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So far, 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. When the *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* (IJTS) 3.1 published a topical section on 'Taiwan, Public Diplomacy, and the World Health Assembly' back in February/March this year, little could we anticipate that the world would soon be facing an epidemiological crisis not seen since the threat of Spanish Flu in 1918. At the time of writing this editorial, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected every continent, devastated families and communities, and provoked an overwhelming sense of uncertainty across world. The short-term impacts and long-term repercussions for international and national politics, society, economy, education, culture, as well as health, are difficult to measure and predict. This has prompted many academic institutions and funding agencies in different countries to search for innovative ideas and encourage research initiatives to help capture data that can be used for immediate and future analyses. It is hoped that such efforts may equip practitioners, policymakers, and governments to better comprehend and manage problems highlighted or created by the pandemic in order that we may resume a 'new normal'. How are Taiwan and Taiwan studies relevant to the global response to COVID-19 and its related issues, such as national security and geopolitics, societal resilience and social inequality, environment protection and national recovery/transformation, and so forth? What new insights may Taiwan and Taiwan studies gain from other countries and disciplines? What valuable lessons may Taiwan's experience offer the rest of the world? IJTS would like to contribute to such discussions among the global Taiwan studies communities and beyond, and publish research papers that can address—in a global and local context—some of these issues in the future.

A large amount of our editing work in 2020 took place during lockdowns. However, the process of putting together this issue has been very smooth. To this end, our gratitude goes to all our authors for their original research that tackles a variety of subjects (Scott Simon, Hui-Yi Katherine Tseng, Timothy S. Rich and Andi Dahmer, Doris T. Chang, and Hsin-i Sydney Yueh), two special

reports on the Japan Association for Taiwan Studies (Momoko Kawakami) and the Association for Taiwan Literature (Hsin-Chin Evelyn Hsieh) respectively, one review essay on an exhibition about social movements in post-war Taiwan (Susan Shih Chang and Jeremy Huai-Che Chiang), and six book reviews of publications on six fascinating topics (Nathan F. Batto, Chris Cockel, Thomas B. Gold, Ming-yeh T. Rawnsley, Ann Heylen, and Ti-han Chang). We also need to thank all our external reviewers, Executive Editorial Board members, Book Review Editor (Gary Rawnsley), Assistant Editor (John Wood), our team of proofreaders and copy-editors (including Jon Wilcox), as well as colleagues at Brill for their professionalism, efficiency, and generous assistance.

It is amazing how imposed isolation can stimulate creativity and inspire people to maintain ‘contact’ and work together from afar. The *IJTS* Editorial Office has conducted more online communications with colleagues and friends in different corners of the world over the past few months than ever before. As a result of these formal and informal conversations, the journal is now working with the North American Taiwan Studies Association and the European Association of Taiwan Studies to create an online platform, called the ‘Global Taiwan Cultural Salon’, in order to provide casual but structured and interactive talks of mutual interest (as opposed to formal paper presentations). As an experiment, during the initial stage two sessions will be organised in the summer of 2020. By the time the issue of *IJTS* 3.2 is published, we will know the general response to the virtual Global Taiwan Cultural Salon. Should there be support for such an outlet within the global Taiwan studies community, we hope that other institutions (for example, the Japan Association for Taiwan Studies) may also join the partnership to make the Global Taiwan Cultural Salon a long-term, diverse, and vibrant forum.

With the publication of the *IJTS* 3.2, the journal is now three years old. We have so far (including the current issue) published two topical sections—‘The State of the Field of Taiwan Studies’ (issue 1.1, February 2018) and ‘Taiwan, Public Diplomacy, and the World Health Assembly’ (3.1, February 2020)—35 research articles, three forum discussions, four special reports, two review essays, one research note, and 33 book reviews. The subjects addressed are wide-ranging, covering political communications, indigenous studies, history, migration, politics and international relations, and film and literature, to name but a few. While some of the papers may be more localised (for example, analysis of a specific historical or current event), others seem more global in their outlook (for example, forging links between Taiwan and a wider international, cultural or theoretical/intellectual context). However, the common characteristic shared by these articles is that they have all positioned Taiwan and the relevant issues they examine in different global, regional, and local contexts and processes.

Ultimately the *IJTS* welcomes interdisciplinarity as well as comparative approaches. While the journal's primary focus is Taiwan, the ambition is to broaden the horizon of Taiwan studies to foster discussion not only between the different disciplines that form the field, but also to inform and be informed by other relevant fields. These approaches can be observed not only in the research articles, but also in books reviewed by the *IJTS*, as well as the ways these reviews are written. When the journal editors recently compiled the figures of full-text views and PDF downloads for all the published articles, we were pleasantly surprised by the popularity of our book reviews. This has boosted our confidence in the journal's value in this area. Moreover, while the reviews for the journal are written in English only, the *IJTS* accepts reviews of books published in any language. The *IJTS* encourages publishers, authors, and potential reviewers to get in touch with Gary Rawnsley¹ about publications or if you wish to write a review. Each issue will continue to contain a selection of book reviews.

Reflecting on the relatively short journey of the *IJTS*, we are humbled and pleased that the performance of the journal has been promising. Firstly, the journal is distributed globally: in 2018, 152 institutions worldwide have access to the journal through direct subscription, journal package or consortia deals and in 2019, the figure rose to 216. Secondly, full-text downloads on the Brill platform reached nearly 1,400 in March 2019 and increased to around 2,200 in March 2020. Thirdly, the *IJTS* has now been indexed by the European Research Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH Plus). The journal will continue to work towards being one of the top-ranking journals indexed by all major outlets. We acknowledge that these are early days and are confident that the figures will keep climbing as the journal continues to gather further momentum. Thank you, as readers or contributors, for your support.

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