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## Editorial

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Since its launch in 2018, the *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* (*IJTS*) has been dedicated to advancing the field of Taiwan studies by disseminating research of exceptional quality on a broad range of subjects. It is gratifying to report that our journal continues to be on an upward trajectory.

In addition to the regular editing and publishing work, in 2024 *IJTS* embarked on five initiatives to help further promote Taiwan studies and facilitate closer institutional interactions with organisations operating in the field. First, we organised the 2023–24 *IJTS* Research Article Competition. The prize in the arts and humanities category went to Wen-chi Li's 'Why do we need Taiwan studies in the twenty-first century?' (Li, forthcoming), while in the social science category the winner was Gina Song Lopez's 'Going *weigen*: Animal advocacy and sustainability intersections under Taiwan's New Vegan Movement' (Song Lopez, forthcoming). Research article competitions are an effective measure to encourage submission of original research to the journal; and the breadth of topics help the editors track emerging trends in the field.

Second, since the start of 2024, *IJTS* has collaborated with *Taiwan Insight* to produce a joint publication—*Taiwan Insight–IJTS* special issues—twice a year to publicise more widely the authors and articles published in the *IJTS*. The first *Taiwan Insight–IJTS* special issue discusses the question of democracy and the challenges it faces from populism.<sup>1</sup> This is connected to the topical section published in the second issue of volume 7 of *IJTS* in September 2024, 'Taiwan: A Frontline Democracy Under Threat?' (Albana and Fiori, 2024). The

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<sup>1</sup> For the first *Taiwan Insight–IJTS* special issue (March 2024) and the four articles published, see <https://taiwaninsight.org/past-special-issues/international-journal-of-taiwan-studies/>.

second *Taiwan Insight–IJTS* special issue considers ‘AI and Taiwan Studies’. As artificial intelligence (AI) transforms the world around us, it is attendant upon societies to understand both its contribution and its implications. Given its precarious regional and international geostrategic position, Taiwan may feel the effects of AI more than many other societies. This special issue attempts to encourage non-AI specialists in the social sciences, arts, and humanities to join the conversation about AI’s impact and how Taiwan studies may respond.<sup>2</sup> The editorial teams at *Taiwan Insight* and *IJTS* will evaluate the results of both special issues in 2024 and develop our collaboration in 2025.

Third, *IJTS* Assistant Editor, Dr John Wood of Aberystwyth University, began producing a podcast series in 2024–25 with a start-up grant from the European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS). This podcast looks at three dimensions of how AI influences academia and how Taiwan contributes to global trends in AI. The topics currently under preparation include (1) AI as a tool in education and research, (2) AI and Taiwanese politics, and (3) visions of AI.

Fourth, after a rigorous voting process involving four regional Taiwan studies associations<sup>3</sup> and many Taiwan studies centres and programmes all over the world, the 2024 *IJTS* Open Access Awards were announced. The two winning articles are ‘Indigenous peoples as non-state diplomatic actors in the public/cultural diplomacy of Taiwan: A case study of Dispossession: Performative encounter(s) of Taiwanese Indigenous contemporary art’ (Figueira, 2020) and ‘Yearning for recognition: Indigenous Formosans and the limits of Indigeneity’ (Simon, 2020). As the judges observed, Figueira’s article not only ‘adopts an innovative perspective to explore how Indigenous peoples can shape cultural diplomacy’,<sup>4</sup> but also ‘combines theoretical discussion of public and cultural diplomacy with empirical data from participant observation, interviews, social media, and use of secondary literature’.<sup>5</sup> Simon’s article has impressed judges for providing ‘vital context for understanding the tendency of Indigenous communities to vote for the Kuomintang, despite the Democratic Progressive Party campaigning on pro-Indigeneity policies (a fact that implicitly sits in tension with some research into Taiwan’s Indigenous cultures—and is often

2 For the second *Taiwan Insight–IJTS* special issue (August 2024) and the three articles published, see <https://taiwaninsight.org/international-journal-of-taiwan-studies-contemplating-ai-taiwan-studies/>.

3 The four associations are the North American Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA), the Japan Association for Taiwan Studies (JATS), EATS, and the Australasian Taiwan Studies Association (ATSA).

4 Nomination notes by Reviewer A.

5 Nomination notes by Reviewer B.

simply left unaddressed).<sup>6</sup> Other judges also noted that ‘Simon addresses an important tension, namely, the “enigmatic gap between the perceptions of Indigenous political actors and ordinary people” by questioning the limit of Indigeneity. The analysis presented is based on extensive ethnography with Indigenous communities in Taiwan.’<sup>7</sup> Many thanks to the judges for helping us make a very difficult choice among all the excellent articles and make two valuable papers open access to reach the widest possible readership.

Fifth, we are excited that all the open access articles published in the *IJTS* are now included in a database, Taiwan Academic Classics, with search functionality.<sup>8</sup> We hope this will further enhance the accessibility and searchability of Taiwan studies research output.

In this issue of *IJTS*, we have assembled seven research articles covering geographical perceptions of Taiwan, Indigenous identity, precolonial food culture, health systems, religions and welfare regime, Taiwan’s regional identity under the New Southbound Policy, and public opinion regarding the Dalai Lama’s visits. Moreover, we are pleased to publish a special report on the Fulbright Program’s legacy in Taiwan to celebrate the induction into its Hall of Fame in 2023 of *IJTS* Executive Board member Professor Hsin-huang Michael Hsiao. This report explores the history and purpose of the programme and examines the role of educational exchange in US–Taiwan relations. In the current climate of rapidly changing and increasingly challenging global geopolitics, it is reassuring to learn the value of educational exchanges and public diplomacy. Finally, we publish four reviews of books that examine Tsai Ing-wen’s presidency, how long-term Taiwanese migrants negotiate later life, Taiwanese literature and theatre during the Japanese colonial period, and Taiwan and Southeast Asia in the context of China’s ascendancy. We hope you will enjoy reading them.

## References

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6 Nomination notes by Reviewer C.

7 Nomination notes by Reviewer D.

8 See <https://p.udpweb.com/ijts>.

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