



## From the Editor-in-Chief

Beginning with this issue, *East Asian Studies: China and Its Neighboring Region* (ISSN: 1013-2546; DOI: 10.30402/EAS) presents itself to readers in a renewed format. The journal, originally titled *East Asia Quarterly* and renamed *East Asian Studies* between 2004 and 2024, has been published continuously since its founding in 1969 by the Graduate Institute of East Asian Studies (GIEAS), National Chengchi University (NCCU). As the first and longest-standing academic institution in Taiwan dedicated to the study of mainland China, GIEAS has played a critical role in educating and training talents in this field, as well as in providing policy-relevant insights. In this intellectual context, *East Asian Studies: China and Its Neighboring Region* has served as a vital platform for scholarly exchange on China studies for more than half a century.

The relaunch of this journal marks two significant changes. First, building on its tradition of publishing academic articles, the journal will now mainly focus on shorter analytical essays written by scholars. As China rises as a global power and its influence on regional and international geopolitics grows, the journal invites experts in relevant fields to provide timely and accessible analyses of key developments in China, its surrounding regions, and East Asia as a whole. Written in a knowledgeable yet approachable style, these essays aim to combine scholarly rigor with readability and timeliness, helping readers think critically about important public issues. Second, acknowledging the limitations of a print-based, subscription model in the digital age and with the rise of artificial intelligence, the journal will now be published exclusively online and will offer free newsletter subscriptions. Through these changes, the journal strives to maintain its role as an independent, stable, and open platform for knowledge exchange in China studies.

This inaugural issue of the new series contains five contributions: three feature essays, one book-focused piece, and one fieldwork observation. Together, they share a common concern: how China's growing power is reshaping the international order, and how we should study and understand contemporary China in light of these changes.

In their essay, “從儒家視角反思全球南方學者在 2025 年 ISA 年會上的爭辯” Shih Chih-yu and Huang Chiung-chiu offer a China-informed interpretation of academic freedom that challenges Western-dominated understandings. Drawing on their participation at the 2025 International Studies Association convention, they observe how scholars from the Global South question the Western monopoly on the concept of academic freedom. While Western scholarship tends to frame academic freedom in



terms of individual rights, the authors propose a Confucian-inspired notion of responsibility, highlighting parallels with other civilizational traditions that have long engaged in similar debates. Shino Watanabe's essay, "Global Development Initiative: China's New Approach to the International Order," analyzes China's strategies for reshaping the current international order through its 2021 Global Development Initiative. Rather than seeking to replace existing norms, China has advanced complementary measures while positioning itself as an agenda setter to win international support and consolidate its leadership in global governance. Olga V. Alexeeva's contribution, "Between Rhetoric and Reality: China and Russia in the Shadow of Trump-Era Geopolitics," explores the dynamics of cooperation and competition between two major neighboring powers. While the war in Ukraine has brought China and Russia to an unprecedented level of partnership, minor frictions remain. Looking ahead to a second Trump administration, the essay suggests that the two countries may continue to deepen their strategic non-alliance relationship.

Taken together, these three essays examine the dilemmas and challenges facing the liberal international order from different perspectives as it encounters emerging powers, particularly China. Complementing these discussions is the book-focused essay, which reviews Amitav Acharya's *The Once and Future World Order: Why Global Civilization Will Survive the Decline of the West*. By tracing the long-term course of global history, the essay highlights how the current crisis of Western dominance in global governance does not necessarily entail systemic collapse. Instead, it points toward a more pluralistic and inclusive coexistence of multiple civilizations and their respective traditions for order-building.

A new addition in this transformed journal is the section on fieldwork observations. Fieldwork has long been a cornerstone of scholarly inquiry. Yet in recent years, U.S.-China tensions and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly reduced the number of researchers conducting fieldwork in China. This is regrettable, for many key concepts in social science have originated from direct observations of unfolding events on the ground. Fieldwork thus provides the foundation for making concepts more concrete and grounded in reality. Recognizing this, the journal now includes essays that showcase how scholars enter the field, employ specific methods, and generate insights from their observations. The fieldwork contribution in this issue, written by geographer You-tien Hsing, illustrates how spatial ethnography can shed light on processes of social transformation in China's Northwest. Drawing on her forthcoming book, *Conserving China's Northwest Frontier: Nature, Culture, and Future* (Oxford University Press, Fall 2025), Hsing introduces the method of "Ethnography in Selective Places." She emphasizes that while researchers select sites, they are simultaneously "chosen" by



these places through unanticipated circumstances. Such encounters not only raise new questions but also deepen and broaden existing lines of inquiry.

As a longstanding journal, *East Asian Studies: China and Its Neighboring Region* has consistently served as an essential platform in the field of China studies. This transformation is both a self-challenge and a response to the changing landscape of China and East Asian studies today. With the goal of advancing Taiwan's unique strengths in China studies, the journal understands that only through ongoing innovation and refinement can it continue to offer the scholarly community engaging insights and a strong platform for exchange.

**Chih-shian Liou**

Editor-in-Chief