

# Editorial Note

Welcome to the first issue of Asia in Focus at its new home, the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies at Lund University. We are honored to take stewardship of this important journal, mindful of the role it has played in nurturing junior scholars across the Nordic region over the years. This transition, from the esteemed Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (NIAS) at Copenhagen University, marks a new era in the history of this journal, yet, we remain committed to upholding the standards of academic rigor and excellence that have been its hallmark for years.

Asia in Focus' mission to serve as a platform for early career scholars has never been more important. Where once a young scholar's publishing career began after the completion of a PhD, today having an article published is becoming a prerequisite to even getting on to a PhD programme. Therefore, Asia in Focus continues to act as a much-needed bridge, enabling early career scholars to reach a wider audience, and thus for the next generation of scholars to have their voices heard.

Open Access remains the heart of this mission. As a truly open access journal, Asia in Focus stands apart. There are no fees to submit or to publish—an unwavering commitment that breaks down barriers to knowledge dissemination. This is a commitment that we, at Lund University, are deeply proud to uphold. We believe that scholarship thrives when knowledge is accessible to all, and that the vast profits made by commercial publishers – which come directly out of education budgets and are built on the backs of the free labour and goodwill of scholars – are immoral. We hope that Asia in Focus can help point towards an alternative model.

We wish to extend our profound gratitude to the Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (and a special shout-out to Inga-Lill Blomqvist for her patience and persistence!). Their tireless efforts and dedication have laid a solid foundation for Asia in Focus. We hope to respect their legacy by maintaining their commitment to academic excellence and inclusive scholarship.

We should also address the delay in publication of this issue. The transition process took longer than initially planned and we are immensely grateful to our authors for their patience and understanding throughout this period. We believe that your scholarly contributions are worth the wait, and we are excited to share these with our readers.

So, while this editorial transition marks a new phase for Asia in Focus, we are privileged to build on solid foundations, and our ethos remains the same: to provide early career scholars with an open access, peer-reviewed platform to share their research.

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