

# Editorial Note

Welcome to Issue no 11 of *Asia in Focus*.

The year of publication for this issue has been a hectic one. 2025 has brought new threats to academic freedom, democracy, and student safety. The development we are seeing in the United States is not a new one globally as evident to anyone in Asian studies but nonetheless worrying to behold.

Although we did not specify a theme in the call for papers, a commonality has been identified. In this issue, you will find three articles written on topics that, in one way or another, pertain to most of our authors, as well as to our main source of responsibility as educators: our students.

In the current global climate, we believe that open-access, critical academic publications are as imperative as ever, and we are proud to be able to provide it. As always, we would like to thank our reviewers without whom this journal would not be possible. We would also like to thank our contributors for entrusting us with their work and for their hard work. Finally, we would like to thank our readers. We hope that you will enjoy this latest issue.

Maaïke van der Burg starts this issue off by examining how universities in Japan have positioned themselves as protectors of youth in discourse on ‘new religions’, drawing a line between what is considered legitimate or illegitimate, effectively shaping the understanding of religion itself.

Yuchen Viveka Li focuses on the A4 Revolution, where Chinese students abroad organised both offline and online protests and forums. She brings insight into contemporary student activism and emphasises how online spaces “provide room for marginalised voices to resist authoritarian regimes”.

Finally, Lisa Sihvonen investigates *juku*, Japan’s private after-school education industry. She traces how students, parents, and educators relate to these institutions, and her work reveals that perceptions of *juku* are embedded in ambiguity. In this article, Sihvonen poses the important question: when we discuss education, whose perspective should be given priority?

Happy reading!

Julia, Paul, Karin, & Nicholas

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