

Asian Studies for the 21st Century

The Quest for a Global Perspective in Asian Studies

This quest for a global perspective in Asian Studies has taken the Netherlands as its point of departure. There is no other reason for this than that the contributions presented in this supplement are the written form of the speeches delivered during the official opening of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) on October 13, 1993, in Leiden. We have chosen this format to stress their transient nature. The lines of attack chosen by the contributors vary according to their nationality and disciplinary background. The value of the contributions must be sought in the inclination to seek a common ground for Asian Studies: How can Asian Studies be strengthened and be put in a proper global perspective?

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 1994. "The Quest for a Global Perspective in Asian Studies". *IIAS Newsletter* 2. Supplement. Asian Studies in Global Perspective. 35-36.

The first contribution in this supplement is that of F. Hüsken, Professor of Anthropology at Nijmegen University and Chairman of the Board of IIAS. He looks back on the achievement of Dutch scholars and Dutch heritage in the field of Asian Studies. Notwithstanding this glorious past, Asian Studies were on the verge of becoming extinct in the 1970s and 1980s, just at a time when Asia was clearly entering the world picture. Two reports compiled by concerned scholars in the field of the Humanities and Social Sciences constituted a turning point which led to the founding of the post-doctoral IIAS which is a state-supported institute that will stimulate international co-operation.

Interchange

Wim Stokhof, Professor of Austronesian Languages at Leiden University and Director of IIAS, recapitulates the position of IIAS in the broad field of Asian Studies. He sees IIAS as an international facility and service centre, an interchange between organisations and groups of Asianists. He concludes that Asian Studies are bound to Asia which is increasingly impinging on the awareness of the Western world and vice versa.

M.J. Cohen, State Secretary for Education and Science, links the importance of Asian Studies directly to the ever growing economic importance of the Pacific Rim. Europeans have to do away with the old distorted Eurocentric picture of Asia in order to gain a more balanced new one. Moreover, Asian Studies in the Netherlands should be given a higher profile because the traditional Dutch middleman's role demands this. IIAS could play a role in the endeavour by creating a European Network for Asian Studies; a structure for pooling our knowledge of Asia.

Asian Studies from the German Perspective

Before turning his attention to the German situation, B. Dahm, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Passau, highlights the long tradition of Asian Studies in Europe and its fine achievements, at the same time not closing his eyes to the close links between colonialism and Orientalism. Orientalism played a role in the German Romantic movement which stressed the unity of language and state. The independent attitude of the German States is still very much alive today as is witnessed by the decentralised build-up of Asian Studies in Germany and their predominantly linguistic and philological nature. There are 33 universities in Germany dealing with one or more aspects of Asian Studies and the German Asian Studies Association tries to provide some co-ordination. In a European perspective, Dahm sees these kinds of national organisations, in conjunction with the European organisations and the renowned European Institutes in the field of Asian Studies, as the backbone of what Cohen labelled a European Network for Asian Studies in which the identities of the different schools will be guaranteed.

Neighbouring Australia

From the contribution of Professor M.C. Ricklefs, Director of the Research school of Pacific and Asian Studies of the Australian National University, one gets a clear impression of the urgent need felt by the Australians, who are still predominantly Western orientated, to come to grips with the Asian 'challenge'. The Australian government has reacted by making Asian languages compulsory. Australia is well aware that it does not border on France or Germany but on Indonesia and Japan. Asian Studies in Australia is established in several regional centres but one can still speak of a concentration of Asian Studies in Canberra, clustered around the Australian National University, its library, and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. Ricklefs is of the opinion that the prospective European Network of Asian Studies should be linked up with other existing networks including the

Australian one. Post-doctoral exchanges within a global network could bring a beneficial global perspective within reach.

Teach or Perish

David. K. Wyatt, Professor of Southeast Asian History at Cornell University and President of the Association of Asian Studies (AAS), stated that Asian Studies in the United States is a big enterprise which has been institutionalised in many different universities across the country. Furthermore, if one looks at the membership of the AAS, which acts as a North American interest-group for Asian Studies, it becomes clear that traditional humanistic disciplines have continued to dominate the field. The support for Asian Studies in the United States comes from the general funding of higher education and is justified by the teaching of undergraduates. This leaves little room for new directions and has given Asian Studies in the United States a highly specialised and parochial outlook. Wyatt expresses hope that in future international co-operation will play a larger role in Asian Studies.

Learning from Asia

Professor R. Rybakov, Deputy Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow which employs over 1000 researchers, informs us about the history of Asian Studies (which he consistently calls Oriental Studies) in Russia, the origins of which he dates back to the time of Peter the Great. Asian Studies in 19th century Russia were predominantly of a philological nature. Scholars incorporated words from languages of Asian peoples who had been conquered during the Russian expansion into the Russian vocabulary. Russia became an Asian country itself and Asian Studies a form of self study. After the communist revolution Asian Studies were completely politicised, but Rybakov states that the majority of Orientalists did not commit themselves to crude dogmatism. With the overthrow of communism a new generation of Orientalists, or should we say Asianists, is emerging which eagerly looks for inspiration from their economically successful Asian neighbours.

Decolonisation of Knowledge

Dr Taufik Abdullah, Senior Researcher at LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences) in Jakarta, sketches Asian Studies in a broad regional Southeast Asian perspective of countries such as Indonesia, The Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

He addresses the decolonisation of knowledge in the context of Asian Studies, which was by no means an easy thing to do for the Asian scholars. In the 1950s and 1960s they searched for a proper academic perspective and in the 1970s and 1980s national identity and culture were high on the agenda. According to Taufik Abdullah the awareness of the artificiality of national boundaries in the global village will stimulate international co-operation and enhance research in a broader regional Southeast Asian perspective.

The Quest Has Just Begun

Much research still remains to be done in order to really come to grips with Asian Studies in a global context. More attention will have to be given to Asian Studies in the Asian countries themselves. Fortunately Taufik Abdullah can inform us about Asian Studies in the Southeast Asian region. But we are still ill-informed about Asian Studies in Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, and India. More attention will have to be paid to Asian Studies in the southern countries of Europe and Latin America. Fortunately, Asian Studies in France and Great Britain have been charted in recent studies and Asian Studies in Scandinavia have been highlighted in an article in the previous issue of this Newsletter. With the assistance of databases, which are continuously updated, and unstinting efforts we will be able to create a greater degree of transparency in the world of Asian Studies. As a step in this direction in its next supplement the editorial staff of this Newsletter will venture to give a picture of Asian Studies in Europe.

Guide to Asian Studies in Europe

This Guide cannot be seen as an abstraction, divorced from developments over the past few years which have influenced the field of Asian Studies in Europe. Therefore, before turning to this Guide to Asian Studies itself, it is necessary to set the stage with a brief sketch of those developments which have generated the growing awareness in Europe that intensive co-operation is a vital key to unlock new research areas and deal with the new realities of present-day Asia and the world at large. An awareness which is to be found at all levels among Asianists, institutes, organisations, and associations in the field of Asian Studies.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 1998. "Guide to Asian Studies in Europe", *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe*, edited by Paul van der Velde. London: Curzon Press. 5-7.

The foundation of the European Science Foundation-Asia Committee (ESF-AC) in 1994 can be seen as marking the beginning of the intensification of institutional co-operation in Europe. On its board are twenty members representing all the important European institutes in the field of Asian Studies. The committee has set itself three main goals. The first of these is to reinforce Asian Studies by setting up an ESF fellowship programme, which has so far been supported by the government of France, the Scandinavian countries, and the Netherlands. The second goal on which the ESF-AC has set its sights is the organisation of international scholarly meetings to increase mobility and co-operation among Asian scholars. So far thirty meetings of this kind have been organised, generating new impulses for Asian Studies in Europe. In a further attempt to stimulate co-operation and mobility the Committee also allotted a budget to the regional associations for Asian Studies in Europe in the field of Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Southeast Asian Studies, which had already been founded, and stimulated the foundation of the European associations for South Asian and Central Asian Studies in 1996.

The third goal identified by the Committee as necessary to the achievement of its purpose was to create a European Database for Asian Studies (EDAS), which should initially help to identify the quantitative spread of Asian Studies in Europe and later their professional content. The publication of this edition of the *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe* can be regarded as the outcome of that first quantitative phase of the project. Now this project is poised to enter its second phase in which more qualitative information will be added to the EDAS by means of a more elaborate questionnaire. This does not mean that the quantitative gathering of information will not continue.

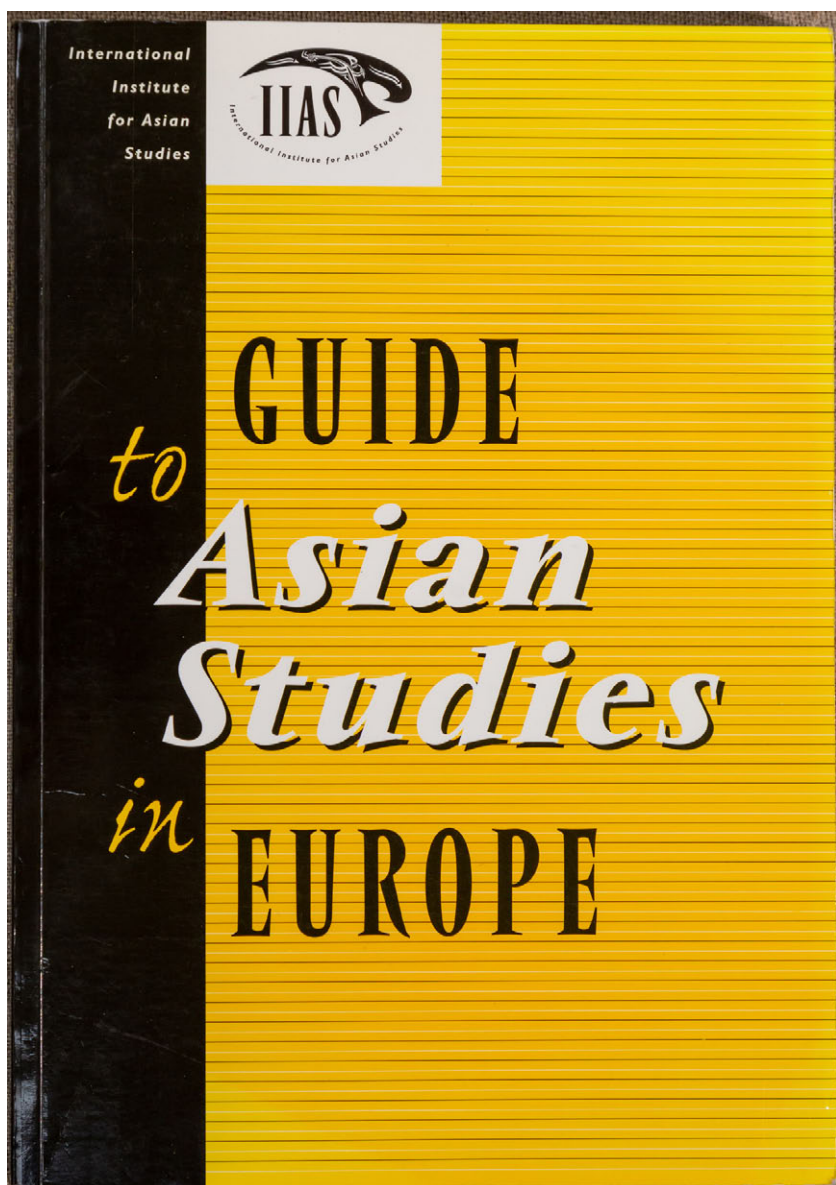


Figure 14. Cover of the *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe*. Photo Cindy Bakker.

The Guide to Asian Studies in Europe (GASE)

Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of compiling or supervising a project of this kind knows that he or she is fully dependent on the co-operation of the people who are candidates for inclusion in the Guide. Certainly when it is the first time that such a guide is put together, a lot of water has to flow under the bridge before such potential candidates are convinced of the necessity for the guide. The purpose of this publication is to present as concisely as possible the outcome of a project which has spanned a two-year period. The catalyst was a similar line of research conducted in the Netherlands in 1994-1995, resulting in the *Guide to Asian Studies in the Netherlands '95*.

The GASE Project commenced in 1995 with an announcement in the *IIAS Newsletter*, which included a questionnaire requesting professional data and information from Asianists about the region and discipline. By appending their signature, the respondents declared that they agreed that the information they had supplied us could be used for this publication. The response to this mailing was condensed in the *Preliminary Guide to Asian Studies in Europe '95* which was sent as an insert to all readers of the *IIAS Newsletter*. The primary reason behind this earlier publication was to act as a stimulus to generate more response. In this we were not disappointed. In Russia, Spain, and France national initiatives were undertaken to produce inventories for the field of Asian Studies, a move which expanded the European dimension of the project. In June 1996 a letter, which also contained a print-out of the data then in our possession, was sent to all respondents and, for encouragement, to all non-respondents. This initiative created a very sizeable response which, taken in conjunction with questionnaires received up to June 1997, seemed to justify the decision to go ahead with the publication of this guide, now that nearly 5,000 respondents or approximately 60 per cent of the European Asianists are represented in it. These figures would indicate that the total number of Asianists in Europe is in the region of 8,000.

Quantitative Data

The *Preliminary Guide to Asian Studies in Europe '95* contained information on 300 institutes and about 500 Asianists. The Netherlands was not included because the *Guide to Asian Studies in the Netherlands '95* alone contained more than 500 Dutch Asianists. In September 1995, a presentation detailing the GASE Project was made in a meeting of the ESF-AC. By that time slightly more than 2,000 Asianists had responded. About 40 per cent of them were Dutch. It was therefore no wonder that the area most studied turned out to be Southeast Asia, taking account of the

strong Dutch tradition in that field. South Asia was in second place, and third place was taken by East Asia. Central and Insular Southwest Asia were virtually virgin territories. Discipline-wise there was a clear preponderance of anthropology and history. French, German, and British Asianists were already well-represented whereas the Mediterranean countries and Russia went almost unrepresented.

In this Guide almost 5,000 Asianists are listed, which is a tenfold increase in comparison with the Preliminary Guide. There is still a Dutch bias, but in all the percentage of Dutch Asianists has dwindled from 50 per cent to a little more than 20 per cent. Although the Netherlands emerges as the country with the most Asianists, we are convinced that in the second edition of this publication this number will be proportionally more representative. Countries with more than 500 Asianists are Germany, Russia, France, and Great Britain. All other countries have fewer than 200 Asianists. Fortunately Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece can now account for more than 300 Asianists between them. This number is comparable to the number of Scandinavian Asianists.

In the presentation in September 1995, South and Southeast Asia were the most studied regions. Now we can note that East Asia has stolen a march as the most studied area followed by Southeast and South Asia. Interestingly, a remarkable growth of Central Asian Studies can also be discerned. Countries attracting the most attention from Asianists are China, Indonesia, India, and Japan, each with on average 1,000 specialists. A middle category is formed by countries and regions such as Thailand, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, The Philippines, Taiwan, Tibet, and Vietnam which are studied by on average 400 scholars.

By far the largest discipline in the field of Asian Studies is history followed by anthropology, both fields with more than 1000 scholars. Cultural studies and religion attract about 800 researchers. Noteworthy is the rise of researchers in the field of political science, international relations, and economics. Each of these disciplines has more than 500 practitioners.

The Second Phase of GASE

In the second phase of the GASE Project our aim will be to collect more detailed information on the professional content of the work of the European Asianists. The instrument we have chosen to accomplish our aim is a more elaborate questionnaire. We would ask our contributors to this second phase to be fairly reticent in filling in their regional and disciplinary specialisation. If there is one thing we have learned from the first phase questionnaires it is that Europe has a fair percentage of Asianists who feel competent in a variety of disciplines and regions. Of course, it is hard to qualify when it is possible to claim to be a specialist in a certain field

but a minimum requirement should be that one has to have written at least three articles on the topic or a book. This should not stop young scholars from filling in the questionnaire, because it can also be seen as a statement of aspiration. Those who have already filled in the first phase questionnaire will receive a print-out of the information already provided. They then have to fill in only the remaining part. Please note that there is a separate entry in the questionnaire which is from the National Bureau of Asian Research (Seattle). If you fill out this questionnaire we will relay this information to this Bureau which will include it in its directory which tends to concentrate on specialists in policy studies. We hope for your continued support in this project and please do not hesitate to comment on this Guide so that we will be able to improve the second edition.

New Developments in Asian Studies: An Introduction

The eighteen contributions to this book concern the world of Asia albeit in a highly diverse sense. The articles range from Gujarat to the mountains of western Japan and from Tibet to Madagascar. They cover a time-scale from tenth century China to the present situation in the Pacific Rim and they deal with such political issues as minority rights and legal reforms, and analyses of the academic discourse in Asia. All the articles were written by scholars affiliated with the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 1998. "New Developments in Asian Studies.: An Introduction". *New Developments in Asian Studies*, edited by Velde, Paul van der and McKay, Alex. London / New York: Kegan Paul International. IX-XVII.

Minorities in Asia

No major Asian nation-state is without its minority groups which have fought to maintain their identities and often succeeded. This section contains a review of one such successful strategy and a more general, theoretical consideration of the problem of minorities. Barend ter Haar, in "A New Interpretation of the Yao Charters", discusses these charters, which are often in the form of beautifully illustrated scrolls, preserved by the people of the Yao culture of southern China. These scrolls contain at least one or two narratives, which tell of the northern origins of the first Yao groups and legitimate their exemption from taxes and corvée labour. Chinese scholars (both Han and Yao) take quite literally the claims that these documents were donated by past emperors. They even use them as straightforward historical sources of the early history of the Yao. In his article, Ter Haar argues that these documents were actually composed by the Yao themselves on the basis of transmitted mythology in order to create a positive identity vis-à-vis the Han Chinese. The charters use the format of historiography because this was (and perhaps still is) the dominant mode of self-legitimation in the Chinese sphere of influence.

In his article "Can Kymlicka's Liberal Theory of Minority Rights be Applied in East Asia", Baogang He examines and questions this theory in the context of the East Asian experience. Kymlicka's theory of minority rights justifies and defends the institutionalisation of internal boundaries between communities in a nation-state, and, consequently the right of national minorities to refuse assimilation into a larger society. Baogang reviews the main ideas of Kymlicka's theory and, in testing it, describes minority policies in East Asia as a basis for discussion. The question of whether this conceptualisation of minority rights is appropriate in the East Asian context is examined. Another aim is to explore whether the inherent notion

of justice in Kymlicka's theory is comparable to the Confucian notion of justice. Finally the topic is used to test the strengths and limits as well as the applicability and implications of Kymlicka's theory.

Chinese History Within and Without

The next three contributions on China-proper all deal with history, the latter of the three being concerned with the question of sinology and sinologists. In his contribution, "Historical Consciousness in China: Some Notes on Six Theses on Chinese Historiography and Historical Thought", Achim Mittag takes a fresh look at six theses inspired by Chinese historiography and the Chinese sense of the past. These include: the often repeated view that the Chinese have valued a backward-looking attitude; the notion of compartmentalised time, which has been considered a hindrance to the development of historical consciousness; the time-honoured idea of history as a 'mirror'; the assertion that Chinese historiography was confined to chronography; the view that Chinese historiography functioned as 'a guide to bureaucratic practices'; and the notion of 'tyranny' of history. In his concluding remarks, Mittag introduces and briefly discusses a new theoretical approach to writing history and historical thought in a comparative perspective.

Angela Schottenhammer, whose contribution on "Politics and Morality in Song China: Sima Guang as a Typical Example" explains the functioning of the ideological transition from the field of politics to morality within a political dispute and argumentation. She begins by describing the historical, political, and ideological background of Song China which was characterised by the emergence of new political and ideological concepts. The particular battle which captures her attention was that of the factions of the reformer Wang Anshi and those of Sima Guang, who clashed on the question of what the best and most appropriate way was to guarantee political and economic stability, and the unity of the empire. To prove themselves right, Song officials used a very specific argumentation originally put forward by Sima Guang. This example could just as well be applied to modern China and in fact has been one of the uses of Chinese history as Mittag has shown in his article. This leads to the intriguing question of who the present-day Wang Anshi is and who is accorded the role of Sima Guang.

Hans Hägerdal contributes an article entitled "Why Sinologists Look East: An Essay on the Prosopography of Sinology". He applies a prosopographical approach to the study of Western sinologists as a group of individuals pursuing a profession. Hägerdal draws inspiration from a wide range of sources: state-of-the-art studies, obituaries, autobiographies, and interviews. A number of themes, which are essential for the development of the profession, are examined. These are then placed in

the wider perspective of academic traditions and the temporal aspect of change. The first which springs to mind is the meaning of China and Chinese culture in the environment in which the sinologists work. This highlights the difficulties in gaining physical and mental access to the object of study. The scene having been set, the spotlight turns to patterns discernible in the initiation phase of the scholars: why China? Though purely academic interest has become an increasingly decisive factor among sinologists in their choice of the field, other factors should not be overlooked. The next step is to survey the personal characteristics of the sinologists. Hägerdal investigates issues relating to their educational and inspirational background and foregrounds the problem of an intellectual genealogy and the pros and cons of a strong scholarly tradition. Hägerdal hypothesises that the relation between the profession of sinology and Western political interest in general is less clear-cut than is often presumed. Strong national intellectual traditions in the field of sinology have prevailed thus far, but now these seem to have reached a stage of modification, submitting themselves to the influence of the internationalisation of research.

People, Capital and Law in China

Leaving history behind, the next three contributors bring us directly to present-day China, examining such pertinent topics as economic modernisation, migration, and law reform. In her article “Qiaoxiang Ties and China’s Economic Modernization”, Cen Huang gives a review of the current studies on overseas Chinese, with a specific focus on the relationships between qiaoxiang (home town) and China’s fast growing transnational economy. Qiaoxiang ties, in a broad sense, represent complex social, political, cultural, and economic relationships between overseas Chinese and their ancestral homeland – China. They derive from ‘traditional’ modes of organisation among Chinese migrants, which have persisted for centuries. During the past two decades, large amounts of foreign capital have flowed into China and there is a widespread belief that the majority of this capital was introduced or invested by overseas Chinese. Qiaoxiang ties have played an important role in the creation of the economic miracle in South China. Nurtured by the qiaoxiang phenomenon, a transnational economy has been emerging in South China since the late 1980s. Huang focuses on three themes: qiaoxiang ties and Chinese societal networks; overseas Chinese remittances and foreign investment; and entrepreneurship and China’s economic modernisation.

The theme of Carine Guerassimoff’s article on “Legal and Illegal Mainland Chinese Emigration During the 1990s” is the new Chinese migration from the People’s Republic of China since the end of the 1980s. She argues that the Chinese government is doing its best to control and organise the new flow of migrants, but the movement is growing so fast that illegal networks remain as important as before.

Yong Zhang examines the history and recent development of the Chinese administrative penalty system in comparison with Japanese and Taiwanese laws in his article, "The Development of the Chinese Administrative Penalty System: A Comparative Perspective with Japanese and Taiwanese Law". In contrast to the Japanese and Taiwanese administrative penalty systems, which developed under the principle of the separation of state powers and the rule of law, the Chinese administrative system has developed under the principle of concentration of state powers and the Chinese-style of the rule of law, which means that in the past as well as in the present the administrative power occupies a position of substantial supremacy. Against the background of the internationalisation of the Chinese economy, the Chinese administrative penalty system faced the problem of matching Western standards.

The legislation contained in the Chinese Administrative Penalty Act is an effort to make a rapprochement. Although the new legislation has improved the former situation in the power of creating administrative penalties and the procedure for imposing an administrative penalty, these improvements have their own limitations. The most acute of these restrictions affects personal freedom. The Chinese legislators were not in a position to remove the vested power for creating administrative penalties from the hands of the Executive, and administrative penalties affecting personal freedom could not be abolished nor could the newly introduced system of court hearings be applied to an administrative penalty regarding personal freedom. The short and simple answer to this conundrum is that the legislation has to be carried out within the framework of current Chinese constitutional principles.

Islam and the Challenge of Modernity

Turning south to Indonesia, the discussions fall into two highly opposing categories for modern Indonesia: Islam and regionalism. In his contribution on the "Role of Islam in Contemporary Indonesia: Search for a New Social Paradigm" Dilip Chandra analyses the developments within Islamic movements and organisations themselves and then contrasts this to the government's momentous step in 1985 of introducing Pancasila (the Five Principles) as the sole basis for all socio-political organisations. The crux of this argument is that though this historic step led to a formal end of the ideological struggle in Indonesia, which included the struggle for an Islamic state, it simultaneously opened up new possibilities for the Islamic organisations to channel the aspirations of the Islamic community (Ummat). The post-1985 period has been marked by a growing rapport between the government and the new Islamic leadership, whose summit was reached by the creation of the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia (ICMI, the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association) by the government in December 1990.

Chandra analyses the major events which led to the declaration of Pancasila then focuses on its impact on the Islamic struggle. His conclusion is that although there is a favourable climate for greater unity within the Ummat at present, there has also been a major shift in the struggle of the Ummat concerning its aims. The current Islamic struggle is now more preoccupied with the application of Islamic cultural values and social norms in society, rather than with the creation of an Islamic state.

Using the academic debate on globalisation as an introductory framework, Jeroen Peeters discusses the Indonesian book trade in "Islamic Book Publishers in Indonesia: A Social Network Analysis". Proceeding chronologically, he offers a detailed discussion of Islamic publishers working under the Sukarno regime. Their fortunes initially declined under the New Order rule of Suharto. The healthy state of the industry which lasted until recently, typified by the publishing house of Mizan of Bandung, contrasts sharply with the struggles endured in the early days of the Republic by those who did their utmost to propagate religious knowledge.

Between Nation and Region: Authors in Indonesia

The contrast between ethnicity and nationalism has always been a delicate issue in Indonesia. The two following articles offer a historical perspective. One deals with colonial times, the other with a contemporary author. The article by Edwin Wieringa, entitled "Another Document from the Funeral Pyre: The Suluk Aspiya or Suluk Endracatur by Radèn Mas Atmasutirta", is about Pakubuwana IV's quest for the secret wisdom to help him exercise his statecraft. A close reading of the text shows that it has little to do either with mysticism or history. The story is perhaps best characterised as a 'satire' on Pakubuwana IV (r. 1788-1820). In his Babad Pakepung, Yasadipura had sharply criticised Pakubuwana IV for not having listened to his court poet. Atmasutirta in his poem was probably seeking more official court recognition for poets.

In his contribution "Because I am a Malay' Taufik Ikram Jamil between Nation and Region", Will Derks discusses some of the main tendencies in modern Indonesian literature by focusing on the work of the Indonesian author Taufik Ikram Jamil. Taufik is a Malay in his early thirties, living and working as a journalist as well as a literary author in Pekanbaru, the capital of the Indonesian province of Riau. Although not yet well known, Taufik seems to be a promising young author of a great many poems, short stories, and essays. Derks shows that Taufik is by any claim a national author in whose work some of the main tendencies in modern Indonesian literature concerning the vicissitudes of the state and the nation are reflected. The clues are in its *pasemon* character, its inclination to play 'the game with the censor', its penchant for the absurd and its reticence, among others. Having said this, it has to be admitted that Taufik's work also reveals a strong

tendency to emphasise regional Malay concerns rather than national Indonesian preoccupations. This expression of a desire to 'turn inward', as well as some reasons for this desire, are discussed at length. Derks shows that Taufik holds an ambivalent position 'between nation and region', and ends by suggesting that such an ambivalence may be characteristic of other young writers in Indonesia today.

Deconstructing Imperial Images

The next three contributions are taken from South India, Madagascar, and Tibet, all looking at colonial myths which were once propagated to shore up the interests of colonial governments, and then proceeding to deconstruct them. "Indian Languages in the Modernization Discourse in Colonial India" is the contribution of E. Annamalai. In it he describes the nature and extent of encoding the modern ideology in Indian languages, especially Tamil, lexically and semantically. As one of the sources for language modernisation is cultural contact, this article describes the dissemination process of modern ideology identified with the European Enlightenment which began in India in the nineteenth century. The process is a mosaic of varying motivations of the colonial rulers and negotiations of the Indian subjects in disseminating and appropriating modern ideology, each to their own ends. Education, having been imparted through the medium of English to the upper segments of Indian society, did not, the author contends, turn out to be the primary source by which Indian languages were modernised. Publications in Indian languages by the bilingual intelligentsia, who had access to English education, were, however, such a source. Thus language modernisation followed societal modernisation at the ideological level.

In a theoretical framework which distinguishes between linguistic affiliation, assimilation, and differentiation of modern ideas, the article shows general semantic shifts in Tamil, illustrating assimilation and semantic differentiation as a way to create new meanings which are not isomorphic with the modern ideology. These would seem to suggest that a differentiated modernity was created. Both assimilating and differentiating manifestations of modernity as encoded in Indian languages are important for appreciating the issues of inter-translatability and inter-communication between Europe and Asia, even in the domain of modernity.

Rafolo Andrianaivoarivony has chosen "The Construction of the State of Madagascar in the Nineteenth Century: Archaeology of the Religious Legitimacy" as the title of his contribution. In it he addresses the question of how religious values were transformed and then used in the construction and consolidation of the kingdom of Madagascar. As of 1869, the legitimacy of power was no longer based on the values of the traditional religion but on Christianity. Although not denying the

enormous impact of Christian values on modern Madagascar, Andrianaivoarivony makes clear that the ancient values of the traditional religion have not been erased completely.

“Tibet: The Myth of Isolation” by Alex McKay, examines the popular image of pre-communist Tibet as a remote and inaccessible land and demonstrates that this image was deliberately cultivated for political purposes by Tibet itself and its Chinese and British patrons. The Tibetan government wished to maintain Tibet’s isolation in order to protect its Buddhist system, and the Chinese (and later the British) co-operated with this policy to protect their own influence in Lhasa. In fact, the harsh climatic and physical conditions were the main barrier for Europeans wishing to travel there. Officials of the government of India and wealthy individuals who supported the British imperial government were routinely permitted to enter Tibet. Up to 2,000 Europeans entered Tibet in the first half of this century and even after the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa in 1903-4, more than 80 travelled to Lhasa. Neighboring states such as Mongolia and Bhutan were far more isolated from European visitors.

Environment, Culture, and Economy

The last three contributions range from the environment, to music, to the formation of modern supra-state organisations. Hunting, a very sensitive issue in many countries, is the topic of John Knight’s “The Debate on Hunting in Present-day Japan”. He focuses on the various criticisms levelled at hunting and on the way in which Japanese hunters respond to these criticisms. One of the key differences between hunting in the Japanese context and hunting in other urban-industrial societies is the Buddhist emphasis on the wrongful character of life taking. Despite the official recognition of contemporary Japanese hunting as a sport, hunters themselves recognise its life taking (and precept-breaking) character by ritually commemorating the souls of the animals hunted. Recreational hunting in Japan, it is argued, is caught in a rhetorical debate, whereby it cannot be straightforwardly defined either as a safe sport or as justifiable killing, but is left as an unstable, morally dubious activity. This discussion of Japanese hunting draws upon an ethnographic study of hunting among the mountain villagers on the Kii Peninsula, western Japan. For the wider national debate on hunting, it also draws from the database of the newspaper, *Asahi Shinbun*.

Music is the theme chosen by Françoise Delvoye who writes about “Music Patronage in the Sultanate of Gujarat: A Survey of Sources”. She presents a survey of sources on some aspects of the cultural policy of the sultans of Gujarat (1407-1573), paying particular attention to their music patronage which should be seen within

the wider framework of a project she is conducting on the Social and Literary History of Court-Musicians in Western India, 14th-18th Century. Still today, the artistic heritage of Gujarat reflects the importance of artistic patronage in medieval western India. Delvoye demonstrates the importance of written historiographical, musicological, and literary sources drawn from a range of literary genres in various languages in the period of the sultans of the Muzaffarid Dynasty, founded by Zafar Khân in 1407. In a case study of the eminent poet-composer Nâyak Bakhshû, whose compositions were compiled on the orders of the Mughal emperor Shâh Jahân (r. 1627-58) and who has left us with an invaluable corpus of lyrics, Delvoye unravels facets of the socio-cultural court history of medieval India which add a documentary interest to the literary value.

Gwyn Campbell, in his contribution on “The Indian Ocean Rim (IOR): Economic Association: A Giant in the Making?”, examines the rise of and prospects for a major new economic grouping: the IOR. The region possesses a long history of trade links, owing to its unique combination of relatively populous and resource-endowed littorals aided and abetted by the interplay of the monsoons and currents which facilitated trans-oceanic transport. This fortuitous conjunction is reflected in the emergence of the Indian and other trade diasporas. The advent of steam power and European colonialism from circa 1870, followed by the Cold War, and Apartheid in South Africa, destroyed the existing Asia-African trade networks. The abolishment of Apartheid cleared the way for a renewal of economic relations in the region in the early 1990s. First mooted in 1993, the idea of an economic association of Indian Ocean countries quickly gathered momentum and, in March 1997, the IOR association with an initial fourteen members was officially constituted.

Although it faces problems in terms of economic disparity and a potentially large membership, the IOR also has a number of advantages. The diversity of its resource base and of its component economies makes for complementarities which, given the huge population and fast-developing economies of Southeast Asia, create the potential for large-scale economies and thus for rapid economic growth across the region. This in turn could transform the IOR into the first intercontinental association of the “South”, in contrast to the ASEAN for example, capable of bargaining with currently existing regional associations and world economic institutions of the “North” (EU, IMF) in order to counter North-South economic domination and create a more balanced global economy.

These eighteen articles offer a kaleidoscope of issues in Asian Studies reflecting the research interests of the IIAS. Many of the articles have implicit comparative transregional dimensions which clearly exceed the dimensions of mere case studies.

What about Asia? Revisiting Asian Studies

What about Asia? Revisiting Asian Studies brings together scholars from Asia, Europe and America to test the strength of a field of study which, considering the rise of Asia, should be gaining momentum. But is it? This is one of the many questions that the contributors to this volume ask themselves. In the past decade the use and legitimacy of area studies, and in particular Asian Studies, have been passionately debated in conferences and academic journals. Questions have been raised in several issues of the *IIAS Newsletter* over the conceptualisation of Asian Studies and the kind of knowledge that Asia specialists produce. A variety of answers have been presented, but the issue is still far from settled.

Original source: Stremmelaar, Josine and Velde, Paul van der. 2006. 'What about Asia? Revisiting Asian Studies', *What about Asia? Revisiting Asian Studies*, edited by Stremmelaar, Josine and Velde, Paul van der. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 7-13.

Wim Stokhof, who has been a fervent debater and partisan of Asian Studies, has taken numerous initiatives during his directorate of the International Institute for Asian Studies (1993-2006) to stimulate this field of scholarship. To honour his contribution to Asian Studies we have invited eminent scholars to reflect on and provide insight into the debate on the state of the art of Asian Studies. Among the topics touched upon are: the conceptualising of Asian Studies: what do they look like from a national, regional or global perspective? What is the relationship between Asian Studies and the societies that they cover? What contribution do Asian Studies make to Asian societies? What is the future for Asian Studies? Will interest in Asian Studies outside Asia continue, and will Asian Studies be 'Asianised'? What is the role of Asian diasporas in the conceptualisation of Asia?

From Enlightenment to All-inclusiveness

In his article "Asian Studies and the Discourse of the Human Sciences" Gananath Obeyesekere explores the issue of how the native Asian scholar, as opposed to the scholar of Asian Studies, can relate the discourse of the human sciences to his own cultural heritage. There is a view widely prevalent among Asian nationalist scholars, and elsewhere in the world, that one should be able to construct an indigenous social science. Obeyesekere argues that this is an unrealisable goal at present and that we cannot avoid our contemporary cosmopolitan inheritance of Enlightenment discourse. He makes a case for a more realistic approach which would use terms, concepts and ideas from one's own cultural tradition to enrich the Western discourse of the human sciences.

Obeyesekere does so by employing Buddhist ideas of “no-self” and the absence of essence within existence to critique the Cartesian paradigm, ‘I think, I am’. Employing primarily Buddhist visionary experiences he argues that visions are “showings” that occur without the mediation of the ‘I’. He then brings in Nietzsche who boldly suggested that instead of the Cartesian cogito, one should be able to say “It-thinks”. From here Obeyesekere moves to a form of “aphoristic thinking” in the Buddha, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein that again entails the appearance of condensed thoughts without the mediation of the ‘I’ and in this sense he brings about a dialogue between the European and the Buddhist Enlightenment. In other words the question he poses is: “What are the areas of thinking where the self or ego does not exist and the Cartesian cogito does not operate?”

Peter van der Veer in his “Area Studies in a Changing World” demonstrates that area studies – in this context Asian Studies – can contribute to the deepening of knowledge on globalisation because it can put the ‘national’ into a global context. He first delineates the three main lines of criticism on area studies, namely that they do not produce universally valid knowledge; that they are intimately related to Western power interests and that they do not take into consideration the fluid boundaries of this age of globalisation. Although Van der Veer finds truth in this criticism he points to the huge potential of area studies which allows for a more in-depth perspective on the variety of forms of globalisation. According to Van der Veer, rather than a comparative stance, an all-inclusive point of departure should be taken in studying the West and the East.

He expounds this by using a case study of the relations between the Dutch state and Islam which edifies his all-inclusive approach. That such an approach is necessary is borne out by the jingoist attacks on mosques and Islamic schools that have taken place in the Netherlands in the wake of 9/11. The loyalty of Muslim immigrants to the Dutch way of life was questioned and a fierce debate ensued over the nature of Dutch society. It has only recently dawned on the North Sea Hollanders that their country is in fact a postcolonial society with a growing number of immigrants who adhere to Islam. This once again proves that the concept of *la longue durée* is unfortunately not embedded in political discourse because otherwise the debaters would have realised that only fifty years ago the Netherlands was a colonial society in which a vast majority of the population was Muslim.

Historical analysis of the colonial state could have provided clear insights into three dilemmas the postcolonial modern state has to come to grips with: how to make individuals into loyal citizens; how to substantially increase the political participation of its subjects, thereby entailing a public sphere in which civil society can operate; and how can the modern state protect the liberty and equality of its inhabitants? In this context another important question needs to be tackled: can the postcolonial state still be called a ‘national’ state or are we moving in the direction

of what Manuel Castells labelled “the Network Society”? Certainly cosmopolitans view the state as an obstacle to realising their global ambitions when using their transnational networks, which are essential for creating transnational identities that are inspired more often than not by religion. They challenge the national state that can no longer counter confrontations with traditional national reflexes. Only by tackling these challenges from an all-inclusive perspective is there a chance that acceptable answers can be found.

The Intimate Knowledge of Asia

Shamsul A.B. in his “Asia as a Form of Knowledge: of Analysis, (Re) Production, and Consumption” regards Asian Studies as consisting of a number of regional studies, such as South Asian Studies, Japanese Studies and Southeast Asian Studies. Asia is in Shamsul’s eyes both a real and imagined area. It is real in terms of its physicality and the people that populate the region. It is imagined because it is situated in documents and texts that form a corpus of knowledge regarding the society and environment of the region that have been accumulated from the earliest of available records on leaves to the latest digitalised form.

In sum, Asia is a form of knowledge. This knowledge is called Asian Studies and has been constituted from accounts about its society and environment. It is organised along a baseline, a continuum between ‘plurality’ at one end and ‘plural society’ on the other. Both ‘plurality’ and ‘plural society’ are terms that describe the two different processes of social formation as well as types of society forms within Asia before and after the arrival of the Europeans in the fifteenth century.

The consolidation of “plural society” in Asia led to the organisation of knowledge about societies within the region into nation-states hence the development of nation-state based studies, such as Indonesian studies, Japanese Studies and so on. Therefore the production and reproduction process of knowledge about Asia became increasingly detailed but highly compartmentalised hence the complex system of organisation and bureaucracy that is involved. This, in turn, shapes the pattern of consumption of knowledge about Asia, both within and outside Asia.

Robert Cribb in his “A Little Knowledge is a Useful Thing”: Paradoxes in the Asian Studies Experience in Australia’ relates the history of Asian Studies from the 1950s to the present. Until the 1950s there was no such thing as Asian Studies in Australia. Academies interested in Asia worked within disciplines such as history or anthropology, or in an esoteric field generally called Orientalism. As of the fifties Asia began to loom large in the world; Asia as a whole seemed to have something special, something not to be found elsewhere. It became a place where important lessons could be learned, and the people to identify those lessons were Asianists.

Like the Orientalists, they spoke one or more Asian languages, but their orientation was on the present rather than the classical past. They typically drew insights from more than one discipline, blending history, politics, anthropology and economics. Since the late 1980s, however, Asian Studies have come under attack from different corners. There were accusations that a cultural determinism was rife among Asianists and that they were staunch adherents to a pluralist stance in the Asian values debate which implicitly denied the universality of human rights. These attacks combined with the winds of economic realism blowing ever more strongly from the 1980s onward caused a notable decline in academic and financial support for the field of Asian Studies despite the increasing importance of Asia to the West. Cribb then focuses his attention on the future of Asian Studies in Australia against the background of the growing complexity of Australia's involvement with Asia beyond both bilateral government relations and the Asian Studies world of the universities. Business engagements are growing and people-to-people contacts are multiplying in cultural, technological, religious and social fields. In academia, geologists, economists, engineers and a host of other researchers routinely include the study of Asia in their teaching and research. Many of them are discovering that much of modern Asia is no more difficult to understand than the United States or France. When Asia was a mystery, Asianists were the gatekeepers to a world of glittering promises and terrifying threats. As Asia becomes routine, those who want to take part in it feel that they can bypass Asianists. However, Cribb still sees a role for Asianists and Asian Studies when he concludes that the risk of assuming that a little knowledge is enough will lead to insufficient specialists addressing complex issues that only those with a deep knowledge can tackle effectively.

The Eurasian Space

Yeo Lay Hwee in her contribution "The Ebb and Flow of ASEM Studies" explores Europe's and Asia's "rediscovery" of each other in 1996 with the launch of the high profile leaders' summit in the form of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEM is the official abbreviation for the Asia-Europe Meeting, an informal forum for developing dialogue and cooperation between the members of the EU, the European Commission, China, Japan, Korea and the ten members of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations. It led to a burst of writings and literature on ASEM and Asia-Europe relations; this burst of energy saw economists, International Relations specialists, Europeanists, Asianists, and a string of political and news commentators rushing to analyse, dissect, and theorise on the ASEM process. ASEM was studied not only from a policy angle but from the perspectives of diplomacy, inter-regionalism and global governance. The interest in and study of the ASEM process has waned

as the process suffers from a lack of commitment and coherence. It could even be argued that because the ASEM process lacks progress, and has been criticised for the lack of substance and substantive results, interest could not be sustained. But the death knell has not rung for ASEM as the cooperation and conflict between Asia and Europe remain real and important. ASEM may not be a central theme but it is still one of the frameworks that should be mentioned in passing when examining EU-East Asia relations, and issues on regionalism and inter-regionalism.

How does one define ASEM studies – is it in the realm of economics, politics or the international political economy? Is it in comparative studies, comparing Asia and Europe and their approaches to regionalism and internationalism? The article clusters the key studies and writings on ASEM, and examines how they have added to the understanding of such a process in the real world of politics and diplomacy. Yeo surmises that it is perhaps rash to talk about ASEM studies in the same breadth as Asian Studies but by looking at ASEM from different disciplines one can get a more complex and nuanced picture of how the Asia-Europe relationship is perceived.

Paul van der Velde in his “Re-orienting Asian Studies” concentrates on developments in the organisation of the field of Asian Studies from the beginning of the 1990s to the present, highlighting the role played by Wim Stokhof. Four major initiatives are singled out and elaborated upon: the European Science Foundation Asia Committee; Programme for Europe-Asia Research Linkages; the European Alliance for Asian Studies and the International Convention of Asia Scholars.

The European Science Foundation Asia Committee was established in 1994 at a time when interest in Europe for Asia began to rise steeply; the Committee's purpose was to bring together the fragmented forces in Europe in the field of Asian Studies and it operated successfully for six years. In essence the Committee significantly enhanced the value of local research funding by building bridges within Europe and between Europe and Asia. The same can be said of the European Alliance for Asian Studies, established in 1997, which combines the individual strengths and endeavours of eight institutes of Asian Studies in Europe. One of its goals is to intensify links and communication between academic research on Asia and non-academic institutions and actors. The Programme for Europe-Asia Research Linkages had an even wider scope. It was set up in 1998 as a cooperative project between institutes in Asia and Europe and was to be a network of researchers with the aim of developing a Eurasian research culture wherein issues shared by the two regions would be the driving force of study. While the previously mentioned initiatives were about cooperation between Europe and Asia, the International Convention of Asia Scholars, launched in 1997, involves the entire world in the study of Asia. The IIAS played a major role in its foundation. The main goals of the International Convention of Asia Scholars are to transcend the boundaries between disciplines,

between nations studied, and between the geographic origins of the Asia scholars involved. With the fifth convention coming up in Kuala Lumpur 2007, ICAS has grown into the largest biennial Asian Studies event outside the US covering all subjects of Asian Studies.

A clear line of development can be discerned in all these initiatives. What started out as a plan to make Asian Studies more visible at a national level gradually developed through European and interregional stages into a global process, thereby transcending the prevailing parochialism in Asian Studies. Through joint action Asia scholars were enabled to interact beyond their own discipline and region, thus enriching other (non)academic platforms and making valuable contributions to discussions at all levels of society.

Cosmopolitan Orientation

The contributors to this book share an understanding that the similarities between Asia and the West are of greater importance than the otherness of Asia on which the Orientalists focused their studies. Obeyesekere makes a strong plea for the cosmopolitan inheritance of Enlightenment discourse which leaves open the possibility to use terms, concepts and ideas from one's own cultural tradition to enrich the human sciences. Therefore, area studies and Asian Studies in particular are all but antiquated. In its all-inclusive jacket, as put forward by Van der Veer, it has the potential to be a powerful tool coming to grips with the workings of the merging of the postcolonial state and the network society in the globalising world of the 21st century.

This all-inclusive approach can not only be applied to the study of a problem within a national context but can also be used to study a process such as the Asia-Europe Meeting. This process, which focuses on the similarities between Europe and Asia rather than on the dissimilarities, can be regarded as an attempt to address Asia's and Europe's key societal questions, such as ageing, global warming and security, in a global context. Here, Asia scholars add value to debates with their intimate knowledge of the region. As Cribb so aptly states, "A little knowledge is a useful thing" because at no other point in time has knowledge about plural Asia become so indispensable as well as widespread. However, this does not mean that Asia scholars should remain in their ivory tower. Instead they should without hesitation take on a cosmopolitan habitus and apply their fusion of local, regional and global knowledge to all domains of society and learning. Wim Stokhof would call this process the rich tapestry of life.

Re-orienting Asian Studies

This contribution will outline the developments in the cooperation between the actors in the field of Asian Studies over the past fifteen years, a period which coincides with Wim Stokhof's directorship of the IIAS. In describing these developments we should keep in mind that he has played an important role as an initiator and as a facilitator. However, this article is not solely about Stokhof *per se* but about the world of Asian Studies in which he has operated. When using the terms Asia and Asian Studies, Asia is meant here as the area east of the Indus River up to and including Japan and Asian Studies is seen as the set of disciplines and sub-disciplines pertaining to the Humanities and Social Sciences which focus on Asia and whose researchers have a special area-related expertise and a thorough knowledge of the language, culture and history of their chosen area.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 2006. 'Re-orienting Asian Studies'. *What about Asia? Revisiting Asian Studies*, edited by Stremmelaar, Josine and Velde, Paul van der. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 87-103.

Asian Studies in Europe up to 1950

Four distinctive features of Asian Studies in Europe can be distinguished: The first is that Europe has a long tradition in Asian Studies spanning more than 500 years. The institutionalisation first took place in Asia itself with the foundation of the Dutch Asian Learned Society in Jakarta in 1778, followed soon after by its British equivalent in Calcutta in 1784. The French established their Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in Paris in 1795. A second distinctive feature of Asian Studies in Europe is that it was born out of the colonial encounter (An exception is Germany where Orientalism was fuelled by Romanticism). A third feature is the growing quality of Asian Studies which developed into specialisations such as Indology, Japanology and Sinology (Chairs for Indology were founded in Paris (1815), Bonn (1818), and Oxford (1833)). The fourth characteristic is the predominant focus of Asian Studies in Europe on philology, history, ethnography, and religion.

A clear and demonstrable decrease in interest in Asian Studies took place in the aftermath of World War Two. This decrease was caused by several factors. The 'granting' of independence to the Dutch, British and French colonies in Asia, shortly after the end of the war, put an end to the opportunities for young scholars to work as civil servants in the colonial administration. Before the war a host of them had the opportunity to develop a thorough knowledge of, and expertise in, topics related to their sphere of work. Upon their return to Europe many held professional chairs in Asian Studies. They used learned journals and conferences to exchange

their views in a European context. This process of accumulating knowledge about Asia *in loco* and disseminating it in Europe came to a halt after the independence of the colonies. The journals led an increasingly precarious existence and focused almost completely on classical Asian Studies.

In the immediate post-war period, Europeans became more and more involved in the reconstruction of their national states. The war had left them penniless and their infrastructure was in ruins. Endeavours to reconstruct their countries confronted the Europeans with two crucial insights. Firstly, without the US and its Marshall Plan, the European countries would have been extremely weak in a political as well as economic respect. Secondly, to avert disasters such as future wars, steps were to be taken to build a strong economic Europe. The predominant focus on the Atlantic relationship and a profound preoccupation with the convergence of national forces in Europe further distracted Europe's attention from Asia. Add to this the growing tension in the framework of the Cold War and you may understand that it was only after the fall of the Berlin Wall, coupled with the slowly developing perception of an Asian miracle, that Europe's renewed interest in Asia was jumpstarted. It will come as no surprise that motivation fueling the EU's interest in Asia stems from an unambiguous combination of economic and strategic considerations. Asia in this century will account for more than half of the world's population and has the potential to become both the world's most powerful economic region and, consequently, a political powerhouse of the first order.

To sum up: the "loss" of the colonies, the Cold War and the preoccupation of the national states with reconstruction in a wider European framework resulted in an persistent disinterest by the national authorities in the study of Asia and a consequent lack of funding for Asian Studies.

Asian Studies in Europe from 1950 to the Present

The decline in Asian Studies in the post-war era could be seen in academic circles among the former European colonial powers and this had a ripple effect stretching to other countries in Europe which had not had a colonial presence in Asia, such as the Scandinavian countries, Austria and Italy. A host of eminent scholars (many of them practically oriented) were forced to leave. Many took up positions in American universities and were instrumental in setting up study centers at their new places of employment, which eventually resulted in the burgeoning of contemporary Asian Studies in the United States. The founding of the Association for Asian Studies (1941) gave Asian Studies in the US both a focus, an academic meeting point and recruitment center, certainly at its annual meetings at which the majority of American Asia scholars gathered.

If we take a look at Asian Studies in Europe during the second half of the 20th century, we ineluctably have to acknowledge a quantitative and qualitative decline. Asian Studies in Europe has been very specialised, idiosyncratic and disproportional, focused on philology, history and anthropology. The *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe*, published in 1998, paints a telling picture of the nature of Asian Studies in Europe. Only 15 per cent of the research conducted can be labelled contemporary and geared to the present-day situation in Asia; in terms of discipline, history accounts for more than 40 per cent of the total output. Cogently, in Asian Studies in Asia, we see the reverse: eighty-five per cent of the studies conducted deal with contemporary issues, in the fields of the economy, politics, law and development.

Contemporary studies is meant here as the disciplines such as political sciences, strategic studies, international relations studies and social sciences. It is beyond doubt that the study of contemporary issues demands an intimate knowledge of the language, culture and history of the area under investigation. *La longue durée* is a prerequisite for insightful research. However, Asian Studies in Europe tend to be backward looking and more concerned with the uniqueness and cultural diversity of the countries and peoples in the region. A survey of Asian Studies in the Netherlands and Europe taken in conjunction with a review of the infrastructure and resources applied in this field of study reveals a hard core consisting of languages and cultures, social sciences and history.

Concealed within these disciplines, there is a great diversity of approaches born of the different research traditions of the countries in which these studies have been established. Another feature of European Asian Studies is the opposition between 'universal' and 'area-specific' approaches, which exposes the field to misguided notions derived from 'Orientalism' or leading to unwarranted claims of uniqueness. It is not necessary to elaborate on the well-known discussion of the pros and cons of the area studies approach versus the pure disciplinary approach because it is a non-discussion. An exclusive area studies approach could fragment disciplinary coherence and limit the scope and quality of research. Asia should be studied from a thematic i.e. interdisciplinary and comparative perspective.

As far as the field of Asian Studies has demonstrated an interest in public policy and strategic studies, it has been and still is dominated by colonial practices. In the post-colonial period, public policy studies of Asia have taken on the guise of developmental studies, concerned with state interventions for the benefit of specific target groups in the less developed parts of the region. It is estimated that in Europe between six to eight thousand people currently work in Asian Studies; most of them are real Asia scholars – they have area-specific knowledge and master an Asian language. Asia scholars are dispersed over many universities, institutes and area

study centers. The amount of knowledge is considerable but dispersed. Further, if you take into account the many large sets of data on Asia in European libraries, collections and archives, you can imagine what huge potential there is to further develop Europe's Asia expertise.

The question then arises, why have Asian Studies not played a dominant role in the Asia-Europe relationship or to phrase it differently, why have they not contributed to the cultural dimension in the Asia-Europe relationship? Possible answers could be: European Asia scholars are mostly individualists; they work in isolation in small departments; and they are not used to organising themselves so as to create greater visibility. Apart from this, there is the dichotomy between scholars from the classical, philosophical tradition and the contemporary Asia researchers. Studies by Asia scholars tend to focus on small-scale, long-term research and they are not used to large-scale programmes, or taking into account the wider picture. In Asian Studies there is much diversity in terms of scientific approaches. While this is an asset to the field, it does not help to organise people in cooperative research programmes. Quite a number of Asia scholars abhor the idea of multidisciplinary research, where, for instance, Social Sciences and Humanities would complement each other, or of working together with economists or colleagues from exact sciences and engineering.

Perhaps this draws a too despondent picture of the state of the art of Asian Studies in Europe. There are clear indications that in the last two decades of the 20th century, a greater interest has developed in contemporary studies combined with a gradual retreat from the formerly dominant focus on linguistics and on philology. Institutes such as the South-Asia-Institute in Heidelberg (1960) and the Nordic Asian Studies Center in Copenhagen (1967) carried the banner as advocates for contemporary studies in Europe. At many universities and institutions there is now a demonstrable tendency to offer courses in the classical disciplines as well as teach contemporary issues. A short check of dissertations defended at European universities since 1990 reveals that the following themes have been most popular: labour relations, democracy, economic relations, regionalism/ globalism, ethnicity, identity and/or nationalism, the rural versus urbanity, minority rights, migration, state / nation / regions, tradition and modernity, women and gender, international relations, and of course post 9-11 security.

Bearing this in mind we should now elaborate on the endeavours made to arrive at the organisation of Asian Studies at a European Level. Three major initiatives will be singled out for that purpose and elaborated on: 1. the European Science Foundation Asia Committee; 2. Programme for Europe-Asia Research Linkages and; 3. the European Alliance for Asian Studies.

European Science Foundation Asia Committee (ESF-AC)

In 1992, the Ministers of Education and Research from France and the Netherlands approached the European Science Foundation in Strasbourg. The ESF is the European association of more than 70 major national funding agencies devoted to scientific research in 29 (European) countries. It represents all scientific disciplines – from the exact and engineering sciences, to the Humanities and Social Sciences. In their joint letter to the president of the ESF, the two ministers asked the ESF to stimulate co-operation in the so-called Asian Studies, in particular in the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is puzzling that these two ministers asked for special assistance from an international European institution in matters which clearly pertain to the sphere of their own national responsibility. How did this come about?

At the time when the ministers approached the ESF, the national authorities responsible for Asian Studies had become acutely aware of the importance of Asia, heightened by their continuous neglect of the field and the necessity to co-operate and co-ordinate Asian Studies in Europe. In reaction to the ministers' plea, the ESF established the Asia Committee in 1994 that aimed to bring together the fragmented forces of Asian Studies in Europe, thus improving its standards of research and expertise and benefiting the participating countries and the European Union as a whole. Delegates on the Committee itself represented a wide range of research councils, scholarly institutions and constituencies. This variety and breadth of experience has enabled the Committee to obtain an unusually comprehensive and considered view of the resources, strengths and weaknesses of Asian Studies in Europe. Such a view was certainly beyond that available to any national or other European body. The Committee, which operated successfully for six years, adopted a variety of scientific instruments to achieve its goals: fifty-five interdisciplinary workshops were organised jointly by European and Asian partners; publication grants and travel grants were given; a postdoctoral fellowship scheme for promising young scholars was designed to promote mobility among researchers, and professional European Associations for Asian Studies were supported.

Through these activities, the ESF-AC developed Europe-wide research strengths and improved links between European centers and researchers and their counterparts in Asia. This support has been firmly based in both the Humanities and Social Sciences arenas, and a substantial share of it has focused on contemporary issues of importance to European policy makers. In this context it is elucidating to emphasise that the Humanities and Social Sciences are not independent fields of study, but are closely related and both are indispensable to understanding the workings of Asian societies in the broad sense. The functioning of governments, economies, management, and scientific systems, for example, all involve research that embraces both fields of study. Supplementary to the direct results of the

committee's activities, European and Asian networking has been greatly improved with real but unquantifiable results.

One of the most important results of the ESF-AC has been the creation of new networks at various levels. Through the ESF-AC, isolated scholars in small institutes scattered over Europe have been able to establish new links at a disciplinary or interdisciplinary level. It also supported scientific gatherings connecting and engaging European scholars in Europe-wide, Atlantic or Asia-Europe networks. One other feature of the ESF-AC's work is the scope of the European group that has benefitted and been drawn into the wider field of Asian Studies. The ESF-AC's role in the establishment of associations of Asian Studies in several European countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, and, more recently, France clearly reflects this. In addition, the ESF-AC has established a platform for the six European Associations for Asian Studies to strengthen their roles and enable them to fulfil their missions more effectively.

Any appraisal of the Committee's record would confirm that it has had an impact in the field of Asian Studies of a kind qualitatively different to what any member country could have obtained individually. And, judged by contemporary research funding standards, this has been achieved at an extremely small cost. What the ESF-AC has done, therefore, is to enhance the value of local research funding by building bridges within Europe and between Europe and Asia. Through the work of the ESF-AC there is now some Asian Studies presence in almost every European country and expertise in contemporary studies and social science based work has improved enormously.

Even before the ESF-AC was disbanded, some of its members came up with the idea to involve Asian participation in setting up a multilateral research project. In a meeting in Seoul in October 1998 the Programme for Europe-Asia Research Linkages (PEARL) was established. The following institutes were involved: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta; Department of Political Science, Yonsei University, Seoul; European Studies Programme, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok; Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, National University of Malaysia, Bangi; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; École Française d'Extrême Orient, Paris; Institute of Asian Affairs, Hamburg; International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden; Nordic Institute for Asian Studies, Copenhagen and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. PEARL was to be a network of researchers from Asia and Europe, representing leading Asian and European Studies departments in the field of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The need for this was felt both in Asia and Europe in order to boost the research interaction between the two continents which seemed opportune against the background of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) which was established in 1996.

At the time of the launch of PEARL it had already become abundantly clear that the focus of Asia-Europe relations was on politics, economics and security.

According to the members of PEARL, research should be much higher on the agenda of ASEM. A broad-based research partnership encompassing the Humanities and Social Sciences at the two ends of the Eurasian continent would deliver enormous intellectual benefits to scholarship at the national, regional and global levels. This would gradually develop into a shared research culture which would enable attention to be more effectively directed to issues which are shared between the two regions, as well as globally. But when it came down to basics the representatives of these institutes were not able to deliver the organisational and financial back-up for PEARL once the ESF pulled out. They then reasoned: Why leave a perhaps uncertain but comfortable national environment and swap it for an unsure future oriented experiment?

The European Alliance for Asian Studies

Another example of co-operation in Europe is the so-called European Alliance for Asian Studies (EAAS), or the Alliance as it came to be known, which began as a co-operation between the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden in the early 1990s. The initiative taken to enlarge the partnership in 1997 was inspired by the new world order that emerged during the last decade of the 20th century as outlined above. This was an order in which Asia developed very rapidly in every respect: culturally, economically and technologically.

A more profound mutual understanding between the two continents is essential to future academic research. Existing expertise on Asia in Europe has to be improved and optimised to meet the needs of Europe and equally those of Asia. In Europe, the initiators of the Alliance felt that restructuring Asian Studies was necessary and could be achieved by combining the individual strengths and endeavours of the various existing institutes of Asian Studies.

The policy of the Alliance is aimed at the establishment of scholarly excellence in central areas of research and expertise on Asia by building up high quality, border-transcending research with a strong focus on contemporary issues; creating networks with Asian and other research institutions and scholars; strengthening the links and communication between academic research on Asia and non-academic institutions and actors. The Alliance supports both long-term and short-term fellowships for research in Asian Studies, collaborative research projects and academic workshops and conferences.

Much has been achieved in the past six years, because of its broad range of activities. The Alliance has grown into a well-known international network bringing together expertise in Asian Studies in Europe and facilitating scholarly

excellence to the benefit of research institutions and the European community at large. The Alliance was enlarged with new members such as the Institute of Asian Affairs in Hamburg (current name: Institute of Asian Studies), the European Institute for Asian Studies in Brussels, the Asia-Europe Centre at Science-Po in Paris (now called CERI-Sciences Po), the Centre for East-Asian Studies in Madrid and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

The network is expanding not only in Europe but also in Asia. Upon the initiative of the Alliance a joint Annual Asia-Europe Workshop Series was set up in 2001 in co-operation with ASEF. The series supports workshops which focus on contemporary topics that are of relevance to both Asia and Europe. More information regarding the recent activities of the Alliance can be found on its website which is maintained by the secretariat, and hosted by the IIAS in Leiden. Moreover, the Alliance is seeking co-operation with a yet-to-be-formed alliance of Asian institutes in Asia. The initiative to constitute such an alliance has been taken by the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences in Beijing. Once the Asian Alliance has been created, close links will be fostered with its European sister organisation and eventually this will lead to an Asia-Europe Alliance for Asian Studies.

Asia-Europe Meeting

In 1994 the European Commission published *Towards a New Asia Strategy* (1994), in which the idea of a first get-together of EU countries and ASEAN countries was launched. The initiative came at the right time: absorbed in its own integration processes and in developing a strategy towards its eastern neighbours, the EU had simply neglected its relations with Asia for a long time. In the meantime, the European Commission had gradually become aware of the unprecedented economic developments in the ASEAN region and of the growing strategic role ASEAN intended to play in that part of the world.

From the very beginning the IIAS looked upon the idea of rapprochement between Asia and Europe as a potentially very effective vehicle for closer cooperation between the two continents. Therefore the IIAS did not hesitate when it was asked for input in the preparatory meetings of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Venice and Manila in 1995. On the basis of these meetings Goh Chok Tong, the then Prime Minister of Singapore, produced a document in which he envisaged a rapprochement between Asia and Europe in three stages: 1. Filling the knowledge gap / obtaining 'mutual understanding'; 2. Engaging in a process of constructive dialogue, and 3. Reaching consensus on the basis of shared values and goals.

The first meeting of Heads of State took place in Bangkok in 1996. In the following years ASEM developed into an interregional platform for consultation

and discussion between Asia and Europe. For a time, the momentum was nearly lost due to the Asian economic crisis. During the London meeting (1998) it became increasingly clear that ASEM remained useful to both regions as a forum to stimulate dialogue at a range of levels. The aims of ASEM are quite vague and somewhat ostentatious. Moreover, there seems to be little connection between the measures taken or the instruments chosen by the heads of state to obtain these goals. Basically, the whole ASEM process is still waiting for a crucial idea or concept that will boost its development.

Unfortunately the ASEM process has been hampered by unexpected events such as the Asian financial crisis, the political problems in Indonesia, the Myanmar problem, the Tsunami catastrophe, SARS, Avian Flu, the dramatic events in the Balkans and the institutional crises in the European Commission and the European Parliament and recently, the negative vote of the French and Dutch populations concerning the European constitution. Although these events have caused a higher mutual awareness, it was not always in a very positive sense. It is striking that in cases where a concerted action between ASEM countries could probably have been effective (e.g. the Asian crisis), the cooperation between European and its Asian partners has been quite limited, unproductive or sometimes even lacking.

The Pillars of ASEM

ASEM has three pillars: the economic domain, the political domain, and 'the rest', in which civil society issues, culture, education, and research are heaped together. Needless to say, ASEM is first and foremost an economically driven forum. This can clearly be seen from the plethora of meetings concerning trade, investment, finance, and business, as well as from the activities developed within this first domain: the Asia-Europe Business Forum, Trade Facilities Action Plan, Investment Experts Group Meetings, Investment Promotion Active Plan, the ASEM trust fund, and the European Financial Expertise Network, to mention a few.

In the political domain the situation is less concrete: the Asian partners appear to be apprehensive whenever such topics as human rights and good governance are suggested for the agenda. At the third summit in Seoul, however, commitments were made to strengthen the political dialogue, giving special attention to human rights issues, and to address the global implications of such problems as illegal trade in weapons, drugs, and workers of regional and interregional migration. At the Copenhagen meeting (2002) a joint declaration on Cooperation Against International Terrorism was adopted. However, it is difficult to perceive what has actually been done about these issues in the ASEM framework. Reports cannot easily be found linking the chairman's statements and intentions with what actually

has been accomplished and what the results are. The parties involved thus mainly consider the ASEM process as a way to deepen relations between Asia and Europe and as such it is a time-consuming exercise in building mutual confidence.

It is the third pillar which in fact is often treated in a somewhat step-motherly way, or in other words: culture and civil relations in ASEM are seen by most politicians merely as functional prerequisites for successful economic relations. Fortunately the ASEF has done a lot to promote better mutual understanding through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. A cascade of all sorts of sympathetic initiatives and actions has flooded both regions, ranging from cultural festivals, young entrepreneurs forums, meetings for editors, young leader symposiums, Asia-Europe Young Artists Painting competitions and last but not least the establishment of the ASEM-DUO fellowship programme. ASEF has, given its limitations and objectives, done a great job on the cultural dimension of the ASEM process but it misses – inevitably given its brief and scope – a clear focus and depth. Moreover, ASEF runs the constant risk of becoming an entity on its own – no longer perceived by the public as a (partial) actualisation of the ASEM process.

Pointing to the free exchange of views between European and Asian heads of government, the EC is always quick to proclaim the ASEM process a success. Still, sceptics might point out that economic relations between Asia and Europe would have prospered without ASEM anyway. In the second domain, less progress can be demonstrated. In the third domain many opportunities have neither been seen nor seized upon.

ASEM should concentrate on the third pillar. It is from this very diverse and varied storehouse that new joint activities are to be expected. Right now, the existence of ASEM is barely noticed by the people of the ASEM member states. If we would like to improve this situation and make our 'ASEM people' more aware of each other and of ASEM, we should choose a more bottom-up trajectory, i.e. ASEM should be more engaged in the numerous initiatives ventured by various sectors from civil society such as universities, research groups, professional associations, labour unions, NGOs, parliamentarians, artists and think tanks.

A New Perspective for ASEM?

Until now relations between Asia and Europe have been dominated by policies that place economic growth above all else. However, a more balanced policy with special attention to the third pillar of the ASEM process will in the end yield more promising cooperation. ASEM is still in need of a long-term internally driven strategic vision that can be translated into clear and concrete objectives, backed up by all ASEM members. This is of course not an easy task; ASEM is like a patchwork

quilt, a mixed bag of 35 different countries (plus the EC) with many dissimilarities in their cultural, ethnic, ethical, political, economic and societal systems; some have a shared history, while others have nothing in common in terms of their past. However, this rich tapestry of ASEM is also its biggest asset.

In ASEM we have created a unique mechanism for dialogue between two regional concentrations of a completely different nature and with rather different objectives. It is still a very frail instrument: there is a danger that the momentum built up in the first decade will disappear. It is therefore no wonder that Wim Stokhof in his lecture on the occasion of receiving a honorary doctorate from the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta (July 2006) pleaded for the following steps to be taken in order for ASEM to become more effective and more visible: "1. Reformulate ASEM's objectives; 2. Establish a new format of rules of engagement; 3. Start institutionalisation through setting up joint institutes and programmes with well-defined objectives, concrete deliverables, good monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures, and a clear financial commitment; 4. Install a joint interregional secretariat with two main tasks: to monitor the new format of rules of engagement and to facilitate and implement jointly taken decisions".

In this lecture, Stokhof also made a strong plea for the foundation of ASEM Institutes for Advanced Studies in Asia and Europe where young scholars from both regions work together. This aims to replace the lopsided Eurocentric Euro Studies Programmes introduced by the EC in China, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Singapore. He also argues for an ASEM research council with the following tasks: monitoring and facilitating the ASEM Institutes for Advanced Studies; creating a network of existing centres of expertise and institutes in Asia and Europe; initiating activities (in close cooperation with ASEF) such as symposiums and master classes and increasing the visibility of Asian Studies in Europe and Asian and European Studies in Asia.

To implement these proposals one could build on experiences derived from initiatives related to ASEM such as the Asia-Europe Network of Museums (ASEMUS), which was formed in 2000 on the basis of a concept launched by the IIAS. The ASEMUS was started as a co-operative project between museums in Asia and Europe with the support of the ASEF. Its objectives are: to increase the sharing and joint use of museum collections in Asia and Europe; to share and transfer professional museum competence; to make repositories of documentation and databases jointly available and to develop joint exhibitions. ASEMUS is run by an executive committee which is backed by a secretariat. The membership of ASEMUS consists of museums in Asia and Europe and the website provides a wide variety of information on the participating museums.

Looking back from the vantage point of 2006 we can conclude that ASEMUS has organised a series of meetings between museum curators from Asia and Europe;

this has helped them get to know each other better, share their problems and successes, and even find common solutions to technical problems. This network is operating quite well. In ASEMUS the first steps have been taken to create what Wim Stokhof and others have been striving for: a global collection, not a series of objects belonging to a certain nation, ethnic group, museum or person, but a set identifying mankind in all its various representations. The same idea was behind the ASEM Research Platform and the ASEMmeeting place.

ASEM Research Platform (ARP)

In the Chairman's statement of the Fourth ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (June 2002) the Foreign Ministers called for the establishment of a portal linking all existing ASEM related websites. They viewed such a portal as an important tool in facilitating and deepening the ASEM process. In January 2002, the IIAS had already launched the idea of setting up such a portal and by the time of the Foreign Ministers' Meeting try-outs of the website had been executed. This was by no means a coincidence. Since its foundation in 1993 the IIAS had been involved in improving and facilitating the relations between Asia and Europe in the academic and cultural fields. From the outset the IIAS has worked closely with ASEF. To name a few examples: the IIAS has set up an Asia specialist database for ASEF; ASEF and IIAS co-organised the cultural manifestation surrounding ASEM 2 in London (1998); it has covered the activities of ASEF in its *IIAS Newsletter* and is co-organising the Asia-Europe Workshop Series with ASEF; IIAS organised the Young Leaders Meeting, the ASEM Summer University and will co-organise the Young Parliamentarians Meeting in 2007 in The Hague. On the basis of these past and future cooperative projects, working together on the further development of the ASEM portal could have been construed as a logical next step in the development of the ASEF-IIAS cooperation.

The ASEM website, which was an integral part of the ASEM Research Platform (ARP), was launched a couple of weeks before ASEM 4 in Copenhagen (September 2002). It embraced diverse aspects of the ASEM process. One of the main goals of ARP was to sensitise people at all levels of society in Europe and Asia to the Asia-Europe Meeting process. One of its first activities was to create an ASEM portal meant to facilitate the search for information and research on ASEM by structuring all relevant information about this process. It contained: texts of official documents pertaining to ASEM; all available electronic publications and titles of other relevant publications in the digital library; the ASEM agenda and the civil society activities within ASEM and other relevant information pertaining to ASEM.

An equally important goal was to inform the scientific community about ASEM research and facilitate contacts among scholars studying ASEM. It aimed at a

division of labour between the ASEF division of intellectual exchange, which could concentrate on short-term projects, and the ARP, focusing on long-term projects. The ARP could build on the expertise in Asia-Europe relations it had built in the past. In this way it would have been able to engage the efforts of thousands of scholars across the ASEM community. The spin off from their endeavours would have been considerable. It derives its influence, on the one hand, from the formulation and analysis of the issues that move Asian and European governments and the media, and, on the other hand, through the students trained and educated in this culture who move outside academia to other positions in society. Developing and sustaining such a Eurasian research culture would have presented a small financial investment in comparison to the benefits that would have been gained.

This ARP initiative was welcomed by persons and institutions involved and interested in ASEM such as officials, diplomats, journalists, representatives of civil society organisations, scholars and so on. By 2004 the website offered a wide variety of information and documentation on ASEM and the number of visitors to the website grew both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view. This meeting place should have become an interactive environment where it is easy to come into contact with representatives of all layers of society in Asia and Europe and react to their ideas and opinions concerning ASEM. It would have contributed to a higher degree of awareness of the ASEM process because the main idea behind this environment is making people at all levels of society in Asia and Europe increasingly conscious of the existence of the process.

The further development of this ASEM Meeting Place under the aegis of ASEF would have been a logical next step in view of the many possibilities that constructing such a repository / database offers. However, only the information pertaining to the agenda and official documents were incorporated in the ASEM Information Board which is now operated by ASEF. This more narrow interpretation of the idea of disseminating factual information is a missed opportunity to boost the ASEM process in general and the visibility of the process in particular.

International Convention of Asia Scholars

Whereas the ESF-AC solely consisted of representatives of Asian Studies centers in Europe, PEARL included both members from Asian and European studies institutes in both continents. The Alliance consisting of European institutes always strived for a mirror organisation in Asia which will become a reality at the end of 2006. While all these initiatives are about cooperation between Europe and Asia, the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) tries to involve the entire world in the study of Asia.

ICAS was at the outset an experiment in terms of the parties involved, the nature of the participants, the contents, the manner of the organisation, and its size in terms of participants. How did the ICAS come about? As of 1995 the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and the IAS had been thinking of ways of internationalising Asian Studies. This transatlantic dialogue gradually matured and was thought of as a process involving American and European Asia scholars. Its main goals are to transcend the boundaries between disciplines, between nations studied and between the geographic origins of the Asia scholars involved.

The idea of ICAS was officially launched in 1997 by the IAS, in close cooperation with the AAS. Apart from the AAS and the IAS, the six European Asian Studies Associations also joined and a programme committee was established consisting of representatives of all parties involved. There was never any doubt that Asia scholars from all over the world should have the chance to participate and once the convention was announced, enthusiastic replies came from every quarter of the world, especially Asia. Thus ICAS became a platform on which Asia researchers from all corners of the world could study problems of interest to all.

ICAS has grown into the largest biennial Asian Studies event outside the US and covers all subjects of Asian Studies. There, ICAS has now become the only major, regular Asian Studies event to take place. On average the number of participants now varies from 1000-1500 people. The organisation of ICAS 1 was put into the hands of the IAS and it was held in Leiden in 1998. More than 350 universities, institutes, and organisations were represented. There were nearly 1000 participants from 40 countries; 130 panels were held; and there was a remarkably equal distribution continent-wise. New cooperative initiatives were developed. ICAS 2 was hosted by the Freie Universität Berlin and took place in 2001. About 800 scholars attended around 100 panels and 500 papers were presented. During this convention the ICAS secretariat was founded. The secretariat co-organises the events with local partners, guarantees the continuity of ICAS and it organises the ICAS Book Prizes. It was also decided to have future meetings of ICAS in Asia and make it a biennial meeting.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore jointly hosted ICAS 3 in 2003. Over 1,000 scholars from 54 countries participated and some 940 papers were presented in 250 sessions, on a wide variety of topics. ICAS 3 also provided a platform for scholars to explore ways of coordinating Asian research in Asia. ICAS 4 was hosted by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in 2005 in the Shanghai Exhibition Centre. It had slightly more participants and panels than ICAS 3. At the opening ceremony of ICAS 4, the ICAS Book Prizes (Humanities, Social Sciences, best PhD) were awarded for the first time. Also the publication of selected proceedings of ICAS was announced.

ICAS 5 will be hosted by the Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON) and the Institute of the Malay World and Civilisation (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan

Malaysia in August 2007. It will be held in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and is expected to draw 1500 specialists in the field of Asian Studies to Kuala Lumpur. Each convention has been organised by respected academic institutions such as the Freie Universität Berlin, the National University of Singapore and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. During the conventions prominent Asia scholars hold keynote addresses. Among the speakers, for instance at ICAS 4, we counted Prof. Wang Ronghua, Prof. Barbara Andaya, Prof. Jean-Luc Domenach who talked on such varied topics as “The future of Asia”, “Cross-Cultural Conversations in History”, and “Towards a European Point of View on Asia”.

In the panels, virtually every topic important in the field of Asian Studies has come to the fore. A cross-disciplinary border transcending approach is stressed which enhances a fruitful dialogue among the participants who originate from more than 50 countries in Asia, Europe and America representing about 500 institutes working in the field of Asian Studies. This encounter between researchers coming from different cultural and paradigmatic backgrounds results in new insights in the way they will approach their topics in future research. On a personal level this leads to long-term academic friendships that stimulate a global approach to research on Asia. ICAS does not perceive itself as an isolated academic event. ICAS clearly links to the city and the country where it is held. This is brought about by connecting ICAS to the city and vice versa by way of a wide variety of cultural events such as exhibitions, performances, concerts and films.

It is no wonder that Wim Stokhof will remain involved in this ICAS process as Secretary General till 2011. ICAS will put the network which he has helped to build up over the years in the field of Asian Studies and beyond to good use. 2011 will see the greatest gathering of Asia scholars yet because ICAS and AAS are jointly hosting a meeting in Honolulu. This event is the outcome of twenty years of development in Asian Studies which has brought scholars from Asia, Europe and America closer together in their study of Asia in a global context.

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Figure 15. Covers of programme books of ICAS 1, 2, 3 and 4. Photo: Cindy Bakker