

PUBLISHING IN ASIAN STUDIES



ICAS 4, Shanghai, 20-24 August 2005



So Many Books, So Little Time. How Do We Keep Track?

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Editorial office IIAS, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, the Netherlands,
iiasnews@let.leidenuniv.nl, www.iias.nl • Subscriptions Please contact
iias.subscribe@let.leidenuniv.nl • Guest editor Marie Lenstrup, Asian Studies Book Services,
Elst Utr. • Graphics Iben Trino-Molenkamp • Copy editor Renata Jasaitis • Design JB&A
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By **Wim Stokhof**,
Secretary General ICAS

This supplement to the 37th edition of the *IIAS Newsletter* on publishing in Asian Studies is the fruit of a long and intriguing process of discussions among publishers, editors, writers, readers and academic institutions on how to increase the visibility of Asian Studies worldwide. This supplement offers us the opportunity to elucidate several new initiatives to boost this process, which is closely interlinked to the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS).

In the past 12 twelve years we have tried, in co-operation with a host of parties, to build a transparent Asian Studies community where everybody can indiscriminately enjoy the scholarly fruits of the work of Asian Studies scholars. Our main and most visible vehicle in this endeavour has been – and is – the *IIAS Newsletter*. From the beginning, its main goal was to inform the Asian Studies community both in printed form and online about the activities of their colleagues in other

parts of the world or, dare we say, sometimes even in the room next door.

With a readership close to the 100,000 mark, we do not all feel that we have reached our final destination but should give it a new boost in tandem with ICAS. Over the past years the number of books and catalogues reaching the editorial desk of the *IIAS Newsletter* has risen steadily. Due to space restrictions only a limited number of books can be reviewed, more will be listed in the Books Received section. Doubtlessly, editors of other newsletters and journals are familiar with this situation.

Therefore we suggest bringing a site for recently published books (less than a year old) online with a search engine where all books published by partner publishers are listed under both regional and disciplinary headings. Information on each of the books will include all factual information plus an image of the jacket and the cover text. Reviews, if any, of the book can be added. Interactivity will be the key word of this site because scholars and students will be asked to give impressions of the books they have

read, not unlike the *Zagat Survey* which is based on the findings of costumers. This bottom-up approach will be linked to the already existing initiative of the ICAS Book Prizes for the best books in the Social Sciences and Humanities, which are judged by an international Reading Committee more in line with the *Guide Michelin* approach (see page 5).

Last but not least ICAS will be setting up an ICAS General Proceedings Series containing *Capita Selecta* of the ICAS 4 panels in co-operation with European, Asian and American publishers. All panel chairs that are interested in this venture should send a book abstract to the ICAS Secretariat before 1 November 2005. The books chosen will be published before the next ICAS in Kuala Lumpur in 2007. We are convinced that this series will represent the state of the art in publishing Asian Studies to which this supplement is completely devoted.

We would like to thank all contributors to this supplement for their insightful contributions on publishing in Asian Studies. ■