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WANTED asian studies: hearts and minds



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- Announcements of projects, events, call for papers

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Confucius Inc., Plato & Co.

Director's note

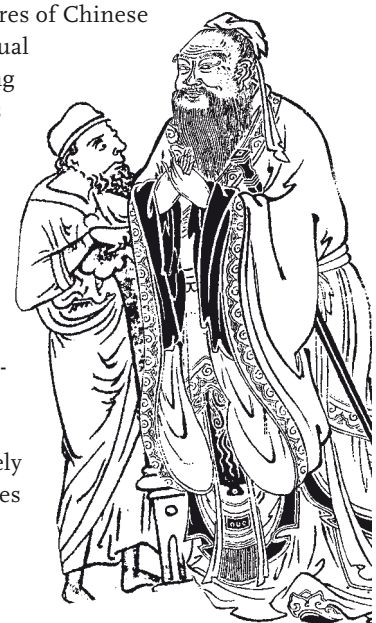
With its growing worldwide network of Confucius Institutes, China is catching up in the propagation of its culture and language. The Confucius Institute Project, a non-profit organization administered by the Chinese Ministry of Education through the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, intends to establish 100 Confucius Institutes around the world by 2010.

The project, named after the sage who encapsulates the '... longevity and profundity of Chinese language and culture', is a move by the Chinese government to accelerate the integration of Chinese language and culture into the world of the 21st century. The worldwide franchise has its headquarters in Beijing, which supplies the overall strategy, the image, the promotional material, and the 'Great Wall Chinese' multimedia courseware.

Most recently founded Confucius Institutes are co-operative projects between the main office and an existing centre of Chinese learning, such as those at San Francisco State University, the University of Melbourne, the University of Manchester, the Freie Universität Berlin and the Nanyang Technological Institute. The strategy of engaging existing centres of Chinese learning will most likely work to their mutual advantage, for funding, visibility and creating legitimacy. These institutes could emerge as focal points within overseas Chinese networks while offering Chinese students abroad the opportunity to work as teachers. In contrast to the open-minded pragmatism of the Chinese enterprise, the national European institutions abroad such as the British Council, the Goethe-Institut and the Alliance Française seem like relics of the colonial past.

Will the fractious tribes of Europe collectively manage to inaugurate 100 Plato Institutes worldwide by the year 2010? <

Wim Stokhof
Director, IIAS



The International Institute for Asian Studies is a postdoctoral research centre based in Leiden and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Our main objective is to encourage the interdisciplinary and comparative study of Asia and to promote national and international cooperation in the field. The institute focuses on the humanities and social sciences and their interaction with other sciences.

IIAS values dynamism and versatility in its research programmes. Post-doctoral research fellows are temporarily employed by or affiliated to IIAS, either within the framework of a collaborative research programme or on an individual basis. In its aim to disseminate broad, in-depth knowledge of Asia, the institute organizes seminars, workshops and conferences, and publishes the *IIAS Newsletter* with a circulation of 25,000.

IIAS runs a database for Asian Studies with information on researchers and research-related institutes worldwide. As an international mediator and a clearing-house for knowledge and information, IIAS is active in creating international networks and launching international cooperative projects and research programmes. In this way, the institute functions as a window on Europe for non-European scholars and contributes to the cultural rapprochement between Asia and Europe.

IIAS also administers the secretariat of the European Alliance for Asian Studies (Asia Alliance: www.asia-alliance.org) and the Secretariat General of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS: www.icassecretariat.org). Updates on the activities of the Asia Alliance and ICAS are published in this newsletter. <

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