

# ICAS News

## When 5000 Asia scholars meet: *The AAS-ICAS Joint Conference in Honolulu*



Paul van der Velde and Martina van den Haak

THE CONFERENCE KICKED OFF with a reception on the lawn of the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa on 30 March, attended by more than a third of all participants and exhibitors. The Lieutenant Governor of Hawai'i and representatives of the University of Hawai'i, the East-West Center, AAS and ICAS held welcoming speeches after which the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble performed. An *aloha* atmosphere took possession of all present and this atmosphere also reigned during the whole of the four-day joint conference at the Hawai'i Convention Center, which turned out to be the biggest Asia scholars meeting ever with an attendance of more than 5000 delegates.

It is too early as yet to assess the impact of the conference. We will do that at a later stage when we have received feedback from the participants and exhibitors. In this contribution we will provide the full citations of the ICAS Book Prize winners, as during the awards ceremony we only read out summaries of them. But first we will quote the citation of the AAS for Exceptional Service in Asian Studies which was given by the AAS to Wim Stokhof, founding director of the International Institute for Asian Studies and co-founder of the International Convention of Asia Scholars.

Top:  
Visitors listening to the speeches at the welcome reception

Right:  
Performance by the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble during the welcome reception



### The Association for Asian Studies Citation for Exceptional Service in Asian Studies

The AAS wishes to acknowledge the distinguished contributions of Dr. Willem Arnoldus Stokhof to contemporary Asian Studies. Educated as a linguist at the University of Amsterdam, Dr. Stokhof has trained a generation of students for research in the languages and cultures of Indonesia. Dr. Stokhof has also pioneered internationalized forums for Asian Studies and scholarly cooperation. He served as Secretary to the Committee for Advanced Asia Studies of the European Science Foundation. He was founder-secretary of the European Alliance for Asian Studies and the initiator of the Annual Asia-Europe Workshop Series in Singapore. He was the founding director of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden and Amsterdam. Under Stokhof's tireless direction, the IIAS heightened cooperation between Asia- and Western-based scholars, and promoted new, collaborative models of research. Perhaps more relevant to our current gathering (*the AAS-ICAS joint conference, ed.*), Stokhof was the co-founder of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), a conference forum that has also strengthened ties between scholars in Asia and the West.

Stokhof has also fostered international co-operation in Islamic Studies. He was the founding director of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in Leiden. He directed the Indonesian-Netherlands Co-operation in Islamic Studies, training more than thirty Ph.D.s from Indonesia. He also chaired the Indonesian Linguistic Development Project (ILDEP), and directed the INPA training program for upgrading Indonesia's governors and *bupatis* in co-operation with the ministries of Interior Affairs of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

In recognition of his visionary contributions, unparalleled in their influence, the Association for Asian Studies honors and thanks Dr. Stokhof.

In the next issue of The Newsletter we will come back to the AAS-ICAS Joint Conference. In the meanwhile, take a look at the more than 600 pictures taken by a professional conference photographer at <http://www.vreeburgavservices.nl>.

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## ICAS Book Prize 2011

The ICAS Book Prize, now in its fourth edition, saw a steep rise in the number of books submitted. We received no less than 200 books from 45 publishers in the field of Asian studies. The IBP 2011 Reading Committee consisted of Anand Yang (Chair) and Manuela Ciotti, Derek Heng, Alex McKay and Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce. The prizes were presented at the Award ceremony in the Hawai'i Convention Center in Honolulu on 1 April 2011, where also the prizes of the AAS were awarded.

### IBP 2011 Social Sciences winner



**URADYN E. BULAG**  
*Collaborative Nationalism.*  
*The Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier*  
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010

The history of Inner Asia has been shaped by the tripartite interaction of China, Tibet, and Mongolia, and in the light of modern Chinese state policies towards its "minority groups" *Collaborative Nationalism* is concerned with 'reconsidering the question of the political in ethnopolitics'. China's nationalising project is aimed at a collaborative nationalism, and this work is essentially an examination of the politics of friendship. Central to this are the competing visions of Chinggis Khan, whose achievements have been contested and appropriated to serve the interests of different regions and ethnic groups. Bulag examines these issues in a stimulating, even impassioned exploration of the levels of friendship and association between ethnic groups, centralising Mongolia in Inner Asian history and advancing the concept of "collaborative nationalism" as a device through which to understand the actualities of inter-ethnic relationships. We are pleased to award the ICAS Book Prize 2011 to Uradyn Bulag for his highly original work, well grounded in both Asian and European sources, which will inspire students and specialists alike to rethink approaches to the region and to the analysis of national identities.

### IBP 2011 Humanities winner



**STEIN TØNNESSON**  
*Vietnam 1946: How the War Began*  
University of California Press, 2009

It is immediately apparent that *Vietnam 1946: How the War Began* is an important book. Tønnesson argues that this was not merely an ideological conflict, as has hitherto been regarded and understood, but one that was first and foremost the result of geo-political blunders and misreading by all parties involved during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly, he argues that the conflict could have been prevented, and concludes by examining how each of the key figures involved might have acted to prevent war. One of the great strengths of *Vietnam 1946* is that it is the product of several decades of research and reflection. It carries the authority of an author who has closely studied both the available sources and the individuals involved in the decision-making processes. We are pleased to award the IBP 2011 Humanities to Stein Tønnesson for his compelling narrative that ultimately recognises the limits of historical enquiry, for important records remain unavailable.

### IBP 2011 Colleagues' Choice winner

More than 5000 votes were cast by Asia scholars in this third edition of the Colleagues' Choice award. The winner received 2000 votes. It clearly shows that social networks are becoming increasingly important in the life of academics. They increase their visibility not only in the field but also in society at large.



**ALEXANDER HUANG**  
*Chinese Shakespeares:*  
*Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*  
Columbia University Press, 2009

The Chinese appreciation of Beethoven is well known: of Shakespeare, less so. *Chinese Shakespeares* is an original and engaging study of the Chinese adoption of the English language's greatest playwright. This work may be enjoyed in its own right, but is also a study of both Chinese cultural engagement with the West and of cross-cultural communication in theatre and film. Shakespeare's works largely escaped a colonial context in their early manifestations in China, and were often imbued with localised meanings that enabled their partial indigenisation. Shakespeare continues

to be interpreted and reinterpreted in China for both local and global audiences and Huang's study of the various manifestations and meanings, translations and performances, will be the standard text in the field for years to come. We are pleased to award the IBP Colleagues' Choice Award for a study which draws on a wide range of sources, and is a significant contribution to literary studies, cultural history, and studies of globalisation.

### IBP 2011 Best Ph.D.s

This year we received nearly 40 theses which represented a strong increase over previous years. The IBP Best Ph.D. 2011 Reading Committee consisted of 2009 winners Birgit Abels and Iza Hussin.

### IBP 2011 Best Ph.D. in the Social Sciences



**IMRAN BIN TAJUDEEN**  
*Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Emporia in Nusantara: Historic Adaptation and Contemporary Accentuations*  
National University of Singapore Thesis, 2009

*Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Emporia in Nusantara* is a rich and nuanced study of urban architectural forms in the ports of Austronesian Southeast Asia. In particular, the port cities of Nusantara have been shaped by both the regional diaspora and intra-regional trading and shipping networks, making them a uniquely dynamic – and challenging – environment for study. Tajudeen's reading offers a number of useful interpretive interventions into the scholarship on native architecture, not only reading 'artefacts as texts', but 'texts on artefacts', incorporating the dimension of time both in terms of the 'predicament of ruination' and in terms of the writing and transformation of history in heritage and preservation projects. Tajudeen's work offers a new reading of the Asian urban built environment as a vernacular practice, continually being interpreted and reconstructed by local, state and regional actors, and therefore constantly in need of a creative and responsive scholarly approach. For theoretical originality, contributions of data from the field and the potential for advancing Asian studies scholarship, we are very pleased to award Imran bin Tajudeen the ICAS Best Thesis Prize in the Social Sciences.

### IBP 2011 Best Ph.D. in the Humanities



**CARMEN PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ**  
*A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting*  
Leiden University thesis, 2009

*A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting* presents a meticulous and well thought-out analysis of Iranian nineteenth-century visual representations of identity and their aesthetics. In doing so, González builds on a large and hitherto understudied, if not undiscovered, body of photographs that were taken through the lenses of both Iranian and non-Iranian photographers. By cross-examining nineteenth-century Iranian portrait photography and the rich Iranian portrait painting tradition, she is able to pinpoint the subtleties that underlie the visual negotiation of a distinctly Iranian identity that is alert, in a critical way, to European influence. What makes her approach so valuable and fresh is González's ability to unveil the processes of the creation of meaning through photographic art in nineteenth-century Iran. She does so by contextualizing portrait photography within its historical and cultural frameworks of reference. Such a project requires a full-fledged theoretical framework that is informed by several disciplines including Islamic art history, history of photography, post-colonial studies, and world art history that she has carefully crafted. We are pleased to award Carmen Pérez González the ICAS Best Thesis Prize in the Humanities for this extraordinary piece of Ph.D. work that will certainly have repercussions beyond world art and Iranian Studies.