

30 Years of IIAS, 30 Years Supporting Asian Studies

Inge Klompmakers



Above: News clipping from Spring 1996 edition of *IIAS Newsletter*, covering the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in Honolulu, Hawaii, at which IIAS presented recent Dutch publications. From left to right: Wim Stokhof, Shoma Munshi, Gerry Moran, Sabine Kuypers, and Paul van der Velde.

It was in my third year at Leiden University that I learned that close to the Japan Studies faculty, a new institute for Asian Studies would be opened: the International Institute for Asian Studies, or IIAS. As a 20-year old, still having to graduate, I did not pay so much attention to IIAS's activities, and I could not know then that 30 years later, this new institute would have evolved into a highly acclaimed and flourishing institute, known to many Asian Studies scholars from all over the world.

I most certainly could not have imagined that, in 2023, I would collaborate with IIAS in my day-to-day work as a publisher. My career started in the art trade at a Japanese art gallery and auction house, followed by a period at an art book publishing house. It was in 2006 that I entered the world of academic publishing. Since then, IIAS reappeared on my radar, through *The Newsletter* and through its many organized activities.

Today, in my role as Commissioning Editor Asian Studies at Amsterdam University Press (AUP), I have the pleasure to work closely with IIAS's Publications Officer Mary Lynn van Dijk on four book series launched by IIAS: *Asian Heritages*, *Asian Cities*, *Global Asia*, and *Humanities Across Borders*.

Mary Lynn's enthusiasm and hard work for the series deserve mentioning, as they are instrumental in making the manuscripts into real publications. Moreover, I should add that the book series could not exist without the scholarly work of many erudite and passionate authors. We are able to graciously benefit from the expertise of our editorial boards and reviewers as well, when evaluating the book proposals and the complete manuscripts.

AUP is grateful for the opportunity to partner with IIAS on these series – which help us to better understand today's Asia – and we share the goal in making the scholarship available to a wide audience.

As a publisher, I intensely like the personal meetings and talks with scholars at conferences, learning about interesting research projects, and brainstorming together about AUP's ideas on how to contribute to the field with new book series and journals. Those personal encounters motivate me to create the best possible circumstances for our authors to publish their research, and being part of the team behind the IIAS-AUP book series is, therefore, truly rewarding.

If I would only praise IIAS for its vision to launch its book series program, I would not do the institute justice. IIAS is strong in bringing scholars together, and building their communities. The institute facilitates new research and stimulates the exchange of ideas and knowledge on Asia. Other important IIAS initiatives that help materializing this mission are of course IIAS's Fellowship Program, the ICAS conferences, and *The Newsletter*.

In a period of 30 years, many fellows have found their way to IIAS, in Leiden, and have become ambassadors of IIAS's mission to promote Asian Studies. IIAS, with its welcoming and warm atmosphere, is a place where new working relationships and friendships originate. The many encounters of scholars at the twelve ICAS conferences have, in turn, resulted in numerous new collaborations and new publications.

While the academic world and the world of academic publishing are changing, IIAS is continuously looking for new ways to support the field of Asian Studies. One major change that should be noted concerns the ICAS Book Prizes (IBP), wherein the organizers are to be applauded for including books in languages other than English.

Another recent development in the context of the IIAS-AUP book series is that IIAS, where possible, supports publication in Open Access. This makes the scholars' research even more widely accessible, also to audiences beyond academia, and this perfectly suits IIAS's ambitions in terms of outreach activities. A wide range of activities, such as workshops and lunch lectures are organized, and I myself have good memories of a series of lectures, held in collaboration with the Rijksmuseum, which brought Asian art scholars and curators to the Netherlands for inspiring talks.

Let me conclude by wishing IIAS a prosperous future in supporting Asian Studies. As a publisher, it is a joy to work with an institute like IIAS, which has a clear vision on how to stimulate new research and how to move scholarship forward. At AUP, we therefore look forward to continuing our pleasant collaboration and to publishing many new volumes together in the IIAS book series program.

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Amsterdam
University
Press

Book Series as a Global Currency: the IIAS Publications File 1993-2023

Paul van der Velde

From its inception in 1993 to the present, IIAS has published a wide variety of academic publications but also ancillary publications such as guides, year reports, yearbooks, lecture series, promotional material of all kinds, and of course *The Newsletter* (formerly *IIAS Newsletter*). For now, let's zoom in on the more than 100 books that IIAS has published in the past thirty years.

Needless to say, an academic institute should be active in publishing its own and others' academic output. In the beginning stages we concentrated on what our fellows were working on, which resulted in two *IIAS Yearbooks* (1994-95). Furthermore, we mounted an *IIAS Lecture Series* (1993-1998) containing the speeches of politicians and Asia scholars held at IIAS. Furthermore, to get an idea of who was doing what in the field of Asian Studies, IIAS as a facilitating institute published the *Guide to Asian Studies in the Netherlands*, the *IIAS Guide to Asian Collections in the Netherlands*, the *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe* and also the *IIAS Internet Guide to Asian Studies*. The latter, published in 1996, gave an overview of this then-only-emerging new setting. We even produced a mouse-pad with the IIAS logo as a giveaway!



Below: Cover of *The Eurasian Space: Far More Than Two Continents*, published in 2004 by IIAS and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore (ISEAS).

Edited by Wim Stokhof • Paul van der Velde • Yeo Lay Hwee

Above: Two early IIAS publications: *IIAS Internet Guide to Asian Studies* (1996) and the *IIAS Guide to Asian Collections in the Netherlands* (1997).

London and Singapore-based Publishers

These were all in-house publications, with their own ISBN numbers making IIAS into a publishing house. We realized that this was not an ideal situation. Therefore, we contacted several publishers. We choose Kegan Paul International (KPI) in London, a publisher with a global distribution network. Thus, the "Studies from the International Institute for Asian Studies" series came into being (1996-1999) and ultimately comprised eight volumes. After KPI, Curzon became our new publisher. The "Curzon-IIAS Asian Studies Series" (2001-2005) was set up and subsequently released 13 volumes. Also together with the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, the "IIAS/ISEAS Series on Asia" (2003-2010) was set up. Seven volumes were published.

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The IIAS and ICAS Publications Series

After working with a number of different publishers, we thought the time was ripe to concentrate our publications program. Amsterdam University Press (AUP) fully embraced our idea of two series primarily on contemporary Asia. That its books were distributed in the United States by the University of Chicago Press and that AUP also had a distribution network in Asia was clearly a plus. This was the beginning of the "IIAS Publications Series" (2007-2013) and the "ICAS Publications Series" (2006-2012), both consisting of monographs and edited volumes. The "IIAS Publications Series" remained very much a channel of publication for the many fellows visiting IIAS. The topics of the books reflected the kinds of research being done at IIAS during those years. Looking back on that time, we find monographs and edited volumes on gender, art, urban studies, migration, politics, and economics. In all, 18 books were published with an average of four books per year.

The idea for the "ICAS Publications Series" was born out of a demand from participants of ICAS to have their contributions published as a kind of proceedings. Because we had seen too many ragbag proceedings, we started thinking of another way of publishing a selection of the more than 500 articles flooding our desks, which had been presented at ICAS 4 (2005) and ICAS 5 (2007). After a thorough selection, we came up with eight possible edited volume titles; on average, each contained ten articles. From the contributors we chose one senior scholar and one junior scholar to edit the volume. We asked them to mail all articles to every contributor, who in turn had to return all their comments to the editors, thus establishing an internal review process. The outcome was eight book titles, which were all launched in one session at ICAS 6 (2009) in Daejeon, South Korea. Around 50 editors and contributors to the books were present at the session. In all, 23 monographs and edited volumes were published in the series. In view of the workload, this approach was discontinued,

but recently around 100 papers on a variety of topics presented at ICAS 12 were published as pre-publications in Open Access by Amsterdam University Press as an experiment which might be continued in the future.¹

Ongoing Series: Asian Cities, Asian Heritages, Global Asia, and Humanities Across Borders

In 2013 the series were streamlined along the lines of IIAS's research themes: Asian Cities, Asian Heritages, and Global Asia, whereas Humanities Across Borders is a recent addition that adds a long

overdue pedagogical and methodological dimension. Including these four IIAS series, AUP now publishes 15 Asian Studies series. This means that we almost never have to reject book proposals because if they do not fit in one of ours, then they often find their way into one of the other series. We are able to guarantee, if all deadlines are met, that a book after submission of the manuscript will be published within a year, an exceptionally short time span in comparison to other publishers. This includes the reviewing process.

So far, 40 volumes (an average of four per year) have been published, with 15 more books in various stages of production. Also not unimportant is the fact that titles from all of our publications series have not only been reviewed in *The Newsletter*, but also in major Asian Studies journals worldwide.

We hope that in the future all IIAS's series will be available in Open Access (there are signs pointing in this direction), which will make IIAS's research available to all for free: from in-house publications with hardly any impact to Open Access publishing with a potential global readership. The more than 100 books published by IIAS in the past three decades are part and parcel of the Asian Studies world, in which book series form the global currency and backbone of the academic community.

Paul van der Velde
IIAS, The Netherlands

Notes

- <https://www.aup-online.com/content/proceedings/ICAS-12?page=5>



My Intellectual Journey with IIAS

Tak-Wing Ngo

On an ordinary day in 1994, I received a phone call from someone I did not know, asking if I was interested in taking up a postdoc position in the Netherlands. At that time telephone scams were rare, so I agreed to set up a meeting in London, where I was doing my PhD at SOAS. It so happened that shortly after its inauguration in 1993, IIAS launched its first research project on the Chinese diaspora – the Qiaoxiang Project – and was recruiting postdocs. I was thrilled by the opportunity but eventually did not take up the position. My first encounter with IIAS ended, but my long intellectual journey with IIAS had begun.

Even though I did not join IIAS, I still ended up in Leiden after I accepted a lectureship in Chinese politics at Leiden University. On the very first day that I reported for duty in January 1995, I was told that I would be representing IIAS in organizing a joint conference in Copenhagen with NIAS, the Nordic counterpart of IIAS, on the theme of Asian values and democracy. The conference was a big success, with numerous follow-up activities. I also established a long-term relationship with

NIAS by taking over a book series editorship with NIAS Press on Democracy in Asia.

From the day IIAS projected its presence uninvitedly onto my path, my academic life has been intimately shaped by it. In the next two decades, IIAS supported nearly a dozen international workshops under my convenorship. They included initiatives to study the state and state-making in Asia, alternative modes of resource flows and allocations including rent-seeking and the shadow economy, and institutional voids in developmental governance. Taking full advantage of the organizational resources of IIAS, I carried out many of my own research activities under its name. Thanks to the open-mindedness and flexibility of IIAS, I was spared from wasting time writing up funding proposals and going through tedious procedures. In the bureaucratic academic world, IIAS is a breath of fresh air. Throughout these years since its inception, IIAS has remained active, innovative, and entrepreneurial. In fact, it is a dream institution for researchers, one that combines everything in the academic production chain: funding, research support, workshop logistics, conferences, publicity, and publications!

My career took a new turn in 2008, when IIAS surprised me again by nominating

me for its endowed chair. I became the IIAS Professor of Asian History at Erasmus University Rotterdam. Shortly before that, I established the IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance, the first national research centre in the Netherlands devoted to the study of regulatory governance in Asia. In these positions, I recruited new PhDs, postdocs, and visiting fellows to expand research activities both for IIAS and for myself.

My link with IIAS did not weaken after I moved to the University of Macau in 2011. As soon as I had settled down in Macau, I began organizing for ICAS 8. Subsequently, ICAS 8 successfully took place in 2013, in a casino resort hotel with a huge turnout. It was worth my hair loss for the event. The following year I started a new IIAS book series with Amsterdam University Press, under the theme of Global Asia. More than a dozen books have appeared under the series. The series is still going strong, receiving many proposals each year.

In retrospect, my intellectual path would have been quite different without IIAS. For me, IIAS is not only a source of intellectual inspiration, funding support, and institutional backing, but also a training ground for a wide range of academic skills including academic administration, conference organizing, editing, and publishing. It has been my privilege to be associated with IIAS in all these years; I can also proudly say that I have contributed to the activities and development of this institute. Go on IIAS, happy anniversary!

Tak-Wing Ngo, University of Macau



Above: Cover of *Shadow Exchanges along the New Silk Roads*, co-edited by Eva P.W. Hung and Tak-Wing Ngo in 2020 for the Global Asia series at IIAS/Amsterdam University Press.

Right: Scholars gather in Macau for ICAS 8, which Tak-Wing Ngo helped organize with IIAS.