The Newsletter No. 96 Autumn 2023

The ICAS Book Prize



# Celebrating Ten ICAS Book Prize Editions

Martina van den Haak and Wai Cheung When IIAS celebrated its tenth anniversary year in 2003, the secretariat of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), based at IIAS, established a book prize that would cast a broader international spotlight upon academic publications in the dynamic realm of Asian Studies, fostering an enriched interdisciplinary context.

n its early stages, the ICAS Book Prize acknowledged publications in English.

Over the years, the ICAS team expanded the horizons of the ICAS Book Prize, and it has blossomed into a diverse, multilingual realm through collaboration with our global partners, sponsors, and reading committees. This development has granted recognition and commendation to outstanding publications across diverse languages.

In doing so, ICAS continues to redefine and decentralise the landscape of knowledge about, with, and in Asia. In this special edition of *The Newsletter* celebrating 30 years of IIAS, we are honored to share the inspiring stories of several of our distinguished prize winners across the years. Encompassing both early-career and seasoned scholars, these narratives present their reflections on the

ICAS Book Prize, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered along their academic journeys. The award marked international recognition of their scholarly contributions, and for most it also opened new doors, offering global platforms and invaluable networks. As we wrap up the tenth edition of this initiative (take a moment to explore the special booklet highlighting IBP 2023 in this issue), we proudly find ourselves amidst a remarkable assembly of international ICAS Book and Dissertation Prize winners.

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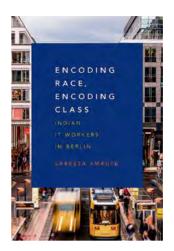
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Top: Winners of the 2019 ICAS Book Prize receive their awards. Bottom: Winners of the 2017 ICAS Book Prize receive their awards

## Encoding Race, Encoding Class: Indian IT Workers in Berlin

Sareeta Amrute Winner ICAS Book Prize 2019 Social Sciences



eceiving the ICAS book prize was one of the highlights of my career to date. The experience was warm and beautiful, and even a little bit overwhelming. I remember being quite amazed at the number of people in attendance, the lovely musical performances, and the setting – warm and balmy nights, pomp, and good conversation. Since winning the prize, I've begun work on a new project, and of course, I've done much in the way of COVID-parenting and rethinking our relationships between work and life. My new project investigates the relationship between South Asian diasporas and online safety as a fundamental part of building democratic practice. I've also moved on to a new university, Parsons, The New School, where I can stretch my creative wings through reimagining the social sciences. All of this was certainly made possible, in no small part, by the ICAS Book Prize.

## Tibetan Medicine in the Contemporary World

Laurent Pordié Winner ICAS Book Prize 2009 Colleagues Choice Award



t was an afternoon in the summer of 2001 when my dear friend Calum Blaikie encouraged me to bring together specialist researchers on the social dimension of Tibetan medicine to come up with a book on the subject. We felt that such a volume was missing, despite the exponential increase in Tibetan medical studies worldwide, and we were excited by the possibility that a book of this kind could both present the current state of scholarship in the domain and provide fertile avenues for work in the future. We were in Ladakh, northwestern India, together with a team of researchers working on Tibetan medicine in the framework of a regional program exploring the transformations of Tibetan medicine. It provided the foundations for various publication projects and engaged me in conceptualizing the volume Tibetan Medicine in the Contemporary World. I wanted to compile a volume that would bring a comparative scope to contemporary studies of Tibetan medicine, based on multi-sited research, while keeping the focus on its social and political aspects. A number of scholars in Tibetan medical studies were invited to contribute, some of whom were specifically requested to research and write on predefined topics and others who were already working on issues within the proposed framework. The project then took shape over the next five years and can perhaps be considered as a true collective work – a characteristic that has greatly enhanced its coherence and added to its heuristic potential. While getting a book prize is an experience of its own, the ICAS Book Prize has been even more special to me, as our awarded volume was a team effort. The fact it was granted the Colleagues Choice Award made the whole thing even sweeter. This is the first thing that comes to my mind as I think about this volume: this prize goes to us all involved. Perhaps because we are stronger when we are together, the book became a landmark in Tibetan medicine studies – a recognized reference until this day. The platform given by the ICAS award has been a huge contribution to achieving this.

#### La réforme politique en Birmanie pendant le premier moment colonial (1819-1878)

Aurore Candier Winner ICAS Book Prize 2021 French Language Edition



une 22, 2021. "Bombs and explosions have decreased for about a week in Yangon, but violence between civilians has escalated. Informants, administrators and ward officers are being murdered in the streets. Conflicts between People Defense Force militias and the army are growing in Central Burma." This is what I wrote in my field notebook the day before I received the news that I won the ICAS Book Prize French Language Edition award.

I was about to leave Burma, where I had lived since the late 1990s. The award and the very positive comments of the selection committee of GIS Asie tremendously helped me in this dire time. The ICAS Book Prize rewarded the long and laborious process of my 20-year research in Burma. I had only managed to turn my doctoral research into

its final form, an edited and formatted book, thanks to the work of my publisher, the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO).

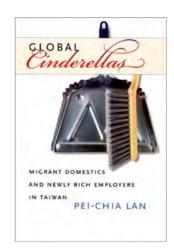
Although the printing had been delayed due to the pandemic, the monograph La réforme politique en Birmanie pendant le premier moment colonial (1819-1878) was one of the first the EFEO published in Fall 2020. When I learned about the IBP competition, I contacted the EFEO Director of publications (Charlotte Schmid) and her team (Emmanuel Siron and Gabrielle Abbe), who were very supportive and encouraging. At that time, Burma was still in its democratic transition that had started ten years before, and the Democratic Party had just won the general elections.

The ICAS award took on another dimension after the military coup of February 1, 2021: it was not just meant to reward the work of a researcher, but also the struggle of a people. I was thankful that my book could contribute to the international exposure Burma needed in this situation.

Last but not least, the ICAS Book Prize
French Edition and its financial support
helped me resettle in my country and
opened new career opportunities. The
prestigious award enhanced my credentials
and reinforced my applications for academic
positions. I received a grant to translate the
book into English, and I am about to move
on to a new chapter in my academic career.

#### **Global Cinderellas**

Pei-Chia Lan Winner ICAS Book Prize 2007 Social Sciences



lobal Cinderellas: Migrant Domestics and Newly Rich Taiwanese Employers is my first book. It took me several years to revise my dissertation, extend the research, and turn it into a book. During the summer of 2005, I was visiting IIAS and enjoyed the tranquility of small-town life. The copyedited manuscript arrived at my IIAS office – an era devoid of PDF or electronic editing. Duke University Press shipped the entire package from the United States to Leiden. It was heavy.

The book was published in 2006 and won the ICAS Book Prize for Best Book in the Social Sciences in 2007. It also garnered a book award from the Sex and Gender Section of the American Sociological Association the same year. As a junior scholar, I was surprised and delighted to receive both recognitions. Particularly gratifying was the final sentence of the ICAS reading committee's comment: "Well-written and full of empathy, the book will be read widely." I traveled to Kuala Lumpur to accept the award. The ceremony was flattering – I felt as if I had won an Oscar (laugh). However, the most rewarding moment came when I met the reading committee members. A senior professor of history, whose name eludes me now, smiled and remarked: "Ah, I can see you in the book. You're just like what I had imagined." I was so happy

that the book could deliver my voice and convey what I cared about, despite the challenges of writing in a foreign language and navigating academic jargon and formalities.

The book awards helped Global Cinderellas to gain publicity and travel afar. It was used in many classes on migration, gender, and globalization. Students from various countries emailed me to share their thoughts after reading the book in class. Just recently, one American student sent me a meme she made about the book. Global Cinderellas has also been widely cited, with nearly 900 citations according to Google Scholar.

Hater authored a Chinese version of Global Cinderellas, published in both traditional (in Taiwan) and simplified Chinese (in China). I endeavored to make the book more accessible to the public. It also won several awards, including the Best Non-fiction Book of TIBE (Taipei International Book Exhibition) in 2010. What surprised me the most was that the book found resonance beyond academic circles. It sold more than 10,000 copies over the years and many readers were lay people. Some employers told me that they sought to understand migrant caregivers in their homes better and searched for improved ways to interact with them. A flight attendant wrote in her blog that, after reading the book, she felt much more empathy when hosting migrant workers from Southeast Asia on the plane.

I sent a few copies of the book to some Filipina migrants I had grown close to during the fieldwork. I am unsure if they read it. They simply said, "The book is heavy!" "Wow, it took a long time to write." Their stories surpass the book in richness, and their life journey continues. I hope that Global Cinderellas has done justice to their life chapters as migrant workers and transnational mothers, while helping the world comprehend their struggle, full of tears and laughter, like all of ours.

Adams Bodomo

# The Meiji Revolution and the Emergence of the Political Culture of the Literati

Hun Park
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2021
Korean Language Edition



t still remains a good memory for me to win the ICAS Book Prize Korean Language Edition in 2021. Until now, academics have only emphasized the view of Westernization or Western impact about the Meiji Restoration. Through my book (The Meiji Revolution and the Emergence of the Political Culture of the Literati), I argued that since the 19th century, Japanese samurai have gradually become Confucian intellectuals, and as both samurai and Confucian literati, they promoted the transformation of the samurai society.

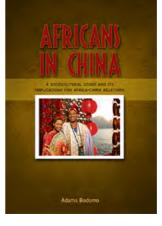
In fact, Japanese history research is still in a marginal position in Korean academia, and my research takes such an unconventional point of view that I did not think that I would receive such a big prize. This award is the first academic award I received, and it is still the last one, so I feel it is all the more precious. This award brought great joy to my family, who has supported my research work for a long time. In 2021, the awards ceremony was held online because COVID-19 was in full swing, but my wife edited the scene of my acceptance speech and shared it with my relatives, so I was receiving congratulary calls for a while. Also, some Korean newspapers reported on the news of my award, and even if I wasn't a celebrity, I experienced a little bit of fame. Also at a conference symposium, a moderator introduced me as the 2021 ICAS Book Prize winner. All of these are pleasant memories.

After that, I left the Meiji Restoration field for a while and paid attention to the modern history of Korea-Japan relations. As you may not know, this issue is not just an academic area. It is still very sensitive politically, and it has a great impact on current Korea-Japan relations. I have published my studies in the form of educational books and newspaper columns. Now, as I am about to return to my original major, the Meiji Restoration, I am writing a retrospective article about winning the ICAS Book Prize, which gives me some encouragement. Anyway, I will continue to do my best to create another book about the Meiji Restoration.

I heard that the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), which has hosted the ICAS Book Prize project, is celebrating its 30th anniversary. I sincerely congratulate you, and I hope that you will continue to lead Asian Studies in the global academia.

#### Africans in China: Guangdong and Beyond





hanks for asking me to say a few words about the ICAS Book Prize. My edited book, Africans in China: Guangdong and Beyond, won the Colleagues Choice Award in 2017 and, indeed, another of my books, Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and Its Implications for Africa-China Relations, was shortlisted two years earlier for the prize awards at an ICAS conference in Accra. The idea of an ICAS book award is an excellent one. And it is even more important that you have been able to sustain it for 20 years. A society or organization that doesn't have a robust recognition system is not one that can make much progress, and the ICAS Book Prize is such a recognition system. Congratulations on IIAS's 30th anniversary.

#### The Mutuality of Artistic and Scholarly Work

Madalena Natsuko Hashimoto Cordaro Winners ICAS Book Prize 2019 Portuguese and Spanish Language Edition A Erótica Japonesa na Pintura & na Escritura dos Séculos XVII a XIX, 2 volumes (Japanese Erotica in Painting and Writing at the 17th to 19th centuries, 2 volumes)

uring a long life dedicated to researching Japanese art and literature, I kept producing in my private studio prints that are heavily influenced by my academic interests: paintings, prints, and writings of the Edo period (1603-1868). My approach to art were not only centered in history or criticism but also in its making processes, as they differ quite a lot from the Western ones.

After retiring from the Faculty of Letters of University of São Paulo, I have been an adviser at its Graduate Program in Visual Arts. My own art works have been increasing in number, and one ongoing series that I hereby present some examples deals with some of the Hokusai Manga volumes, which were published from 1814 to 1878.

In fact, Hokusai drawings occupy a relatively small part of the imagery in the collages, although they play a strong unifier role, as the prints accrue from various periods and different subject matters (pre-historic haniwa statues, human figures in many life stations, plants, flowers, trees, objects and instruments, insects, animals, worms, views from a plane...).

I believe the prints show a variety of procedures and times of the "making" that show a complex rhetoric of series building, modernizing Hokusai's panoramic, and an all encompassing view of life.

Right: Hokusai nos trópicos #8 (Hokusai in the Tropics #8) Waterbased woodcut and of Hokusai *Manga* vol. 1 (1814) on handmade (irregular margins),



#### Painting, Seafood, and **Academic Writing**

Stephanie Coo WInner ICAS Book Prize 2021 English Language Edition - Humanities Clothing the Colony: Nineteenth-century Philippine Sartorial Culture, 1820-1896



Above: Painting by Stephanie Coo, winner of the 2021 ICAS Book Prize in the Humanities for Clothing the Colony.

henever seafood was served at our home in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, I noticed my grandfather (Ankong in Hokkien) never used his hands to eat fish, crab, shrimps, prawns, etc. I created this painting with that in mind, during a hectic period in my life when I was balancing teaching, research, university administrative duties; writing my book; and grieving for a dying grandfather. Three hours of painting on Friday nights became a creative refuge.

My book's intense editing, peer review, and revision process was wearing me down. With good humor, I told my Dutch editor, Dr. Hidde van der Wall, that I could barely open my left eye anymore. He suggested, "Take a break and come out briefly with us to get some drinks." Briefly was the key word. Had he not included that word, I would not have summoned the energy to come out on a weeknight. At that time, there was a simple bar called Jeepney on a parallel street near Katipunan Avenue, the Ateneo de Manila University's main thoroughfare. Little did I know that it was during that night, over drinks and laughter, that Dr. van der Wall, Dr. Jozona A. Lorenzana, and I would come up with the title, Clothing the Colony.

Clothing the Colony went on to win the ICAS Book Prize in 2021 for Best Book in the Humanities. A year later, it won the Best Book in History at the 39th National Book Awards and the John C. Kaw Prize for Best Book in History. When I learned about the prizes, I was a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Universidad de Granada, although I was physically in Portugal for the fellowship's Outgoing Phase. Being away from home, I could not celebrate with my family, but I recall being treated to a concert, coastal drive, dinner, and dessert by different friends. Professor Armando Marques Guedes (Full Professor, NOVA School of Law, Universidade Nova de Lisboa) invited me for breakfast and reminded me of my responsibility to continue using the pen to make genuine contributions.

Since then, I have been awarded a grant by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) in Portugal (2023-2029), invited to be a guest researcher for the Philippine Studies Program at Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany (2022-2023), and promoted to Associate Professor by the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines (2022). Through the initiative of Ambassador J. Eduardo Malaya (Philippine Embassy, The Netherlands), I was finally able to meet the IIAS team behind the ICAS Book Prize.

Currently, I am writing my next books while exploring new research pathways in Lisbon. Keep an eye out for my upcoming publications to learn why my grandfather never ate seafood with his hands.

### Is "Best PhD Dissertation Award" Still Relevant in This Frantic Publication Era?

Sam Wong Winner ICAS Book Prize 2005 Best Dissertation

s the first winner of the ICAS Book Prize for the Best Dissertation (in 2005), I have been invited, by the ICAS secretary, to reflect on the significance of the award as far as my career is concerned. Initially, I planned to turn this request down because, some 17 years since the winning the award, I am still an assistant professor. You can, therefore, imagine how little has been the impact on my academic life. That said, after reflecting on the request, I decided I wanted to use this platform to discuss a bigger issue: does a PhD dissertation award remain as relevant these days?

To be fair, although not advancing my career as I had hoped, the IBP Dissertation Prize has opened a lot of doors for me. My first-ever book saw the light of day. The book itself made me a star in my own department. Selling nearly 500 copies of my book meant that I got enough royalty fees to enjoy a few nice restaurant meals. The book has improved my credential so much, that I was twice invited to be a PhD external examiner. Thanks to IIAS, I built further networks and created my first edited book, with two distinguished

scholars. One outstanding memory was that, because of my book, in 2008 I was invited by the University of Vancouver to be the first speaker in a symposium – even before a more prominent professor in the World Bank!

Back to 2004 when I started my post-doc in the UK, the academic landscape was very different. Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), unlike Research Excellence Framework (REF), was less threatening. PhD students were not expected to publish. Neither did academics care too much about the notion of 'publish or perish' at that time.

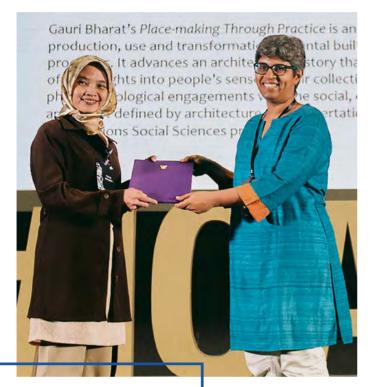
These days, PhD students have become highly productive; everyone seems to have three or four publications before graduation. Simultaneously, academic publishers take a more proactive approach, making lots of calls for book proposals. They even set up booths at major academic conferences in order to attract new talent. The changing demand-and-supply means that a book publication is no longer out of reach to most PhD graduates. If they manage to get

a decent manuscript ready, it is likely that they will receive more than one offer. In the light of this, dissertation awards and the associated offer of a book contract have become less attractive.

That said, it is really not ICAS's awards that matter most: for me, it is the energy of ICAS and the high quality of IIAS'
The Newsletter that pulls together various scholars in Asian Studies. The sharing of the latest information about research, publications, study groups, conferences, and grant applications has created a healthy and exciting academic atmosphere.
The IBP Dissertation Prize, which is held every two years, is simply a sign of encouragement to hardworking, lucky scholars.

I am no longer a young scholar. The award may not have achieved an academic miracle for me. Yet, it is the recognition that has helped me enjoy staying in the world of academia for nearly two-and-a-half decades. May I take this opportunity to congratulate IIAS on its 30th birthday!

Right: Tutin Aryanti presents the 2017 ICAS Dissertation Prize (Social Sciences) to Gauri Bharat at ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.



#### ICAS Dissertation Award: Hitting a Double Jackpot

Tutin Aryanti Winner ICAS Book Prize 2015 Best Dissertation - Social Sciences

riting this story is both a reminiscence of those best old days and a looking back to what I have passed through during the past eight years of my academic career. It was in May 2015 when the ICAS Selection Committee sent me an email telling me that my dissertation was shortlisted as one of the three best dissertations in social sciences. Dr. Michiel Baas and Dr. Paul van der Velde invited me to attend ICAS 9 in Adelaide. I was thrilled; I never imagined that I could be on the shortlist, but I also felt anxious and confused. I was expecting my baby, who was predicted to be born in July 2015, when the conference was held. It would be a risky trip for me, and the airline would not let me fly with such a mature pregnancy. I was disappointed that I could not make it to the award announcement, but it vanished into thin air as the ICAS committee congratulated me for winning the best dissertation in social sciences. Having delivered the baby and being awarded the ICAS award was a double jackpot!

As a winner, I served on the jury for the next dissertation award and was invited to ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai in 2017. Being one of the juries for dissertations in social sciences from all over the world was overwhelming. Still, it was a precious experience as a newly-minted doctor who eagerly sought to be an international scholar. I had to read

and score 66 dissertations and select the 15 best ones for the longlists and, later, the three best of the best for the shortlists. I never knew that reviewing dissertations for ICAS would be excellent training, as today, I am a reviewer for tens of international journals. Being both a winner and a jury of the ICAS Dissertation Prize has brought me international recognition from scholars and institutions from across the globe and opened a broad network with global scholars at the same time. Holding the ICAS award has opened doors to win more grants and fellowships, such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW) International Home Project Grant and the Graham Foundation Grant to develop my work on aender and architecture. I was also awarded my university's Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Most Outstanding Lecturer. I was invited to speak to conferences in India, the United States, and some universities in Indonesia to present my ICAS-winning doctoral research exploring the gendered segregation of space in Javanese mosques. I was also invited to serve as an external dissertation reviewer at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (United States) and the University of Melbourne (Australia). The ICAS Best Dissertation in Social Sciences Award indeed has paved my academic career path after the doctoral program. I could not be more grateful for it! Thank you, ICAS!

#### Between "Here" and "There": From Being Shortlisted to Chairing the IBP 2023 Dissertation Reading Committees

Anna Romanowicz

s an almost mid-career scholar, someone who is already not 'here' but not yet 'there,' I am bound to reflect on how far from 'here' and 'there' I actually am. I am only sure that the route has been intertwined with the IIAS-IBP Dissertation Prize. My journey started the night when I hit the 'submit' button for consideration by the ICAS 10 Dissertation Committee. I was shortlisted that year, and I went on to serve as a reading member on both the Humanities and Social Sciences committees in two subsequent editions. Today, I chair the Dissertation Committee. Like many scholars, I too found ICAS distinction to be a leverage in my career.

But more than that, my involvement with ICAS is one of the crucial reasons for deciding to work in academia. Has it really been so significant? Consider this: We are all frustrated with the way in which in contemporary neoliberalized and bureaucratized academia requires us to be more occupied with quantifying and

measuring our work than with actually doing our job. Where is the space for good old discussion? Where is the space to cherish scholarship instead of measuring it? For reading something not because (oh, with this Impact Factor) it must be quoted in another paper we produce, but for reading something for pleasure and with pure interest? Where is the space to reward quality of research process, analytical and argumentation skills?

For me, this space has been associated with the IIAS-IBP Dissertation Prize. I have endeavoured to chair the Dissertation Committee in the IBP 2023 edition, upholding the same spirit. With the participation of numerous generations of scholars representing various areas and schools of thought in Asian Studies, I look forward to the future with confidence, knowing that the values of scholarly camaraderie and a commitment to high-quality research will continue to be deeply ingrained in the ethos of forthcoming editions of this award.



Above: Winners, secretaries, and jury members meeting in the Botanical Garden in Leiden during ICAS 11.

## The Asian Library at Leiden University

Kurt De Belder

he Asian Library at Leiden University is a major international knowledge hub on Asia. The Library holds extensive collections on China, Japan, Korea, and South and Southeast Asia, including the largest Indonesian collection outside Indonesia.

Through a variety of fellowships, the Library has funded more than 400 international researchers to be in residence in Leiden and use the special collections for a period of up to three months. The Library was particularly honoured that a former alumnus funded the newly created Lingling Wiyadharma Fellowship program that supports international scholars to conduct research in the library's Indonesian special collections. Last year we received the first three fellows, and we are happy to welcome this year's fellows.

The Library's Digital Collections portal provides access to more than half a million hi-res digitised items that are available via open access so that everyone world-wide can view and use these images. An impactful example is the availability in Leiden of a unique collection of unofficial or underground poetry journals from China. The Library is in progress to make these highly influential cultural items digitally available so that researchers, readers and poets can access, often for the first time, these journals that play such an important role in contemporary Chinese culture.

To make sure that our digitised items can be incorporated in international research, education, citizen science or heritage initiatives and can be used by teachers worldwide in (digital) courses, the Library has implemented IIIF (International Image Interoperability

Framework) that allows its collections to be more open and useable.

The Library operates an office in Jakarta, Indonesia, that supports the acquisition and cataloguing of contemporary materials in Southeast Asia and maintains close contact with a number of partners in Asia. Thanks to the Library's partnership with the National Library of Indonesia, three Hikayat Aceh manuscripts, held in Leiden and Jakarta, were recognized this year by UNESCO as world heritage and inscribed in the Memory of the World international register. This year the Library signed a cooperative agreement with the National Archives of Indonesia to set up several joint projects. Thanks to the Japan Art Catalogue project of the National Art Center in Tokyo, the Asian Library is one of five worldwide repositories and the only one in Europe – where art historians, students, and the public can access Japanese art catalogues. Our ongoing cooperation with the National Museum of Taiwan Literature, also renewed this year, allows the Library to make available the largest collection of Taiwanese literature in Europe. Finally, the Library is a proud sponsor of the ICAS Book Prize since 2015 and holds all the nominated books in its collections.

Leiden University Libraries continues to build on its collection strengths supporting research and education at Leiden University and will open in September 2024 a new Middle Eastern Library and a new African Library. We're looking forward to welcoming you.

Kurt De Belder is University Librarian at Leiden University.



Above: Hikayat Aceh manuscript held at the Asian Library at Leiden University, recognized this year by UNESCO as world heritage and inscribed in the Memory of the World international register. The Hikayat Aceh is an indigenous history of the former sultanate of Aceh on the island of Sumatra in present-day Indonesia.

