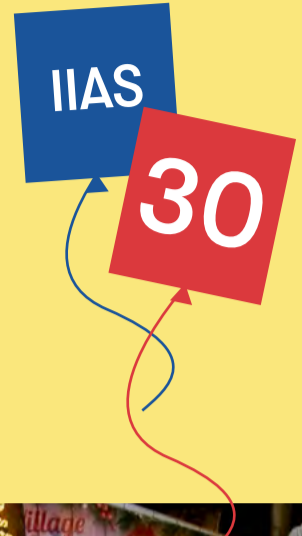


# The Newsletter



From the Director



IIAS in Leiden



ICAS



Fellowship



The ICAS Book Prize



The Newsletter



Critical Heritage



Asian Cities Cluster



In Situ Graduate School



Humanities Across Borders



IIAS Publications



IIAS Outreach



ABRN



Africa-Asia



Supported Programmes



Future Proof Design



SPECIAL EDITION  
Celebrating 30 Years  
of Knowledge Collaboration  
in Asia and Beyond





Paramita Paul

Dear reader,

This Fall, we celebrate 30 years of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). In this special issue of *The Newsletter*, we bring you a "Collection of Stories," reflecting three decades of knowledge collaboration in Asia and beyond.

Regular readers will already have noticed that the issue looks and feels different. Each section is dedicated to one of our programs and activities, and is introduced by the program coordinator. For their respective sections, the program coordinators have asked connections from the last 30 years and from all over the world to reflect on their experiences with IIAS and its initiatives.

As you go through the pages of the issue, you will encounter the stories of former and current fellows (pp. 10-15), as well as editors of our publication series (pp. 16-19). You will also meet attendees of different iterations of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) (pp. 24-25) and winners

and organizers of different ICAS Book Prize (IBP) editions (27-31). You can read all about the experiences of participants of our In Situ Graduate Schools (ISGS) on pp. 32-33, and of participants in the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN) on pp. 34-35.

Several of our flagship research programs – Humanities Across Borders, The Asian Cities Cluster, Critical Heritage, and Africa-Asia – present themselves on pp. 36-47, while other supported programs are introduced on pp. 48-49. *The Newsletter* considers on how it has developed over the years and also introduces its regional editors on pp. 20-23, and our Outreach program is showcased on pp. 50-51.

Our director and members of the board reflect on IIAS's past and future on pp. 4-5. "IIAS in Leiden" is the theme of pp. 6-9, which covers reflections from the municipality of Leiden and from an early employee thinking back on IIAS' founding in the early 1990s. These pages also uncover the story of our current office building on

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# and Beyond

# in Asia

How should we respond to these changes? How do we bring change ourselves? What has been, and is, the role of IIAS, and how do we proceed from here? The stories on our pages inspire contemplation as well as action, and we hope you find them enlightening.

Many of you will be connected to IIAS and are long-time subscribers to *The Newsletter*. For others, this issue might be your first introduction to our journal, or even your first introduction to our institution and what we do. Some of you might reminisce and relive memories of past meetings and events. Others might find out more about the research conducted at our institute, or you might become inspired to publish with us. We encourage all of you to take your time to wander through our collection of stories. You are welcome to read the issue from A-Z, or section by section, but you can also read it playfully, moving back-and-forth between pages, following one story to find another, learning about creative processes, and immersing yourselves in paintings, poems, photos, and anecdotes, making your own way through the narrative.

The official opening of our institute took place on October 13, 1993. On October 13, 2023, we celebrate our 30th anniversary with a festive day of cultural performances, interactive workshops, engaged discussions, and delicious foods. These festivities will be preceded by an open conversation on October 12, 2023, on the topic "Decolonizing Area Studies." All are welcome! For more about the program, go to: <https://www.iias.asia/30>.

Our upcoming conversation and festival in October are not stand-alone events. In fact, they kickstart a year of celebrations. IIAS's 30th anniversary coincides with IBP's tenth edition, and inserted in this special issue of *The Newsletter*, you will find a supplement booklet with all winners, accolades, and shortlisted submissions of IBP 2023. Our festive year culminates in the 13th ICAS Conference-Festival, to be held in Surabaya between 28 July-1 August 2024. We welcome proposals for different types of formats and activities; for more information, please go to: <https://www.iias.asia/events/icas-13-crossways-knowledge-international-conference-festival-surabaya-indonesia>.

In its first 30 years, IIAS committed itself to alternative models of research, education, and dissemination, ever striving towards work that is de-centered, critical, and engaged in broader conversations. This remains a cornerstone of our mission, and we look forward to many more years of knowledge collaboration in Asia and beyond.

Come celebrate with us, and we hope to meet many of you in person at our festival on October 13, 2023, and at ICAS 13 in Surabaya in 2024!

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Rapenburg 59, which has a history of more than 400 years. Further reflections from longstanding members of the IIAS network can be found on pp. 52-53. Last but not least, those of you interested in design will enjoy the story of the development of our visual identity on pp. 54-55.

Our stories come in many forms, and this issue is a combination of writings, art, images, and poetry. Notice, too, that the reflections are critical: both the field of Asian Studies and academia itself have undergone changes in the last three decades, and both remain in constant flux.

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The Newsletter is a free periodical published by IIAS. As well as being a window into the Institute, The Newsletter also links IIAS with the community of Asia scholars and the worldwide public interested in Asia and Asian studies. The Newsletter bridges the gap between specialist knowledge and public discourse, and continues to serve as a forum for scholars to share research, commentary and opinion with colleagues in academia and beyond.

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Colophon  
The Newsletter  
No. 96 Autumn 2023

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Printing:  
Nieuwsdrukk Nederland,  
Amsterdam

Submission deadlines  
Issue #98: 1 March 2024  
Issue #99: 1 July 2024  
Issue #100: 1 October 2024

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# Looking Back, Looking Forward

## Three Decades of IIAS

Philippe Peycam

The adventure represented by the small institute that is IIAS is difficult to convey in a short article. What should perhaps be stressed from the outset is its inherent plasticity, as an organization, in both its ways to operate and in the programmes it has been running. This built-in flexibility, reflected in the unique collective spirit that animates its team, is I believe the secret that has allowed IIAS to adjust, adapt, and (re-)position itself in the face of changing contexts, new challenges, and new opportunities.

First, the name of IIAS and the helpful ambiguities it contains: coined from its creation as both ‘international’ and focusing on ‘Asian Studies’, the way the institute has evolved somehow allowed it to transcend these notions that were purposefully chosen for their intrinsic elasticity. One now can say that IIAS is engaged in a local-global-local articulation rather than a reduced national-international one, even though the original adjective is what enabled it to move creatively beyond traditional boundaries. IIAS today is, in fact, associated with numerous locally situated ecologies of knowledge, which, through its panoply of activities and programmes, it helps link to each to each other in an inclusive trans-national and trans-regional perspective.

On ‘Asian Studies’, the metamorphosis has been even more radical with the acknowledgement that Area Studies as they operated in the West during and for a while after the Cold War period should now be understood through the multi-local articulation I just mentioned. In other words, no single-centered ‘expertise’ from and on any given ‘region’ or ‘area’ can claim comprehensive authority through one ‘superior’ gaze; rather, regional knowledge becomes ontologically meaningful if it is framed in conversation among equals with other geopolitically-culturally situated knowledge ‘centres’. This fluidity in the definition of ‘studies’ can also allow for a multiplicity of expressions encompassing different formats and genres. It allows, in the deeply interconnected and entangled world we live in, for multiple voices to participate as active co-creators of knowledge.

Beyond its name, IIAS’s inherent agility can be gauged by the particular role, position, and status it occupies in the academic system. IIAS is a unique ‘specie’ in Academia. Not a part of a university per se, though supported by one, its existence as an independent, multifaceted, interdisciplinary facilitating platform serving a multiplicity of stakeholders in Asia, The Netherlands, Europe, and the rest of world, is also a reflection on how ‘Asia’ as a global multidimensional human ‘factor’ is by definition pervasive everywhere.

Unbound by convention or baggage of some sorts, prone to explore new modes of exchange, the institute has largely contributed to transforming traditional patterns of knowledge creation, emphasizing the need for an inclusive, humanistic approach. After 30 years of existence, IIAS has become a trusted partner not only in Asia and Europe, but in what we now call the Global South. The institute draws this trust from its fundamentally collaborative nature, one privileging reciprocal arrangements built on non-hierarchical collegiality and mutuality.

Many of IIAS’s successful networks have been shaped around collectively defined



Fig. 1 (left): Audience at the opening ceremony of ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2017.

Fig. 4 (right): Participants of the first Humanities Across Borders summer school, “Reading Leiden,” explore the built structures of the old city. (Photo courtesy of Cheryl Jacob, 2017)



Fig. 3 (left): IIAS fellows and staff explore Brieneoord Island in the river Nieuwe Maas, led by ARK, an NGO working with the municipality of Rotterdam on a project called Rewilding of the City, 2023.

objectives ranging from research-based thematic inquiries (e.g., ‘Neighborhoods’, ‘River-Cities’), to ones centered on shared aspirations, like for instance the ‘Africa-Asia’ platform, itself an extension of the broad meeting-grounds that are ‘International Convention of Asia Scholars’ (ICAS) events. With time, the often unplanned convergences among different actors have crystallised into vibrant coalitions of partners willing to leverage each other’s contribution for the sake of common interest. For instance, an unusual network like the groundbreaking pedagogical ‘Humanities Across Borders’ (HAB) was forged around a shared aspiration in both the ‘South’ and the ‘North’ to creatively rethink aspects of academic education beyond old practices and canons. The point to stress here is that IIAS, thanks to its inborn versatility and deep-seated

humanistic grounding, has been able to explore numerous areas of intervention in an innovative serendipitous way in the service of an increasingly diverse array of publics and partners.

Gradually and incrementally, the institute was able to articulate its unique role – its ‘niche’ – around a coherent assortment of facilitating functions, each and all aimed at supporting academic activities in regard to ‘Asia-in-the-world’. These are: (1) research facilitation, (2) pedagogical support, (3) knowledge dissemination, (4) knowledge community building, and (5) capacity building and civic engagement. On all of these ‘fronts’, I can confidently say that IIAS has largely contributed to reshaping not just the ‘field’ of Asian Studies, but the way cross- and trans-disciplinary, intercultural, collaborative scholarship should go, precisely

beyond Asian/Area Studies, as they still operate in many academic settings.

One can point to a few of IIAS’s achievements – and to the way collaborative mechanisms have been mobilised and perfected – by always inserting new spaces of engagement allowing new intellectual explorations, to appreciate how old-school Area Studies practices have been disrupted.

Take for instance the ICAS conference or conventions. Their different metamorphoses, from the first traditional academic event in 1998 to the locally embedded conference-festival model of the last editions – and especially now, as we reimagine academic meetings in the post-COVID era – have made sure that these major exchange opportunities can continue to operate as indispensable junctures for new forms of intellectual inter-cultural interactions.

I could say the same about *The Newsletter* and the many mutations it has undergone, with a wide array of sections, formats, and forums. Integrating innovative possibilities like those offered by the digital media, our outlets continue to serve as the indispensable space of expression for knowledge dissemination related to Asia and Asia in the world, for an ever-expanding and diversified audience. Here, the conceivers of *The Newsletter* presciently imagined a publication that would not be constrained by the imperious demands of quantitative evaluation, as are traditionally assigned to academic journals. The bet was, and still is, that people of multiple academic backgrounds and walks of life wish to grasp the wide spectrum of research or modes of expression carried out in and on Asia so as to inform their own scholarship, taken thus as a contribution to a larger – humanistic – undertaking. To my knowledge, there are no equivalent publication outlets operating at such a level of inclusiveness in other region-focused academic ‘fields’. *The Newsletter* itself has evolved tremendously to take heed of otherwise unheard voices and perspectives, contributing to democratising the very act of producing knowledge.

I could mention other IIAS initiatives built on the same craving for real inclusiveness – in essence, decolonial aspirations – as they are articulated in network-based platforms such as the Humanities Across Borders programme for education, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia initiative, with its two more specialized offshoots: Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network and the River Cities Network, both aimed at engaging academic and non-academic actors in the production of more civically situated knowledges. I could also include the recently transformed IIAS Fellowship Programme, which not only seeks to embrace a more differentiated range of individual profiles and backgrounds, but also strives to imbue fellows with the emancipatory experience of engaging in collegial participatory activities, diversifying exposures, taking advantage of the wide range of activities that the institute offers. All of this is intended to broaden rather than restrict their individual – possibly even professional – horizons, beyond the straightjacket ultra-specialised profiling usually ascribed to them in mainstream academia.

To conclude this longer than usual piece, I think I can describe the progressive strategic re-orientation IIAS has been pursuing in today’s context of shifting paradigms and hierarchies: through the five functions mentioned above, IIAS’s original Area Studies mission has moved to one seeking global-local, inter-cultural, collaborative understanding. As I see it, to embrace the tectonic geo-political and -economic changes that we see emerging today, IIAS must deepen its partnerships with institutions and colleagues, notably from those in the ‘Southern’ regions of the world in Asia and beyond. This stance, from a North-based organization that is IIAS, should also help recast Western academic scholarship as an ever innovative *benevolent-thus-necessary-and-respected player*, beyond yesterday’s old Area Studies paradigms.

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## Capacity Building and Civic Engagement: IIAS as a Global Matchmaker

Adriaan Bedner

When IIAS became operative in 1993, the reason the Dutch government wanted to fund this initiative was that the founder had convinced them of the need for a knowledge-center on Asia. Asia was the continent of the future and the Netherlands needed solid scholarship on the region to be able to engage with it economically and politically. The institute's 'audience' was the Netherlands, and in particular policymakers in the Hague. In short, at first sight capacity building and civic engagement in Asia did not seem high on the Institute's list of priorities.

Nonetheless, from the start, IIAS actively pursued these two objectives that gradually became more important when the Institute moved away from being a Dutch knowledge-center only to become a global academic lynchpin – in particular in the humanities and in Asia, but increasingly in the connection Asia-Africa-Europe as well. It is a remarkable achievement that the Institute has managed to do this without losing its support from the Dutch government.

A brief look at IIAS's website makes clear how prominent capacity building and civic

engagement are. For example, the most prominent item at the time of writing of this piece is "The Birth of the Airlangga Institute of Indian Ocean Crossroads and the role of IIAS," which offers a prime example of IIAS's achievements on this score. When scholars in Surabaya were looking for inspiration to start an area studies institute, IIAS was a natural partner to help develop this plan. Convincing those involved in the initiative that it would be a bad idea to simply copy a similar institute in Singapore, IIAS helped them to think through what they would like to achieve and how they could position themselves to become more than a badly-funded competitor of the Singaporeans. In so doing, IIAS's institutional network has been key and it has proved to be unique capital for such efforts at institution-building in Asia.

This is only one example of the staggering number of projects and networks IIAS is involved in, however. The main reason that IIAS is so successful in engaging in all of them – I think – is that it combines a broad, idealist vision of how scholarly collaboration can lead to a better world with a fairly modest way of operating. This means that IIAS will not

dictate the terms of collaboration and leaves ample room for partners to be in the lead. To play such a role is only possible through the Institute's form: unlike 'normal' scholarly institutes it does not have a large academic staff of its own; it is a 'clever' organization, which uses its resources to maximum effect by stimulating and supporting others to ultimately produce the knowledge IIAS seeks to generate.

Yet, without deep, interdisciplinary area studies knowledge available within IIAS, this would not have been possible. Such knowledge is located in the various programme committees, boards, and in the close collaboration within the various networks. But, members of the core staff also need to have sufficient knowledge themselves about the state of the art in area studies to be able to gauge new scientific possibilities. This is perhaps most apparent in the programme Humanities Across Borders (HAB), which is truly innovative in its efforts to build a new, multi-cultural, and inclusive methodology in the field of humanities. A programme such as Humanities Across Borders would never have been possible without the experience and vision of the present director of IIAS.

This engagement with innovation does not mean that IIAS no longer invests in more traditional forms of capacity building and civic engagement. Examples abound, with various levels of involvement, from the dual master programme in heritage studies to engaging with local communities in the River Cities Network. What should be mentioned here as well is the fellowship programme,

which has run from the start of IIAS, and which has enabled dozens of scholars to spend a year or more in Leiden to work on research and prepare themselves further on a future in academia. For some of them, the fellowship programme has acted as a safety net, preventing them from dropping out just after having finished their PhD.

There seems to be a danger of 'overstretch' if a small institute like IIAS initiates, engages in, and supports so many different programmes and networks. As I mentioned above, the main reasons it has worked so far are vision and an institutional structure to support it, which hitherto has worked well enough. Yet, there is a third factor that has been indispensable for IIAS's success, which is its ability to attract external funding for its efforts. In particular, the long-term commitments like those of the Mellon Foundation and the Luce Foundation have contributed to a stable financial basis for engagement and innovation. Such support, in turn, relies on the ability of IIAS to show that it has the knowledge and networks to use the funding effectively. This is what the Institute has managed very well over the past years, which closes the circle.

Thus, in a way the success of IIAS in capacity-building and civic engagement is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Adriaan Bedner is KITLV professor of Law and Society in Indonesia and Head of Department of the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance and Society. He also serves on the IIAS Board.

## Network and Community Development

Tina Harris

I first heard about the IIAS in 1999. This was just a year after I finished university, and well before I even toyed with the possibility of going to graduate school. Frustrated with a secretarial job in New York City where my main task was to pour tea, I joined the Social Science Research Council as a program assistant, where my job was to help set up workshops with academics, policymakers, and NGO representatives in South Asia and Southeast Asia. At every meeting – often held in various parts of Asia – at least one person would mention their involvement in the interesting activities of a mysterious organisation called the International Institute for Asian Studies. I remember a Nepali environmental scientist in Meghalaya, a Dutch historian in Chiang Mai, and a Malaysian sociologist

in Bandung all mentioning the IIAS and its far-reaching work in "area studies" as it was called at the time. In my mind, the IIAS was a massive organisation with hundreds of staff members, churning out new knowledge from its giant headquarters in the Netherlands, with mini-IIAS branches all over the world.

Little did I know that two decades later, I'd be co-chairing IIAS board meetings in a beautiful but compact house in Leiden, with a tiny but tight-knit and extremely dedicated staff team. I marvel at how this idea of IIAS as a huge institution with "hundreds of staff members" still rings true at many of the IIAS global events that are held around the globe, such as the Asia-Africa Conference, the Asian Borderlands Conference, and the International Convention for Asia Scholars (ICAS). Yet, what was clear in 1999, only five or six years after its

establishment, was that the IIAS had already been able to facilitate academic events that brought far-flung (in both the geographical and disciplinary sense) scholars together in fresh new ways. While it shares important features with other academic departments and organisations, IIAS as an institution is unique, as its global reach is remarkably wide.

One example of IIAS network-creating is the Asian Borderlands Research Network, which I have been involved with for over a decade. Setting up a conference like this is a serious amount of work, and part of what IIAS does best (mostly spearheaded by the peerless Martina van den Haak). The process works via careful inquiries, co-hosting, and collaboration with staff and students in local institutions in Asia. Held in a different Asian borderland city every two or three years, the conference also specifically focuses on generating new networks for individuals from Asian borderland regions, particularly those who are early career scholars or practitioners, with travel grants available for low-income scholars and field trip opportunities near the venue location. Perhaps, then, one of IIAS's

biggest community-creating influences is its dedicated long-term timeframes. Many NGOs and academic grants run on (at the most) five-year plans, or on short term projects that often fizzle out. Even though IIAS may have similar funding cycles, it manages to maintain and sustain community networks on the micro level – and keeps these relationships going.

While the scholarly landscape – and therefore IIAS – has changed significantly over the past thirty years; from Global North development studies or "oriental" and area studies perspectives to finally including more Asian and Global South voices (just take a look at the authorship of the first few newsletters compared to now!), there is still more to learn and more to change. As a facilitator of global networks and long-term relationships, however, it is clear the IIAS is remarkably far-reaching, with lasting impact.

Tina Harris is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam and serves on the IIAS Board.

## A Call for Promiscuity

Jeroen de Kloet

Much has changed in the social sciences and humanities since I obtained my PhD in 2001. Too much to grasp in a short essay. Allow me to reflect upon, and juxtapose, only two trends: professionalization and decolonization. Indeed, I am struck by how universities have become more "professional" – I deliberately want to steer away from the (dare I use a Deleuzian term) overcoded word "neoliberal" here, although both terms share, for me, similar negative connotations. On a more positive note, and very much supported by current student cohorts, there has been a call for a decolonization of the universities in recent years. What role did and can the IIAS play in both processes?

First, professionalization. Over the past decades, fields seem to multiply as they become more and more specialized. Journals continue to pop up to cater to these "emerging new fields." Talking about my current field, it is not just media studies I do, but also platform studies, new media studies, television studies,

visual studies, cultural studies, software studies – and at times the rather uninspiring prefix "critical" serves as a further marker of distinction. Just as regional or national markers are used to further differentiate fields. Consequently, knowledge runs the danger of being increasingly siloed, whereas a discourse of multi-disciplinarity has simultaneously emerged, merely seeming to obfuscate these processes of specialization. In addition, processes of professionalization related to research grants, track records in ranked journals, and signified by words like "deliverables" and "impact," encourage rather than discourage specialization and a consistent, if not repetitive, research focus.

It seems to me that the IIAS is, and has always been, resisting these trends. Granted, in its packaging into three research areas, it may act as if it has a clear and strong focus, but actually, if one has to characterize the IIAS, it is in its curiosity, its omnivorous and promiscuous range of topics, its eagerness to connect nearly everything to Asia – I remember the aspiration to even move into outer space. Take Humanities Across Borders, a programme that resists specialization, that works against the call for professionalization, and instead pushes knowledge beyond the confines of the university. In programmes like these, the idea of multidisciplinary as well as the call to work together with alternative sources of knowledge, to forge alliances with artistic knowledge, with vernacular forms

of knowledge, becomes pivotal, not mere window-dressing.

Second, decolonization. Here, I like to suspend my thinking from theoretical debates, for example, regarding the difference between the postcolonial and the decolonial. Instead, I like to observe how students increasingly question our Euro- and Anglocentric curricula, how calls for other voices, from other places, with other histories, are becoming louder and louder. It has been increasingly problematic that a philosophy department would offer only one course allocated to "Non-western philosophies" – till today a quite common practice. At the same time, our students remain predominantly educated by teachers coming from the West, using authors based in the West, and engaging with media objects from the West. I am well aware of the complications of writing about "the West" (or the East, or China, for that matter), as if it were a clear and definable category, but allow me to use this simplification here. The discontent of students with these practices is inspiring, and provides a unique opportunity to change our teaching and research practices, and also a potential trajectory away from the processes of professionalization as discussed earlier.

If we see decolonization more as a practice than as a theory (ironically, U.S.-based publishing houses seem particularly instrumental in the dissemination of decolonial theory), it seems to me that

the IIAS has already gathered ample experience. Its biggest conference, the ICAS, is usually based in Asia, as many of its other seminars and activities are; its partnerships, fellowship schemes, networks, and research programmes are driven by collaborations with, to use another fraught term, the "Global South." The Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) may well serve as an example here. While these experiences also deserve critical scrutiny (for example, in terms of funding), such experiences of collaboration and exchange may inspire a more practice-based approach towards decolonization.

By multiplying our frames of reference, by moving away from the usual suspects in knowledge production and develop a curiosity to other, often less known authors, alternative traditions; by resisting yet another reification if not celebration of the Oxbridge and Ivy League class, by moving away from rankings that are less global than they seem, by resisting further professionalization, and aligning ourselves with our students in a call for decolonization, research in the humanities and social sciences may well become more open, more unsettling, and more promiscuous. It is this intellectual promiscuity that the IIAS may bring to the humanities at large.

Jeroen de Kloet is Professor of Globalization Studies at the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam and serves on the IIAS Board.



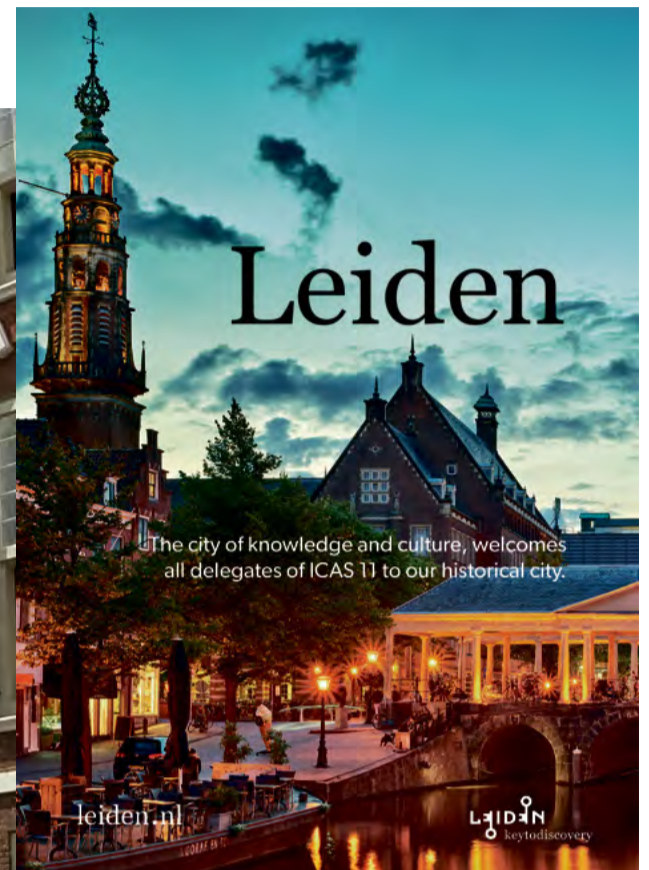
# City of Leiden, Host of ICAS 2019

Left: Procession of congress participants to the Hooglandse Kerk.

Right: Poster showcasing the city of Leiden as the host of the 11th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 11) in 2019.

Bottom right: Attendees gathering at the Hooglandse Kerk for the ceremony.

Arnoud Nierop



**“The city of knowledge and culture welcomes all delegates of ICAS 11 to our historic city.”**  
This statement embodies the municipality of Leiden’s gratitude for being chosen as the host for the 11th International Convention of Asia Scholars, which took place from July 15-19, 2019. The official opening of ICAS 2019 was evident in the city with a procession of congress participants to the Hooglandse Kerk, where Mayor Henri Lenferink performed the official opening ceremony.

As the oldest university town in the Netherlands, dating back to 1575, Leiden is one of the oldest Dutch cities. The remnants of international knowledge and historical culture are easily noticeable throughout the old city centre. Leiden is a city of science, known today for the presence of the leading Leiden Bio Science Park. Beyond its contributions to medical science, Leiden also has strong ties with Asia, which explains the fitting presence of the IIAS (International Institute for Asian Studies) in the city. The university library holds the world’s largest collection on Indonesia and significant collections on South and Southeast Asia, China, Japan, and Korea. These connections with Asia are also evident throughout the city, including the Hortus Botanicus and the Sieboldhuis. All of these factors made the historical city centre of Leiden the perfect congress location for ICAS 2019.

Dr. Paul van der Velde from Leiden University (IIAS) collaborated with the Leiden Convention Centre to create a bid book to bring the congress to the city. After a successful bid, he contacted the municipality of Leiden to ensure a flawless execution of the congress and its organisation. IIAS and the city of Leiden were dedicated to being outstanding hosts for the 2500 participants attending the congress. The historical city centre served as the backdrop for the congress, demanding a well-organised logistics system to facilitate smooth movement throughout the city. Various buildings in the city centre were utilised for different sessions of the congress. During the breaks, participants had the opportunity to explore the historical buildings and enjoy a leisurely stroll along the beautiful canals of the city.

To ensure a smooth organisation, a close collaboration between IIAS and

the municipality of Leiden was established, with me serving as the intermediary between IIAS and my colleagues at the town hall. In retrospect, I can confidently say that this collaboration was constructive and fruitful, fulfilling our aspiration to make IIAS and Leiden successful hosts for ICAS 11. My colleagues actively participated, offering their insights, organising, and coordinating various aspects of the event. As a result, major public gatherings in the bustling city centre, such as the opening procession through the city, were well-executed and successful.

The participants of the congress visibly enjoyed the city. They were clearly present in the city during the afternoons and evenings, identified by their conference bags and badges. I had the opportunity to witness this up close when I was enjoying a summer evening with my wife, dining on a terrace along the canal. Conference attendees

engaged in lively conversations during their dinner on the terrace, simultaneously, groups of participants passed by engrossed in animated discussions. It was a wonderful sight to see Leiden as a place for socialising and relaxation beyond its role as the host city for ICAS 2019.

As the municipality of Leiden, we were delighted to contribute to the success of ICAS 2019. This sentiment was reinforced during the closing celebration held at the Stadsgehoorzaal in Leiden, where we all concurred that Leiden truly lived up to its reputation as a city of international knowledge and historical culture. ICAS 2019 was a triumph, and I take pride in the fact that the municipality of Leiden played a part in making it a success.

Arnoud Nierop,  
Municipality of Leiden,  
The Netherlands.



# The Creation of IIAS

As Seen by One of Its Earliest Staff Members

Paul van der Velde

At the beginning of the 1990s, the academic field of Asian Studies had reached rock bottom in Europe. The relationship between Asia and Europe in general was also at a low. At that time, awareness grew amongst a number of experts that this situation should be remedied. It was time for action.

A committee, headed by the Berkeley Professor of Indology Frits Staal, produced a report to the Dutch Government – *Baby Krishna* – which took a strong post-Orientalist stance [Fig. 1]. One of the recommendations of the report was to put in place a committee for the social sciences. That committee produced a second report: *Krishna in the Delta* [Fig. 2]. This report recommended the establishment of a European Institute for Asian Studies. After sounding out colleagues in France, Germany, and England, it was agreed that the Netherlands, with its relatively central position on the continent and its own longstanding Asian Studies tradition, should take the lead by hosting such an institute.

## Founding of IIAS

The outcome of the two reports was defined in the *Agreement on National Cooperation in Asian Studies*, signed on January 8, 1993 by four founding Dutch institutions: the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Free University Amsterdam (VUA), the University of Amsterdam (UVA), and Leiden University (LU). The parties agreed upon the following activities: (1) to set up and execute a post-doctoral programme for Dutch and foreign researchers; (2) to organize international scientific gatherings; (3) to act as a national centre

for Asian Studies to improve international cooperation in the European context; and (4) to develop other activities in the field of Asian Studies, such as the publication of a newsletter and the establishment of a database, which should contain up-to-date information on current research in the field of Asian Studies. The ministry of education agreed to subsidise the institute for an undefined number of years, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added a two-year internationalisation budget. With this, the new institute was founded in 1993 [Fig. 3]. It was decided that it should be named 'International Institute for Asian Studies' and not 'European,' so as not to limit the range of its future activities. The academic field of Asian Studies in Europe was not only fragmented, but it remained fairly orientalist in its general outlook. The founding director of the institute, Wim Stokhof, understood that stressing the contemporaneity of Asia, especially in the post-Cold War context, was paramount for the realization of the ambition to become a facilitator for Asian Studies worldwide.

We were immediately gripped by the vibe of setting up such a new innovative institute. We all worked overtime. Very quickly, we established contacts throughout all Europe and, more importantly, amongst the large variety of institutes and organisations in Asia. Research programmes were soon set up which attracted talented fellows to join

IIAS. We were regarded by our colleagues as the new kid on the block. The results of these feverish few years were soon recognised by a highly positive evaluation report produced by an independent international review committee in 1999. Its conclusion gives a good idea of IIAS' burgeoning activities in the first five years of its existence and of its newly acknowledged role in the academic landscape:

"The committee [considers that the new] institute [has] attained a unique facilitating and informing role for Asian Studies in general, establishing national and international scholarly networks that are without parallel, both in institutional and intellectual terms. Its *IIAS Newsletter*, which contains information on all aspects of Asian Studies and has a circulation of almost 20,000 copies, is widely read and acknowledged as the only information vehicle of its kind. The IIAS has also pioneered new modes of dissemination via the World Wide Web."<sup>1</sup>

Paul van der Velde,  
IIAS, The Netherlands

## Notes

- 1 Fox, James J., Carol Gluck, and Om Prakash. 1999. *Report of International Committee Evaluation on The International Institute for Asian Studies*.



Fig. 1 (above): Cover of the report *Baby Krishna*, produced by a committee headed by Frits Staal in the early 1990s. (Image from *IIAS Newsletter*, issue #1, p. 3)

Fig. 2 (below left): Cover of the report *Baby Krishna in the Delta*, which recommended the establishment of a European Institute for Asian Studies. (Image from *IIAS Newsletter*, issue #1, p. 3)

Fig. 3 (below right): Programme of the official opening of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) on October 13, 1993. (Image from *IIAS Newsletter*, issue #1, p. 1)







## Rapenburg 59: The Historic Home of IIAS

Erica van Bentem

Located at the side of Leiden's most beautiful city canal, the Rapenburg 59 building has housed the headquarters of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) since 2008. The office of IIAS, built in the 17th century, is located on a corner at the end of a row of historic buildings, and it is directly adjacent to the neighboring house. The facade overlooks the Rapenburg canal, and on the right a narrow alley, the Doelensteeg, leads to the back of the building. Here one finds a small, enclosed – almost secret – garden behind a brick wall. The wall, which is protected by buttresses in the inner garden, has been designated a monument by the municipality of Leiden.<sup>1</sup>

On the side of the Doelensteeg, the window of a sunken cellar is visible. The basement is still in its somewhat eerie original condition; a stone staircase leads down to the cellar with the shape of a barrel vault.

The office building has an L-shaped floor plan. Three building layers are visible at the front with a number of wall anchors on each floor beam. A cornice over the entire width is visible at the top and above the cornice is a rectangular dormer window. The hipped roof, visible from the Doelensteeg, is placed over the front two parts of the house and covered with gray Dutch tiles.<sup>2</sup>

The facade has an asymmetrical composition. On the ground floor, the front door is placed on the left and the roof slopes more towards the right. The facade, with a natural stone plinth, is built in a small red brick, size 'Triples' (18 cm). Visitors to the IIAS office must enter the building through a very heavy oak door. Two wooden frames in the form of natural stone columns frame the door and the skylight, above which a stone roof is placed. Behind this is a stretch that makes it seem as if the shape of the door frame used to be lower and perhaps smaller. The Empire sash windows on the first and second floors date from the early 19th century, and these are two panes wide

and three high. They consist of a lower window and a fanlight.<sup>3</sup> Masked keystones are visible above the windows of the first and second floors. After construction, the building received a stepped gable, which was later replaced by the straight cornice.<sup>4</sup> The building has only a few ornaments, and hardly any iconographic language has been used compared to neighboring buildings. The most eye-catching elements are the monumental front door and the masked keystones above the windows.<sup>5</sup>

But perhaps even more interesting than the appearance of the building are the historical residents. The architect is unknown, but it is known that the building

was sold in 1517 to Philips van der Laan, who resold it to Jacob Florisz van Montfoort in 1544. This Jacob Florisz van Montfoort was a brick maker and not without means and prestige, as was his wife, Dirckje Dircks Boelens van Lindenberg, was the daughter of an Amsterdam mayor. Their importance is also apparent from the location of their graves, which are still located in the Academy Building at Rapenburg 73, the former White Nunnery.<sup>6</sup> In 1564 their son, Dirck Jacobszn. inherited the place that extends

Fig. 1 (above): The façade of IIAS's office at Rapenburg 59. (Artwork by Xiaolan Lin [Instagram: @xiaolanlan65], 2023)



over Rapenburg 59-61. Because of his origin and wealth, Dirck Jacobszn. belongs to the regent class in Leiden. And this comes to full fruition when William of Orange (1533-1584) – founder of the House of Orange-Nassau and leader of the Dutch revolt against the Spanish in 1568 – stays with him in 1574. He appoints Dirck Jacobszn. mayor of Leiden. One year later, William of Orange gives the city of Leiden a university. Leiden University, the oldest university in the Netherlands, was founded on February 8, 1575.

During its long history, the building has had many owners, often associated with Leiden University. Between 1692 and 1730, it became a student hostel called “The Prince of Brandenburg,” where students paid 140 euros per year for a room.<sup>7</sup> In 1957, the building was purchased by Leiden University for the Faculty of Sociology.<sup>8</sup> And here at Rapenburg 59, almost 400 years after her ancestor William of Orange had visited the place, Princess Beatrix, former Queen of the Netherlands, found her study room in the conservatory. Between 1956 and 1961, during her studies, she looked out over the enclosed garden between the walls of Rapenburg 59 and prepared herself for her reign.

The building that now houses IIAS breathes the history of more than 400 years, and there is of course much more to tell about this period. Some stories have already been uncovered, but many others are still in the stones waiting to be revealed.

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Notes

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- 2 Stenvert, R. en G. van Tussenbroek. 2015. *Inleiding in de Bouwhistorie*. Utrecht: Matrijs, p. 64.
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Fig. 2 (below): The back garden of IIAS's office at Rapenburg 59. (Artwork by Xiaolan Lin [Instagram: @xiaolanlan65], 2023)



Figures 3-6: Architectural and interior views of the IIAS office at Rapenburg 59, Leiden. (Figure 4 courtesy of the author, 2017; All other photos courtesy of IIAS.)





# Coordinating Provisional Communities

Laura Erber

Conviviality at IIAS is not merely a pro forma word. Rather, it is a reality in permanent construction. Naturally, the communality of the space is brought about by a shared background: all fellows are living in a strange country, in a transitory situation; some are already more professionally established but most are still on the move, dealing with a fast and ever-changing, highly-challenging academic scenario.

From the position of participant observer, I am increasingly interested in understanding the nature of the bonds and exchanges of transient communities, where knowledge and everyday living are inextricably intertwined. It is a pleasure to see that, in the texts that make up this commemorative dossier, some fellows have chosen to write their testimonies jointly, thus translating the dimensions of sharing and collaboration which we so value, and which is not always easy to develop in the academic environment – highly competitive and often refractory to spontaneous dialogues.

After this first year as the Fellowship Coordinator, it's more clear to me that one of my main tasks is to carefully listen to and understand each researcher – their unique demands, frustrations, and expectations.

As the coordinator of a programme for researchers involved in Asian Studies, I find that, despite all the critical perspectives one can put forth against Area Studies, the need for ever-deeper knowledge and experience of places and peoples achieved through informed discourse will not die out, and it is essential to the fostering of knowledge on global dynamics on a consistent basis. Place-specific knowledge is still very much needed. But, if it is to succeed, a fellowship programme like ours must indeed bring out – through the fellows and activities – the many disciplines that contribute to Area Studies – historians, philologists, anthropologists, and geographers, as well as literature, art, and culture specialists.

In the case of IIAS, this ephemeral community which lies at the heart of every fellowship is not guided by a false promise or by the idyllic scenario of living together, nor is it precisely a community that adheres to an edifying ethos. While knowledge is being built, we also find instances of deconstruction, questionings of and discussions about the ways of doing research and what it means to be a researcher today, given the demands

of the academic market. In a way, this community's ideal is to always envision a wide spectrum of possibilities, ranging from full and total integration into the academic system as it stands today, to the creation of alternatives and new areas that broaden one's understanding of what knowledge production is and means in an extremely unequal and complex world.

We greatly value the quality of our fellows' academic and intellectual production, as well as their unique individual professional careers and engagements in activities outside the academic sphere. More and more, the objective of IIAS is to facilitate the full development of each fellow's career in a space conducive to academic and intellectual exchanges, a space that values a critical approach to hegemonic academic cultures and practices.

We hope that the fellows, coming from different fields and countries, and working with a wide range of theoretical-critical perspectives, will benefit from the cross-domain understanding of academia, and that, through the proposed group activities, they can renew or deepen their vision of the place and dynamics of Asian Studies

When people ask me what it is exactly that I do at IIAS, I like to say, jokingly but truthfully, that my job is to create and sustain transient communities. A community without leadership, devoid of masters or guides, in which bonds are forged and continuously transformed.

in today's world. This may well be easier said than done, but in practice it means creating real conditions that are conducive to dialogue between real people at a given moment in their lives.

Coordinating a programme like IIAS involves the art of listening and the art of promoting encounters, conviviality and conversations as an open-ended and unpredictable horizon of experiences. However, the hardest thing for someone in my position to deal with is precisely the provisional dimension of the programme. Yet this is also what makes the period of exchange much more free-flowing and intense, leading to results that may be difficult to express in and be computed by bureaucratic reports, but which, hopefully, will nevertheless leave a positive imprint in the intellectual and professional future of every person who was once part of the IIAS fellows community.

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## Fellowship Selection

As member and chair of the Academic Committee for the IIAS fellowship programme, it has been my privilege to be a part of a selection process that paves way for early and mid-career scholars to visit IIAS for research stays.

This fellowship programme attracts applicants from across the world, which is, in itself, a testimony of its reach via its work and in particular, its Newsletter. We are a small committee, and we bring our multi-disciplinary expertise from various facets of Asian studies to the table. A key challenge in our selection process has been to strike a balance – between disciplines, themes, areas, and indeed less represented geographies. For incoming fellows, IIAS offers a haven for social and intellectual camaraderie – a goal indeed, for the

fellowship programme – but also a particular milieu that the university town of Leiden itself provides, where a contained atmosphere for writing can be generated. Fellows have many opportunities for exchange with Leiden University's excellent Asian Studies scholars. Over the years, I have seen many long-term collaborations and friendships develop via such exchange. When I joined Leiden University back in 2012, I had the pleasure of meeting some of the incoming IIAS fellows, who have over the years, become dear friends, and I still recall the warmth such associations generated for us, as newcomers, both at the university and at IIAS. I have since witnessed fellows coming to IIAS with book projects – either writing monographs out of their PhD theses, or transforming their book projects, and taking them to new directions in dialogue with the transnational, and trans-disciplinary scopes that the IIAS milieu provides. I have also seen the long-term associations many of the fellows have built with the institute, particularly becoming parts of IIAS's global programs over the years. There is hence, a community building process, that the fellowship program plants the seed for.

It is a start, one could say, of potential associations – as much social as they are intellectual or institutional. Of course, at the core of the selection process is the uneasiness and regret even, of knowing that we are only selecting a mere handful of candidates from a rather exhaustive set of very good applications. It is often a narrow sliver of difference between the in and the out in that selection. Hence, as much as we joyously complete the long selection committee meetings with a happy selection, we are aware that we ideally would have welcomed more – and it is a particular pleasure when candidates we liked but couldn't select reapply – and indeed, we can welcome them in subsequent rounds. That institutional memory makes the selection process human – something that the cold professionalism of fellowship applications and such committees often lack.

Sanjukta Sunderason (University of Amsterdam) is the Chair of the Fellowship Selection Committee at IIAS.





## A Transformative Experience

Aditya Kiran Kakati

I began a fellowship at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden amid the global Covid-19 pandemic, in 2021. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the IIAS provided a unique environment for fostering a sense of community and connections. From potlucks, picnics and barbecues to stimulating conversations with the ghosts in the basement, my time at the IIAS was a transformative experience that surpassed all expectations.

Many of us fellows lived in the same building at Hogewoerd, Leiden's historical textile fabrication district in its glory days. During these initial months and under the duress of the pandemic, we organized potluck dinners, picnics, and barbecues, taking advantage of Spring weather. These gatherings provided a platform for sharing delicious food from different culinary cultures, peppered with discussions and, sometimes, even debates about culinary "exceptionalism." Breaking bread together, we exchanged stories, experiences, and ideas, finding solace and support in each other during the challenging times of the pandemic.

When the IIAS office became accessible again, fellows could find some regularity and routine for work. The IIAS building is by the canal on Rapenburg, providing a workspace with an old charm. I routinely encouraged other fellows to gather for lunch, especially in the cute back garden of the office, equipped with wooden benches and tables. I often found myself working late into the night. As most people left, I discovered an unexpected company in the form of ghosts in the basement. These spectral companions, remnants of the institute's long history, seemed imbued with a wealth of knowledge and stories. More recently, after my reassurances about the friendly spirits, the late-night working crew of fellows has grown in size. The serenity of late evening when the office bustle subsides and the yellow lighting in the old building creates a reflective atmosphere that I found beneficial for writing.

Being part of the IIAS community, I actively participated in the whole range of activities offered. One of the more significant engagements was at ICAS 2021, hosted online from Kyoto that year and remotely managed from Leiden. During the quiet summer months, I bonded with the organizing staff and provided moral support for their late-evening shifts. Apart from my panels at this conference, I helped set up a last-minute "break-in" panel on Afghanistan overnight, and the outcomes of that discussion were very productive. Beyond the confines of the IIAS, some fellows started to attend the annual Durga Puja celebrations in Den Haag. This celebration was a way to interact with the South Asian community in South Holland and, more importantly, partake of some delicious festival feasts to feed both bellies and nostalgia for home. Between hectic late-evening work routines, we organized several



Above: Fellows and others attend a puja in the Netherlands. (Photo courtesy of Aditya Kiran Kakati)

barbecues, including on New Year's eve, when another wave of the pandemic returned in the winter. Ever since, I have pushed to promote "winter barbecues". Local events such as "Leiden Onzet," or the city's wonderful weekly markets provided other rallying points for us. Such experiences created strong bonds among fellows and made the experience of living in the quaint and scenic Leiden even more wholesome.

The IIAS provided a home base for interdisciplinary research and creative exploration, providing a stable platform for pursuing intellectual and creative endeavors. Leiden University's vast library resources, various departments, and research centers where I presented in seminars have all provided a crucial milieu for me to develop intellectually, professionally, and personally.

My fellowship at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden during the pandemic was an unexpected journey. The IIAS created a vibrant and welcoming community that fostered connections, intellectual pursuits, and cultural immersion while providing a place for me to return to upon completion of my Swiss National Science Foundation postdoctoral mobility grant. Through shared meals and recipes, late-night conversations with spectral companions, active participation in various events, and the overall nurturing environment of the institute, my time at the IIAS became a transformative experience.



Left and below: Attending an "Inspirational Session" with other IIAS Fellows. (Photo courtesy of Wen Huang)

## Living and Reflecting in Leiden

Wen HUANG

Uncertainty has become the norm in life. After experiencing multiple lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I arrived at IIAS (International Institute for Asian Studies) as planned, where I felt warmth and hospitality after engaging in discussions with Director Philippe Peycam and Fellowship Coordinator Laura Erber. Throughout the years, I have been immersed in busyness, whether it was during my time in Boston or my visiting scholar period in Madison. My primary objective has always been to enhance the efficiency of resource allocation. However, in the field of technology, the deployment of big data and artificial intelligence has surpassed the effectiveness of human experience.

Discussions at IIAS have provided me with a greater comprehension of the primacy of life and the pursuit of a better existence. They have also emphasized the importance of effectively managing the relationship between development and stability, as well as the necessity of risk prevention and resolution. Each individual contributes the strengths and capabilities, viewing development from an existential perspective and to fulfill the potential of life.

At IIAS, I participated in various inspirational sessions, gaining a deeper understanding of broader, more complex, interdisciplinary, and cross-domain innovations. I also learned how cultural traditions shape and recreate themselves, and how the local social and cultural landscape is formed. As someone originating from the ethnic regions of southwestern China, I pondered on self-identity and future pursuits. While my current research combines geographical information systems in natural sciences with virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) for simulating cultural heritage tourism, my academic background remains rooted in anthropological fieldwork.



Right: Fellows and friends having a picnic. (Photo courtesy of Aditya Kiran Kakati)







Left: Inside rubber plantations with cattle, Bukulumba, South Sulawesi (Photograph courtesy of Iqra Anugrah, 2016)

## A Journey to IIAS

Iqra Anugrah

**M**y first encounter with the IIAS was through *The Newsletter*. I remembered back when I was in college, I read several research and fieldwork articles by Southeast Asianists published in it. I still remember reading two articles on Islam and politics in Indonesia by Okamoto Masaaki and Ken Miichi, two Japanese scholars of Southeast Asia. Since then, I have followed IIAS's activity and its many initiatives.

Fast forward to my time as a scholar in training during my PhD program at Northern Illinois University (NIU). My experience at NIU was kind of unique, since the push to prove myself as a "real" political scientist was there, but my colleagues and mentors also appreciated and encouraged those who still wanted to do the classic area studies research – deep fieldwork and archival

works, interdisciplinary thinking, theorizing in and through Asia, that sort of thing. Once again, IIAS made an appearance in my trajectory. I became aware of IIAS's book review series (then called as *New Asia Books*), the ICAS Conference, and the IIAS itself, including its fellowship program. I also contributed a book review for *New Books Asia* around that time.

Up until this point, my engagement with IIAS was still primarily dominated by technical concerns.

After I embarked on a career as an itinerant (non-tenure) scholar with ties to the Indonesian activist scene, I naturally searched for options, for jobs that would allow me to keep myself financially afloat while doing my research. Then IIAS appeared as a natural option. I applied for a 10-month IIAS fellowship in 2022 and was notified in December of the same year that I was selected as one of the fellows. I was elated!

I have come a long way in my career since my starting point as a clueless

yet curious undergraduate student. The intellectual and social milieus of Asian Studies community, in which IIAS plays a significant part, have facilitated my growth, both personally and professionally. Okamoto Masaaki and Ken Miichi, scholars whose writings in *The Newsletter* I read as an undergrad, have both become my colleagues and mentors. My stay at IIAS so far has proved my impression of IIAS as a place to do social science and humanities research beyond the sometimes-suffocating pressure of professionalization in our respective disciplines (winking curiously at my political science colleagues). This is something that I never imagined possible to experience as a political nerd from Indonesia for whom English is a third language.

I am happy that my experimental project as a recovering political scientist-turned-theorist found a place at IIAS. Finding a group of colleagues who are interested in my weird project – a political

theory of competing visions and forces of conservatisms in Indonesia (anti-communist intellectuals, neoliberal economists, and Islamist activists and celebrities) – is indeed encouraging. The eclectic formats for scholarship outputs and deliveries that IIAS expects from its fellows make my intersection with the institute fruitful. My IIAS affiliation had allowed me to give a talk on the specter of Edmund Burke in Indonesian conservative statecraft vision and discuss Trump's right-wing populism with colleagues. The abundance of sandwiches, cakes, and snacks at the institute's events and kitchen helps a lot too.

I hope that my remaining stay at IIAS will be productive (which will give me longer time to enjoy Dutch *kaas* and *brood*) and the Institute remains committed to the promotion of interdisciplinary, innovative, and rigorous Asian Studies amidst the pressure of neoliberalism and parochial professionalization on today's academia. Three cheers for IIAS!

## Fostering New Communities and Perspectives

Jean-Thomas Martelli

**I**IAS is an institution instrumental in bringing together scholars from different horizons. Usually, what 'binds' a group intellectually is either a common disciplinary focus or a similar geographical interest. The IIAS is neither of those: its originality is to connect researchers on the basis of different specializations tied together by a larger areal cohesiveness that goes far beyond traditional decoupages of Asia: China, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia ...

As a result, I learned about parallel and divergent political processes beyond the traditional 'referent' of the West. Although I sometimes disagreed with my colleagues on what the substantive nature of a de-colonial practice was, I thought that intra-Asia comparisons carried the potential of such *de*. By toning down

compulsory references to socio-political processes in Europe and North America, our discussions asserted the standing of our Global South-centered fieldworks and artistic practices. Notwithstanding that some 'Asian' realities are in part derivatives of what happens elsewhere, our scholarly engagements converged and humbly contributed to establishing the primacy of a de-Western perspective.

I thank the IIAS for providing researchers with the resources they need to transition into more stable academic jobs. The IIAS is a beacon of hope for a more sensible approach to trans-disciplinary studies grounded in Asian spaces, and I am confident that through the diverse and impactful publications of your fellows you will continue to make significant contributions in that direction. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.



Above: Fellows enjoying a winter market. (Photo courtesy of Aditya Kiran Kakati)



## Invitation to (Un)Learn

Lisa Richaud and Carmina Yu Untalan

What happens when institutions create spaces that tone down academic formality? Reflecting together on the past few months, this question seems to best capture our experience at IIAS. Picture a long table, with a bottle of wine and hummus sandwiches. Around it sits a bunch of people, reading Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* before they watch a Filipino movie, *Minsa'y Isang Gamu-gamu (Once a Moth)*. On the same table, they would read Dai Jinhua's caustic prose on the convergence between Mao-memorabilia and mass consumerism. Or translated short stories written by Indonesian-born Chinese authors, like Yuan Ni. With sparkling eyes and occasional laughter, they let ideas disrupt any rigid sense of time.

Doing away with formality is a shared desire in neoliberal academic institutions. We tend to assume that casualness would offset the gut-wrenching feeling that comes with expressing ourselves in a hierarchical space. Too often, however, we fail to achieve that promise of comfort. And worse, declared, if not imposed, casualness sometimes brings the opposite: it reproduces hierarchies, fuels our sense of awkwardness, or deepens our lack of confidence. Rather than the coveted figure of the slick public intellectual, we become the quintessential type of "affect aliens," to borrow Sara Ahmed's apt term (remember that time when you were fortunately funded to attend a major academic conference, in a five-star hotel in California, only to find yourself seeking comfort in the loneliness of a corner,

wondering how the rest could have learned to master the repertoire of "acting as if"?)

Being socialized in an environment that purports an adaptable façade, is it even possible to take casualness beyond its prescribed, codified form, especially among young scholars (read: precarious nomads who are pressured to publish alongside paying the bills and worrying about visas)? The IIAS 'Inspirational Sessions' opened a space for possibility. The instruction was simple: in each session, a fellow is asked to share any piece of work, be it literary or visual, which shaped his or her trajectory. Initially, skepticism was on board for some of us. Is this yet another stage for adjusting our academic selves in front of others feigning interest? Despite the pessimism, we soon realized that copresence among fellows can relieve us from the anxiety of

"footing" in conversations. Collectively, we reinvent the frame of discussion. Disagreement and tension arise without disrupting conviviality. We may enter the room remotely interested, but curiosity organically develops, taking precedence over our egos. Rather than a mere presentation, it is an invitation to be surprised. No need for a corner here.

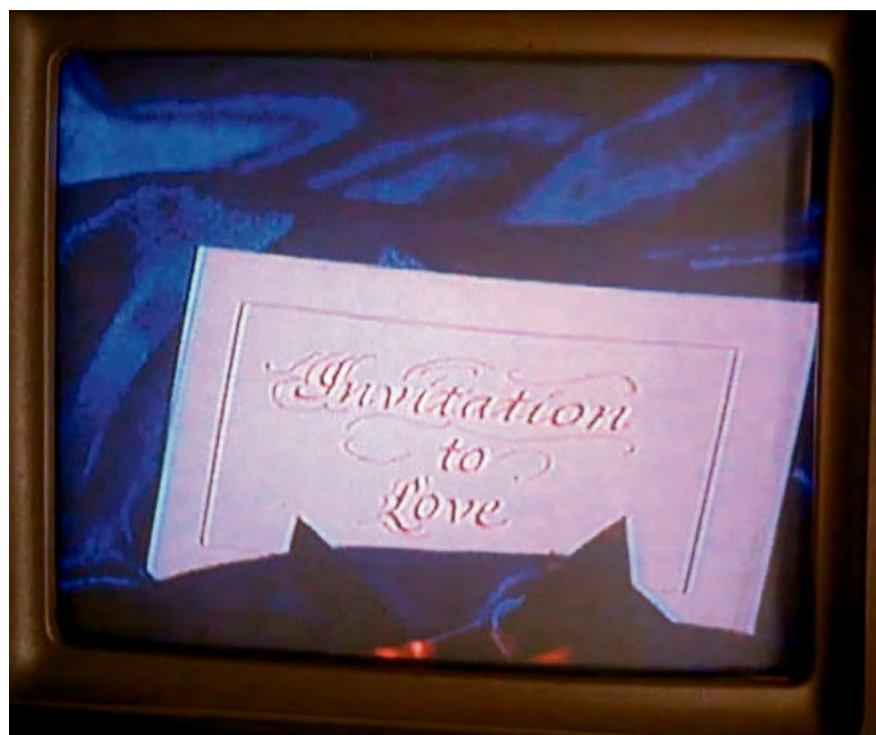
Casualness of this kind expands – from discussions in lecture rooms, to walks along the canals, to sandwich-nibbling at Hortus, to Texels drinking at Café de L'Espérance. The next morning, the conversations make their way back within the walls of Rapenburg 59. We begin to excavate, on shared grounds, the unspoken truths of academic life without fear of embarrassment. Allow us a few examples: the expectations of what it would be like to be in a European institution,

coming from a non-Western background; the perils of thinking along binary categories; freely expressing our disillusionment toward the imperatives of becoming a "promotional intellectual"; confessing the desire for conditions that would enable us to just even imagine living a conventional life, instead of pretending that precarious academic mobility is a normal way to live. In these moments, the organic flow of talk collapses any sense of hierarchy and identity politics, allowing us to take pleasure in coming up with ideas among, and within ourselves. All this, without the pressure to publicize our intimacy.

Our enthusiasm might raise eyebrows. You could be asking, isn't the pleasure derived from casual discussions among peers the new false consciousness? Aren't we falling into the trap of romanticizing our accumulated exhaustion? We, as young scholars, are prone to justify the unjustifiable – how we have to bear through precarity for that elusive tenure. Cultural studies scholar Lauren Berlant calls this "cruel optimism," the attachment to objects that structural dynamics have rendered unattainable but which keeps on providing a sense of belonging. Truth be told, we might not be getting closer to the next step – from the immediate task of finishing a chapter, to getting a more stable position. Yet, even as a "reprieve, not a repair," to paraphrase Berlant, our sense is that such moments of togetherness are invaluable. We even dare say that our reinvention of academic sociality has equipped us better to confront the realities of uncertainty.

Through 'Inspirational Sessions,' we realized that institutions, as the routinization of practices, have not lost all capacity to produce good habits of conviviality that require minimal attunement. So when weeks go by without these Sessions, we, the "affect aliens," actually look forward to the next.

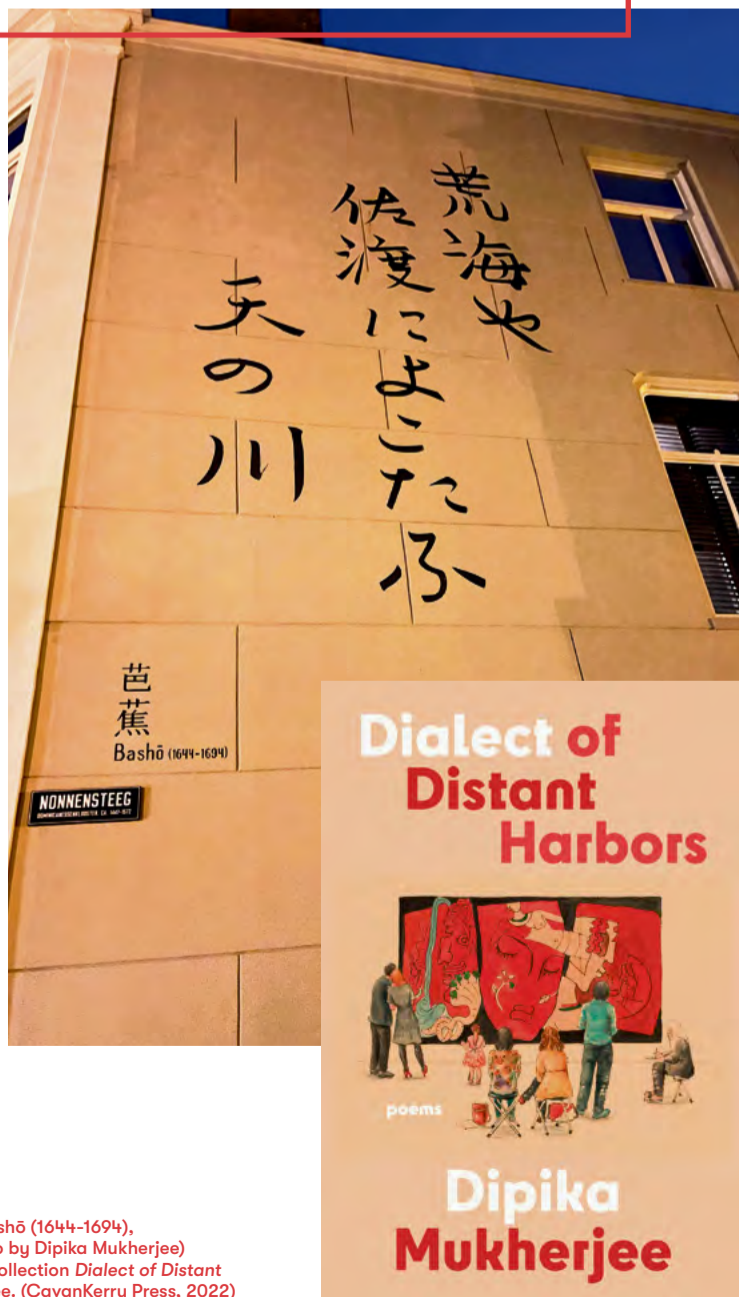
Simply put, we are so glad, thankful, [insert any relevant social media terminology] to be part of this #academicfriendship.



Above: Still from the television show *Twin Peaks* depicting the fictional soap opera *Invitation To Love*.

## Academic Work and Creative Writing

Dipika Mukherjee



Above: Poem by Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), Nonnensteeg, Leiden (Photo by Dipika Mukherjee)  
Inset: Cover of the poetry collection *Dialect of Distant Harbors* by Dipika Mukherjee. (CavanKerry Press, 2022)

Back in 2007, while on a fellowship at the International Institute of Asian Studies in Leiden, I used to frequent the Kern Library with its extensive collection on Indology. This library has now been moved and merged into the main University of Leiden Building. In 2007, however, it was housed at the Nonnensteeg, where the nuns once prayed in this oasis of tranquility in the middle of a botanical garden. Iron trellised staircases led to a maze of books, the laden shelves bordered by ancient Tibetan tankhas displayed on the walls.

In this magical treasure house, I chanced upon my first sari-covered book, published by the Writers Workshop in Calcutta. I was astonished by the beauty of the book; the jewel-bright sari cover bordered by a faint line of green and white embroidery stood out from the other beige and bland spines in a line. Inside the cover, a table of contents written in flowing calligraphic script. I recognized at once that although this book was exceptionally beautiful, it was also rough around the edges, the paper thinner than usual. I would later learn that these books had been hand-printed and handcrafted since 1958, when the press had been founded by a visionary P. Lal in Calcutta (now Kolkata), who would go on to publish the early works of the towering figures of Indian writing in English like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Ruskin Bond, A K Ramanujan, Adil Jussawalla, Keki Daruwalla, Jayanta Mahapatra, Meena Alexander, Agha Shahid Ali, Chitra Divakaruni, and Vikram Seth, among others.

I immediately wrote to P. Lal. He wrote back, inviting me to submit my work. He explained that the criteria for selection were high imaginative awareness and mature technique. With the arrogance of a newbie writer with a smattering of poetry and prose published in journals but no books to my name, I decided that I would not submit my work to a small publishing house in India where English was a second language, but

aim for a much larger readership. In 2003, I had been a resident at Centrum in Port Townsend, within walking distance of the Copper Canyon Press, and I had fallen in love with the Copper Canyon broadsides and the poetry of Reetika Vazirani. I decided to submit my work exclusively to North American and British publishers.

I was lucky with my first poetry chapbook, *The Palimpsest of Exile*. It was picked up by Rubicon Press in Canada in 2009 and my editor, an acclaimed poet in her own right, treated my inchoate words with a love that bordered on reverence. The Japanese flyleaf matched the flower on the cover exactly, and the finished product was exquisite.

But I kept seeing the Writers Workshop books everywhere, and delighting in their difference. As the press went into its sixth decade of existence, I finally realized the value of being a part of the literary history of India, and started the process of qualifying for my own handloom sari-bound volume of poetry, with exquisite calligraphy inside. P Lal had passed on, but his son, Ananda, published *The Third Glass of Wine* in 2015.

Leiden, in a lot of ways, laid the seeds for the publication of my books of poetry as well as my works of prose. It is an old and erudite city filled with wall poems in many languages. The poem painted on the wall outside my office ended with *There's no time. Or is there nothing but time?* This is an ancient town that looks exactly the same in the paintings from the seventeenth and eighteenth century that hang in the museums; a city so impossibly beautiful, so stilled in time, that it spoils you for other places. From my office at the Nonnensteeg, one window looked down into a narrow alley so picturesque that I had to research whether it was the same alley in Vermeer's famous painting (it wasn't).

Since 2007, I have been back to the IIAS multiple times, to complete an academic manuscript as well as talk about my creative writing. It is a place of unfettered inspiration, and may it always continue to be so.





Left: Fellows gathered together in the IIAS conference room for an "Inspirational Session." (Photo courtesy of Chiara Livio)

## Northern Italians in the Low Lands: Experiences as Gonda Fellows

Chiara Livio and Martina Palladino

During the academic year of 2022-2023, we, Martina Palladino and Chiara Livio, were beneficiaries of the Gonda Fellowship at the International Institute for Asian Studies. The fellowship, granted by the J. Gonda Foundation, is dedicated to supporting the scholarly study of Sanskrit, other Indian languages and literature, and Indian cultural history. As post-doctorate-level scholars, we were selected to spend six months at IIAS to conduct our research projects.

Upon our arrival at the IIAS, Martina was engaged in a study on the *Śākadvipya Brāhmaṇas* in India. Her research was focused on the religious, cultural, and linguistic aspects of this under-studied Brahmanical group, which claims Iranian origins. Chiara was involved in an examination of *Mankha's Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* and its commentary by Jonarāja, which underlines the gaps in existing scholarship of the poem's manuscript tradition.

A shared bond emerged immediately from our common Italian roots. Interestingly enough, we were both born in the North of Italy, Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy, and we had the same academic interests in Italy. However, we never crossed paths despite the intricate web of Italian academia. The first time we met at the IIAS, over a cup of coffee in early January, it was not surprising to find out that we had friends in common, and that we both had been to Leiden before, the cradle of Sanskrit studies in the Netherlands.

As our time at IIAS progressed, we soon realized that the fellowship offered more than just a platform for academic research, as it soon became an experience that blurred the lines between the professional and the personal. On the one hand, our work at IIAS and Leiden University was characterized

by a blend of independent research, group discussions, and collaborative reading groups on Sanskrit texts. On the other hand, shared meals and coffee breaks in the IIAS kitchen gave us time for discussions and interactions with our then colleagues Jean-Thomas, Lisa, Mina, Aditya, Mariko, Aryo, and Soheb. With their backgrounds in political science and anthropology, they brought fresh perspectives that enriched our own philological studies. With their friendly and creative personalities, they made our stay at the institute very enjoyable and memorable.

A special note of gratitude is owed to Laura, our fellowship coordinator. Her role extended beyond administrative duties. She invested time and effort into understanding us not just as researchers but as individuals, fostering a sense of personal connection within the academic setting by attending our lectures and showing interest in our academic enterprises.

Reflecting on our time at IIAS, we recognize how significantly it underscored the importance of collaboration and shared learning in academia, which is often overshadowed by competition and individualism. Martina is now off to the University of Ghent, where she continues her academic career as a postdoctoral fellow, whereas Chiara is working at Utrecht University Library as an advisor for the publishing support department. We both took with us the synergistic atmosphere that IIAS inspired us to embrace, and the sweet memory of our time in Leiden.

## Exchange and Urban Studies at IIAS

Rohit Negi

I spent three wonderful months at IIAS from March to June 2014, as part of the exchanges under the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) program. These were extremely productive months, getting to meet several scholars in residence, and deepening my relationships with those I already knew, all while exploring the Netherlands. While there were a couple of other UKNA scholars at IIAS with whom I shared substantial interests, the diversity of areas that fellows pursue meant that conversations were just as fascinating as they were enlightening. I remember learning about the music of Northeast Asia, Christianity in Sri Lanka, and the Chinese diaspora in South Africa from some of these excellent fellows.

As a short-term Leiden resident, I came to appreciate its past, urban form, architecture, and, of course, its museums. Speaking of the latter, one of the IIAS colleagues generously loaned me their Dutch Museum Pass, and I could use it to visit museums not only in Leiden but also Amsterdam and Utrecht. Since the Netherlands is a (relatively) small country that is well-connected by its train system, Leiden is a convenient launchpad to explore its different regions. One of my favorite memories of the summer was convincing a Japanese IIAS fellow to accompany me to a field hockey game that India was to play



Above: Fellows and colleagues gather for a drink beside the canals of Leiden. (Photo courtesy of Masaya Shishikura)

against Belgium, in a village on the other end of the country. The poor fellow did not quite know what field hockey was, let alone having ever watched a game, but was a good sport to come anyway. We ended up journeying by multiple trains, exploring the beautiful village, witnessing a close game, and chatting with the Indian team players and coaches.

On the academic front, I spent my time at IIAS working on a literature review for an area (urban ecology of Delhi) that I was just

about dipping my toes into. The review has been extremely valuable; contributing not only to research work, but also feeding into teaching. My Urban Environment course at Ambedkar has since then had a much stronger ecological component, much to the appreciation of students. I also had the opportunity to present the work towards the end of the visit at the Delft University of Technology.

Over the years, many of the relationships forged during that time have only been

strengthened. I have come to participate in and contribute to IIAS initiatives such as Asian Studies in Africa, ICAS, and Humanities across Borders, and I look forward to continuing these collaborations in the coming years. Congratulations to IIAS on its 30th anniversary and all the best for what is to come.

Rohit Negi  
Associate Professor,  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi





Left: The office of the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (FMSH) in Paris, France. (Photo courtesy of the authors.)

## The IIAS-FMSH Short-Term Intra-European Fellowship Program

Marta Craveri and Fabiana Di Paola

Created in 1963 by the historian Fernand Braudel, the *Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* (FMSH) continues the original project, while adapting it to contemporary circumstances. The Fondation supports innovative and international research in humanities and social sciences, and it disseminates knowledge to the greatest number of people in order to respond to the major challenges facing our society. By supporting nearly 400 researchers from around the world each year and ensuring the

dissemination of a wide range of scientific resources, the FMSH is the largest humanities and social sciences foundation in France.

The FMSH has established a successful partnership with IIAS and since 2019, the IIAS-FMSH program is open to IIAS fellows whose work will benefit from spending a short-term residency in Paris. Selected IIAS fellows are hosted by the Fondation for a period of two months in the heart of Paris. We offer accommodation in the central

Maison Suger, networking opportunities, exposure with the French academia in Asian and other area studies, publishing services, access to academic libraries such as the *Bulac* with one of the richest collections on languages and civilizations that are not those of the Western world, as well as administrative support.

Thanks to the high-level profile of invited fellows from IIAS, the program has equally benefited the French research community of Asian Studies and beyond, which includes well-known institutions such as *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales*, *Université de Paris*, *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* and *Collège de France*. Designed to further enhance the intra-European circulation of researchers in Asian Studies, the IIAS-FMSH partnership contributes to decompartmentalizing knowledge and multiplying perspectives to enrich the field of knowledge.

Marta Craveri, FMSH, France  
Fabiana Di Paola, FMSH, France

"The FMSH provided an excellent milieu to connect with the wider academic community in Paris through South Asian, Himalayan, and Burma/Southeast Asian research centers, where I presented papers and attended seminars. It has been a good base for me to connect with archives and museums for research materials. At the FMSH, I could meet scholars beyond Asian Studies, working on ethnomusicology in Northern Africa or Eurasian Semiotics, which was refreshing. Finally, the lovely FMSH staff, working facilities, and accommodation, all located in the heart of Paris, have made the experience of work and research here very pleasurable."

—Aditya Kiran Kakati, Associate Research Fellow, International Institute for Asian Studies, IIAS, Leiden and FMSH 2023 Research Fellow. He is also Early-Postdoctoral Mobility Fellow, Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and SOAS, London University.

## Doing Museum Studies with IIAS

Mariko Murata

I am writing this short contribution in Turin, Italy. I am visiting for 16 days to work with the Museum of Oriental Art and University of Turin, as part of a collaboration with the IIAS. While the IIAS regularly develops collaborations and networks with global institutions, this is the first time working with these particular ones. While I am honoured to be the very first 'delegate', I also feel an immense sense of responsibility.

I have been a Fellow at the IIAS for almost nine months. This year, I took a sabbatical from the university I am affiliated to. The leave gave me the opportunity to concentrate on my research, and I was accepted at the IIAS for a fellowship (as a senior researcher without a stipend). Since my arrival in Leiden last October, I have come to appreciate the excellent research and networking opportunities at the IIAS.

From day one, I felt comfortable due to its welcoming and open atmosphere. I enjoy the company of other Fellows in discussions and debates (or simply chats). We learn about others' work through conversations and 'Inspiration Sessions' that are held on a frequent basis. In fact, I feel that I knew nothing about Asia's dynamics earlier.

In addition, the environment at the IIAS and the process of constantly rediscovering Asia both help me to imagine the reality through both the Western and non-Western contexts, which is the relationship that I am concentrating on at the moment.

My research focuses on the issue of 'museums and decolonisation'. Here, I use the term 'decolonisation' in the broadest sense. Decolonisation not only concerns colonialism but also the decentring of Eurocentric views and narratives and deconstruction of the gaze towards the Other. The Netherlands is

the ideal location for me to pursue this topic as Dutch museums are now trying to address this problem using various approaches.

A major topic concerning decolonisation is the issue of repatriation. This is already underway in several museums in the Netherlands, and those who have not started it state that they will return the objects if the evidence of the loot is confirmed. The issue of restitution is critical. However, my primary focus is on how museums approach the issue through their exhibits and programs involving the public. Exhibits and programs are a means of communication; by engaging in decolonisation through the museums' daily activities, they could open up conversations with the wider (and global) public and receive both positive and negative responses.

Museums are colonial institutions in origin. This coloniality cannot be easily deconstructed as it is deeply enmeshed in modern museum systems. Therefore, it is even more crucial for museums, that also identify themselves as places for learning, to challenge and question their own institutions and mediate discussions.

I typically conduct my research in two ways. One method is to observe the museum by visiting as part of the general public.

Investigating the museum from visitors' eyes can help capture several things, from subtle changes to drastic transformations, in an unbiased manner. Another method is conducting fieldwork and interviews with the museum. The IIAS and its collaborators provided me with invaluable opportunities to work in/with the museum.

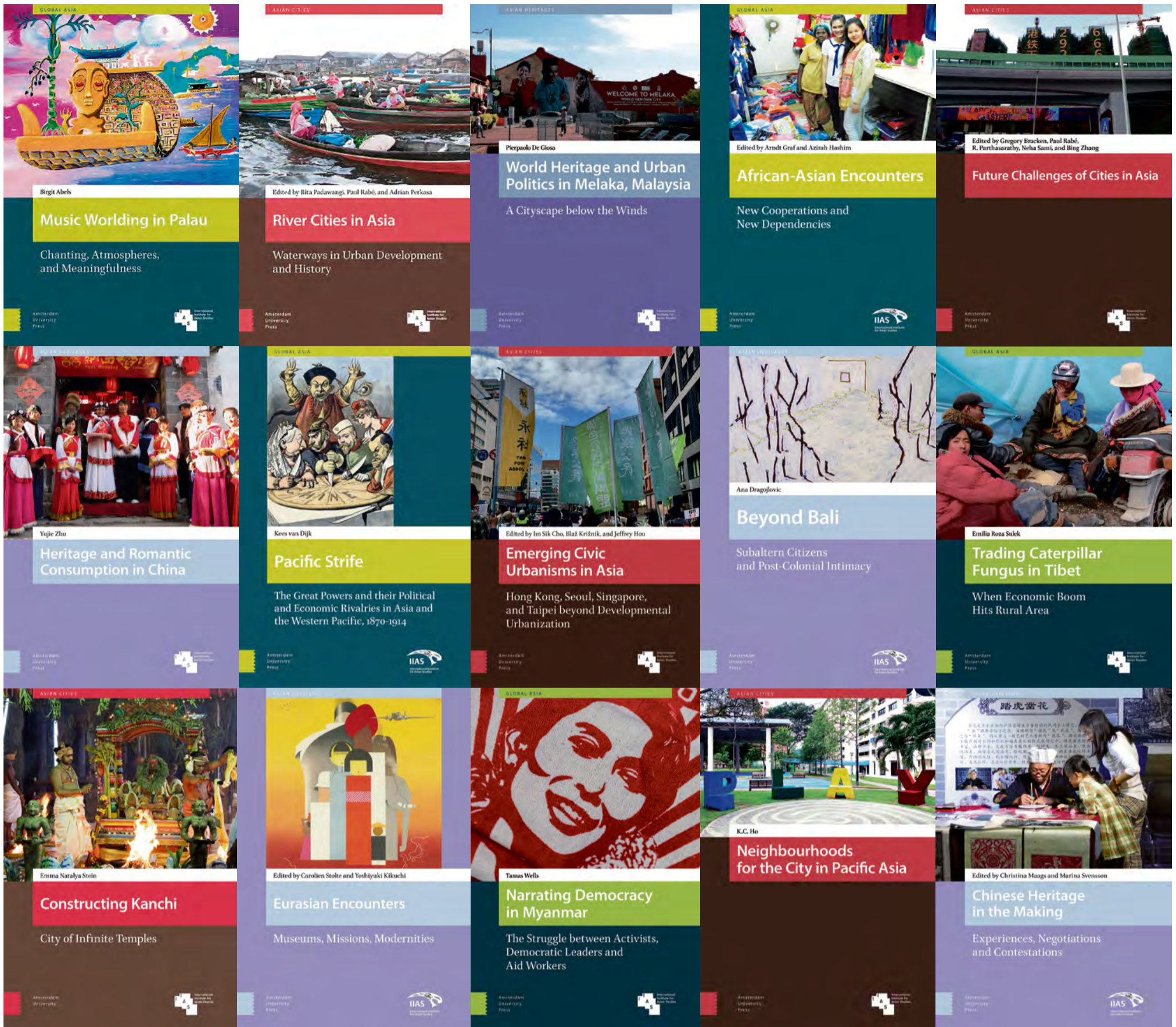
The conventional approach is being discontinued at the Museum of Oriental Art in Turin. It appointed a new director last year, and his expertise in commissioning artworks, programs, and performances of international artists has shed new light on the collections and exhibits, subtly sliding the narrative and gaze that were firmly set upon them. Here, the museum space mediates the process of deconstructing its own coloniality and/or Orientalism. While noticing this new direction, I realized why the museum accepted me when it knew of my critical observations on museums. I hope that my perspective and opinion as an outsider will 'help' it reidentify and understand itself better.

The Italian case undoubtedly adds another perspective to my research in the Netherlands. As I process all that I have seen, I am still trying to observe as much as possible during my stint at the IIAS.



The Museum of Oriental Art (MAO) in Turin, Italy (left) along with (right) a guided tour by the educator in the Japanese gallery of the Museum. (Photos courtesy of Mariko Murata, 2023)





# Book Publications at IIAS

Mary Lynn van Dijk

It is with pride that I present the following essays from Inge Klompmakers, Commissioning Editor for Asian Studies and the four IIAS book series at Amsterdam University Press; Paul van der Velde, who was until recently the ICAS General Secretary and Editor of the IIAS and ICAS Publications Series, as well as the initiator of *The Newsletter*; Tak-Wing Ngo, Series Editor of the Global Asia book series at IIAS; and Alex McKay, co-editor of the volume *The Early 20th Century Resurgence of the Buddhist World in Central Asia*.

It has been great working with Inge, who is our Commissioning Editor at Amsterdam University Press. Her efforts on our four IIAS-AUP series continue to strengthen every book that we publish.

Since January 2013 until he retired in late 2022, I worked with Paul closely on IIAS's publications program. Although I have been working in publishing since November 1999, Paul has taught me a lot about publishing

books, including how to work more effectively with authors, reviewers, and editors.

It has always been a pleasant, respectful, and smooth-running relationship working with Tak-Wing on the manuscripts for the Global Asia series, from submission to publication.

I have also had the pleasure to work with Alex on the edited volume, which was released as part of the Global Asia series.

In each of their essays, they relate their experiences working for or with IIAS.

It is my hope that with these essays, *The Newsletter's* readers will be able to get that rare inside view of what it has been like to be part of/connected with IIAS all these years, particularly from four people who have been involved in its book publications.

Mary Lynn van Dijk  
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## 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.

Inge Klompmakers  
Amsterdam University Press,  
The Netherlands



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).

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 chose 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.<sup>1</sup>

### 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.



## The Early Years of IIAS and its Newsletter: A Memoir

Alex McKay

Almost exactly two years after the official opening of IIAS on October 13, 1993, I arrived in Leiden to take up a Leverhulme Trust (U.K.) post-doctoral fellowship at the institute. I found a small apartment a few doors from the imposing early 16th-century building that housed the IIAS entrance on Nonnensteeg and began an association with IIAS that has never really ended. It was a time in which academia was being transformed by the arrival of the internet, and my first task was to master the new technology of email, which led naturally into a wider exploration of that extraordinary new research resource.

As a post-doctoral institute, the academic atmosphere at IIAS was very different to that of a university. A coterie of freshly-endowed doctorate holders from a variety of nations pursued their own research interests free of any particular duties or requirements. IIAS Director (1993-2006) Professor Wim Stokhof was a dynamic leader and an innovative and even relentless promoter of Asian Studies. He was also strongly supportive of the ambitions of his shifting cast of research fellows. He freely allocated funding for conferences and workshops and was, above all, prepared to give his people – both staff and fellows – opportunity. Some fellows took full advantage of that opportunity, arriving early at their desks and leaving only when the building closed at night, producing books and articles and building their careers and disciplines. Other fellows squandered the chance, for there were many distractions in Leiden. Aside from the many museums and galleries, it was always tempting to wander the cobbled streets and parks alongside the concentric rings of canals, or to pause and while away the time at the bars and coffee shops scattered along the way.

Lunch was provided for the fellows, with the aim of encouraging conversations that would lead to the cross-fertilisation of ideas and disciplines. The extent to which

that occurred was perhaps disappointing, with recent doctorates tending to be firmly wedded to their particular approaches and methodologies. The extraordinary range of subjects under study also made common ground hard to find, except perhaps for agreement over the most congenial cafes and bars. But some lasting contacts and friendships were made, and many seeds eventually bore fruit.

In the years that followed there were a number of wider IIAS initiatives that enjoyed considerable impact in the field of Asian Studies. Not the least of these was the International Convention of Asian Studies (ICAS), the first meeting of which was held near Leiden in 1998 and out of which developed the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) and later the Dissertation Prize. Others included such forums as ASEF (Asia-Europe Foundation) and ASEM (Asia Europe Meetings), as well as a series of publications by IIAS fellows, both in-house and later in partnership with Amsterdam University Press and Leiden University Presses. One particular initiative became central to the identity of IIAS: *The Newsletter*.

*The Newsletter*, originally named the *IIAS Newsletter*, was initially edited by Head of Publications Paul van der Velde, who took on many roles within the institute and went on to become the General Secretary of ICAS. Most recently he has published a memoir, *The Asian Studies Parade: Archival, Biographical, Institutional and Post Colonial Approaches* (Leiden University Press), which includes more detailed studies of the numerous initiatives in which he has been involved with IIAS and ICAS.

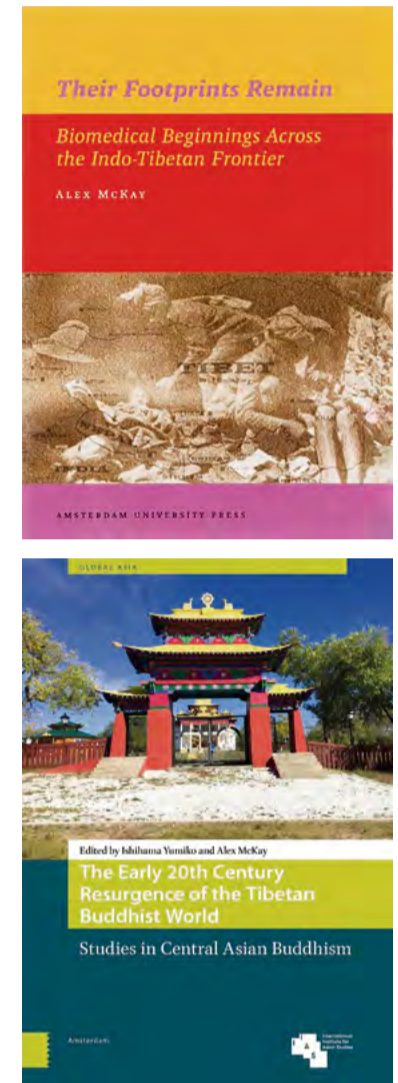
*The Newsletter* became essential reading for everyone in the Asian Studies field, with its mixture of news, articles, and illustrations filling the need for a publication that embraced every aspect of the field in an engaging manner. It enabled younger scholars to alert others to their concerns and research projects, provided an outlet

for more general or even provocative articles than those suitable for a specialist academic journal, and notified us of forthcoming conferences and publications. With the publication being free of charge, many an impoverished student, not least in Asia itself, was delighted to be able to add their name to the mailing list and feel themselves fully a part of the global community of scholars. By the time I joined IIAS, *The Newsletter* circulation was over 17,000. Before long I was able to assist its spread.

Heading to a conference in Budapest, at a time when Hungary was still emerging from the shadows of the Cold War, I helped IIAS staff at a booth they manned in the conference hall. The gathering had attracted a large number of Eastern European and Russian scholars to whom the free offering of a nice cotton conference bag containing the latest issue of *The Newsletter* initially seemed too good to be true. When they found the offer was genuine, I was mobbed by eager recipients, who subsequently contributed to the ever-increasing circulation of the publication! There can be few corners of the world which it has not reached.

IIAS has of course changed in its three decades of existence. Most obviously it has moved to a building on the Rapenburg, and Professor Philippe Peycam has succeeded Stokhof as Director. Several hundred scholars have worked there, and the field of Asian Studies has been transformed during that time. What Paul van der Velde has termed “the New Asia Scholar” has emerged as scholars of Asia throughout the world have come into day-to-day communication, but *The Newsletter* – whether online or in hard copy – has remained required reading. Long may it continue to be so!

Alex McKay  
Australia



Above: Cover of *Their Footprints Remain: Biomedical Beginnings Across the Indo-Tibetan Frontier* by Alex McKay, published in 2007 as part of the IIAS Publications Series with Amsterdam University Press.

Below: Cover of *The Early 20th Century Resurgence of the Tibetan Buddhist World*, co-edited by Ishihama Yumiko and Alex McKay in 2022 for the Global Asia series at IIAS/Amsterdam University Press.





The Newsletter publishes three issues per year, both digitally and in print. For a free subscription, visit <https://ias.us17.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5bda00a9569229289e9e2cd5c&id=e20ff6c969>.



# The Newsletter at 30: On Asia in the World

Paramita Paul and Benjamin Linder

**The Newsletter is IIAS's flagship journal, and it is the most widely read publication of its kind in Asian Studies. It is produced three times a year in print and online, and offers its authors and readers a critical forum in which to discuss and think about Asia.**

In 1993, *The Newsletter* started out with the aim to “create transparency into what is happening in the field of Asian Studies” (NL1, p. 1). We still aim to do so, but in the course of three decades, what this means has undergone several transformations. Importantly, *The Newsletter* has evolved in both content and function. What began as a tabloid for colleagues to share information on research, conferences, and publications has developed into a rich collection of substantial writings for a wide readership interested in Asia. Together with its digital platforms *The Blog* and *The Channel*, it offers insight into current issues as well as long-term research.

Below, as the current editors of *The Newsletter*, we look back at 30 years of our journal and anticipate its 100th issue in 2025. We chart the changes that we have

implemented since our arrival in July 2021, and show how they connect to and expand on some of the ideas of our predecessors, firmly embedding Asia and its study in the wider, contemporary world.

## Asia through places and voices

From its very first issue, *The Newsletter* took upon itself the coordination of scientific research in Asian Studies, and it published news about institutes, conference reports, calls for papers, lectures, awards, and events. This was structured regionally and divided into “General News,” “South Asia,” “Southeast Asia,” and “East Asia.” Another, interesting, regional designation was “Insular Southwest Asia,” which covered the islands in the Western Indian Ocean,

from the Maldives to Madagascar. As our pages gradually contained more thematic articles, the editors decided to drop regional designations, finding it difficult to decide where to place articles “that defied the regional structure: Asian art exhibitions worldwide, research on Asians living in Europe, how Arabs perceive Asians, and the Japanese automobile industry in Europe” (NL2, p. 2).

Indeed, “Asia” can focus on specific locales, but is also a fluid – at times even elusive – entity. *The Newsletter* aims to offer an understanding of “Asia” as both. For instance, it continues to sustain and expand our network of regional partners, and it recognizes the importance of place in current debates, particularly those debates held in the Global South, or between the South and the North. Simultaneously, we are a platform for articles that question mapping

and bordering, and we remain committed to offering alternative frameworks for approaching “Asia.” These can be articles on actual, alternative maps, such as those made by Javanese mapmakers (NL95, p. 6-7, see also page 23 of this issue), or research that traces the trajectory of objects that move between countries and continents (NL95, p. 39-48), or writings on race and the migrant experience (NL95, p. 14-15), or works that explore understandings of such concepts as “mindfulness” (NL91, p. 4-5).

Beyond attending to the question of place, recent articles increasingly emphasize diverse voices, and we actively solicit articles from underrepresented groups. These include junior scholars, female authors, and Indigenous partners, as well as colleagues from, or working on, underrepresented parts of Asia. Our latest example is a collection of articles co-written and illustrated by Indigenous authors (NL94). Indigenous ontologies everywhere emphasize the interconnectedness between Indigenous Peoples, lands, forests, water, and wildlife. Just like the stories of objects and people on the move, these worlds of knowledge take us across official borders. They establish a deeper connection between “Asia” and other parts of the world.

## Authors and “thinker-makers”

In 2015, our predecessors posited the idea of “The New Asia Scholar” (NL72, p. 17-40). In a collection of articles, they noted “an increasing demand for alternative scholarship within Asian Studies, for a move away from Western scholarship, and for the development of ‘reverse discourses’ in order for non-Western scholarship to theorize back at the West.” The editors write that “Asia is a breeding ground for new knowledge and theory” and that emerging local Asian networks and centers of knowledge are seeking to interact with the rest of the academic world. They also discuss how “university and museum programmes draw closer together,” and how “academic research on museums becomes more socially relevant to local communities.” They suggest that “to generate critically and socially-engaged scholarship, new avenues must be paved, so that research may reflect locally-embodied knowledge and understanding.”

At 30, IIAS's various programs, including *The Newsletter*, are fully engaged in the development of and experimentation with activities and connections that facilitate new forms of research, education, dissemination, community building, and civic engagement. For *The Newsletter*, one of the ways in which this has taken shape is that we have actively connected to and published the work of authors who do not define themselves as “Asia scholars” at all. This holds for the articles and illustrations by the Indigenous authors discussed above, but the push extends into much of our recent content: interviews with artists (NL89, p. 54-55), articles by filmmakers and others from the creative industries (NL92, p. 20-21), theater makers (NL92, p. 18-19), architects (NL92, p. 12-13), and curators (NL93, p. 4-7).

Creativity was always central to *The Newsletter*, and the first issues already included a “Museums and art” section. This section grew from a calendar of upcoming events to a series of reviews of exhibitions and artworks. The new articles by “thinker-makers” merit a platform of their own, and, in Issue #92, we introduced “The Tone,” a section with a more open conception of artistic output, featuring works of creativity and curation in the broadest terms.

Other articles by authors who are not Asianists are fully integrated into our research section, including a recent piece by a scientist, who explores the history of his grandmother, a woman revolutionary in the Indian struggle for independence (NL93, p. 14-15). In the near future, we hope to collaborate with archaeologists, geologists, and journalists, to highlight how Asia and its study are in constant communication with other worlds of knowledge and engagement.



### Current issues, long-term research, and shared experiences

The Newsletter has previously considered the connection between current events and research. In 2002, a series of articles investigated how war affected the cultural objects of Afghanistan, and some of these essays are a call to action. Since 2021, we feel the need to consistently include at least one response to a current event. As *The Newsletter* reaches out to an increasingly wider audience, we are even more aware of the role we play in facilitating the connection between knowledge and people, and in creating a free and safe space for discussion. So far, academics and authors working for humanitarian organizations have responded to such events as the evacuation of Kabul (NL90, p. 6-7), the political turmoil in Sri Lanka (NL93, p. 10), the floods in Pakistan (NL95, p. 4-5), and the protests in Hong Kong (NL95, p. 12-13). We have also published a collection of articles on the complex question of provenance and repatriation, from the perspective of academics in Asia and Europe (NL92, p. 31-43).

Current events do not just affect research; many of the above cases have an impact on the author involved, too. *The Newsletter* recognizes that authors can have many different roles, and that they can be politically involved, in addition to being professionals. This dynamic does not only concern external events. In recent

years, academia has changed profoundly, and scholars face more challenges than ever before, from temporary teaching contracts to citation indices. In Issue #94, a group of authors published an article on problems of mobility for scholars from the Global South. Visa-related barriers, they write, raise the question of whether mobility enhances or inhibits academic freedom (NL94, p. 8-9). We envision *The Newsletter* as a site for many more such publications.

We are not activist, but we do recognize the need, and will offer space, for critique. With *The Newsletter* as an anchor, and its digital satellites in *The Blog* and *The Channel*, we have a suite of possibilities. Long-term research and responses to current issues work well in *The Newsletter*. With relatively short word counts and quick turnarounds, authors can publish their research-in-the-making as well as analyses of current situations. *The Blog* is ideal for thoughtful discussions, brief reflections, and critical conversations in a way that is less formal and more timely than what is possible in the print version. And our podcast episodes on *The Channel* create an entirely different environment and experience, as audiences listen to interviews on latest publications, discussions, and talks given at our institute. While different in their approach, all of these platforms are vehicles for learning and for sharing experiences with our audiences. In a world that is increasingly integrated yet increasingly unequal, we hope to create greater awareness of issues within and outside academia.

### Making and communicating knowledge

The current structure and setup of *The Newsletter* and its online platforms help to make knowledge accessible to progressively wider circles of audiences, and they encourage careful consideration.

On a meta-level, "The Slate," a new section introduced in Issue #93, specifically asks how knowledge is made. Proceeding from IIAS's focus on education, "The Slate" invites educators and researchers to explore the debates, practices, challenges, and opportunities of 21st-century education. For the first iteration, one scholar discusses how to introduce primary- and secondary-school readers to stories about the Partition. Another elaborates on how she uses graphic novels to teach histories of Asian migration.

Generally, across our platforms, there is greater attention on the importance of different sensory experiences of Asia. More and more articles question representation and critique visual images. Podcast episodes engage our audience aurally, through recordings of music, sound, language, and accents.

As we proceed to reach out to and involve even more authors and audiences, how we make and communicate knowledge will continue to be important. In 2003 (NL32, p. 6), Prof. J.F. Staal, chairman of the committee that proposed the creation of an International Institute for Asian Studies in the early 1990s, reflected on the future of Asian Studies. Staal wrote about a need to "redress the balance," to "evolve new terms and concepts," and to "translate." Indeed, much is lost in language,

and while we recognize the benefits of a common language of communication, *The Newsletter* is experimenting with other possibilities. One example is the translation of one of the articles co-written by Indigenous authors (NL94, p. 34-35) back into their S'gaw Karen language. This article subsequently appeared in *Thulei Kawwei*, a regional print magazine popular among Karen communities in an area with limited internet connection. In addition, our podcast enables auditive experiences of other languages, and we anticipate including more of them in future episodes.

Different editorial teams have shepherded *The Newsletter* through multiple reinventions – indeed, a glance at the archives reveals dramatic changes in terms of design, format, tone, and substance. Yet a throughline can also be discerned across three decades of issues. *The Newsletter* and its satellite platforms strive to gather diverse perspectives, to increase accessibility, to critically reflect on the ever-shifting landscape of Asian Studies vis-à-vis the contemporary university, and to consistently push scholarship in new directions. In short, we remain committed to facilitating connections and novel conversations. This continuity of purpose enables *The Newsletter* to adapt and evolve. In the coming years, we look forward to maintaining a welcoming, constructive, and incisive forum within our pages and across our platforms.

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Benjamin Linder is Assistant Editor of *The Newsletter* at IIAS. [b.linder@iias.nl](mailto:b.linder@iias.nl)



Left: Graphic of "May We Gather, a National Buddhist Memorial Ceremony for Asian-American Ancestors." Photo downloaded from MayWeGather.org and reprinted in *The Newsletter* accompanying the article "Doing No Harm: Mindfulness, (Western) Buddhism, Appropriation, Systemic Racism" (NL91, p. 4-5).

Below: A call for contributions to the *IIAS Newsletter*, c. 2006 before rebranding as *The Newsletter* (NL41, p. 3).



Above: After a special section dedicated to Indigenous authors (NL94, p. 31-39), IIAS supported the translation of a contribution back into the S'gaw Karen language. That translation was published in volume 12, issue 3 of the magazine *Thulei Kawwei* (September 2023), available at: <https://kesan.asia/category/all-resources/magazines>

tell us about the world we live in... write for IIAS Newsletter

Letters, commentary, opinion  
Research essays, photo essays, interviews  
Book, journal, film, website reviews  
Fiction, poetry, visual art

Takeo David Hymans & Natasja Kershof  
editors  
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# Perspectives on Asian Studies

## A Conversation with *The Newsletter's* Regional Editors

Paramita Paul

**Paramita Paul:** I love how you all indicate things that we've been working on also in the last couple of years – ways in which *The Newsletter* has expanded to include other parts of the world, ways in which we're trying to connect to other areas, to rethink Asian Studies, and to rethink how we understand Asia. We'll turn to those issues in a minute, but let me first talk a little bit about our working process. In a given issue, "The Region" section includes submitted collections from your institutions based on a rotating schedule. As guest editors, you select and curate the articles such that by the time we at IIAS receive them, they're already well developed. I'm curious to know: how do you go about curating your collections? In particular, how do you decide on a theme for a given issue?

**Terence Chong:** I go by topicality – what's current and what's unfolding. We have three regional programs, and they look at politics, they look at economics, and they look at sociocultural issues. These issues are usually cross-border, trans-border issues. In addition to these regional programs, we have five country study programs: Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Thailand. And so, these country study programs look at the domestic politics of each country. How I go about choosing articles is that if, say, the most recent Thai elections took place, and we have researchers who have been working on analyzing the outcomes of Thai elections and the voting patterns, I think, "Well, this is something the European readers would be interested in." Then I would gather a few of them together and curate something around that issue, on the topic of Thai elections. Or, for example, the Indonesia elections will be taking place in February next year, and that will be a major project for us as well. I would think that European audiences would be interested in understanding how votes have been mobilized, whether or not social media has played a role in mobilizing the votes, if political Islam has triggered certain kinds of responses to certain candidates. These are issues that would be interesting, and I would gather a few researchers together and talk about what would be interesting for a reader who may or may not have a good understanding of the Indonesian landscape. So making things clear and simple but not simplistic, so that people can have a quick read and understand whatever they can in that short section that we provide.

**Paramita Paul:** Would you say you are responding to current issues in your collections?

**Terence Chong:** Yes, definitely. When Philippe Peycam first approached me to contribute to *The Newsletter*, I was a bit hesitant. I mean, I'm a big fan of *The Newsletter* and I had been reading it for many years and knew it's very strong on history, culture, gender studies, literary works and all that. But my institute deals with contemporary Southeast Asia, and we deal with elections, religion and how it intersects with politics, migration issues,

and unfolding economic issues. So, I was just wondering how contemporary Southeast Asia will fit into a more literary kind of treatment of Southeast Asia, which *The Newsletter* is really good at doing. But I think over the last few issues working with Philippe and yourself, we've managed to find a nice niche to place a contemporary perspective of the region, a small slice of Asia in *The Newsletter*.

**Paramita Paul:** Ilhong, can you tell us a little bit about your working process? Your background is in archaeology. How does that work when you look for articles and collections? How do you collect and solicit work?

**Ilhong Ko:** Well, as regional editor, I try to keep my identity as an archaeologist down to the minimum. Because at SNU Asia Center we have so many researchers covering all regions and all disciplines, what we do is we select the themes with the input of the researchers based at the Asia Center. Usually, during informal chats we will talk about the most recent issue and then brainstorm about themes that have yet to be dealt with, but then which are quite very relevant to present-day concerns. For example, we have dealt with COVID-19 and Myanmar. Then, what is really important is that we try to think of themes in which it is very important to provide the different perspectives coming out of the different countries of Northeast Asia. So we talk about experiences of 'the other' in Northeast Asia, or about the borderlands of Northeast Asia, or Northeast Asia's engagements with the Middle East. We try to allocate pieces to the different countries comprising Northeast Asia so that the different perspectives can be presented to the wider public.

**Lena Scheen:** Just like Ilhong, I try to not have my own preferences because I really am in contemporary studies. For the issues, because we do "China Connections," it's really about China in connection to the rest of the world, so we also have more historical issues. We also have the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai. The people from that center are who we work with on these issues. We have postdocs at that center, so we also really involve them to ask what kind of themes they think might be a good idea. I always collaborate with one of the postdocs so that they have an opportunity to do this type of work. I find it really important to stress this idea of Asian Studies being done in Asia, so that's also in the themes that we chose. And it's not just themes in Asian Studies being done in Asia, but it's also, "What kind of research is being done in Asia at the moment?" For example, if there is an important conference in Asia at the moment or if there are important institutions, we try to highlight those. I do think that, as simple as that may sound, it does give new perspectives or other perspectives that are not heard enough, in my opinion.

**Paramita Paul:** Edwin and Cathy, do these processes sound familiar to you?

**Edwin Jurriëns:** There are many similarities. In general, our strategies are very mixed. Sometimes, we put out a call for contributions. Occasionally, people come to us with ideas. Usually, we contact people based on their contributions to recent events such as public seminars, conferences, PhD research, postdoc research. We try to have some diversity in terms of geography or thematic focus. Normally, we have at least one contributor from the Asia Institute, or the Faculty of Arts, or the University of Melbourne. As our section is called "News from Asia from Australia and the Pacific," we also try to engage with colleagues from other universities and other cities. However, this is becoming a little more challenging considering people's workloads and their institutional loyalties and obligations. But also, with having Cathy on board, as the editor of the *Melbourne Asia Review*, we will probably look more into sharing our contributors and our content across the two platforms, also to extend the reach of our articles across readerships.



Above: Cover of "Asian Studies in global perspective," a special supplement section of an early edition of *The Newsletter* (NL2, p. 33).





Above: Nineteenth-century map of the district of Tingkir, Indonesia, created by Javanese mapmakers and subsequently re-printed in *The Newsletter* issue #95, p. 6-7. (Source: Nationaal Archief)

**Cathy Harper:** I'll just say something brief because I've been involved in two editions of *The Newsletter* only, but they were on media of religious morality in Indonesia and Asia and Asians in Australian politics and society. So both of those have been about current issues and were relevant to contemporary matters.

**Paramita Paul:** Let's take a couple of minutes to talk about "The Region" section in *The Newsletter*. As you know, you are contributing to one of many sections, but one that was designed in particular to explore how Asian Studies as an academic field, but also Asia as an object of research, gets implemented and imagined differently in different geographical, disciplinary, and political contexts. For example, what Asia signifies and evokes in Singapore is likely different from what it means in Melbourne or Seoul, or what it means here in the Netherlands. It is a broad question, but how do your institutions delineate and approach the study of Asia?

**Lena Scheen:** It is a difficult question, of course, and it comes really to the core of what I appreciate so much about IIAS and *The Newsletter*. I can only echo everything that has been said before, and I think it is not a coincidence that the five editors that are here now share so much of their views because these are such important points. Responding to your question, I wanted to come back to what Ilhong was saying about language. I think this is a really important point that I also want to stress because these are all aspects wherein you can see how much Asian Studies is still colonized. I know this is a buzzword, like 'interdisciplinary research' and 'decolonization,' but these are

very important things that we often say we do but don't really do. What do we view as Asia? Which countries do we include? Do we look at it politically? You would be surprised how often, even within academia, these are still contested topics. So, when we talk about Asia, what are we actually talking about? But it also really becomes about who is talking, who is doing the research, and where we are doing the research? As an American institute that is based in China, we're constantly confronted with these questions, and they are not easily answered. So it is so important that we have all these different perspectives – in a genuinely diverse way – being heard.

**Paramita Paul:** Cathy and Edwin, you earlier made an interesting remark when you said that your contributions to *The Newsletter* firmly place Australia in Asia. So I'd love to hear what you think about your approach to the study of Asia and how that works for you? How do you feel about your collections and your approach to Asia in your contributions?

**Cathy Harper:** The contributions that Edwin and I have worked on together have largely been voices from Asia or Australia on Asia, even if some are located in Australia. They're voices from Asia, but some of them have been in Australia. I know it's not as simple as just publishing voices from Asia, but I think it does help problematise what "Asia" is because then it becomes something that's not necessarily located somewhere else. It's within "non-Asian" nations, and becoming or already is embedded in "non-Asian" cultures. That's what I find most interesting about the collaborations we've worked on. For example, the one we did on Asians in

Australia, it's this really complicated notion of: What's Asia? What's Australia? Who are Asians, and who are Australians?

**Edwin Jurriëns:** There's the institutional context, but there's also of course the geography and the social and political context. There is this closeness and to some extent familiarity between Australia and Asia, especially through migrant communities in Australia and especially in a place like Melbourne. In our institute's staff, Australians are actually the minority. So, it's really interesting to see how colleagues bring their educational backgrounds, their life experiences, their professional experiences, and also their languages all into this mix. It's very rewarding, and we can learn a lot from each other. At the same time, even within our faculty I suppose, but definitely within the broader academic world, I think there's still some prejudice or misunderstanding about Asian Studies or Area Studies, as if it's solely defined by geography or language or colonial or Cold War legacies – or even worse, that it's not a true discipline in its own right. The source of this misunderstanding is definitely not the lack of disciplinarity, but more the very fluid, never fixed, always changing, and – by definition – intersectional nature of it. So it's really not about delineating the boundaries of a continent, states, cultures, languages, or societies. It's really about this multi-layeredness, about letting different types of knowledge speak through each other and transform each other.

**Paramita Paul:** Ilhong, I have the same question for you, but I would like you to focus on what you would say is the most important value of having these different views and perspectives on Asia.

**Ilhong Ko:** I think I can answer that question in relation to a huge research project that is taking place at SNU Asia Center right now. Around 2020, the Asia Center received a huge grant from the Korean government to explore the concept of mega-Asia. This is for seven years, and we are currently in year four, and I am part of this research group. Basically, what we have been doing is to propose the need to adopt Asia itself as the unit of analysis, because if we do so, then this will allow previously unrecognized, indirect connections between distant regions and countries within Asia to be explored – for example, between the Korean peninsula and the Indian subcontinent. If we just look at bilateral or unilateral relationships between the two countries, there is very little that can be said in terms of connections in the past. But if we look at Asia itself as the unit of analysis, we can then focus on the indirect network links, and that shows how Asia was very connected in the past, and it gives us a basis to talk about how Asia can be connected in the present. I think it is important, because if I look at the different contributions from different issues of *The Newsletter*, you see patterns that appear that can be recognized in other regions. That, I think, is a very important aspect of looking at the different regions and the research coming out of the different regions of Asia together.

**Terence Chong:** How we imagine a region depends not just on the histories and the location you're in, but also on harsh realities like funds and what policymakers deem to be important. During the heyday of Area Studies in the 1970s and 1980s, we saw great investment in, say, Indonesian Studies, and American universities were really big on

Southeast Asian Studies. More recently, the funding for these studies have kind of dried up. So, there's this waxing and waning in terms of interest. And it's really important for us as practitioners and as students and scholars of Asia and Southeast Asia to kind of fly the flag and keep things going and try to convince the world or our funders that what we are doing is important – not just to say it's important, but to show why it's important.

**Paramita Paul:** We hope that these kinds of initiatives – "The Region" pages, *The Newsletter* – create a larger Asian Studies community across the world. Do you think that that's the case? And if so, what do you think is the value of that sort of ongoing collaboration as opposed to, say, occasional conference meetings?

**Ilhong Ko:** I suppose the important thing would be that it makes things easier to continue the discourse, because if it's a one-off conference that takes place every year, you have really intensive chats, then a lot is just left there at the conference venue, and maintaining links is quite difficult. If you have a kind of continued workshop program, it makes it easier to continue the discourse, and then we can build up from what has been said in the previous section. I think this makes things much more productive.

**Lena Scheen:** If I can add to that, of course, I agree very much with that. I think the main difference is also a conference is more like hearing each other's research, hearing what others are doing, while here it's really about collaborating. These initiatives – like *The Newsletter* and also our modest contributions to that – lead also to collaborative research, at least that's what we hope. Doing research together is very different from only exchanging what we are individually doing, right? One is a conversation, and the other is where you genuinely have to apply that other approach, or at least bring those two approaches into conversation within a research project. I think that's why this is really crucial and important.

**Paramita Paul:** We all have the experience of living and working in bubbles, but another aspect of *The Newsletter* is that it is widely read. So beyond our own communities, this is a way to reach out to the general reader interested in Asian Studies or thinking about Asia, to talk to them about current topics, to invite them to share their ideas with us. In that sense, we are definitely reaching out of several bubbles into a wider world.

**Edwin Jurriëns:** I think it really helps with creating a home for Asian Studies where we really can get to know each other, to get to know people with commitment to the field, and to develop these collaborative and ongoing initiatives that are not possible with a conference, and also what Lena referred to: to facilitate sort of intergenerational exchange as well, thinking about new generations of students. It's really important to treasure and nurture a community like this because it definitely takes more than one generation to build it.

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This transcript has been heavily edited and abridged. The original audio includes a wealth of further details and discussion. To hear to the full conversation, listen and subscribe to *The Channel* podcast: <https://iias.asia/the-channel>



# ICAS at the Crossroads

## 25 Years of Bridging Knowledge and People

Martina van den Haak and Wai Cheung

The first ICAS event in Asia, ICAS 3 in Singapore (2003), marked the beginning of transformations that have shaped ICAS into a global forum in Asian Studies, attracting thousands of participants from a broad spectrum of fields and backgrounds to 12 ICAS events so far, held in ten different countries, including six in Asia. These ICAS events, organised in collaboration with local hosts, progressively departed from the traditional academic conference model, over time bringing together both junior and senior scholars, researchers, experts, civil society members, artists, and many more. These diverse gatherings fostered a dynamic environment for intellectual exchange of ideas and insights on Asia and beyond, unexpected synergies, new networks, and collaborative initiatives. ICAS events attracted a critical mass of innovative academic and civic contributors, enriching and reshaping the field of Asian Studies in a more multi-centered, innovative, and inclusive manner.

One IIAS initiative that strongly embraced the ICAS model is the Africa-Asia (A-A) academic dialogue, titled 'Africa-Asia – A New Axis of Knowledge' [see also p. 45-47 in this issue]. This platform aims to create an autonomous epistemological and institutional inter-regional exchange space, free from agendas originating in the West/North. After Africa-Asia dialogues became a regular part of ICAS events from ICAS 8 in Macao (2013), the first major Africa-Asia conference was held in Accra, Ghana (2015), in collaboration with the University of Ghana, on the 60th anniversary of the Afro-Asian Conference of Bandung. A second significant event took place in Tanzania at the University of Dar es Salaam in 2018, with a special emphasis on Indian Ocean connections. Both conferences were founded on the inclusive and interdisciplinary model of ICAS events.

After the COVID-19 disruptions, IIAS and its African and Asian partners are collaborating with Cheikh Anta Diop University (Dakar) and University Gaston Berger (Saint-Louis) to organise the next A-A conference in Dakar, Senegal in the 2024-2025 winter season. This marks the first time an A-A conference will be held in a franco-phone African country.

In this special IIAS 30th-anniversary edition of The Newsletter, several longtime ICAS participants share the stories of their ICAS journeys. A reflection on what stood out about ICAS conferences for them and what makes it a conference worth (re)visiting. Besides being spaces where knowledge and people converged, ICAS conferences have also been places where many built new connections and fond memories.

### Looking ahead: ICAS 13 and beyond

Since its inception in 1998, ICAS has evolved continually, ensuring that, even after the COVID-19 challenges, these events remain pivotal for fostering new forms of interaction and knowledge exchange. IIAS and partners are revamping the ICAS event model. This new ICAS 2.0 approach, named 'ConFest' (Conference-Festival), embraces a locally-inspired, sustainable, and participatory experience. ICAS 2.0 continues to uphold the ICAS tradition of encouraging dialogue across disciplinary, generational, national, regional, and sectoral realms.

Future ICAS events will draw inspiration from the human-ecological resources of our host location and partners, shaping discussions and creating integrated programmes involving local and global participants. ICAS 2.0 aims to shape together a vibrant learning and community-building experience. Furthermore, it will also foster innovative modes of engagement through a diverse range of activity formats.

ICAS 13, the first edition to embrace the ICAS 2.0 approach, is being organized in collaboration with Airlangga University (UNAIR) in Surabaya, the vibrant port-metropolis of East Java in Indonesia. This ConFest, scheduled for late July 2024, introduces a fresh approach to reimagining academic conferences. It aims to foster collaboration among academic, artistic, and civic partners and offers a unique platform for adopting a place-based approach to global questions. Titled *Crossways of Knowledge*, ICAS 13 will explore locally inspired yet globally relevant themes through various participatory formats, including panels, interactive roundtables, poster presentations, workshops, book showcases, film screenings, food fairs, exhibitions, and other local engagement activities.

Experience ICAS 13 and immerse yourself in the vibrant city of Surabaya in summer 2024! Don't miss this unique opportunity to be part of the first post-COVID-19 ConFest edition of ICAS. The Call for Proposals remains open until 25 October 2023 [see p. 30 of this issue, or visit: <https://www.icas.asia/icas13-cfp>].

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Wai Cheung is Coordinator ICAS and Conferences at IIAS. [w.m.cheung@iias.nl](mailto:w.m.cheung@iias.nl)

#### Notes

- 1 ICAS 1 Leiden (1998), ICAS 2 Berlin (2001), ICAS 3 Singapore (2003), ICAS 4 Shanghai (2005), ICAS 5 Kuala Lumpur (2007), ICAS 6 Daejeon (2009), ICAS 7 Honolulu (2011), ICAS 8 Macao (2013), ICAS 9 Adelaide (2015), ICAS 10 Chiang Mai (2017), ICAS 11 Leiden (2019), ICAS 12 Kyoto [online] (2021).

As IIAS celebrates its 30th anniversary, the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), which held its inaugural edition in the Netherlands a quarter-century ago, has evolved into a significant global platform for fostering interregional and transdisciplinary discussions. Initially conceived in the late 1990s as Europe's counterpart to the US-based Association for Asian Studies (AAS) conferences, ICAS swiftly distinguished itself by prioritising transdisciplinary and trans-regional/national themes over geographical regions, sparking cross-fertilisation of ideas.



As a scholar working on Southeast Asia, I attended multiple ICAS and Africa-Asia conferences these last years. But the most striking experiences were, for sure, the two conferences in Africa: Accra (Ghana) in 2015, and Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania) in 2018. I was personally touched, as it reminded me of the eight years of my childhood on the campus of the University of Lovanium, which became the University of Kinshasa. Indeed, my father, a Vietnamese scholar educated in Louvain (Belgium), went to teach in independent Zaïre, working with Zairian colleagues but also scholars from Belgium, India, Iran, and Vietnam, according to my memories of our neighbours. Thanks to ICAS conferences on the grounds of the campus, I was able to experience the great dynamism of Ghanaian and Tanzanian universities in the field of Asian Studies. Moreover, the civil society dimension of the conference offered me the opportunity to exchange ideas not only with scholars and students, but also artists and practitioners.

I was very excited to chair the panel "Vietnam and Africa" organized by Pham Van Thuy (Vietnamese National University) and one of the first African scholars who had worked on Vietnam in the nineties, Webby Kalikiti (University of Zambia), and to hear comparative papers on anti-Colonialism movements and Decolonization as well as trade relations between Vietnam and Africa. The incredible number of panels allowed me to enrich my knowledge about the Asia/Africa longstanding connections, and to renew my courses on Southeast Asia, a major crossroad region between the two continents, not only from an East/West perspective, but a South/South one, too.

Claire Tran, Université Paris Cité, France



CAS 1, held at Leeuwenhorst Congress Centrum, near Leiden, the Netherlands (1998), was the first international conference I attended. It opened my eyes to the challenges and opportunities this kind of event represents. Impressed by the size of the convention of Asian studies in Europe and beyond, with sessions and presenters transcending boundaries between disciplines, nations, and geographic origins, ICAS 1 brought together incredibly diverse perspectives on themes and issues of Asian studies, some of them most relevant for my own research interests. It was also a place to meet people, a good mix of scholars from Asia, North America, and Europe, and to make connections, some of them still alive today.

During the next decade, I attended ICAS 2 to 5 convened in Berlin, Germany (2001), Singapore (2003), Shanghai, China (2005) and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2007), respectively. Again, I was greatly excited about the venues, the ICAS Asian Studies Book Fair, Book Prize, and excellence of the organization. Being a Sinologist by profession and also engaged in East Asian Arts, I especially appreciated the ICAS editions in Singapore's Raffles City Convention Centre and Shanghai's Exhibition Centre. Unfortunately, I had to cancel my participation in the meetings at Chiang Mai, Thailand (ICAS 10, 2017), and Leiden (ICAS 11, 2019) due to some unforeseeable reason.

The global pandemic caused many limitations. It affected academic life and all kinds of activities, among them ICAS 12 in Kyoto, Japan (2021). The success of the first virtual ICAS edition proved that the Convention always, and even in times of crisis, has been a platform that provided meaningful gatherings which ensured participants, from academic beginners to renowned scholars, to feel welcomed and engaged. The ICAS in-person meetings, on top, did not only show the social face of academic get-togethers, but also created an inspiring environment (different from the normal environment with our computers or phones in office or at home), in which experience of place and space in Asia and elsewhere were designed to spark creativity and inventive thinking crossing national, cultural, or interdisciplinary borders.

Ulrike Middendorf, University of Heidelberg, Germany



My first attendance at the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) conference took place twenty years ago, in Singapore, in 2003. It was the third instalment of ICAS, known as ICAS 3. For this conference, I took the initiative to organize a panel titled "State and Society in Asia: Political Economy of Globalization." The panel featured Professor John Clammer of Sophia University and Vedi Hadiz, both of whom were colleagues at the National University of Singapore. They presented papers on Indonesia and Japan, respectively. ICAS 3 marked a significant event in post-SARS Singapore, with 258 panels and 13 poster sessions.

What struck me most about ICAS 3, which was held at the Raffles City Convention Centre, was the remarkable breadth and interdisciplinarity of the conference. It covered a wide range of topics, from digitalization, science parks, and the impact of globalization to heritage, memory, and the performing arts, such as classical dance in South and Southeast Asia. Notably, the conference delved into the historiography of colonialism. Many distinguished intellectual figures of that period were present, but one encounter stands out vividly in my memory: my chance meeting with Ms. Sangeeta Isvaran, a renowned classical dancer and scholar who presented a paper at the conference. In the academic world, it is rare to witness, let alone meet, stars of the performing arts like her.

The ICAS conferences consistently bring together established and emerging social scientists and historians from diverse academic fields, including arts, classics, history, and various branches of social sciences. I had the privilege of attending and presenting papers at subsequent ICAS conferences as well. ICAS 7, held in late March 2011, joined forces with the American Asian Studies Association conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. ICAS 8 took place in Macao, hosted at a renowned Casino Hotel. ICAS 9 was held in Adelaide, Australia, where I had the honor of meeting former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who attended our session. Lastly, ICAS 10 was organized in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in July 2017. That year, together with Dr. Mara Matta of Sapienza University of Rome, I coordinated several sessions on memory and nostalgia. Notably, one of our presenters was an active service ambassador of Poland, who presented a paper on Polish Air Force officers in the early Pakistan Air Force – a subject that was largely unknown.

ICAS conferences serve as a meeting ground for scholars, artists, public intellectuals, and hidden talents who defy easy classification within existing disciplinary boundaries. Recalling these conferences evokes a sense of nostalgia, reminding us of encounters that transcend the ordinary and inspire hope in the pursuit of knowledge, even during times of despair and gloom.

Habibul Haque Khondker, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates



My first encounter with IAS and ICAS was in 2003, in Leiden, when I was a young research fellow at EIAS in Brussels. I then joined ICAS 4 (Shanghai in 2005) as one of my first international conferences as a fresh PhD student and learned many things there. Throughout the years, I joined ICAS 6 in Daejeon (2009), ICAS 8 in Macao (2013), ICAS 9 with a partial participation through my paper (2015), ICAS 11 in Leiden (2019) and finally ICAS 12 in Kyoto (2021).

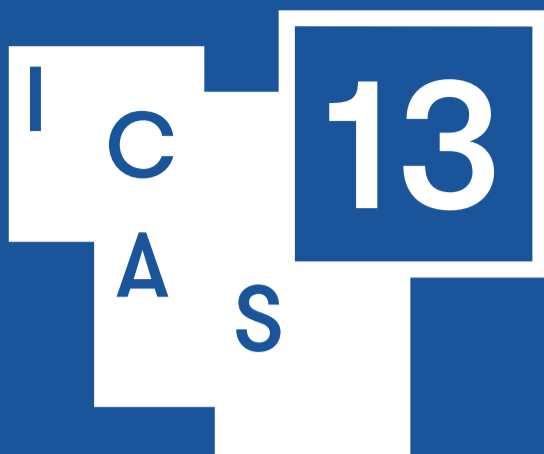
Looking back, I think about my participation in each ICAS – the different countries, different convention themes, different papers, and the many familiar faces and friends – the same feelings of being in a such an intellectual and interdisciplinary environment remain. I now realize that I have been growing up with each ICAS, becoming a young researcher, then spreading ICAS news in Japan, enhancing my research each time. Later on, I joined my university as a lecturer, then came back to Leiden in 2019 as a researcher and lecturer, as well as a mother talking to my daughter about ICAS. Finally, I shared the joy and pride of bringing ICAS to Kyoto, Japan in 2021. Though we were all online, we were still very proud and even more delighted to be able to start the ICAS Book Prize Japanese Language Edition.

Lastly, I must mention dear Paul van der Velde, whom I first met at the IAS office in 2003 and then at each ICAS meeting. He has always supported my work and encouraged me to start the Japanese Language Edition of the ICAS Book Prize. Thanks to IAS, ICAS, the ICAS Book Prize, and Paul for playing such a crucial role in my academic journey. I wish many more successful events, research programs, and ICAS conferences to connect even more with a diverse range of academicians, researchers, artists, publishers, and students in Asian Studies of all ages. Happy anniversary!

Aysun Uyar Makibayashi, Doshisha University, Japan







Above: A street food vendor selling "rujak cingur" and "tahu telur," Surabaya's local delicacies, in Kampung Peneleh. (Sketch by Jonathan Irwan, Urban Sketchers Surabaya, 2019)

# ICAS 13: Crossways of Knowledge An International Conference-Festival in Surabaya, Indonesia

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is gathering in Surabaya as a Conference-Festival (ConFest) in the summer of 2024. Don't miss this opportunity to reconnect in person with your colleagues in the field of Asian Studies!

The proposal deadline (25 October) for ICAS 13 is fast approaching! Seize your chance to participate in ICAS 13 in Surabaya, Indonesia.

International Convention of Asia Scholars  
ICAS 13: Crossways of Knowledge  
28 July-1 August 2024  
Surabaya, Indonesia

**Deadline for Submissions**  
**25 October 2023**

## A Variety of Formats

ICAS 13 will feature globally relevant topics explored through diverse formats, including panels, interactive roundtables, poster presentations, methodologies and hands-on workshops, book, film, food and craft fairs, exhibitions and other participatory formats of local engagements. These events will take place in and around various ConFest venues.

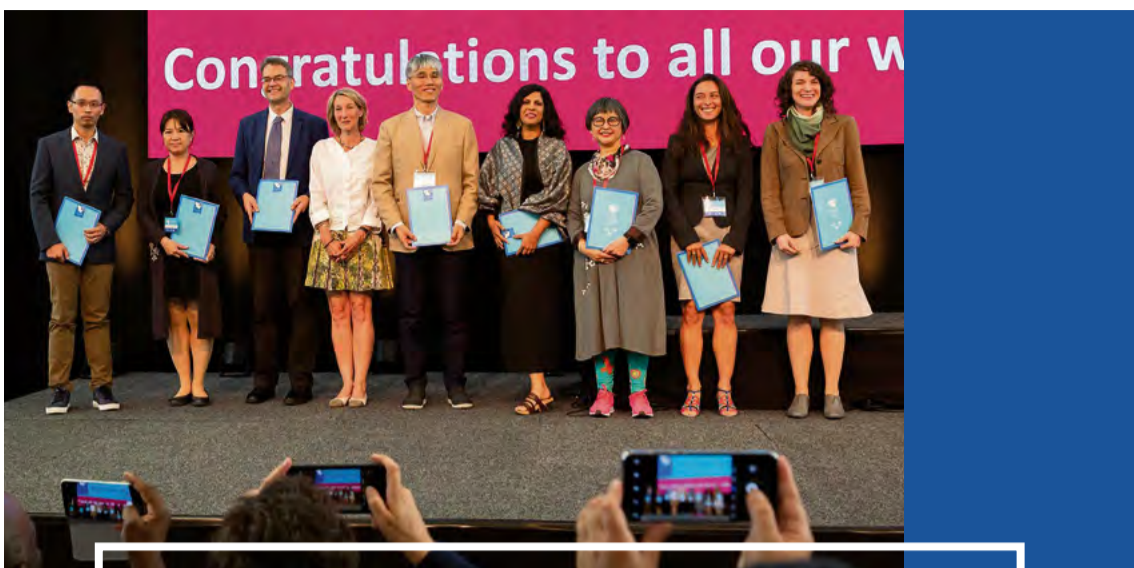
## Experience Surabaya

Immerse yourself in Surabaya and East Java's rich resources. Join us in crafting an experiential local-global ConFest that celebrates diversity, fosters collaboration and encourages the exchange of knowledge within and beyond academia extending to civil society and the arts.

For more information, see [www.icas.asia](http://www.icas.asia). For queries about ICAS 13, please contact us at [icas13@iias.nl](mailto:icas13@iias.nl).







# Celebrating Ten ICAS Book Prize Editions

Martina van den Haak and Wai Cheung

When IAS celebrated its tenth anniversary year in 2003, the secretariat of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), based at IAS, 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.

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

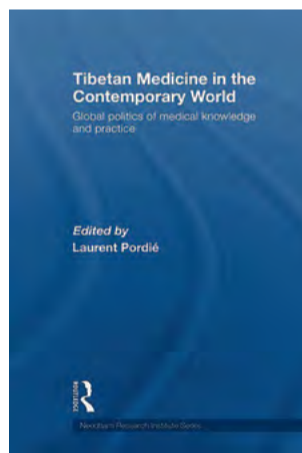
Sareeta Amrute  
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2019  
Social Sciences



Receiving 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



It 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.



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



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

Aurore Candier  
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2021  
French Language Edition



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

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 EFO published in Fall 2020. When I learned about the IBP competition, I contacted the EFO 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.

June 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

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

Hun Park  
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2021  
Korean Language Edition



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 congratulatory 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.

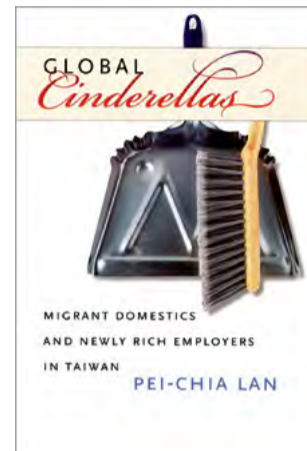
I heard that the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), which has hosted the ICAS Book Prize project, is celebrating its 30th anniversary. I sincerely congratulate you, and I hope that you will continue to lead Asian Studies in the global academia.

It 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,

## Global Cinderellas

Pei-Chia Lan  
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2007  
Social Sciences



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.

I later 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.

**G**lobal *Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers 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

## Africans in China: Guangdong and Beyond

Adams Bodomo  
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2017  
Colleagues Choice Award



Thanks 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 Escrita dos Séculos XVII a XIX*, 2 volumes  
(*Japanese Erotica in Painting and Writing at the 17th to 19th centuries*, 2 volumes)

During 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...).

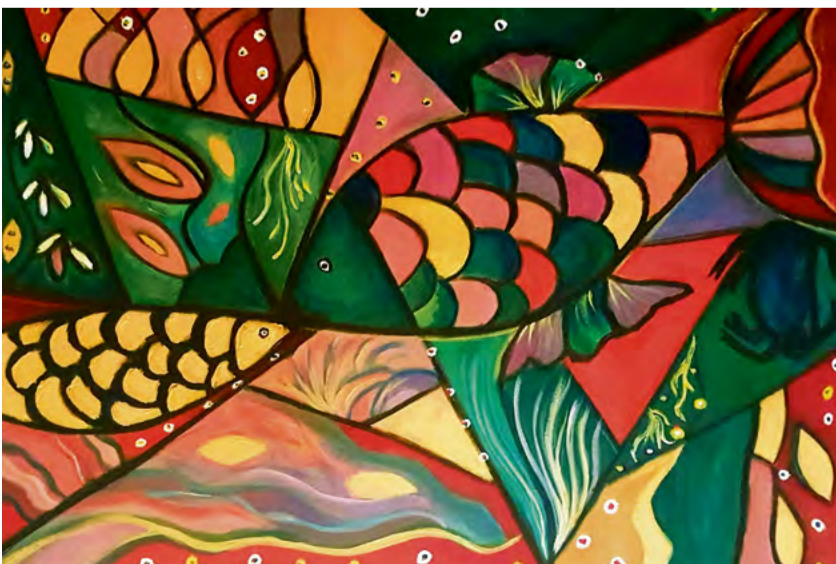
I believe the prints show a variety of procedures and times of the "making" that show a complex rhetoric of series building, modernizing Hokusai's panoramic, and an all encompassing view of life.

Right: *Hokusai nos trópicos #8 (Hokusai in the Tropics #8)* Water-based woodcut and collage with excerpt of *Hokusai Manga* vol. 1 (1814) on handmade paper, 29 x 22 cm (irregular margins), 1994-2022.



## 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*.

Whenever 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 IAS 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

As 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 Arganti 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 Arganti  
Winner ICAS Book Prize 2015  
Best Dissertation - Social Sciences

Writing 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 gender 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

As 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

The 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 Wiyadharmia 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 IIF (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.

# IIAS

# 30

## Let's Celebrate!

On October 12 & 13, 2023, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) commemorates its 30th anniversary!

Join us for two festive days of cultural performances, interactive workshops, engaged discussions, and delicious foods.

Thursday, 12 October  
Decolonizing Area Studies  
An Open Conversation  
13:30-18:30  
Stadsgehoorzaal  
Breestraat 60, Leiden

Friday, 13 October  
Day of festivities  
10:00-17:00  
IIAS, Rapenburg 59, Leiden

Program and schedule:  
[www.iias.asia/30](http://www.iias.asia/30)







# In Situ Graduate School (ISGS) Initiative

Martina van den Haak

The concept for the In Situ Graduate School (ISGS) in Asian Studies initiative was born in 2011 through a Summer Programme in Leiden entitled *Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives*. Over the subsequent years, the title evolved from Summer School to Winter School, finally being named In Situ Graduate School in 2018.



Top: Participants explore the maze of canals in the Mekong Delta during the ISGS "Delta Cities: Rethinking Practices of the Urban." (Photo courtesy of Vu Anh Thu, 2018)

Above: Participants enjoy a meal in Kyoto during the ISGS "Mapping the Aesthetics of Urban Life in Asia: A Dialogue with the Arts." (Photo courtesy of Widya Suryadani, 2016)

Right: Participants examine a special textile collection in the National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde) during the ISGS "Textile and Dyes as Transnational, Global Knowledge" in Leiden, 2022.

These collaborative events, conducted in partnership with institutions across Asia and beyond, intertwine theory and immersive learning for international and local PhD candidates and early career scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The ISGS revolves around a dynamic five- or six-day programme featuring lectures, intensive seminars, and ample opportunities for students to engage with the ISGS convenors and their peers to discuss their research. Augmented by enriching field visits, the journey culminates in a lively seminar, where participants – often organised into small research groups – share and unveil insights from their on-site research.

Within IIAS's thematic clusters – Asian Heritages, Asian Cities, and Global Asia – the ISGS is one of IIAS's flagship initiatives, nurturing research and teaching capacities. Guided by the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and exploration, the ISGS is an initiative that fuses disciplines and transcends borders. By organising in diverse locations and engaging with diverse people, ISGS significantly enriches the chosen

theme's relevance. The objective is to cultivate fresh insights and methodologies within these thematic realms, while supporting young researchers by exposing their work in thematically evocative settings. The ISGS not only fosters novel theoretical and applied knowledge, but also shapes new networks of study focused on Asia. In this light, the ISGS serves as an inclusive platform for PhD students and early career scholars globally, striving to form new transnational, interdisciplinary communities of young researchers.

Some of our past ISGS editions included: "Textile and Dyes as Transnational, Global Knowledge" (Leiden, The Netherlands); "Delta Cities: Rethinking Practices of the Urban (Mekong Delta, Vietnam); "Media Activism and Postcolonial Futures (Hong Kong); "Mapping the Aesthetics of Urban Life in Asia: A Dialogue with the Arts" (Kyoto, Japan); and "Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age" (Macao).

Martina van den Haak is Institute Manager and ICAS Secretary at IIAS. [m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl](mailto:m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl)





## Asia and Beyond: My Journey with IIAS

Thien-Huong Ninh

One of my current research projects examines the comparative significance of “ethnic” Marian depictions – specifically, (indigenous Mexican-looking) Our Lady Guadalupe and (Vietnamese-looking) Our Lady of Lavang – in global social justice movements. On the surface, the project may appear to be only tangentially situated within Asian Studies. However, I must admit that this study owes its inspiration to IIAS. Through participation in many IIAS programs and activities, I have come to appreciate the importance of anchoring Asian Studies within global and comparative contexts.

In August 2012, I flew from Japan (where I was holding a position as a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science fellow) to Leiden to participate in the IIAS World Wide Asia Summer School. Although I had known of IIAS, this was my first direct engagement with the institute. The event gathered twenty-two graduate students and researchers across academic disciplines and regions of the world in Leiden. Over four days, we examined how the flows of people, goods, capital, and ideas within and from Asia have been transforming the global landscape. These stimulating discussions injected exciting new energy into my dissertation writing and drove me to the finish line the following year. Equally important, I made many long-lasting friendships with colleagues in the programme that later bore several reunion meetings around the world.

Because of this wonderful experience, I continued to intentionally keep in touch with IIAS. In 2015 and 2016, I had the opportunity to spend my summers in Leiden through the Research Associate Fellowship at IIAS. I was given the perfect place to write – an office on the third floor of the IIAS building. It was quiet and had a window that looked out into the beautiful canals that run along Rapenburg. And yet, at the same time, IIAS was a vibrant place full of intellectual energy. Whenever I wanted to tinker with an idea or explore a new direction in my writing, I could easily walk across the hall or go downstairs to immerse myself in conversations with colleagues from all parts of the world. The many international conferences and workshops held at IIAS and Leiden University during my stays also constantly kept me on my feet, such as the 2016 “Heritage as Aid and Diplomacy Conference” that I participated in.

Between 2017 and 2019, I had the honor of serving on the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) Book Prize Committee. In 2018, while I was conducting research in Korea, I had the chance to make a presentation at a conference on Korea and Vietnam that was organized by IIAS, Seoul National University, Leiden University, and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. During the same year, I flew to Tanzania to participate in the Africa-Asia conference organized by IIAS, the University of Dar es Salaam, and the Association for Asian Studies in Africa.

Through IIAS, I have been able to engage with and contribute to intellectual productions that critically reflect on Asia and beyond. This kind of productive, transformative and non-normative entanglement is particularly important for junior scholars like myself, who are still shaping their intellectual path. My current interest in studying Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Lavang is a step on this path. Today, whenever I think of “Asian Studies” or “area studies,” I immediately think of IIAS. Congratulations to IIAS on its 30th anniversary!

Thien-Huong Ninh,  
Consumnes River College, United States

## 出会い Deai: Encounter

Widya Suryadani

This poem was born during the 2016 In Situ Graduate School “Mapping the Aesthetics of Urban Life in Asia: A Dialogue with the Arts in Kyoto,” organized by IIAS and the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Japan (CSEAS). I composed the poem within a workshop where the main theme revolved around the dialogue between urban life and the arts. The word ‘ENCOUNTER’ was the title of our sonic performance, where we thought of city as an orchestra. We captured the sounds of the city: the irashimase, the chatters, the noise of the arcade, the crisp of the

walked-on snow, and more. We combined it with music, dance, and heart-felt words: this poem. Everything we did was new for us. We learned that experiencing a city was more of a chance encounter, while this workshop was all about chance encounter. We met with a new way to experience a city, we were challenged to present a new way of representing a city, and we met with new people from various backgrounds to learn from, to learn with, and to learn about.

Widya Suryadani, Institut Teknologi Nasional (Itenas) Bandung, Indonesia

Steps to the temple, Kyoto. Photo courtesy of Widya Suryadani, 2016)







# The Asian Borderlands Research Network

Left: Registration table at the 6th conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2018.

Right: Participants of the 3rd conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network in Singapore enjoy a photo exhibition, 2012.

The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses in particular on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East, and Southeast Asia. Its concerns are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns.

Its aim is to generate new knowledge and methodologies to better understand these transitional zones – and borderlands in general – by encouraging academic exchange between both local and foreign scholars from different backgrounds. For this purpose, ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions regularly in co-operation with a local partner.

Scholarly and political boundaries divide Asia artificially into units, such as South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and so on. These divisions not only mask the many and varied commonalities that transcend such boundaries; they also reinforce the marginalisation of people who live in these so-called border areas. Yet a better appreciation of these 'transitional zones' is, in fact, critical to our historical understanding of processes of social and cultural change in the states lying beyond

Right: Participants at the 7th ARBN Conference in South Korea on an excursion to the DMZ.

Far right: Program booklet for the 4th conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network, 2014.

them. Nonetheless, such a focus remains peripheral to area studies and the disciplines which feed into them.

The Asian Borderlands Research Network was developed to recognise the links, both historical and contemporary, that connect people in these borderlands, focusing on the border regions between South Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, where

the prevailing notions of area studies have been particularly limiting.

The purpose of the ABRN is to encourage academic exchange between both local and foreign scholars from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

In what follows, we present brief writings from four participants in the

Asian Borderlands Research Network: Makiko Kimura, Robert Winstanley-Chesters, Busarin Lertchavalitsakul, and Eva Hung. Each piece reflects upon the place of ABRN in their own intellectual careers as well as its role in fostering academic conversations that challenge conventional disciplinary and geographical divides.



## The Thailand-Myanmar border areas

Busarin Lertchavalitsakul

I became aware of the Asian Borderland Research Network (ABRN) when the second series was held in 2010, which was co-hosted by Chiang Mai University, Thailand. It was inspiring to see that the Enclosure, Interaction and Transformation theme of the conference later became the topic of my PhD.

The geographical focus of my PhD (fieldwork starting in autumn 2012) was around the Thailand-Myanmar borders. The conference allowed me to understand borderlands more broadly, and to think beyond the framework provided by fields within traditional Area Studies, such as Asian Studies and Southeast Asian Studies.

I have followed the conference themes to keep abreast of scholarly trends and turns in the field of Borderland Studies. In the post-PhD period, I have maintained an active research agenda in the Thailand-Myanmar border areas, and I offer a class on Borderland Studies to undergrad students. The border between Thailand and Myanmar is currently contested, with arbitrary and unpredictable border controls in place. In these locations the local people are forced to employ adaptive strategies to survive. The ABRN conference provides a platform to present and discuss these challenges, which are a result of the disparity between state directives and ground-level operations at the border. As such, I plan to attend future conferences, in order to share my work and to listen to

and network with other scholars. I believe this is important and necessary as there are many 'live' Asian border issues which could benefit from academic collaboration, drawing on the insights from multiple locations. For example, global phenomena such as migration flows from war-torn countries, economic repression since the early 2000s, and, more recently, Covid-19, have all had an effect on borderlands and prompted researchers to investigate their impact on people's lives. The ABRN conference allows us to explore these global phenomena and to see how paradigms and frameworks may have shifted.

Busarin Lertchavalitsakul,  
Naresuan University, Thailand



## Reflections on bordering with the Asian Borderlands Research Network

Robert Winstanley-Chesters

11th of October 2012 found me presenting as a very much emerging academic (a year away from completing my PhD), in Singapore for the first time. My paper, I am sure, was not at all memorable, but I will never forget the room. Vista, an ovoid glass pod on top of the National University of Singapore's University Hall on the Lower Kent Ridge Road campus, was truly one of the most beautiful spaces I had ever been in.

Our panel, "Landscape, Military and Diplomacy in Asian Borderlands", felt strangely fitting for the room, a space

suitable for the battle planning of some futuristic hybrid regime, from which much of Singapore could be seen, but also much more than I deserved at the stage of my career. This was the 3rd conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network, hosted jointly by NUS's Asia Research Institute (ARI) and IAS, and from this year I have always felt most at home at this unusual caravanserai of an academic conference. I have had many memorable experiences, heard about the liminal, flexible, fluid practices of border culture in Nagaland across the Myanmar/India border, the back routes and pathways through the

hills of the Vietnam/PRC China border, where national sovereignty is performed by mobile phone infrastructures, and up to the Sino-Russian-Korean borderland spaces, contested by demographic change and geopolitical rebalancing. I have presented and organised panels at every ABRN since, with scholars and practitioners whom I really consider my semi-annual friends, reconvening our connection and collaboration in some unusual, unexpected, less familiar space. There is nothing else like it in academia, nothing like navigating the streets of Kathmandu (ABRN 5 in 2016), at night where not a single traffic light works in the entire city, hiking up and slithering down the Al Archa gorge with the rest of the conference participants outside Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (ABRN 6 in 2018), even visiting my own research home turf in Seoul in 2022 (for the delayed ABRN 7), and engaging in an almost psychogeographic navigation of the DMZ. Aside from the glassy beauty of Vista in 2012, I will remember forever my panel's visit in 2014 (at ABRN 4), to the very last night of the Umbrella Movement's protest encampment on the Admiralty flyover, where borders and frontiers of possibility seemed to be both remade, and about to be foreclosed. Amidst the fantastical graffiti re-imaginings of Studio Ghibli's Totoro as a resistive citizen of a future Hong Kong, colleagues and friends came together to break some of the ties that bind us to our sometimes tightly imposed frameworks of nationality and belonging. After these last few years, when many of the drivers of globalization appeared to go uncomfortably into reverse, when the airport lounges emptied, the cross border trains and busses stopped, the stratospheric sinews that stretch across the planet became ever thinner and more tenuous, a new infrastructure of biosecurity manifested in real time, the connective tissues of our shared global humanity became very fragile, as if we had returned to the world of our grandparents and great-grandparents where everywhere becomes once again very much over there or down there, half known about and seldom visited. In these times the continued connection and collision of the Asian Borderlands Research Network conferences are needed even more, needed to provide the opportunity for border scholars and practitioners focused on in-between spaces, to break our own borders, to actually land and engage with spaces we would normally simply fly over. I hope to see you at the next one, I know not where, though I am hoping for Ulaanbaatar. I certainly know it will be far away from me, but as Wim Wenders said "In weiter Ferne, so nah!"

Robert Winstanley-Chesters,  
University of Edinburgh and  
University of Leeds, United Kingdom

Below: Colleagues at the 6th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network, Kyrgyzstan, 2018.



### Recollections of ABRN6

Makiko Kimura

I attended the first session of the ABRN conference held in Guwahati, Assam, India, when I was still a post-doctorate scholar engaging in fieldwork in the area. At the time (and to some extent even today) it was very rare to have an international conference in Northeast India. I was really excited to take part in the event and learn about the concept of border studies, which was significantly related to my research area.

Since then, I have attended four sessions of the conference (the first, third, fifth and sixth) and enjoyed each and every one. For me, it is a rare international arena where I can meet and catch up with scholars working on Northeast India and neighboring areas. At the same time, as the conference takes place in different parts of Asia, I can observe new themes and topics being presented and discussed. This gives the conference both continuity and change, and I've been able to learn about emerging trends in border studies discussions.

I've also enjoyed long-term friendships with many of the participants—some of whom I have known for decades. It was fun to enjoy an excursion to Kyrgyzstan together, although I somehow hurt my foot and suffered bad internal bleeding on the journey back. I would like to thank Willem van Schendel and his co-convenors for keeping this brilliant network alive, and Martina van den Haak, who has been managing its logistics for many years!

Makiko Kimura,  
Tsuda University, Japan



Left: Umbrella Totoro, Hong Kong 2014. (Photo by the Umbrella Movement, 2014)

## Technologies, Zones and Co-existences

Eva P. W. Hung

I began my research on the political economy of cross-border parallel trade between Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China in 2014. Since then, attending the Asian Borderland Research Network (ABRN) conference has become an irresistible opportunity for me to get connected with scholars in the larger field of Borderland Studies.

The biennial conference brings together both rising and renowned scholars to discuss various aspects of borderland research, making it an ideal platform for intellectual exchange and exploration.

The countries where the conferences took place were also exciting. Nepal (ABRN5), Kyrgyzstan (ABRN6), and South Korea

(ABRN7) are countries with a rich cultural heritage and complex histories with their neighbours, making them ideal locations to explore the intricacies of borderlands. What is more fascinating, however, is how each country was also tightly connected to the respective conference theme.

ABRN5 was about dynamic borderlands, which was best reflected in how Nepal's geographical landscape shapes the livelihoods and communities of people living in the borderlands. ABRN6's theme, "Ruins, Revivals and Resources", reflects the rich archaeological heritage and vast natural resources of Kyrgyzstan. And what better choice for the conference in South Korea than to focus on "Technologies, Zones and Co-existences" (ABRN7), through the country's advanced technological

infrastructure and its existence with the heavily fortified Demilitarized Zone that separates it from North Korea?

What I appreciate most about the ABRN conference is not just its unique focus on borderland research but also how the location speaks to different issues of border regions. The intellectual exchange is always stimulating, and I came away with new insights and perspectives that will undoubtedly shape my future research on borderlands.

Eva P. W. Hung,  
The Hang Seng University  
of Hong Kong



# What Do We Mean by Decolonizing Education?

Responses from the Humanities Across Borders Network

At a talk given at the Hague campus of the Leiden University in September last year,<sup>1</sup> I reflected upon academic ontologies and the question of decolonising education through a description of the three intertwined facets, phases or frames circumscribing the lives of a scholar. A career in higher education, whether as a student, or an early/late career professional is, arguably, governed by a techno-productive, a market, and a vogue life.

Drawing from an analogy of the life-cycle of a product of techno-industrial, capitalist production, the life-cycle of a scholar is also marked by very high rates of obsolescence, both of the self as well as of academic output.<sup>2</sup> In the techno-productive face of higher education, one must accept becoming a statistic in the global proliferation of academic knowledge production via the Internet and other digital technologies. In order not to become obsolete, one must learn to function within a milieu of push and pull technologies that ultimately serve EduTech platforms

that are increasingly becoming the norm for universities the world over. Not only that, there is also the self-objectification practice one must endure to find a place within the different metrics of excellence, or evaluation criteria such as publications and citation indices.

Becoming a valuable resource in the race to tenure-track placement within the higher education industry marks the market life of a scholar in higher education. This is the commercial value, in terms of jobs and funding that an individual can attract or has access to. Education capital is often, but not always, proportional to social, economic,

and geopolitical positionalities within the competitive and closed marketplace of neo-liberalized higher education. Who has this capital? How many generations ago? The market values of the university campus and its revenues from undergraduate courses usually trump historical dis-privilege. And then there is the allure of fashionable research fields, often linked to dominating knowledge circles led by luminary professors. Scholars must align one way or another to waves of shifting knowledge preferences within academe. Disciplinary closure can often be alienating. And negotiating one's relationship to a subject

of study, and finding meaning within it, a lifelong struggle.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of IIAS, we asked colleagues and students from the Humanities Across Borders network to share their responses to a question: "What do we mean by decolonizing education?" In what follows, we present various ways of approaching the prompt: some are new writings from partners, while others were first published previously in *The Newsletter* or on the HAB website (<http://humanitiesacrossborders.org>). Each of these voices speak of an encounter, a reflection, or an engagement within the HAB framework of education collaboration, beyond conventional disciplinary folds, each searching for knowledge and meaning in dialogue and exchange.

Aarti Kawlra is the Academic Director of Humanities Across Borders [a.kawlra@iias.nl](mailto:a.kawlra@iias.nl)

Right: HAB colleagues (from left, Rita Padawangi, Jyothi Thirivikraman, Min Chin Chiang, Aarti Kawlra, Laura Erber, Jody Benjamin, Genner Ortis Llanes, Eric Lawer, and Mohomodou Houssouba) at the *Craft as Method* workshop in Saint Louis, Senegal October 2022. (Photo courtesy of Rita Padawangi, 2022)



## Notes

- 1 "Meaning of Decolonizing Education & the 3 Lives of a Student-Scholar" opening talk at the *INSOCH Inaugural Conference, The Hague LU Campus, September 29, 2022*
- 2 Uberoi, J.P.S., 2008. *Sociology of Commerce and Industry, or the Three Lives of Things. Sociological bulletin*, 57(1), pp.41-60.

## HAB and its Role within IIAS

Philippe Peycam

With its fundamental cross-cultural, inter-regional foundations – starting with its Asian, African, but of course also European backgrounds – HAB had the ambition to engage with the need to re-enchant the universal act of education. To do so, it set about engaging with the often biased geo-politico-institutional economy of knowledge production and dissemination, and in general with the position of the university, often considered as a bulwark of conservatism and hierarchy, itself often associated with the West's lingering normative dominance.

As opposed to the usual initiatives aimed at decolonizing education, mainly engaged in negative deconstructing actions, HAB has, from the onset, prioritized the exploration of new, creative – and therefore positive – methods of knowledge transmission. It has done so by seeking to transcend institutional fragmentations of knowledge by engaging headstrong with communal local experiences, encountered especially in societies where the import from Europe of the university model never fully overwhelmed other more traditional modes of knowledge and their acts of transmission. For this reason, it

was necessary for the programme to start with concrete areas of lived/experienced knowledge, rooted in human activities, regardless of their situation, location, and backgrounds. These were the four 'sites of knowledge' that are food, space, words, and making. Around these inclusive, universal – and therefore humanistic – thematic frameworks (to which some others were added: e.g., health, death, etc.), different forms of enquiry, including those considered most specialised or scientific, could be mobilised in a way that they would regain their true role and function in the service to society, and not the other way round. By definition, an initiative like that of HAB is fundamentally experimental and experiential. It often takes unexpected forms of action. It is fundamentally subversive yet always constructive.

Perhaps its most important and lasting legacy is HAB's demonstration of the need

for any academic institutional undertaking to allow for an open, institutionalised space of inter-cultural, inter-disciplinary and inter-sectorial intellectual experiment. This is also one of the best justifications for IIAS's existence as it stands today, beyond its original narrow Area Studies assignment. This spirit of intellectual experimentation provides an institute like IIAS the kind of multi-functional facilitating purpose at the intersection of the acts of research, education, dissemination, community building, and civic engagement. IIAS owes a lot to HAB for its unsettling questioning and its constant reminder of necessary self-reflexivity in regard to what it can achieve for the academic and civic community as a whole.

Philippe Peycam, is Director at IIAS [p.m.f.peycam@iias.nl](mailto:p.m.f.peycam@iias.nl)



## What Kind of World Do We Want, and How Do We Create It?

Jody Benjamin

I am currently on the cusp of becoming a tenured faculty member at my home university. I think often about what this milestone means in a country where legislators of the past once made it illegal for my enslaved ancestors to learn to read; and where those today try to erase their predecessors' tracks. Less than five percent of tenured faculty today are, like me, black. The number of tenured positions is currently on the decline in the United States, while contingent, part-time, adjunct, short-term contract teaching positions proliferate. Doors are closing. Please mind the gap.

These issues pose questions that are not separate from the "three-lives of a scholar" we are asked to consider in this provocation, but rather sit close to the heart of the matter. What kind of world do we want, and how do we create it? Knowledge "production" in the academy has long been disciplined by the dictates of capital that seeks merely to reproduce the dominant social order. Outside the

academy, politicians clamor not for an education that opens new possibilities for human well-being, but rather for an education that continually rehearses hagiographies of power. I would argue that this remains largely true whether one resides in the (allegedly) post-imperial Global North or the (allegedly) post-colonial Global South. Meanwhile Black intellectual traditions (radical, feminist, queer, anti-colonial, etc.) have long pushed against such narrowing of educational purpose. They teach us the importance of imagination, collaboration, and grit over individualized expertise, status and privilege hoarding. They also insist that everyday people outside the academy know things too. The goal has not been to uphold disciplinary boundaries, national borders, and institutional barriers, but rather to transcend them. This is difficult work. The stakes are high but, as I suggested above, they always have been.

Jody Benjamin,  
University of California,  
Riverside, USA



Left: A grandmother from Lodai massaging Nicolas' son to soothe his motion sickness. (Photo courtesy of Nicolas Bautès)

## On Intimacy in the Field of One's Research

Nicolas Bautès

As academics, whose main social function lies in the combination between research and teaching activities, we are often confronted with the judging gaze of many. Our daily life is punctuated by such interjections that cast doubt on our social utility, on our ability to help students find jobs and build their future, or even on the relevance of a particular course, or on the relevance of our courses to the job market. Behind these doubts lie some of the major issues at stake in our professions, in our educational and ethical commitments to promoting knowledge, fair learning, and to provide keys to understanding the world.

We often approach this world by conducting surveys, so-called qualitative, for they bring us into contact with social situations and people from whom we draw the elements that will enable elaborating - before transmitting - the means of understanding - before acting on - the world. This intrinsic relationship in the social science researcher's approach could be perceived, from the outside, as a banal one. However, when endowed with the caution, respect, and systematism inherent to any proper social (scientific) approach, it turns out to be a truly human (educational) experience. It strongly shapes a profession and builds the very fabric of the social sciences.

Research is at the very heart of a scholar's life because it brings together,

often in intimate situations, individuals from different social positions, career paths, and intentions. The example taken in *Earth as object*<sup>1</sup> illustrates the permeability between the lives we live as researchers and those we present as humans. The encounter with the so-called Other, is made up of these moments of sharing intimacy, daily, life and confidences which, after a delicate process of distancing and analysis, build in meaning which, without constituting a directly mobilisable educational resource, is an important modality of transmission of knowledge. It is also a core feature of social positioning and shapes the scholar's relation to the world. Namely, to be able to consciously address difference, aspiration, regrets, and projections into the future, all the aspects which make the social sciences not just an informed and aesthetic gaze, but rather a truly political relationship with the living world. That way could be a step into the long process toward decolonizing education.

Nicolas Bautès,  
University of Caen, France  
French Institute of Pondicherry, India

### Notes

- 1 Nicolas Bautès, "Earth as Object," *Storytelling Repository, Humanities Across Borders*, December 20, 2019, <https://humanitiesacrossborders.org/blog/earth-object>



Fig. 1 (left): Artisan Evelyne Bassène presenting the manufacturing process of clay pottery from Casamance, Senegal to participants of the Craft as Method workshop. (Photograph courtesy of Aarti Kawlra)

## Bringing Back Our Perceptual World

Jyothi Thirivikraman

Upon returning from the *Craft as Method* workshop and the HAB meeting, I began reading "An Immense World" by Ed Yong about the hidden realms of animal senses. The book uses the concept of *Umwelt*; "an *Umwelt* is specifically the part of those surroundings that an animal can sense and experience – its perceptual world."<sup>1</sup>

Reflecting upon the concept as an academic at Leiden University College (LUC) who lives and works in The Hague, *Umwelt* means knowledge. Understandings of where knowledge resides and whose knowledge is valued are based on a hierarchy of knowledge with universities as the pinnacle of all repositories of knowledge. This sense of knowledge being the exclusive domain of universities, ignores other types of knowledge.

This was evident during the *Craft as Method* workshop. Learning about the process of acquiring clay for pottery is a lesson in lived realities of climate change and geography [Fig. 1]. Determining which glass pieces can be combined to make glass beads is a lesson in chemistry. Learning how to look for indigo plants, dry them and dye cloth are lessons in biology, botany, geography, and chemistry. However, the practitioners

of these crafts do not call it such. And further, we in academia do not value this knowledge. The *Craft as Method* workshop was an opportunity to expand and share our *Umwelts* of knowledge, both as experience and perception of the world around us.

For academics, to proactively rethink where knowledge resides is to expand the doors of the universities. For craft practitioners, it is essential to have their stories and knowledge both valued and understood regardless of their location in surprising, even most mundane, everyday spaces, outside the haloed portals of universities. It is important that we have discussions on the place of universities in society and how universities engage with their wider community(ies).

Jyothi Thirivikraman,  
Leiden University College (LUC),  
The Hague

### Notes

- 1 *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* (London: The Bodley Head Ltd, 2022), 5.

## Youth Aspirations & Anxieties: Two Stories of Caste Marginalization in Kashmir

Hafsa Sayeed

The stories below are part of my larger research on caste and social exclusion among Muslims in Kashmir. They emanate from the fieldwork conducted in Kashmir with people belonging to marginalised caste communities, such as Sheikhs and Hanjis.

Rasheed was a school dropout because he suffered through a discriminatory pedagogic space where his body was not seen as authentic enough to exist. Rasheed articulated his capacity to aspire through an economic vocabulary, where an economic means to a dignified life upheld dignity and meaning. His aspirations sought an immediate economic recourse that could offer him and his family a sustainable means of income. Rasheed's parents work as *Safai Karamcharis* (sanitation workers) at the municipality, and demand institutionalization of sweeping jobs for the Sheikh community. It is seen as a way to access formal employment. However, Rasheed does not resonate with such aspirations. He wants to take out a loan, buy an auto rickshaw, and drive it. His anxieties rested on a stringent reminder of textual Islamic egalitarianism, where he is equal to all other Muslims

despite his caste and class identity. Rasheed reminded me that despite their community being the cleaners of Kashmir, the society does not extend the much-deserved respect to the Sanitation Workers: "Are we not Muslims? We are all equal in the eyes of Allah, and we clean the society, yet should we be discriminated against like this?"

In yet another district named Bandipora, by the banks of Wular, is a village where the Hanjis live. Hanjis are a marginalized community who are also the fishmongers of Kashmir. They traditionally lived in boats and believe that they are the descendants of Noah. I met a girl there in the ghettoized village of Rubeena. She had completed her Bachelor's from the District College. Her aspirations are reflected through her endeavors of imparting education to the children of her community in the village. Rubeena constantly navigated her anxieties on the borders of the caste, class, and spatial identity that defined her. She told me, "If a Hanji family gains upward mobility, and are educated, yet while searching for a match for marriage, most families find it difficult to overlook the caste identity."

Hafsa Sayeed, IIT Bombay, India



## Real World Challenges and Academe

Neelam Raina

In a post pandemic world, we start to rebuild our communities, economies, societies, and we gather lessons learned. One big thing that stands out is our need to be more open to new ideas, approaches, and thoughts - to truly be interdisciplinary. No global challenges that we face can be addressed or resolved without this way of thinking. As researchers and practitioners, we see a clear need to dissolve, resolve, and build bridges between subjects and disciplines and the word 'interdisciplinary' becomes fashionable again.

But what does it mean to be interdisciplinary, intra, and transdisciplinary?

And is it even possible? We need to rethink the way we write and publish, which is a challenge. We need to rethink the way we evaluate and reward interdisciplinary work, the way we study and examine our doctoral work, the way we create departments, schools, and teaching curriculum as well as what we define as innovation in these spaces.

How can we travel the journey of extremely specific expertise towards a PhD and yet be able to broaden out its value and use to communities and the larger world? How do we weave in global challenges and their extensive inter-sectional inequalities? How do we steer clear of replicating knowledge and power hierarchies? How does what we do today impact how we will be able to think and live with the technology that comes at us from all directions? How do we harness our creative energies and our understanding of ethics and principles of equality and equity in everything we do?

Neelam Raina,  
Middlesex University London,  
United Kingdom



Fig. 1 (left): An A.I.-generated image based on a text prompt of a swamp of presentness. (Image courtesy of Surajit Sarkar)

Fig. 2 (below): Image posted to the social media of the author's colleague, holding a sketch of her grandfather, "Artist Namboodiri," by G. Aravindan.

## On Digital Engagement, Sameness, and Our Ability to Discern

Surajit Sarkar

For researchers and students, digital engagement continues everyday, during and off work. A text-prompt A.I. artwork of a swamp of presentness is filled with digital sameness [Fig. 1]. My apprehension emerges from this techno-sensorially enhanced presentness affecting our ability to discern. Everything is equivalent in this mediation, a throwback to the time digital technologies were held by default a democratic tool. Today, as billions record their thoughts in public, the echo chamber of social media is an imperfect mirror to reality, its biases now making the swamp of presentness more difficult to disengage.

Reflecting upon the moment needs knowledge of background, structure and the dynamic between them. It is difficult, more risky when surrounded by the provocations of presentness. In the teaching-learning world of the humanities, a route is sometimes made by holding dear the comfort zone and associated risk averse imaginations. Subverted by the consumerism of objects, trends, and ideas, it becomes near impossible to imagine an autonomous professional, leave alone be one. Between discipline and subject, specialisation and area, it can feel almost dangerous to break the mould. Exercising self-control, also known as self-censorship, becomes a laudable public act.

On the other hand, there are those who are struck with ennui, an overwhelming need to escape the presentness. A couple of hours ago, I saw on the social media of a 30 year old colleague, a post on the passing away

of 97 year old 'Artist Namboodiri,' legendary painter from Kerala. It is a sketch by him of G Aravindan, iconoclast filmmaker, who had died even before my colleague was born. It is a family treasure, taken out to be shared, this time on social media. Her hand holds the crumpled paper down, as she takes the picture, a silent acknowledgement of listening to those who have trudged through the swamp before [Fig. 2].

I am glad that some are looking back from the present and making their own connections to the past. It's a long way home, but it is the only way.

Surajit Sarkar,  
Ambedkar University  
Delhi, India



Left: The teak pillars of U-Pein Bridge along Taungthaman Lake in Myanmar. (Photo courtesy of Zin Mar Latt)

## On Place-Based Teaching and Learning

Zin Mar Latt

In the Academic Year 2019-2020, I taught General Anthropology (Anth-1101) to first year students. My colleagues and I, as part of Humanities Across Borders programme and in conversation with Dr Aarti Kawlra, re-looked and re-examined the course outline of General Anthropology in 2018-2019 to make it more connected with the world. Our idea has been to combine the classroom and fieldwork to show how the concepts of general anthropology that the students learn in the class can be connected with the world around them using code words. As extensions of the fieldwork, the students analyse the learnings from the fieldwork with what they learn in the classroom and the theoretical concepts.

With the intention of revising the course of General Anthropology (Anth-1101), I adopted the HAB approach to explore everyday practices, poems, corpuses, and oral histories using U-Pein Bridge situated on Taungthaman Inn as a site of meaning and knowledge.

In the middle of February 2020, the students visited U-Pein Bridge, situated near Taungthaman village by taxi. Their objective was to find out whatever they could - stories, experiences, lores, etc., related with the word concept of their choice.

When I asked the students to list terms connected with intangible and tangible heritage in anthropology, they identified: belief, norms, oral history, relationships, values, practice, symbols, etc.

During the discussion time in the class, a student, Aye Phyu Cynn Thant, described the way they connected code/concept words with the community thus:

When we arrived at the U-Pein Bridge, our group noticed a range of things that

we identified under tangible culture. They are U Pein Bridge, different kinds of crops like sunflowers, beans, corn, boats, and stalls of shops, dirty water, fortune tellers, teak poles used to build U Pein Bridge and visitors.

Conversely, we also learned what intangible culture is after we interviewed the informants. Some of the significant intangible cultures that we observed were visible through the voices of the community members, the bells hanging on the ropes outside the huts,<sup>1</sup> beliefs, worship and behaviour of the informants.

Two additional concepts were added - historical space and livelihood. Given the departure from traditional way of teaching, this experiential exploration of anthropological terms, helped the students to practically connect with what they had learned in the classroom. When I used to teach these concepts, the students had not internalised them. But this time, there was a difference and it was evident in the notes that they collected from the community living near the U-Pein bridge.

Zin Mar Latt,  
University of Mandalay,  
Myanmar

### Notes

- 1 In Upper Myanmar, as part of the novitiation ceremony, the parents of children who will change novicehood rent bullock carts with decorated cows with hanging bells to pick novices up to go around the village and then to pay respect to the pagoda and finally to worship the guardian spirit (Nat).

## The Challenge of Sustaining Partnerships within the HAB West African Platform

Mohomodou Houssouba

At the launch of HAB in 2017, four West African institutions constituted the West African platform: Institute of African Studies (Ghana), National Institute of Social Sciences (Burkina Faso), Institute of Humanities (Mali) and the Laboratory of Analysis of Societies and Powers / Africa - Diasporas - UGB LASPAD (Senegal). The block enjoyed territorial continuity within an integrated regional community (ECOWAS). HAB was a unique opportunity to create or boost cooperation among the four institutes and eventually extend the network to others. All expressed an interest in holding periodic meetings in the different countries. These would be occasions to stage events that bring the results of research and exchange closer to the larger campus. Departing from academic-style presentations was a shared desire, so experiential workshops, exhibitions, and

interactive podiums were considered more adequate formats. Road trips would offer the opportunity to bring students, teachers, and their research into contact with populations along the way.

In this regard, my own bus trip from Bamako to Ouagadougou to meet colleagues at the partner institution in Burkina Faso (September 2017) was both a self-test and part of the study the Ghanaian team was conducting along borderlands. Bus travel was the closest to living the "grassroots" regional or pan-African experience they explored in the neighborhood, at the borders between Burkina Faso, Togo, and Benin. During the overland journey, I was able to talk with people from all over the region, in French, Bambara, and Songhay; a Malian student returning to his campus in Ouagadougou, a Senegalese tailor rejoining his shop after a stay with his family near the border with



## On Walking Libraries and Challenging Conventional Pedagogies

Kojo Opoku Aidoo

The Humanities Across Borders program represents an intellectually and methodologically disruptive and radical departure from the pedagogical practices that I am familiar with.

In the course of developing a humanistic pedagogy, I encountered griot-like figures (migrants in Ghana, Togo, and Benin) during field stints, who build their knowledge through their analyses of how the world is. They are regarded for their reflective philosophical knowledge, as 'walking libraries' with up-to-date knowledge and histories of their communities. With wide-ranging historical

knowledge, they demonstrate unlimited possibilities for the formal educational establishment. They tell their stories from memory extemporaneously, elaborating on actions and events. These experiences challenge the conventional pedagogical paradigms and call for alternative frameworks. The formal classroom setting with its structural limitations and trappings of scripted literacy curriculum can benefit immeasurably from such wise, knowledgeable griot-like figures.

Kojo Opoku Aidoo,  
University of Ghana,  
Ghana

## More Questions Than Answers

Stephen Hamilton

Pictured here is a textile produced in India for the Ghanaian cloth market being sold by Jansen Holland, a Dutch company that sells wax prints and other African textiles. It is a black and white cloth that appears to use a combination of a type of compound weave and floating warps. The patterns are taken from *kente*, a fine handwoven cloth originating in central and southern Ghana.

In contemporary Ghana, *kente* has become a marker of national identity, and among African Americans, *kente* has been adopted as a potent symbol of African pride and is still a luxurious fabric, one reserved for special occasions and surrounded by an air of ceremony and honor. Expensive wax print fabrics may be culturally important, precious, and imbued with a sense of prestige, but they cannot compare to the deep cultural significance placed on *kente*.

The need for Dutch cloth producers to insert themselves into the market for handwoven textiles despite already dominating the market for expensive wax prints resurrects images of longstanding colonial exchanges. The dynamics of these exchanges speak to a long history of Europe's fascination with the African cloth market and the complex ways they have managed



Above: Handloom Cloth woven in south India for the West African market at the Jansen Holland Shop, Tilburg. (Photo courtesy of Stephen Hamilton)

to compete with local cloth production using products made in Europe and India.

This trip to the Jansen Holland shop raises many questions about power dynamics and the control of production and distribution in non-white countries to other non-white countries. Who are Jansen Holland's primary competitors in the production of this handwoven cloth? Are they weaving cooperatives, guilds, and independent artisans in west Africa with nowhere near the amount of capital or resources as a Dutch textile company? Are they Chinese and Indian commercial textile producers who also make printed textiles for African consumers? Who are the Ghanaians buying this fabric? What is the economic situation for the Indian weavers producing this cloth? Are they commissioned by this Dutch company or employed by them? What are the dynamics of their interactions with Indian craftspeople?

Stephen Hamilton,  
Harvard University, USA

## What I Learned at the Saturday Market in Leiden

Orraya Chawnan

The setting of the Saturday Market is a completely different image from the other local shops during the weekdays. It opens twice a week - a small one on Wednesdays, and the main one on Saturdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. It is full of local or foreign products and foodstands (e.g. Mabroek). The nature of the market makes it common to visitors, making the experience worthwhile. People come to shop but also to relax and enjoy their Saturdays with family and friends.

During our walk in the market street, we met this old couple who were sitting and enjoying their food. Their names were Harry and Suze, and both were over the age of 65. They left their house for the markets to spend their Saturday in a fun way. Here, in the lively street, the couple eats "herring", a Dutch specialty, a fish from the North Sea, listening to music from the music box,



Above: Harry and Suze enjoying the music and eating herring. (Photo courtesy of Orraya Chawnan)

and enjoying the scenery. So, for me their experience revealed that the purpose of the market is not only about selling and buying things but it turns a space into a communal and interactive place where people joyfully spend their Saturdays.

Orraya Chawnan  
Chiang Mai University,  
Thailand

Mali, a traveling salesman from Gao trading grain across borders ... With regard to HAB, my arrival in Ouagadougou coincided with the announcement of a four-million-dollar grant awarded to the University of Ghana by the Mellon Foundation, the main sponsor of HAB. The news sparked envious exchanges about advances made by an established and well-connected university like UGH, at Legon.

The institute leaders organized formal and informal meetings on campus and in town. I met with scholars of different generations, many with impressive achievements and long-term studies of their own. The four-day stay reinforced my conviction that personal contact would play a key role in strengthening partnerships, and periodic visits and rotating events, for example around indigo in Mali and Burkina Faso, would help build a self-driven regional platform. The MoU signed thereafter between INSS Ouaga and ISH Mali pointed in the right direction. It should soon translate into joint fieldwork and scheduled visits between the two neighbors. In addition, future events like the Krokobitey (Ghana) workshop on crafts and ecotourism in 2018 opened up perspectives for transdisciplinary exchanges and discoveries within the region. Still, the major interregional gatherings would take place outside the region, in Dar es Salaam

and Amsterdam in 2018, Leiden in 2019, and Chiang Mai in 2020. Such venues limited the numbers of West African participants to a select few. The Covid pandemic cancelled physical meetings. The switch to online platforms drew a further wedge between the (digitally) well-resourced institutions and their less-endowed partners.

Looking back on this period, the activities conducted in the four countries did not coalesce into a dynamic shared platform at the regional level. Does that mean it's all lost? Not necessarily, as I think of the "Crafts as Method" workshop held in Saint-Louis in Senegal in November 2022. With scholars and highly skilled practitioners coming from Ghana, Mali, Senegal, and other continents, it demonstrated the potential for building a productive West African core around indigo, textile, bead, pottery, for example, to get in conversation with other African regions, Asia, Latin America, and so on. So, while the aftertaste of unfulfilled promise lingers, there is still time for a new momentum in the regional platform.

Mohomodou Houssouba,  
University of Basel,  
Switzerland

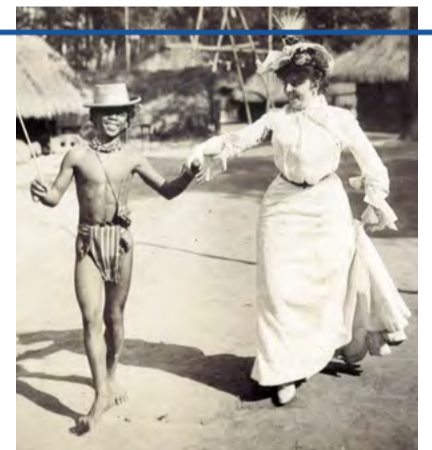
## Recovering the Story of Passive/Insignificant Faces in the Colonial Visual Archive

Enrico Joaquin Lapuz

Pictured on the right is a young boy from the Igorot ethnic group of the Philippines, as he performs the cakewalk, a popular dance of the time, with Austrian-American opera singer Mrs. Wilkins. At a glance, the picture could be interpreted purely from a propagandic perspective, pushing the American ideal of "benevolent assimilation" in showing the positive impact of Western civilization on the savage Filipinos. During the fair, Mrs. Wilkins had taught several singing lessons for Igorot children, with the children having performances of American songs like "My Old Kentucky" in front of exhibitgoers. James Gilbert in his book *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* argued that the interaction captured could be seen as a glimpse into cross-cultural interaction with 'native' peoples through pop culture, molding and shaping the unknown & exotic into something more relatable.<sup>1</sup> Wilkins acted as a representation of the American citizen, interacting with the 'savage' and unknown Igorots in the photograph, also adding a level of familiarity to the spectacle.

The caption of this photograph given by the photographer Jessie Tarbox Beals, *Mrs. Wilkins teaching an Igorot boy the cakewalk at the 1904 World's Fair*, also perpetuates this by placing the singer as the active participant in the exchange and the point of focus, with the Igorot boy (one of her students) acting as a passive receptacle to receive her knowledge. This is on top of a lack of a name given for the Igorot boy, indicating that what was more important was the act of being taught the cakewalk instead of who it was being taught to. To this day the name of the boy is still unknown, despite appearing in other photographs and this particular photo being on the cover of books and websites that talk about the history of the fair.

Interpretations like these look at the photograph beyond what it initially



Above: A photograph of an Igorot boy wearing a bahag (loincloth), a top hat, and cane while dancing with Mrs. Wilkins, who is dressed in white, during the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals (1870-1942) and retrieved from the online collection of the Missouri Historical Society.

presented, but in doing so still put the colonial power in the center as the active in this exchange. The American perspective is placed as the focus, when more could be done to enrich the story of the young Igorot.

What was his name? How did the boy feel about this dance? Igorots performed for fairgoers their own cultural dances, such as the celebratory *ballangbang*. In the dance, men played gongs and set the tempo while the women performed the actual dancing. With the cakewalk also being performed in celebrations, did he find similarities to the movement as he takes the lead in the picture, hence the enjoyment on his face? Did he know about the history of the dance, or if so, would he feel different about performing it?

Enrico Joaquin Lapuz,  
IIAS, The Netherlands

### Notes

- 1 James Burkhardt Gilbert, *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 152.





1.



2.

# IIAS and Surabaya

## A Portrait of Knowledge Sharing across Continents

Rita Padawangi and Paul Rabé

Fig. 1: Prof. Mohammad Nasih, Rector of Universitas Airlangga. (Photo by Ari Trismana, July 2023)

Fig. 2: Dr. Rita Padawangi, Coordinator of Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET). (Photo by Ari Trismana, July 2023)

Fig. 3: Mr. Rizal Aries, Community Leader at Kampung Peneleh, RT 04 RW 04. (Photo by Ari Trismana, July 2023)

IIAS's engagement with the city of Surabaya in East Java, Indonesia, formally commenced in December 2017 with the organization of two events by the IIAS Cities Cluster, in collaboration with local partners: (1) the "River Cities in Asia" workshop of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA), held at the Airlangga University (UNAIR) Faculty of Humanities; and (2) the first workshop of the Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET), held in the Surabaya neighborhood (*kampung*) of Peneleh.



3.

Today, the IIAS-Surabaya relationship has blossomed into a fully-fledged partnership, involving also broader initiatives, including the new Airlangga Institute of Indian Ocean Crossroads (AIIOC) and the joint organization, with UNAIR, of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in the city in July-August 2024.

This article comprises a collection of narratives collected in July 2023 from academics, institutional partners, and communities in Surabaya about their perspectives on collaborative knowledge sharing with IIAS.

### In the beginning... neighborhoods and rivers

When the Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET) started in 2017, Surabaya was one of the six cities in the region that had a team of researchers and community partners in the program. SEANNET was an integrated initiative of research and pedagogy, with active engagement of communities on the ground. The local anchor of SEANNET in Surabaya was UNAIR Faculty of Humanities member Adrian Perkasa,

a historian who eventually went to Leiden University in 2019 to pursue his doctorate.

The first SEANNET workshop took place in Surabaya in December 2017, at the same time as the UKNA- and IIAS-supported "River Cities in Asia" workshop, which brought together scholars working on the river-city relationship in various countries of the region. The workshop was inspired by Surabaya's geographical location but resonated widely throughout Asia. The meeting shaped a book project published by the Asian Cities series of Amsterdam University Press in 2022, entitled *River Cities in Asia: Waterways in Urban Development and History*, edited by Rita Padawangi, Paul Rabé, and Adrian Perkasa.

### Perspectives on broader collaboration

Fast-forward six years, and today the IIAS-Surabaya relationship is a multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder partnership, with UNAIR at its center.

The Rector of UNAIR, Prof. Mohammad Nasih, will be the institutional host of the International Convention of Asia Scholars

(ICAS) in Surabaya in 2024 – a large event that will stimulate activities across the city, in the spirit of the "city as campus" [Fig. 1]. According to the Rector, Surabaya's hosting of ICAS, as the flagship event of IIAS, is part of the process of a continuously growing collaboration.

The working relationship between IIAS and UNAIR has intensified in recent years through ground research projects, educational activities, and community engagements, both through institutional connections and roles of individual researchers. "IIAS has actively contributed in many aspects, especially research, and IIAS has also contributed in community development, community services," said Prof. Nasih.

Community leaders at Kampung Peneleh, the SEANNET research site in Surabaya, corroborated that view. One of the activities was "kampung mapping, starting from the west side until the east side", as expressed by Mr. Rizal Aries, leader of Kampung Peneleh's neighborhood of RT 04 RW 04 [Figs. 2-3].

Another community leader, Mr. Yulian Zainul Ma'ali from the neighborhood RT 05 RW 03, testified [Fig. 4]: "For us, SEANNET is very helpful. It enables us to meet with people from overseas, students, and support

our local economy. Such visits empowers our small businesses, for example, the foreign visitors could get to know local Peneleh-Surabaya culinary tradition. So they could enjoy the delicacies, while getting to know the heritage buildings in Peneleh."

IIAS's work through SEANNET in Surabaya has also reached beyond the academic community. Urban Sketchers Surabaya, for example, is a community of artists, architects, and others from diverse backgrounds who come together for their love of sketching urban spaces. "Urban Sketchers Surabaya (USS)'s collaboration with SEANNET started in 2019, we had an idea, a concept, to conduct a series of sketches that integrate tradition, heritage, and unique activities in Peneleh as a settlement," said Mr. LK Bing, leader of USS [Fig. 5]. "The activity was really memorable because usually we only make sketches of buildings and atmospheres, separate from the interesting stories."

IIAS's collaborative endeavor in Surabaya intensified in recent years as SEANNET, UKNA, and – more recently – the Africa-Asia initiative converged at UNAIR. In 2023, the Rector of UNAIR decreed the formation of the Airlangga Institute of Indian Ocean





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Fig. 4: Mr. Yulian Zainul Ma'ali, Community Leader at Kampung Peneleh, RT 05 RW 03. (Photo by Ari Trismana, July 2023)

Fig. 5: Mr. LK Bing, artist-architect, Leader of Urban Sketchers Surabaya (USS). (Photo by Ari Trismana, July 2023)

Fig. 6: Dr. Lina Puryanti, Director of Airlangga Institute of Indian Ocean Crossroads (AIIOC), Universitas Airlangga. (Photo by Ari Trismana, July 2023)

Fig. 7: Dr. Philippe Peycam, Director of IIAS, with Dr. Lina Puryanti, Director of AIIOC. (Photo courtesy of PKIP UNAIR, May 2023)

Fig. 8: SEANNET Coordinator Dr. Rita Padawangi with local Principal Investigator of SEANNET Surabaya Awang Firmansyah, Yulian Zainul Ma'ali, and Mr. Rizal Aries.



8.

Crossroads (AIIOC). Prof. Nasih, Rector of UNAIR, acknowledged IIAS's support in the shaping of AIIOC: "From our collaborative initiative, and unrelenting support from IIAS, Universitas Airlangga formed and developed a strategic unit (AIIOC), that, *insha Allah*, will join in contributing to knowledge-building, in collaboration with IIAS."

AIIOC at UNAIR embodies that collaborative spirit by engaging faculties from different disciplines. AIIOC brings together the Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, and Faculty of Public Health of UNAIR to be actively involved in the day-to-day running and strategic planning of the institute. "In shaping AIIOC, forming infrastructure, IIAS really helped us to build a very strong foundation, how to start the institution, not from somewhere that we don't know, but we really start with the very good structure. We know how to do," says Dr. Lina Puryanti, the founding director of AIIOC [Fig. 6]. Dr. Puryanti, currently also the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, actively mentions the indispensable roles of Vice-Deans of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, the Faculty of Public Health, and the Faculty of Medicine, all

of which are structurally important in the running of AIIOC currently and will remain so in the future.

AIIOC at UNAIR will be the key institution in carrying out the organizing of ICAS 13 in Surabaya in 2024. "It's an honor for us, for Universitas Airlangga, to be trusted to host the international convention, the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)," says Prof. Nasih. Realizing ICAS as an important responsibility but also opportunity, Dr. Puryanti expressed: "ICAS as one of the biggest conferences in the world absolutely is a very huge and give any institution that be the host will have a very huge benefit." Prof. Nasih highlights that ICAS aligns with UNAIR's larger strategy. "It aligns with UNAIR's strategy to 'go global', to be a world university, to be on the world stage, to contribute actively in shaping the world civilization positively, one that is productive, and glorious."

ICAS 2024 will manifest such spirit of collaboration. "ICAS in Surabaya will be designed as the con-fest, conference-festival, so this is a non-traditional conference with people [not] only attending panels within classrooms, but we are also trying to make the conference really

engaged with the society," says Dr. Puryanti. As a continuation of a growing knowledge sharing in Surabaya, ICAS 2024 will integrate existing collaborative efforts that had started from SEANNET and had grown since then [Fig. 7].

There will be high expectations of ICAS 13 in 2024, especially because it is also going to be the first in-person ICAS since COVID-19 shut down global travel for several years. At the same time, it is also an exciting opportunity to re-think the role of academia and to actively engage with communities on the ground. "SEANNET has been really supportive for us ... because SEANNET has been supporting our residents to get to know the outside world, people from other countries," said Mr. Rizal Aries from Kampung Peneleh [Fig. 8].

Mr. LK Bing from Urban Sketchers Surabaya (USS) aspires to continue from an existing relationship with SEANNET as one of the earlier collaborative endeavors facilitated by IIAS in Surabaya: "This (*Peneleh Dalam Sketsa / Peneleh Sketchbook*) is the evidence that recorded our collaboration, Urban Sketchers Surabaya-SEANNET collaboration that was so memorable for us. We hope this collaboration will always continue in the future."

Through the narratives from Surabaya, we have seen how the works of IIAS have touched many communities, from academics to residents to other communities in the city. The experience from Surabaya may be unique, but it serves as an example of how IIAS and its Cities Cluster continues to grow through collaborative knowledge sharing, and through making this sharing a co-constructive effort to equally empower all who are involved.

IIAS's 30th anniversary is a moment in which collaborators also express their aspirations about the future: more intensive collaboration, working hand-in-hand, and carving meaningful memories together through the process.

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# Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

## The 10-year Anniversary of the Dual Degree Program

Elena Paskaleva

The international, post-graduate Dual Degree in 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' is an initiative of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), which since 2013 has been promoting the field of Critical Heritage Studies through courses, workshops, conferences, and publications. The Dual Degree forms part of a broader ambition to decentralize the production of knowledge about Asia by establishing a platform for continuing dialogue between universities located in Asia and beyond. The present institutions involved in the Dual Degree – IIAS, Leiden University Institute for Area Studies, National Taiwan University, Yonsei University (South Korea), and Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia) – have already established a fruitful collaboration in research and teaching. Currently, talks are underway with several universities in Japan, Turkey, and North Africa.

Fig. 2 (right): Online information meeting about the Dual Degree program. (Photo courtesy of Elena Paskaleva)



### Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

Over the last years, IIAS has been intensively engaged with the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and targeted Asian partners in the development of a special master's (and PhD) track in the field of Critical Heritage Studies. Thanks to the fruitful cooperation between all the institutes involved, the MA in Leiden, as part of the MA Asian Studies, is now combined with a parallel series of courses at a number of Asian universities, enabling students to obtain a 'dual degree' at the end of their studies.

The Dual Degree program offers selected graduate students from the participating universities the opportunity to obtain two MA degrees – one from Leiden University and one from a partner university in Asia – and a Certificate for the Dual Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, issued by IIAS.

The program prepares students to work in academic research, spatial planning, museum management, tourism industries, and heritage conservation across Europe and Asia. They study heritage as a means of rethinking relations between Asia and Europe in terms of mutual respect and exchange, and they explore the creative potential of cultural forms and practices. The process of heritage-making entails various forms of conflict over the definitions, ownership, and uses of cultural attributes. Institutional and non-institutional social actors in Asia and Europe are increasingly involved in debating the legitimacy of heritage claims as well as the need to 'safeguard' different expressions of heritage. Furthermore, heritage is being used as a marketable commodity for the sake of tourism.

The institutions involved in the Dual Degree program consider Asia and the

Middle East as a fertile source of both theoretical and methodological insights into the highly contested area of heritage. Since colonial times, European-based concepts and technical approaches to conservation have dominated the understanding of heritage in Asia and the Middle East, in most cases through the top-down imposition of ideas and processes. It is this hegemonic discourse, usually promoted by developmentalist states in Asia and elsewhere, as well as various processes of indigenous response, that the Dual Degree program highlights. The program focuses in particular on the politics of heritage and the questions of its legitimacy. Who controls heritage? What is the role of heritage in the constructed narratives of nationalism? How is heritage being used as a cultural practice to shape discourses on nation-building and nation-branding?

### Growing Student Numbers

When I took over the program in 2015, there were seven students in the first critical heritage class, which was offered only for the track History, Arts and Culture. Since 2021, the program has been open to all MA Asian Studies tracks and specializations of both 60 EC and 120 EC, including a cross-listing with the Research MA programs Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies. As a result, many interested graduate and post-graduate students have been able to attend all heritage-related classes offered at the Faculty of Humanities.

The global pandemic and online teaching posed a very serious challenge to the success of the program. Although in 2021-2022 all classes were offered online or in a hybrid form, the student numbers kept on growing [Fig. 1].

Whenever possible, online information sessions were held. For example, an extremely inspiring meeting was organized with all partner universities on 22 October 2021 [Fig. 2]. For the first time, both students and staff members from Taiwan, Korea, and the Netherlands could exchange ideas about the future development of the program and acquaint themselves with the courses offered at all three partner universities. Forty-five people participated in the online meeting held via zoom. Both Leiden and NTU students presented their MA theses and discussed their ongoing work.

### Fieldwork Trips

Each year the students attending the Leiden MA program go on several fieldwork trips. Usually, the first trip is to the Textile Research Centre (TRC), where Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood introduces the group to the collection and library and also gives a guest lecture on "Textile as Heritage." Some of the heritage students – such as, for example, Francesco Montuori (class 2019-2020) – continued to work as interns for the TRC and as a result of their growing interest in research, switched to the Research MA in Asian Studies, which prepares students for a PhD. A number of heritage students regularly opt for internships at TRC.

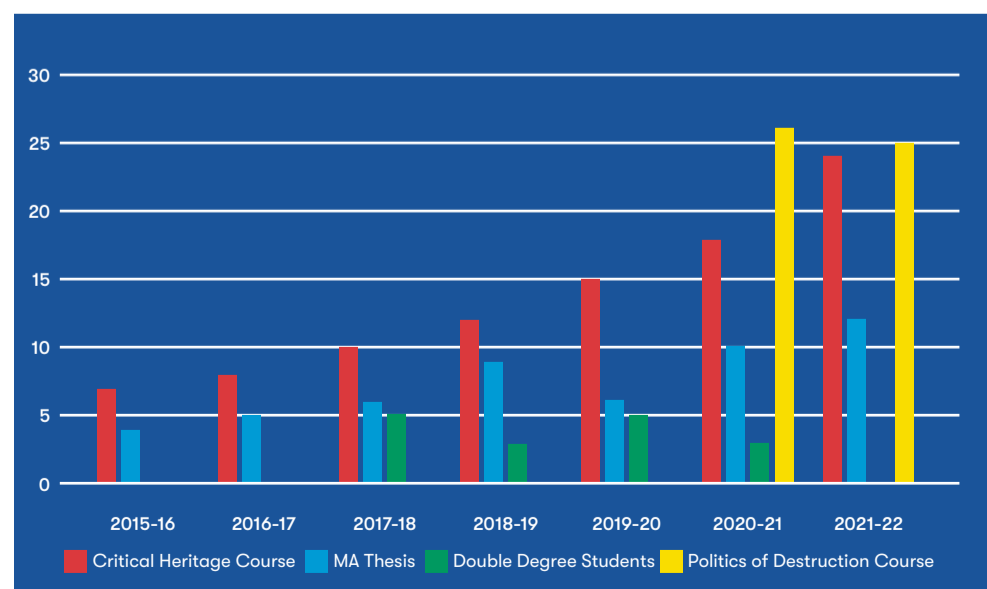


Fig. 1: Growing student numbers in the program 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe.' (Figure courtesy of Elena Paskaleva)





The second fieldwork trip is to the Leiden Heritage Office, where the group is introduced to heritage practices and urban regeneration in Leiden. All students get access to the huge collection of the Leiden archive.

In 2018, the critical heritage students were invited to Morocco by the Leiden Institute in Rabat (NIMAR). Eleven students from Leiden University and 12 Museology students from Mohammed V University shared a learning experience about the complexities of heritage in Morocco. The study trip was led by an entourage of five academic experts with different disciplinary backgrounds, including Philippe Peycam (Director of IIAS), Léon Buskens (NIMAR), Willem Vogelsang (then Deputy Director of IIAS), Elena Paskaleva (assistant professor and coordinator of the Critical Heritage Studies program at Leiden University), and Paul van der Velde (then ICAS Secretary), who all actively participated in the academically stimulating and culturally enriching exchange. It was a five-day immersion in Moroccan architecture, museums, and, most importantly, food. The trip brought us in touch with the multi-faceted aspects of the cultural heritage of a country that is trying to find its own voice. The staff of NIMAR was most helpful.

### New Course #1: 'The Politics of Destruction: Targeting World Heritage'

Several new courses were introduced after 2020. Targeting world heritage sites has led to the deliberate shattering of history and national identity worldwide. Massive

intentional destruction of cultural heritage has been employed in recent decades as a dogmatic tactic of ethnic cleansing and religious persecution. Although cultural heritage is legally protected, and its ruination in times of armed conflict is widely considered a war crime, most of the targeted sites have been considerably damaged and their reconstruction has become a complex political conundrum.

The MA course 'The Politics of Destruction: Targeting World Heritage' gives a voice to the different stakeholders engaged in reconstruction projects and provides a nuanced discussion on the political circumstances that led to the destruction of World Heritage Sites. In addition, the new course acquaints students with the legal framework prohibiting targeted destruction of heritage (e.g., *The Hague Convention of 1954*, *The Geneva Convention Protocol of 1977*, etc.) and introduces them to key concepts of critical heritage studies in the context of transnationalism, globalization, and decolonization.

### New Course #2: 'The Politics of Heritage in the Middle East'

Heritage is always political. Originally a concept coined by the nation-state, heritage has become the object of political appropriation by national and local authorities and stakeholders. Analyzing the dynamic of the various types of public, institutional, and private actors engaged in the current negotiations on heritage practice across the Middle East is the topic of a new course,



Fig. 3 (above): Leiden students in Morocco. (Photo courtesy of Elena Paskaleva)

Fig. 4 (left): Leiden Students at Médersa mérinide, Salé, Morocco. (Photo courtesy of Elena Paskaleva)

Fig. 5 (right): Signing of the MoU between Leiden University, Gadjah Mada University, and IIAS on May 10, 2023. From left to right: Philippe Peycam, Mimi Savitri, and Elena Paskaleva.



entitled 'The Politics of Heritage in the Middle East' in the Leiden Master's program in Critical Heritage Studies.

The political and power practices in the Middle East are crucial to understanding how heritage was romanticized or defined as marginalized in the colonial context. Current attitudes towards cultural heritage can be better understood if they are situated in a historical perspective. That is why the new course offers a special focus on the ways the modern concept of cultural heritage was introduced to the Middle East during the colonial period. The first initiatives to conduct large-scale archaeological expeditions, to start collecting newly-excavated objects, and to initiate restoration campaigns led by European archaeologists, architects, and art historians set the tone for generations to come. As part of global competition among world empires for supremacy over the protection of cultural heritage, the colonial policies behind these projects can be considered an integral part of the overall restructuring of the colonized space across the Middle East.

Political independence after World War II marked the postcolonial states' attempts to build specific national narratives and forge national identities based on the traces of powerful empires. Another trend was to promote popular religious traditions and folklore, considered to be the 'authentic' expressions of the Arab essence that was to define these modern societies. As a counterbalance to these discourses incorporated into state heritage practice, the new course looks at the transformative nature of cultural heritage as derived from individuals and communities who attach meaningful memories to and identify feelings towards the physical traces of their own past.

Cultural heritage – especially its materialization in objects, buildings, and sites – has become a magnet for tourists across the Middle East. While in the 19th century, tourists were fascinated by the constructed idea of an

ancient cultural landscape unchanged since Biblical times, the controversial questions of authenticity have been negotiated at present by preserving the material traces of the past and by reconstructing heritage sites that have been deliberately shattered by war conflicts or looting.

### Scholarships at Leiden University

Leiden University has been extremely supportive in accommodating the needs of the Dual Degree. We are very happy with the extension of the Leiden University Excellence Scholarship (LEXS) to Dual Degree students from all partner institutions. Annually, Leiden University provides a number of LEXS scholarships that reduce the total tuition to the statutory tuition fee, which allows incoming Dual Degree students to study in Leiden.

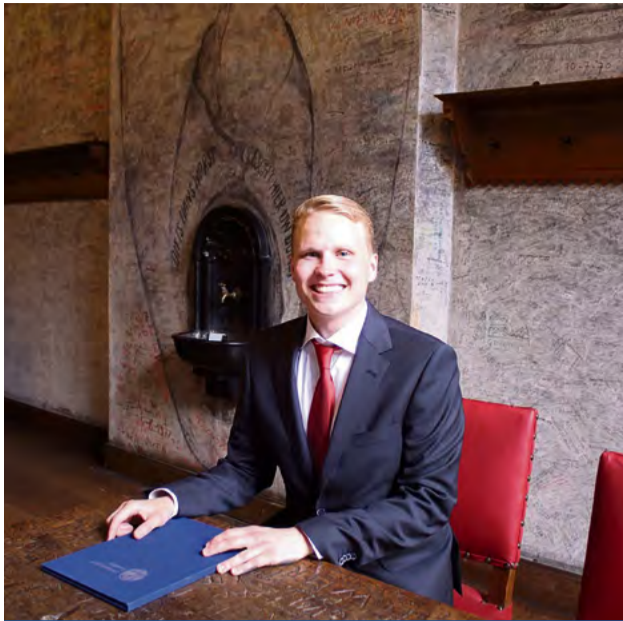
In addition, all Dual Degree students receive a monthly scholarship of €500 for the duration of 10 months from the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). This scholarship is arranged upon successful admission at Leiden University and all partner universities.

### Certification

As far as certification is concerned, upon successful completion of the Dual Degree Program, students obtain the Leiden University MA diploma in Asian Studies. In addition to that, they obtain the master's diploma from the partner university and a separate certificate for the Dual Degree Program in 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe,' which is issued by IIAS and added to their MA diploma during the graduation ceremony.

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Above: Edwin Pietersma in the 'Sweat Room' of the Leiden University Academy Building, where after graduation he was allowed to sign his name on the wall, in accordance with university tradition.

Right: Visiting Kaohsiung, Taiwan, with family.

Below: Visiting National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, Taipei.

(All photos courtesy of the author)



## 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe': A Reflection of 2021 and Beyond

Edwin Pietersma

In 2021, the Dual Degree program 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' celebrated a special five-year anniversary. Existing since 2013, the program was overhauled in 2016 to allow students from Yonsei University and National Taiwan University (NTU) to study at Leiden via this program and to have Leiden University students study there in turn. As the second Leiden student to study at NTU, I have shared my experiences previously in *The Newsletter*<sup>1</sup> and on the IIAS podcast.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, I was asked by Philippe and Ute to write a report and reflection on the significance of the program and the advantages and challenges of the program to date. I was happy to comply and wrote a preliminary report for the institute, based on a previous report by Meredith Holmgren (2011), online research about existing programs on heritage and critical heritage studies worldwide, and a reflection by participating (former) students. Given the 10-year anniversary of the degree (2013-2023), I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the results of this unpublished report.

In 2021, at least 108 programs that deal with heritage as a minor or major were identified.<sup>3</sup> Here, a clear discrepancy

is noticeable: while in Latin America, no programs were identified, Europe alone had 66 programs (or 61 percent of the total), with 32 in the United Kingdom and nine in the Netherlands. Both countries have the advantage of providing programs in English and tend to teach conservation as a discipline. In Asia, eight programs were identified, of which half focused on cultural management.<sup>4</sup> In African countries, the majority of the seven programs focus on heritage as a source of economic development. In North America, 17 programs were identified, of which all except one are in the United States and specialize in conservation and cultural heritage management. Almost all identified programs do not engage with critical heritage studies, nor do they implement a cross-cultural perspective. This is what makes the Dual Degree unique: a combination of Critical Heritage Studies as a discipline combined with Area Studies and gaining experience in two continents.

At the time, the report leaned on the experience of students, either by interview or published texts in *The Newsletter*. These experiences show untapped potential and a need for better communication. For

Leiden students, they lacked specialization in heritage studies or courses in English at Yonsei and NTU. Furthermore, the indication of graduating in one year proved to be difficult due to different academic structures. Students coming to Leiden from Korea or Taiwan noted the lack of Europe as a case study in the program at Leiden and missed the exemption of credits Leiden students could use at Yonsei or NTU.

After the report, IIAS and the universities took these comments seriously: communication has improved, such that students have been made more aware of the different academic cultures and expectations. At Leiden, the courses on heritage have expanded more broadly to also discuss Europe and Central Asia, and new cooperations with Indonesia and North Africa are sought. At NTU and Yonsei, extra courses on heritage politics have been added that allow students to research other regions such as Southeast Asia, and communication has improved overall.

Therefore, I am optimistic about the future of the Dual Degree. It seems it is not only critical of heritage studies, but also of itself. With more opportunities and partners being developed, the program will only

become more popular and promote a better experience for all future students, and no doubt it will continue to be a unique place to question the discourses of heritage.

Edwin Pietersma, Bansomdejchaopraya Rayabhat University, Thailand

### Notes

- 1 Pietersma, Edwin. 2021. "The Double Degree in Critical Heritage Studies. A most rewarding challenge." *The Newsletter* #88 (Spring). Available at: <https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/double-degree-critical-heritage-studies-most-rewarding-challenge>
- 2 *The Channel* (podcast), Episode 17, "Critical Heritage Studies with Edwin Pietersma." Available at: <https://www.iias.asia/the-channel/critical-heritage-studies>
- 3 These numbers are based on the findings by the Association for Critical Heritage Studies, as well as extra online research, which therefore do not necessarily represent a whole image.
- 4 The Dual Degree program, as it was initiated by IIAS, has counted towards the Netherlands programs for my purposes, not towards those of South-Korea or Taiwan at the time.





Left: Thania Petersen, *Remnants 4* (2016)  
While travelling to Surat in India, the artist visited the mausoleums of the men who forcibly moved her people from Indonesia to the Western Cape. The city of Surat was a directorate of the Dutch East India Company in the 17th century. The Dutch and British mausoleums in this city reveal power-hungry competition and the exaggerated grandeur that far exceeds the simplicity of the grave markers these men would have received back home.

Strikingly regal and statuesque, Petersen plants herself upon these graves, trailing a red train behind her that symbolically dredges up violence that this imposing architecture attempts to conceal ... she takes over this colonial space with a towering splendour and inclines the remnants of her past towards renewed inner strength.

common than often assumed within the African context. Being of both Khoisan and Malay background, the Africa-Asia connections have always been evident and tangible. My interests in the arts, cross-cultural communication, and identity have intersected with my academic interests on foreign policy, culminating in where I currently find, in the fascinating and exciting role of Africa-Asia Coordinator at IIAS.

With years of experience in policy advising, advocating for humanist principles in what are often seen as the 'harder' sciences of economics and political science has enabled me to bring the contextual and human element to the often decontextualized and clinical approaches of foreign policy in Europe. Positionality is key, and we are all informed by and through our contexts, exchanges, and experiences.

It is therefore with great excitement that I embark on this new role that enables me to connect my professional and personal interests, in an environment that is dynamic, ever-changing, and full of new knowledge to explore. This Africa-Asia space is meant to further the existing 'new' axis of knowledge that IIAS has built, with more interactive engagement, a community for exchange, and exploration and dialogue.

To showcase the heritage of many in Africa, which directly speaks to the Africa-Asia connections, I hope that you as readers will enjoy the poem written by Jeanine Benjamin, exploring her own African-Asian (and beyond) roots, and the complexities they have engendered with her own identity *vis-à-vis* society. This story is not unique, but it gives us a view into these very real entanglements. Complementing this is the awe-inspiring work by Capetonian artist Thania Petersen. Her piece – *Remnants 4* (2016) – captures the history, triumph, and future of Africa-Asia connections. In the photography series, *Remnants 4* depicts the artist in Surat, India, at the mausoleums of many of the Dutch East India Company's decision-makers who created the orders that would eventually send slaves and political prisoners from Indonesia to the Cape Colony. This series is thought-provoking in its insights into the connections between Africa and Asia, both tangible and intangible.

IIAS's Africa-Asia programme is set to explore these entanglements, past, present, and future, in interdisciplinary and thought-provoking discussions by bringing together scholars, artists, and practitioners who work at these intersections. Importantly, it will also bring together a range of experiences in the Africa-Asia space, where diverging experiences and insights can meet.

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# Africa-Asia: A New Axis of Knowledge

Stacey Links

Key to the Africa-Asia programme of IIAS is bolstering South-South linkages and knowledge production. Bringing this in a way that reverses traditional directions of knowledge sharing to the Global North is crucial to ensure an equitable stake in global knowledge. The Africa-Asia programme therefore sets this mission of inverting traditional modes and directions of knowledge sharing at its core. It has done this since its beginnings, and continues to do so in its flagship conference, 'Africa-Asia, a New Axis of Knowledge.'

It is a great privilege to be able to take the position of Africa-Asia Coordinator at the IIAS. My own research interests have always laid at the intersection of International Relations, South-South engagement, and specifically, China-Africa relations. While much of my focus has

been on foreign policy, my research has always been informed by a context-driven, humanist perspective, particularly insofar as knowledge production is concerned. My personal history has been one of intercultural connections and heritage of Africa and Asia; in fact, a lineage more





Above: AfroAsian fashion campaign for AFI (Photograph courtesy of Ingrid Alice Photography).

## The Challenge of Changing Perceptions of Africa in Thailand: The Importance of Strengthening Institutional Consolidation

Lalita Hanwong

The equator traverses Asia, Africa, and Latin America, leading to several similarities among these continents in terms of natural resources, culture, and a shared historical background characterized by colonialism, politico-economic coercion, and turmoil. Southeast Asia and Africa, united by the legacy of decolonization, have historically maintained positive relations since the Afro-Asian Conference, also known as the Bandung Conference, which took place in Indonesia in 1955, and was predominantly led by leaders from Asia and Africa.

However, the true Global South regions of Southeast Asia and Africa received limited attention after the 1960s. The planned Second Bandung Conference in 1965 never materialized due to the escalation of the Cold War, resulting in international and domestic conflicts across the Southern Hemisphere. Throughout the Cold War period, Southeast Asia was a significant theater of war. The United States, Soviet Union, and China invested substantial efforts and financial resources in Southeast Asia to secure their respective interests. Thailand became a stronghold for the United States in countering the spread of communism in the region, implementing numerous agro-economic development programs as part of its modernization and national development objectives.

Kasetsart University (KU) was established in 1941, first as an agricultural college, in response to the changing developmental landscape in Southeast Asia during the 1940s. Over the past eight decades, the

university has collaborated closely with domestic and international partners to encourage regional and inter-regional academic interactions. Thailand's International Cooperation Agency (TICA) has played a significant role in supporting such exchanges and fostering development cooperation between Thailand, Southeast Asian countries, and Africa. KU has a long-standing history of collaboration and knowledge exchange with African higher education institutions, government agencies, NGOs, and experts in fields related to agriculture, fishery, forestry, and natural sciences. The objective has been to improve people's lives and advance sustainable development.

In 2020, KU established the Africa-Asia Programme (KU-AAP), the first African Studies programme in Southeast Asia. The programme aims to promote African studies in Thailand, foster connections with African partners through interdisciplinary research and education, and to stimulate academic discussions within the country regarding the significance of the "African factor." The ambitious goal of the programme is to create a new knowledge-based community, predominantly between Africa and Thailand.

KU-AAP collaborates with various partners, including the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TICA, and African embassies in Bangkok. In 2021, the programme initiated its first research project which examines political risks in West Africa to support the ministry's decision-making process regarding the establishment of the next Thai embassy in Africa. Additionally, the project

explores business opportunities and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of West Africa from the perspective of the Thai business community.

It's not surprising that Africa presents numerous opportunities for both large corporations and entrepreneurs. Vitamilk, Thailand's leading soymilk producer, has successfully exported soymilk products to Nigeria and Ghana. Extensive conversations with the Thai business community in Africa have revealed a significant potential for Thai products across the entire African continent. Agricultural and food products from Thailand are highly regarded for their reliability and superior quality compared to competitors. However, a major obstacle to direct investment in Africa stems from the scarcity of raw materials, resulting in higher production costs, and indeed a more 'humanistic' understanding of African societies. From the Thai perspective, Africa's strength lies in its abundant labour force, although its full economic potential remains untapped. Despite existing constraints, voices from Vitamilk and other Thai corporations operating in Africa agree that changing perceptions is necessary to facilitate greater investment and stronger connections between Thailand and African countries.

Shifting to the academic perspective, Thai society still possesses a limited understanding of Africa, despite the presence of numerous African athletes in professional and semi-professional football leagues throughout Thailand and ASEAN countries. In Eastern Thailand, where the economy relies heavily on the gem

industry and trade, a solid community of East African gem traders has been formed. There are various ways in which academia can contribute to fostering a better understanding and cultivating positive relationships, not only between Thailand and Africa but also between Southeast Asia and Africa as a whole.

Since the establishment of KU-AAP, discussions on Afro-Southeast Asian connections have been actively pursued in conferences and other initiatives. The Airlangga Institute of Indian Ocean Crossroad (AIIOC) at Universitas Airlangga in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia serves as a commendable example of such activism within Southeast Asian institutions, stimulating dialogues on Africa and strengthening regional ties. Both continents have valuable lessons and experiences to share in an era that requires optimism and collective efforts. Historically, the Thai vision of investing in Africa has been characterized by a give-and-take relationship, with limited opportunities for Thais to learn from their African counterparts due to the geographical distance and alleged stark differences between the two regions. However, this notion has been challenged by the recent launch of the Collaborative Africa-South East Asia Platform (CASAP), aiming to foster cooperation within the Global South community and to reshape the knowledge landscape, which was previously dominated by the North.

By adopting a truly interdisciplinary approach, KU-AAP, AIIOC, and CASAP will serve as catalysts for a new network of collaboration between Africa and Southeast Asia. This collaborative effort will not only transform our universities but also benefit the public and extend beyond academia.

Lalita Hanwong,  
Kasetsart University, Thailand



## Catalysing Africa-Asia Exchanges

Webby S. Kalikiti

I consider it a great honour to have been asked to write something on my long and fruitful relationship with IIAS, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. I was a fellow at IIAS in 2006, courtesy of the International Institute for Social History (IISH), which funded my three-month stay in The Netherlands. Before that year, I was one of the SEPHIS PhD research recipients in 1997. The award allowed me to carry out fieldwork in Vietnam for six months. However, my introduction to Asia started way back in the late 1980's, when a French government scholarship allowed me to work under French experts of Vietnam at the Université Paris 7.

Over the years, that initial contact with IIAS led to a number of critical initiatives that aimed to build academic bridges between Africa and Asia and more recently, linkages between academic institutions in Africa and Southeast Asia.

In 2010, under IIAS's direction, partners in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States started working together on an attempt to conceptualise a capacity-building initiative aimed at promoting the teaching, study, and research on Asia in African universities.

In 2012 and for the first time ever in Africa, IIAS was instrumental in organising a roundtable on 'Asian Studies in Africa' in Chisamba, near Lusaka, Zambia. This meeting discussed how ideas on Asia and Africa, which at the time were somewhat abstract and inchoate, could provide a basis for building capacities in African and Asian Studies in the two continents. Over 30 participants from Africa, America, Asia, and Europe attended the roundtable. IIAS played the most important roles of financing, organising, assisting with logistics, and identifying potential participants. This first meeting resulted in the creation of the Association of Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA).

In 2015, the University of Ghana (in close collaboration with IIAS), organised the first major conference on Asian Studies in Africa. This meeting was attended by over 250 academics, researchers, publishers, and other interested parties. Its great success was largely due to the efforts of IIAS staff and local participants. In 2018, IIAS was once again the key player in yet another A-ASIA conference held in Tanzania, at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. Over 300 academics attended this gathering of Asia scholars.

Meetings in 2020 and 2023 brought academics and researchers together from the Universities of Kasetsart in Bangkok, Thailand; the University of Airlangga (UNAIR) in Surabaya, Indonesia; the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal; the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania; and the University of Zambia. All of these are a result of the instrumental role that IIAS, through its global reach and highly

experienced staff, has played and continues to play in fostering innovative ways of constructing a new architecture of academic contacts and knowledge production through South-South collaborative efforts. The setting up of new centres focused on Africa and the Indian Ocean at Kasetsart and UNAIR, respectively, the establishment of a Centre for Asian Studies at the University of Ghana, and ongoing efforts to set up similar centres in East-Central and West Africa are some of the tangible results of IIAS's catalytic role.

At personal level, my long interaction with IIAS and its staff has resulted in a very fruitful and productive relationship. IIAS has given me opportunities to not only travel but promote A-ASIA in Africa and Asia through participation in conferences and attendance of meetings aimed at promoting academic and research linkages between Africa and Asia, and more recently, between Africa and Southeast Asia.

In 2012, IIAS facilitated my tour of Asia, where I discussed the objectives of A-ASIA, possible areas of collaboration in teaching Africa and Asia, staff and student exchange programmes, and possible research agendas with academic staff and researchers in Singapore and Taiwan. All interactions aimed to seek prospects for the establishment of academic partnerships, postgraduate training for African students, as well as possible signing of MOU's between African and Asian universities. Later in 2012, IIAS made it possible for me to attend the ICAS conference in Macao where, along with other members of A-ASIA, we were able to once more present and discuss A-ASIA's aspirations with eminent scholars of Africa and Asia.

In 2018, I attended ICAS 11 in Leiden, where I participated in a number of panels on Africa and Asia. Later that year, I attended the conference in Tanzania that IIAS and the University of Dar-es-Salaam organised. This conference was very important to me. I presented a paper on Vietnam and Africa, and participated in other panels on Vietnam. As a result of the conference in Dar-es-Salaam and thanks once more to IIAS, later in 2018, I was invited to attend a conference on Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City and Phan Thiet.

From all of these instances, it is clear that IIAS has not only been a major driver of initiatives, but has over the years also acted as a catalyst for the emerging academic interest in Asia on Africa. Personally, IIAS has greatly contributed to my work as an academic and has afforded me opportunities to interact with and establish networks with Asia scholars within and beyond Africa.

Webby S. Kalikiti,  
University of Zambia, Zambia

## As Untitled As We Are (2009)

I cannot be categorized by the simplistic labels you know  
Confusion overwhelms you at the sight of me  
I find pleasure in your intrigue  
At me, the product of the lesser

I am the descendant of the downtrodden  
A mixed masala of all that you oppressed  
The great-great grand daughter of the not so important  
The spawn of the good enough only to labour, to harvest,  
To clean, to exploit  
To lust and rape but not love

I am a striking exotic flower  
Cultivated from seeds of India  
Of St Helena  
Of Malaysia  
Of the Namib Desert  
And natives of the Cape  
And shamefully, of the colonialist seed,  
Forced, as was their nature  
This unspoken piece of history  
I reject

Eons have passed since my people were lowly  
Now I celebrate our innate rhythm  
Our musical talents, our spices  
I celebrate the Arab bump on my nose  
My San stature, my Indian locks  
You stare at my bursting lips  
And lose yourself as my Khoi behind sashays past you

In this world, Pride only exists  
For pedigree and purity  
And royal lineages backdated  
Each privileged generation, under their feet,  
the solidity of a castle, preconstructed.  
Climbing strength unnecessary,  
Their lives' trials effortlessly imagined.

Was it not a greater task and more admirable  
for those whose castles were demolished  
To unyieldingly hold onto the foundation  
And consistently build up, by generations, reconstructed  
Till the zenith is reached

I am a masterpiece  
A mosaic mystery  
Of incense and rain dances and clicks  
Of breyani at funerals and bredies and gemmerbier  
Of Ghoema and Cape Jazz  
And talkap and gutties speel

By your thinking, your mind cannot fathom us  
You oversimplify into conceivable terms  
Naively dismissive, are you  
Intellect, exotic beauty, sensuality, have I

Fittingly, I emerge from the meeting waters  
of Indian and Atlantic  
And rise to the peak of Lions Head  
Not by my own merits  
I have been lifted by those who have gone before me

I stand here  
For me, for my orphaned half-caste grandmother  
For whomever of my tribe are made to feel culturally inferior  
For my people's pride, and yes, are we not an African tribe?

And despite my early life's disadvantage  
I rule, I take, and I conquer  
With you, I smile, but my fighting slave spirit flames  
within my soul  
The rise is inevitable

Jeanine Benjamin,  
South Africa



Above: Participants at the first "Africa-Asia, a New Axis of Knowledge" conference, held in Ghana in 2015.









## Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies (LCIOS)

Mahmood Kooria and Tom Hoogervorst

In early 2017, several Leiden-based Indian Ocean scholars decided to sit together over coffee. The initial aim was simple: to find out what colleagues from different backgrounds were working on. Not long afterwards, the Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies was born, with IIAS as its main hub of activities. During our informal lunch meetings at the IIAS seminar room, typically in the presence of Indonesian culinary delights, we invited visiting scholars to present their ongoing or nearly finished research. Over time, the LCIOS also hosted and participated in Indian Ocean roundtables. In the process, we attempted to create a platform for interested academics, students, and the general public to keep track of this fast-developing area of study. Thus far, most of our events have taken shape around the theme of connections, including in religion, culture, language, colonial history, and socio-economic and environmental problems.

Our first conference was held at the Ashoka University in India on 27-30 August 2019. Titled "Customizing Sharia: Matrilineal Muslims and Islamic Law in the Indian Ocean Littoral," we brought together over thirty scholars from Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America to discuss a topic of transoceanic relevance: the connections and comparative potential of diverse matrilineal Muslim communities in maritime Asia and Africa. As a senior participant noted, in her career that spans across four decades, it was the first attempt to bring such diverse specialists of the same topic under one roof. The conference also hosted a theatre group

of twelve artists from the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Their performance on the intricacies of matrilineal Islam received a standing ovation from the audience.

The pandemic forced us to temporarily organize our activities online. As a happy result, we saw more interaction between scholars – especially from India, Indonesia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Réunion, Singapore – than would have been possible onsite. We decided to use our Zoom classroom to promote new book publications on the Indian Ocean. On popular request, we also organized a roundtable discussion titled *Indian Ocean and Epigraphy* (10 December 2021) to discuss what it means to study epigraphy from an Indian Ocean framework. The connections between the speakers, research topics, and regions were so numerous that we were gently pushed to organize a second roundtable, *Indian Ocean and Epigraphy II* (28 March 2022), to compare multiple experiences on the written heritage of Indian Ocean societies.

As the world slowly opened up, we organized another conference titled "Spiced Islam and Textual Circulations: India, Indonesia and the Indian Ocean," held on 28-29 November 2022 at Universitas Islam Negeri, Jakarta. More than twenty specialists discussed the intellectual and textual circulations between Islamized South and Southeast Asia, exploring their role in socio-cultural formations and transformations. Several participants emphasized that the mystical, ethical, legal, literary, culinary, commercial, and codicological dimensions of textual corpora – in all their diversity –

provided a comparative lens to study cultural contact at large. The vernacularization of Islam in particular proved to be a fascinatingly detailed story of exchanges between different ports. Inspired by the discussions that ensued, we aim to organize a follow-up conference in 23-24 October 2023, focusing on the material cultural aspects of Islamic connections across the Bay of Bengal. The event will be co-organized by Universitas Islam Negeri, the Indonesian International Islamic University, and the Nahdlatul Ulama University of Indonesia, with funding from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.

The centrality of cultural exchanges – many of which remain poorly studied – also prompted us to organize a one-day workshop on a writing tradition from Kerala. Titled "Ponnāni Script versus Arabic Script? Scribal Practices among Muslims of Malabar," the event was held on 19 June 2023 in collaboration with the Centre for Ḥadrami Studies at the Sabeelul Hidayah Islamic College in Malappuram. It foregrounded the impact of plurilingualism on the local scribal and calligraphic traditions. With a dozen specialists from the region and beyond, we explored the intricacies of a vernacular scribal style known in Malayalam as *ponnāni lipi* and in Arabic as *khaṭṭ al-funnāni*. The participants took different critical approaches to comprehend the nuances of this script and its long historical trajectories, relying on textual and material evidence.

Meanwhile, we have benefited from a visit to Europe by Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulkadir,

who had been invited by the African Studies Centre and Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. Mr. Abdulkadir is a poet, imam, and intellectual from Lamu, Kenya, who is known for his critical voice in the face of social ills and injustices. Together with Annachiara Raia, we co-organized a roundtable discussion on commitment, Islam, and social justice in his Swahili poetry. Six invited scholars provided examples from their own fields and areas, followed by responses from Mr. Abdulkadir and finally a double book launch.

The coming year will bring closer collaborations with especially Indonesian institutes. The ICAS 13 conference held in Surabaya in 2024 is a perfect venue to strengthen our ties with existing partners, such as Airlangga University, and to forge new ones. Our long-standing plan to organize Indian Ocean winter schools, to which Covid put an untimely end, might perhaps be revived as well. In the end, it all depends on the input we receive from the growing community of affiliated Indian Ocean scholars around the world.

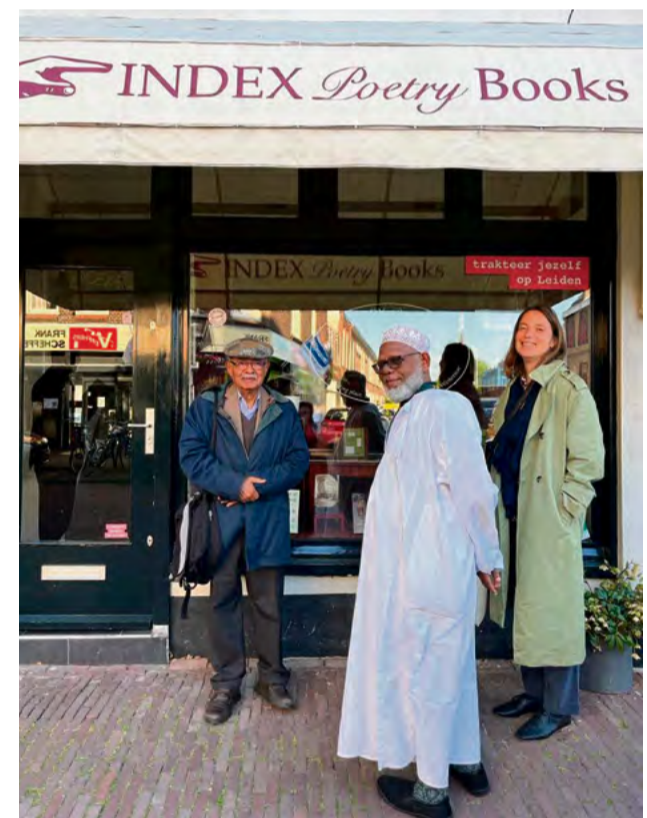
Mahmood Kooria is a Researcher at Leiden University and a Coordinator of the Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies (LCIOS).

Tom Hoogervorst is a Researcher at the KITLV and a Coordinator of the Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies (LCIOS).

<https://www.iias.asia/programmes/leiden-centre-indian-ocean-studies>

Above left: Poet, intellectual, and imam Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulkadir (center), commonly known as Mahmoud Mau, in front of Index Books in Leiden, surrounded by Farouk Topan (left) and Clarissa Vierke (right).

Right: A poetry reading at Index Books in Leiden, marking the release of *In This Fragile World: Swahili Poetry of Commitment* by Ustadh Mahmoud Mau. Left to right: Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulkadir ("Mahmoud Mau"), Farouk Topan, Clarissa Vierke, and Annachiara Raia.



## Green Industrial Policy in the Age of Rare Metals (GRIP-ARM)

The ERC-funded study "Green Industrial Policy in the Age of Rare Metals: A Transregional Comparison of Growth Strategies in Rare Earth Mining" (GRIP-ARM) examines the globalized supply and demand for rare earths – including mining, processing, manufacturing, use, and recycling – to have a closer scrutiny of mining both as a strategy for industrialization and as an integral part of contemporary efforts towards a sustainable supply of raw materials.

GRIP-ARM interrogates the dynamics in rare earth mining that might lend this particular resource a tool for economic development. The research is one of the

first systematic, comparative studies on rare earths mining and economic development, which brings political science perspectives in conversation with natural resource geography and international political economy. Using a trans-regional comparison of China, Brazil, and Kazakhstan, the GRIP-ARM project began in 2021 and spans across five years.

The study has three primary objectives: (1) To empirically document how mineral states design industrial policies that have the potential to link extraction and manufacturing sectors of the economy. It will also explore why similar policies yield varying outcomes. (2) Identify the political factors that successfully built linkages between sectors of the economy,

spur technological innovation, and maximize benefits from extractive industries. (3) Analyze new initiatives of rare earth importers in the EU and Japan. The project provides insights on how importing countries and their manufacturing firms have promoted ways to address long-term supply vulnerability and sustainability of resource use.

Low and middle-income countries joining the race for industrialization are increasing demands for high-tech goods ranging from computers, mobile phones, and flat screens, as well as for low-carbon consumer products, such as energy-efficient cars, solar panels, wind turbines, and even lights – all of which constitute further pressures to accelerate the pace and breadth of natural resource exploitation. Moreover, growing demands for rare earths are currently suffering from a supply constraint given that China – the dominant market player in rare earths mining – has begun to impose export restrictions and reorient its mining policy to support domestic industrialization. The impending resource crunch creates incentives for mineral states to gain strategic and economic advantage.

GRIP-ARM's agenda is especially salient as several rare earth projects are being developed in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to create an alternative supply chain outside China. By building an interdisciplinary scholarship on rare earths-based growth strategies, GRIP-ARM contributes to scholarship on innovations in non-traditional manufacturing sectors as key to long-run economic development.

Another crucial element of the project is that it will create valuable knowledge for the Global Rare Earths Industry Association, which provides inputs on global efforts to create a secured, greener supply of critical raw materials. The study will add to knowledge on how developing countries can seek to build industrial capacity to extract in less environmentally destructive ways. In these ways, the research contributes to the urgent call of designing growth strategies compatible with ecological sustainability.

Jewellord Nem Singh, Coordinator  
<https://www.iias.asia/programmes/green-industrial-policy-age-rare-metals-grip-arm>



# IIAS Outreach: Connecting Knowledge and People

Annemarie van Leeuwen

In today's society, the sciences and the arts are gradually moving more towards one another from their relatively separated positions. IIAS finds it important to help bring these different kinds of knowledge together, because we have the firm conviction that science and the arts are both creative processes and overlapping domains which can and do inspire one another.

For a number of years now, IIAS has organized outreach activities as part of our policy to transcend disciplinary borders. With our outreach programme, we aim to cross the borders of academic-focused events by incorporating a diversity of cultural domains like film, literature, dance, and other forms of art into the discourse. In reaching out to these domains, IIAS is also reaching out to a wider audience; not only to Asian Studies scholars, but also to others with various interests in Asia. Academics and non-academics meet,

become acquainted with each other's worlds, and broaden their Asian horizons and their understandings of their respective regions. By connecting knowledge and people in a very practical sense, IIAS facilitates opportunities for new synergies to emerge, which in turn can lead to innovative approaches in all disciplines.

As part of this goal, we have had the pleasure to work with many different people from many different disciplines in recent years, with artists and scientists alike,

on a broad variety of outreach events. These include film screenings, talks by artists and museum curators, public lectures at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, book talks, and workshops, to name but a few. In what follows, we present two reflections from colleagues who have worked closely with IIAS and its various outreach activities over the years: (1) Roald Maliangkay, former coordinator of the IIAS Amsterdam branch, and (2) OOI Keat Gin, historian at Universiti Brunei Darussalam and former IIAS fellow.

Looking to the future, we are excited to continue the outreach programme and to keep expanding and innovating in response to our ever-changing world. There is a synergy here as well: as an institute, we continue to be inspired by the community we have the pleasure and honour to work with.

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## Fruitful Interlude

OOI Keat Gin

There is a saying that the Dutch "think with their pockets," and that "parsimony is not an embarrassment, but a virtue." On the contrary, the Dutch were generous, to my person at least, with indulgence in my scholarly endeavours. Appointed as an Affiliate Fellow of IIAS (2002-2004), I sojourned a month or two each year, undertaking research in the Netherlands. Thereafter, I held a Visiting Research Fellowship (2005-2006) with the *Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (NIOD, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation). Even when I was with IIAS, I spent most of my research time at NIOD working on materials related to wartime Dutch Borneo (present-day Indonesia Kalimantan). In both capacities, I was based in Amsterdam with trips to the General Archives at The Hague.

Accommodation ranged from a studio in the Red Light District to a spacious apartment on the outskirts (a daily train ride to Centraal Station), all agreeable and intriguing. My wife Swee Im and I had fond memories of our times in bohemian Amsterdam: strolling hand-in-hand by the canals, observing elementary schoolchildren walking two-by-two through the traditional window prostitution neighbourhoods, breathing in the strong 'strange' smells emitting from 'coffee shops' (though not indulging in their 'specialties'), enjoying beer and frites, hosting home-cooked dinner get-togethers, grocery shopping using a 'huge-sized' trolley, wowing at the 'Night Watch' in the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh's 'Irises,' walking through Albert Cuyp Market, Waterlooplein, Bloemenmarkt, and Nieuwmarkt.

An affiliate IIAS fellowship was indeed fruitful and transformative, as it allowed space and time which enabled the pursuit of my main research interest that subsequently produced *The Japanese Occupation of Borneo, 1941-1945* (Routledge, 2011), *Post-war Borneo, 1945-1950: Nationalism, Empire, and State-building* (Routledge, 2013), and *Borneo in the Cold War, 1950-1990* (Routledge, 2020).

This was a pioneering breakthrough, as the trilogy focused on Borneo as a single entity.

*The Japanese Occupation of Borneo* considers the nature of wartime Japanese military rule in Borneo, contrasting the different administrations of the Imperial Japanese Army, which ruled the northern portion of the island, and the Imperial Japanese Navy, which ruled the southern half. The immediate post-war years (1945-1950) were a crossroads: *Post-war Borneo* discusses the various factions and powers, both local and international, all contending for control of the island. In midst of post-war reconstruction and economic resuscitation, the upheavals which affected Southeast and East Asia during the Cold War deeply impacted Borneo. The attempted communist takeover of Sarawak from the 1950s, a failed uprising in Brunei in 1962, Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* (confrontation), and the horrific purge of Leftists elements in the mid-1960s are detailed in *Borneo in the Cold War*.

Although this is not to discount the contributions played by numerous other fellowships, the IIAS fellowship came at an opportune time when I was planning to focus my research on Dutch Borneo,

and subsequently to the said trilogy on the historical development of Borneo in the second half of the 20th century. Furthermore, IIAS afforded the strengthening of bonds with other scholars: Remco Raben (NIOD, Utrecht University); Elly Touwen-Bousma (NIOD); Peter Post (NIOD); Leo Douw (University of Amsterdam).

Heleen van der Minne, who managed IIAS Amsterdam branch then, was always attentive and helpful, and I am most grateful that she organized the launching of my three-volume award-winning *Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia, From Angkor Wat to East Timor* (ABC-CLIO, 2004). For the IIAS-sponsored event, she secured the former meeting hall of the Seventeen Gentlemen (The Heeren XVII), Board of Directors of the *Vereenigde Nederlandsche Geocroyeerde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC, United East India Company).

In closing, I take this opportunity to register my gratitude to, and congratulate IIAS on its 30th Anniversary, and may its promotion of Asian Studies be a bountiful enterprise.

OOI Keat Gin, Universiti Brunei  
Darussalam, Brunei

## Meanwhile, over in Amsterdam ...

Roald Maliangkay

To be perfectly honest, I don't really know how it happened. But in January 2005, I somehow managed to land the job of IIAS Amsterdam Branch Head. Apart from having worked in bars for a decade, I had little experience managing people and I cannot imagine that my ability to pull a perfect pint gave me a winning advantage. But perhaps Wim Stokhof thought I was speaking metaphorically.

The branch office and its affiliated fellows were located inside a large, old-but-renovated building at the southernmost part of the Oudezijds Achterburgwal, next to the Oudemanhuispoort. It was a place I visited a few times a week, as a casual lecturer for the Asian Studies in Amsterdam (ASiA)

program. Responsible for the program were my patron saints Jacqueline Vel, Willem van Schendel, Mario Rutten, and Leo Douw. They introduced me to Thomas Voorter and Ireen Hoogenboom, and the equally lovely Heleen van der Minne, IIAS's local administrator. Most of us were located along the same dull hallway, which we tried to breathe life into by way of posters, some samplings of Willem's Bangla pop, and a glass display cabinet with a collection of, surely, inedible canned food from across Asia. I like to think it made a difference, though in my memory the hallway was always quiet and deserted. The IIAS office, on the other hand, was a small but vibrant center full of books, colorful merchandise, and large plants that we hoped would one day add some green.

The people were all fantastic to work with and learn from. At Leiden University and

SOAS, I had been affiliated with East Asian studies, and it was exciting to be part of an area studies community in another city and to learn about other parts of Asia. Heleen took care of all the real work, conscientiously filling in forms and managing finances, and politely answering emails and phone calls. My job was much easier than hers. Although I occasionally helped provide support to fellows, I was mostly engaged in the promotion and coordination of IIAS-related activities, while trying, at least, to resolve administrative complications and complex requests. I also sought to salvage our office plants, which somehow refused to grow without the occasional shot of espresso. Many of our activities routinely took place in one of the nearby former offices of the East India Company (VOC), which added a degree of gravitas that we often neutralized by way of a post-event drink at our then favorite local hangout Kapitein Zeppos. I wish I had been able to engage more with fellows during my time at the IIAS, but I lived in an outskirt of Rotterdam, and it was a long journey home.

To me the IIAS occupies a unique and important position in Asian studies. While scholars working on Asia can be found

around the world, there are few places that make a genuine effort to foster synergies in research across the humanities and social sciences. As someone who works on entertainment and popular culture in East Asia, it's exciting to know the Institute continues to support a broad range of approaches. It may not advocate area studies per se, but the culture that I was fortunate to be part of for some time, certainly embraced multi-disciplinarity and an interest in the full complexity of Asian cultures. My time at the IIAS had a profound influence on my career since, and I hope it will continue to support the work of countless fellows in the future.

Some six years after I left in 2006 to take up a position in Australia, the office was closed. I suppose those caffeine junkie plants were donated to a nearby café, but I do wonder what happened to the canned food collection. I imagine it's still there, waiting for one very courageous adventurer with a mean appetite.

Roald Maliangkay,  
Australian National University,  
Australia



Lecture & Masterclass by Professor **Monika Zin**

**Buddhist Stories Carved in Stone**  
On the Techniques of Narrative Representation in Ancient India

Rijksmuseum/IIAS Lecture  
6 Oct 2016, 14.30-16.30 hrs  
Auditorium, Rijksmuseum  
Museumstraat 1, Amsterdam

IIAS/Leiden University Masterclass  
7 Oct 2016, 15.00-17.00 hrs  
IIAS, Conference Room  
Rapenburg 59, Leiden

**Sanskrit Culture on the Silk Road**  
Buddhist Paintings in the Monasteries of Kucha

Registration is required for both events. Please email: [h.m.van.der.minne@iias.nl](mailto:h.m.van.der.minne@iias.nl)

RIJKSMUSEUM Universiteit Leiden IIAS

IIAS Annual Lecture  
8 December 2016  
Leiden, The Netherlands

Oxford Historian & Acclaimed Author  
**Dr Peter Frankopan**

**After the Silk Roads: Asia, Europe & the Discovery of the Americas**

16:00-18:00 hrs  
Leiden University Academy Building  
Small Auditorium, Rapenburg 73 Leiden  
Registration: [www.iias.asia](http://www.iias.asia)

IIAS

IIAS Seminar  
23-25 April 2013  
Leiden, the Netherlands

**Asian Cities Colonial to Global**

Postcolonialisms | Networks | Urban Governance | Architecture

Convener:  
Dr. Gregory Bracken, IIAS Research Fellow  
Information and registration:  
[www.iias.nl/event/asian-cities-colonial-global](http://www.iias.nl/event/asian-cities-colonial-global)

This seminar is part of a cooperation between IIAS and TU Delft

TU Delft IIAS

IIAS Annual Lecture  
19 September 2013  
Leiden, the Netherlands

Delivered by Professor Carol Gluck  
Columbia University, New York, USA

**Modernity in common**  
Japan & world history

4pm, Academy Building, Small Auditorium  
Leiden University, Rapenburg 73, Leiden  
Followed by reception. Register via [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)

IIAS 20

**Spectacle and the City**

4-5 June 2010  
Bushuis / Oost-Indisch Huis, VOC-zaal,  
Kloveniersburgwal 48, Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands

Convenors: Jeroen de Kloet (ASCA, University of Amsterdam)  
Lena Scheen (IIAS, Leiden University)

**Urbanity in Popular Culture and Art in East Asia**

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl) | [iias@iias.nl](mailto:iias@iias.nl)  
Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) [www.fgw.uva.nl/asca](http://www.fgw.uva.nl/asca)

IIAS ASCA NWO

2018 Annual Rijksmuseum/IIAS Lecture  
with Professor Matthew McKelway

20 October 2018, 14.30 - 16.30, Auditorium  
Rijksmuseum, Museumstraat 1, Amsterdam

Convener: Prof. Chou-Liang Wu  
(IIAS Professor, holder of the European Chair of Chinese Studies at Leiden University / National Taiwan University)

**Counter-Enlightenment and Modernity in "Modern China"**

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl) | [iias@iias.nl](mailto:iias@iias.nl)

IIAS Area Studies

18-19 June 2010  
Faculty of Arts, Leiden University,  
Lipsius Building, room 148,  
Cleveringaplaats 1, Leiden,  
The Netherlands

Convener: Prof. Chou-Liang Wu  
(IIAS Professor, holder of the European Chair of Chinese Studies at Leiden University / National Taiwan University)

**Counter-Enlightenment and Modernity in "Modern China"**

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl) | [iias@iias.nl](mailto:iias@iias.nl)

IIAS Area Studies

**Oceans of Sound**

9 September 2010  
University of Amsterdam,  
University Theatre, Theatre Hall,  
Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16,  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Convener: Dr Birgit Abels  
International Institute for Asian Studies /  
Universiteit van Amsterdam

**Sama Dilaut Performing Arts**

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl) | [iias@iias.nl](mailto:iias@iias.nl)  
Department of Musicology, Universiteit van Amsterdam [www.musicology.nl](http://www.musicology.nl)

IIAS ASCA UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

IIAS-ISEAS Conference  
18-20 November 2013  
Leiden, the Netherlands

**Framing Asian Studies**

Geopolitics  
Institutions  
Networks

Convener:  
Dr Albert Tazang,  
IIAS-ISEAS Postdoc Fellow  
For information and registration visit:  
[www.iias.nl/event/framing](http://www.iias.nl/event/framing)

IIAS ISEAS

IIAS Seminar  
10-11 May 2017  
Leiden, the Netherlands

Convener  
Dr. Gregory Bracken

**City & Society**  
The care of the self

Gravensteen, Room 1.11  
Pieterskerkhof 6, Leiden

Information & registrations:  
[www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)  
This seminar is part of a cooperation between IIAS and TU Delft

TU Delft IIAS

IIAS Seminar  
3-4 December 2012  
Leiden, the Netherlands

**State Restructuring and Rescaling in Comparative Perspective**

3 December  
Leiden University  
Lipsius (room 148)(LUF)  
Cleveringaplaats 1, Leiden  
4 December  
Gravensteen (room 111)  
Pieterskerkhof 6, Leiden

Convener: Prof. Tak-Wing Ngo  
(IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance /  
University of Macau/Erasmus University, Rotterdam)  
and Prof. Loraine Kennedy (Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde  
et de l'Asie du Sud, CNRS-EHESS, France)  
Information and registration  
please visit [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)

ceias CNRS LECOLE BRUNO LEZOUAR IIAS

IIAS Seminar  
28-29 May 2015  
Leiden, the Netherlands

**Governance and Challenges in China's Peripheries and Ecology**

Gravensteen  
Pieterskerkhof 6, Room 111

Convener: Prof. Yuehsen Juliette Chung  
For further information & registration  
visit [www.iias.nl/peripheries](http://www.iias.nl/peripheries)

IIAS LUCSoR

**Indigenous Peoples in Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands**

18-19 May 2010  
Gravensteen (room 111),  
Pieterskerkhof 6, Leiden,  
The Netherlands

**New laws and discourses  
New realities?**

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl) | [iias@iias.nl](mailto:iias@iias.nl)

IIAS

IIAS Seminar  
21-22 April 2016  
Leiden, the Netherlands

**New Religious Nationalism in Chinese Societies**

Venue  
Museum of Ethnology, Pavillion  
Steenstraat 1, Leiden

Convener  
Prof. Cheng-tian Kuo  
Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies  
IIAS & Leiden University  
/National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Information and registration:  
[www.iias.nl/new-religious-nationalism](http://www.iias.nl/new-religious-nationalism)

IIAS

IIAS Seminar  
7-8 December 2012  
Leiden, the Netherlands

**Mapping Dalit cultural heritage in contemporary India**

Leiden University  
Lipsius (room 148)(LUF)  
Cleveringaplaats 1,  
Leiden

Convener: Prof. Ronki Ram  
(ICCR Professor of Contemporary  
India Studies, IIAS & IIAS)  
Information and registration  
please visit [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)

Leiden University Institute for Area Studies IIAS

2019 Annual Rijksmuseum/IIAS Lecture  
by Professor Pierre-Yves Manguin

19 October 2019, 14.30 - 16.30  
Auditorium, Rijksmuseum,  
Museumstraat 1, Amsterdam

**The kingdom of Śrīvijaya**

Professor Pierre-Yves Manguin will also conduct the IIAS/Leiden University Masterclass  
"Between myth and history: the hierarchy of sources for Śrīvijaya (Southeast Sumatra, Indonesia)"  
17 October 2019, 15.00 - 17.00  
Room 104, Matthou de Vrieland 3, Leiden University, Leiden

Registration for both events required  
[www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)

RIJKSMUSEUM Universiteit Leiden IIAS





### Thirty Years of IIAS

I don't exactly recall when was the first time I met Philippe Peycam, but it was well over a decade ago! However, I do remember we felt empathy with each other and we talked frankly and openly about our institutions (IEEM & IIAS) and how we should do things together. I also fondly remember how I was impressed with his knowledge on Macau and the passionate way he would talk about it. Since then, we had worked together on several projects as well as participated in all ICAS of the last 10 years. Our cooperative efforts covered mostly matters related to Macau's heritage, culture and identity and they have certainly contributed in widening the curiosity and interest of the academic community on matters related to this city/region, as well as establishing a network of learning and researching that goes well beyond the Asian context. Notwithstanding the difficulties that COVID presented to academic cooperation all over, IIAS and IEEM managed to strike an important partnership that is running an ongoing project coordinated by myself and Prof. Mehdi P. Amined "Comparing energy transition in the EU and China". In fact, a topic that is quite different from the previous ones, that shows how wide and deep our working relationship have developed along more than one decade.

We congratulate IIAS and Philippe for such meaningful occasion and hope many decades more of successes!

Macau, 11 July 2023

José Luis de Sales Marques  
President of IEEM



Photo taken at the IIAS event "Perspectives on Asian Studies in Latin America" in 2016 (from left to right: Cláudio Pinheiro, Sheyla S. Zandonai, and Paul van der Velde). (Photo courtesy of the author, 2016)

I first heard of the IIAS nearly ten years ago, when a friend shared information about a call the Institute had launched for the Macau Winter School. I had just left France for Canada. Macau, where I had been several times before to conduct fieldwork for my Ph.D. research, appealed to me in ways that freezing Montreal did not. It was familiar and still strange. It had that Asian feeling where all things come alive at once, resonating within the anthropologist in me. I applied. Being selected as one of the twenty participants of a highly competitive event opened a new world of possibilities. Even though that trip to Macau was short, it felt like going out to explore the unknown again. Since then, IIAS has been a way for me to connect and learn, a haven against the uncertainty I faced many times: as a scholar, a person, and a foreigner in nearly every place I have been. Its vocation to normalize otherness and invite the margins to the center is unparalleled. In so doing, IIAS builds a community of belonging among cultural diversity. This, I believe, makes the Institute a great place in which to think of ways to engage that are at the same time intellectual, political, and human. Without a doubt, Philippe Peycam and the terrific team working with him should be lauded for crafting and nurturing a truly global yet close-knit network. There is no place like IIAS.

Sheyla S. Zandonai, University of Macau



Above: Picture with Philippe Peycam, José Luis Sales Marques, and architect Carla Figueiredo at the seminar "Inner Harbour" (2013).

I first heard about IIAS back in 2013. Dr. Paul Rabe was visiting Bangalore and a colleague at the Indian Institute of Human Settlements introduced him as a researcher and practitioner interested in understanding the urban geography of Whitefield, an area I had been engaging with for some years. I was just preparing to screen the next instalment of my *Neighbourhood Diaries* film series (Whitefield Diaries was the previous instalment) and Paul readily agreed to attend the screening in a historic family mansion in a colonial-period bazaar area. As we chatted, he suggested that I should give some thought to joining him on a panel he was putting together for the next ICAS, on urban renewal and community agency. ICAS is where I met Philippe and others from IIAS.

I have since been associated with various IIAS projects and initiatives, including UKNA (Urban Knowledge Network Asia), SEANNET (South East Asia Neighbourhoods Network) and HAB (Humanities Across Borders). Although I have not been directly employed by the institute or its projects, I have had ample opportunities to engage with its material practices. As a humanities-based, community-engaged practitioner and scholar from the Global South who has long promoted interdisciplinarity in research and practice, it's reassuring to see a Global North institute walk the talk.

For IIAS, attempting to decolonize knowledge production practices while co-creating knowledge in ways that are inclusive is neither mere rhetoric nor just academic discourse. Under Philippe's able guidance, the institute understands all too well the trap and resultant limitations of institutionalised forms of knowledge production. It's not easy to consistently walk the thin line bordering many binaries: academic and practitioner knowledge, didactic and pedagogical approaches, community-engaged and expert-driven lenses, global and local knowledge networks, theoretical and applied research.

Nor is it easy to consistently pay attention to what is being said rather than 'who' (by which I mean the designation) is saying it. I respect Philippe and the institute's sustained efforts to empathetically engage with diverse social actors, be they individuals, advocacy groups, or universities. In an increasingly fractured world, such institutions play a crucial role in bridging various socio-cultural, educational, and economic axes. Significantly, IIAS recognises that any such facilitation across axes can only be reasonably democratic, and they frame their work with this self-awareness. Going forward, it would be wonderful to see more platforms like this that actively promotes a need for contextualised understanding of people and places.

Krupa Rajangam, Saythu ... Linking People and Heritage, India





My affinity with IIAS began in 2018, when I first met Philippe in New York. I was then completing my doctoral dissertation (finally!) and seeking postdoctoral opportunities outside the United States. Having spent several years in North America, I craved new experiences on another continent. Philippe's pleasant disposition attracted me to IIAS – if the Director were already so personable and visionary, what about his comrades-in-arms and the like-minded fellows whom the institute has hosted over the years? I was curious to find out more about whom I could meet and what I could achieve at IIAS, so without a second thought, I applied to become a research fellow the following year. I had never even been to the Netherlands, even though I was remotely fascinated with the country's history as the superpower of the seventeenth century (yes, I am the quintessential historian) and its economic achievements of recent times. Growing up in Singapore exposed to Dutch (or Dutch-related) brands such as Heineken, Shell, and Unilever, I wanted to know more about the Netherlands. Shortly after my arrival, I discovered another of the nation's great innovations: IIAS. Friends and collegial peers often asked what my deliverables were at IIAS, and my answer perplexed most when I said "nothing!"

I appreciate the beauty of what I would call the "IIAS mode" – providing its fellows with not only facilities but also, more importantly, the latitude in conducting their own research. Not having to teach, help out with administrative work, or even deliver a lecture for IIAS, I was able to churn out many journal articles and book chapters during my stint there. With IIAS's blessings, I was also able to complete visiting fellowships in Taiwan and Thailand. IIAS is truly "international" and "Asian." Through its programs, I made my maiden trip to Africa, attending the "Africa-Asia: A New Axis of Knowledge" conference in Tanzania (I am so looking forward to participating in the next one in Senegal). I also expanded my professional network beyond North America to Africa, Europe, and Asia, which allowed me to reciprocate the institute's support. I gathered a team of contributors for an edited volume in one of IIAS's book series (Asian Cities), which examines the politics of space in Cold War Asia. I also convened a selection committee for the ICAS Book Prize 2023 (Chinese Language Edition) when I was appointed as the secretary of this edition. I am honored to contribute to the IIAS cause of connecting knowledge and people for a more integrated understanding of Asia, and I am forever grateful to Philippe, my friends at IIAS, and colleagues from all over the world for enriching my life with their expertise and kindness.

Ying-Kit Chan,  
National University of Singapore

Photo from ICAS 11 at Leiden in 2019 with José Luís de Sales Marques and Sheyla Zandonai. (Photo courtesy of the author, 2019)



In 2016, I received an email from Philippe regarding an IIAS-co-organised conference I'd applied for. He asked for a revision of my abstract and, as I find out later, that he had pushed for my paper to be included in the programme. Philippe might have just been following a hunch, but the opportunity to participate in that conference in Leiden changed the trajectory of my academic life. There, I felt heard as a junior, affirming my drive to speak and write for a cause. I met 'partners-in-crime' who I still work with closely today. Subsequently, ICAS became a "good ol' stomping ground." From Chiang Mai to Leiden, every convention felt like a homecoming of sorts: the strong academic atmosphere was mentally refreshing while the familiar faces, laughs, and bear hugs were spiritually warming.

IIAS will always have a special place in my heart not only for its inclusivity, heart, and warmth, but also for its unwavering and staunch support towards facilitating progress and dialogue in all matters concerning Asia and its diverse cultures and inhabitants. The Institute's genuine devotion to championing intellectual freedom and opening new ways of understanding Asia's past, present, and future resiliency has inspired individuals like me to pluck up the courage to think, speak, and write about Asia – its cities, peoples, and creatures – through more critical lenses.

To Philippe and the entire IIAS team: congratulations on thirty years! I look forward to witnessing many more milestones. Mabuhay!

Catherine Chan, University of Macau

As a researcher on cultural heritage, I got to know IIAS during the first biennial conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies in Gothenburg (2012). However, I only officially started my experiences with IIAS in 2015, when I became an UKNA fellow at the institute. I am impressed by its multiple layers of networks and ambitious goal for civic emancipation.

Besides the fellowship, I have taken part in its various academic activities at different locations across Asia. From my observation, IIAS is an international knowledge hub deeply rooted in and widely engaged with local communities. From the perspective of heritage studies, it has established its unique approach for alternative use of culture as an emancipatory force through humanistic research, participatory learning, intellectual production, and empathetic communication.

IIAS has its own way of carrying out transdisciplinary discussions, even in difficult conditions. Heritage conservation is strongly bound to engineering disciplines in China, and the UKNA conference coordinated by Chinese partner institutes in 2015 was turning towards this trend at the beginning. Nevertheless, IIAS led the topic in a more humanistic direction, stressing the importance of humanities and social sciences in conservation planning and ecological development. It struck a balance between the fields [Fig. 1].

The seminar 'Revisiting Delhi' (2016), with which I was also involved, reflects IIAS's mission regarding teaching facilitation. Co-organised with local universities, the seminar focused on how to engage students with urban heritage [Fig. 2]. This resulted in a teaching collaboration between the Community Knowledge Center (CKC) at Ambedkar University Delhi and my faculty, the Department of Cultural Heritage and Museology at Fudan University, Shanghai. We have successfully "moved" the scenes of local life in old Delhi into the modern city of Shanghai: in 2018, a photo exhibition from CKC's collection was curated by Fudan students at the university museum.

The 2017 workshop in Surabaya was more neighborhood-based, and participants were all invited to a community meeting. The locals interpreted their own heritage to the scholars, instead of an authorised interpretation by the latter. It is a good start for further communication between academics and locals, as a scholarly way to promote the civic engagement.

From these experiences, I have found that IIAS links academic and non-academic communities at both local and international levels. Its core concern is the social responsibility for developing mutual understandings between people and achieving their spiritual liberty.

Xiaomei ZHAO, Fudan University, China

Fig. 1 (above): A site visit to an ancient Buddhist temple in Pingyao. (Photo courtesy of the author, 2015)

Fig. 2 (right): A visit to local community in Delhi. (Photo courtesy of the author, 2016)





# Future Proof Design

## The Importance of a Consistently Applied Visual Identity

Paul Oram and Thomas Voorter

As an educational facilitator in Asia Studies, IIAS is committed to promoting knowledge amongst its global partners. Unique in its scope and appeal, it is fully focused on developing a broad network and community worldwide through capacity building and civic engagement. Communicating this dynamic and disseminating knowledge is an ongoing process.

In an ever-increasing marketplace, having a clear communication strategy is essential. A business cannot simply assume that its audience will perceive of them as they perceive themselves.

Savvy organisations within the public sector have realized that they can benefit from adopting the principles used by high street brands. Through clear, constant and effective communication they can help build their own 'brand' into one that is trusted and valued, fostering a sense of ownership both internally and externally.

Building a successful brand takes time. There are three key factors to consider. The most important is behaviour. An institution will be judged on its actions and commitments. The second factor is how these are managed and communicated and through what channels. The third factor, and the one that concerns us in this article, is how these are conveyed with the aid of a visual identity.

The IIAS visual identity was developed in 2017 by Amsterdam/Beijing based creative agency LAVA. All employees of IIAS were invited to take part in the process. It would

## Connecting knowledges & peoples

The brand proposition is a result of an extensive research phase that paved the way for the development of the visual identity.



Primary Identity elements: IIAS logo and sub brands

IIAS Green

IIAS Blue

IIAS Red

GT Walsheim

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy  
z  
0123456789

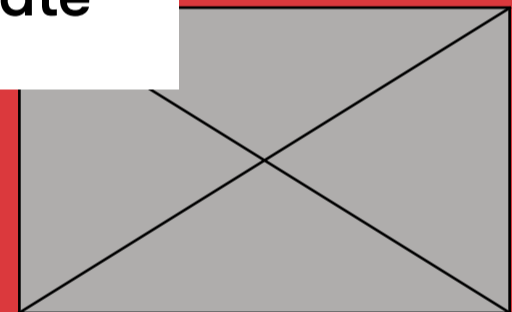
Strategic identity elements: typeface and primary colour palette

Title

Sub-heading

Date

Additional information



Tactical identity elements are based on the 'stacked' layout concept.

## Gestalt theory

Gestalt theory is based on the idea that our brains will attempt to simplify and organise complex designs and imagery that consist of many elements, by subconsciously arranging the parts into an organised system that creates a whole. Our brains are built to see structure and patterns in order for us to comprehend our surroundings.

Gestalt theory comprises of six key principles: similarity, continuation, closure, proximity, figure/ground, and symmetry/order (also called *prägnanz*, German for 'good figure').

*Prägnanz* is the principle we will focus on here. This states that your brain will perceive complex shapes in as simple a manner as possible. The IIAS logo is a clear example of *prägnanz*. Your brain will interpret the image as four rectangles, even when the outlines of each are incomplete because these are simpler shapes than the actual shape depicted.

The brain completes the frame

The brain visualises a red rectangle over a white frame

The *prägnanz* principle. Above: the brain interprets the logo shape as four rectangles. Below: the brain sees two rectangles: a red block in front of a white framed block.



prove an emotional experience for staff members as it called upon everyone to express and share their perception of their organisation. During an intense workshop staff explored their convictions and core values, such as how IIAS is perceived in a global context and how it interacts and exchanges ideas with its partners and target audience. This exercise concluded in the formulation of the brand proposition 'Connecting Peoples and Knowledges' along with a strategic document that would serve as a guideline for the design phase.

The final design of the logo expresses the dynamic of IIAS. The design avoids any visual clichés that could be associated with a particular part of Asia and focuses instead on the practice of 'carrying out research'.

Typically, when doing research a desk will be cluttered with stacks of books, folders, photos, maps, memos, sticky notes, and other scribbled-upon pieces of paper lying around in some structured form of chaos. This 'stacking' principle was applied to the logo. Aside from the active process of research, it can also be read as a crossover

of initiatives and as promoting collaboration.

The individual sans-serif letters in the logo are laid out in a non-linear fashion as opposed to a more traditional font and layout to further reflect the culture of innovation within the organisation. This value driven design approach ensures the new logo will maintain relevance into the foreseeable future.

The logo is the most prominent element of an identity. However, to be effective it needs to be supported by a series of design elements. Strategic identity elements comprise of the typeface Walsheim, a modern derivative of Futura, along with three special colours; IIAS red, green and blue. An important condition for the choice of the Walsheim typeface was that it renders in a clear and consistent way the widest possible range of diacritic characters used in modern-day and classical languages.

Effectively disseminating knowledge requires a visual design that maintains its balance while accommodating substantial amounts of content, such as articles and event details, both in online and print formats. Another important feature of the design is that it can be easily transported to IIAS' sub

brands, such as ICAS, HAB and UKNA. With its identity, IIAS communicates its current initiatives and programmes with clarity, assured that all future initiatives will be equally served and enhanced by it.

Tactical identity elements embrace the 'stacking' principle and include design guidelines for a fluid and original system that is instantly recognised by its visual rhythm and that can be applied across all communication.

Adherence to these guidelines is the key to a successful visual identity that will amplify as well as ease communication with the audience and thus help to build the reputation of the IIAS brand. In the case of IIAS, the design is particularly interesting. It is founded on gestalt principles. Boxes overlap one another with lost edges that the brain reads as being there. With the logo, the viewer will see four rectangles although this is not what is physically rendered. These principles are taken further with the use of overlapping framed headings, intro boxes and images.

With its visual identity, IIAS has a complete suite of tools that it can fully utilise across

all communication. Used intelligently and consistently it has greatly improved brand recognition as well as enhanced people's experience and interaction with IIAS.

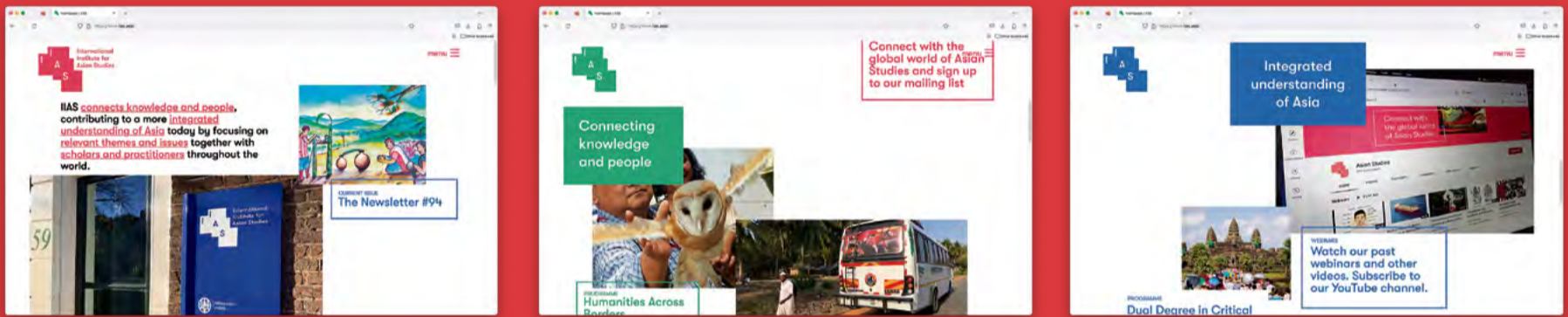
IIAS' communication efforts are constantly evolving, most recently with the introduction of The Blog and The Channel (our podcast platform). The flexibility and versatility of the design allows for a seamless integration of these new digital additions.

With its identity, IIAS communicates its current initiatives and programmes with clarity, assured that all future initiatives will be equally served and enhanced by it.

**Paul Oram** is an independent graphic designer responsible for the design and layout of the IIAS Newsletter. Website: <https://www.pauloram.nl>

**Thomas Voorter** is the communications coordinator and web manager at IIAS. Email: [t.j.h.voorter@iias.nl](mailto:t.j.h.voorter@iias.nl)

**Lava team** Noortje Boer, Daan Hornstra, Anton Lamberg, Cecilia Martin and Frank Smolenaers. Website: <https://www.lava.nl>



'Stacked' layout design elements forming the fluid structure on the IIAS website (above) and providing a consistent and instantly recognisable visual look for the Newsletter (below).





A very special thanks to all of our worldwide network on our 30th anniversary! We look forward to further collaboration in the future.



1. Philippe Peycam  
Director

2. Martina van den Haak  
IIAS Manager/ICAS Secretary

3. Erica van Bentem  
Financial Manager

4. Adrian Perkasa  
Project Manager ICAS 13

5. Cherelle Jaleesa Karsseboom  
Management Assistant  
and Programme Support Officer

6. Adèle Greenman  
Management Assistant

7. Aarti Kawlra  
Academic Director  
Humanities Across Borders

8. Stacey Links  
Coordinator  
Africa-Asia Programme

9. Elena G. Paskaleva  
Coordinator  
Asian Heritages Cluster

10. Paul Rabé  
Coordinator  
Asian Cities Cluster

11. Laura Erber  
Coordinator  
Fellowship Programme

12. Mary Lynn van Dijk  
Publications Officer

13. Paramita Paul  
Chief Editor of *The Newsletter*

14. Benjamin Linder  
Coordinator Public  
& Engaged Scholarship

15. Wai Cheung  
Coordinator  
ICAS & Conferences

16. Annemarie van Leeuwen  
Coordinator  
Outreach & Lectures

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19. Thomas Voorter  
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IIAS Content Manager  
and Editor (Web & Print)

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Web Editor  
Humanities Across Borders

22. Lemeng Zhang  
Intern  
Social Media and  
Online Communications





Illustration by Narutai Riangkrur

# ICAS Book Prize 2023

Wai Cheung

In this special edition of *The Newsletter* we celebrate IAS's 30th anniversary. At the same time, we are also celebrating the ICAS Book Prize's 10th edition in this special insert for the 2023 edition!

At its inception, the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) received tens of submissions in three categories. Over the years, the number of submissions and prize categories gradually grew, with IBP developing into one of the biggest book prizes in the field of Asian Studies. With the aim to become more inclusive and to decentre the landscape of knowledge on and in Asia, IBP has been awarding prizes in multiple languages for several editions now. As this edition still partly coincided with the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, we were pleased to see that many individuals still successfully completed their PhD degrees and that the publication of books and articles remained substantial. For the IBP 2023 edition, we received nearly 800 submissions and are awarding prizes in 13 different categories!

## The IBP 2023 partners

For the 2023 edition, we started working together with three new co-organisers and sponsors: Casa Asia (sponsor of the Portuguese/Spanish Edition); Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO, co-organiser of the Japanese Edition); and Wan Boo Sow Research Center for Chinese Culture at the National University of

Singapore (organiser and sponsor of the Chinese Edition). We are grateful that they joined our IBP family by supporting this multilingual initiative. Our gratitude also goes out to our longstanding partners who have been organising and sponsoring several editions already: the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS, German Edition); GIS Asie, French Academic Network on Asian Studies (French Edition); IAS and the Asian Library at Leiden University (English Edition); SEPHIS, The South-South Exchange Program for Research on the History of Development (Portuguese/Spanish Edition); Society for Hong Kong Studies (Best Article on Global Hong Kong Studies); Seoul National University Asia Center (SNUAC, Korean Edition); and Aysun Uyar Makibayshi (Secretary of the Japanese Edition). Without their support and efforts, these different categories would not have been possible. It was a delight to work with all these highly motivated and committed partners as well as with their network of reading committee members. Thank you all for your hard work!

Besides being the Acting Secretary of the IBP, I was also the Secretary for the English Edition. This tenth edition in 2023 marked several 'firsts' for the IBP. Paul van der Velde, our recently retired

colleague who initiated the IBP in 2003, had a completely different role this time. Instead of being the organiser, he fulfilled the role of a reading committee member. I am sure it must have been a joy for him to finally be able to have time to go through and actually read all the submitted books in the Humanities category. Our longstanding colleague in this endeavour, Alex McKay, went from chair of the dissertations reading committee to sitting on the reading committee for books as well this time. Taking over Alex's former role was Anna Romanowicz. It was her first time as the chair of the dissertations reading committee, though she was involved in several previous editions already. I am grateful that I could work with a very supportive team, both external and internal. Though I did not have the opportunity to go through all the submissions, it was very enlightening to hear and read the reading committee members' praises of the shortlisted submissions. Besides the academic value of the research, there seemed to be an appreciation for how the research topics relate to people's everyday lives, or how scholarly conclusions connect to real-life issues and current world events. This appreciation extended across various

fields, encompassing both contemporary and historical research topics. I can only imagine how difficult the choices were that every reading committee member had to make to arrive at the selection of the longlists, the shortlists, and eventually the winners. For the IBP 2013 edition, ten years ago, 'accolades' were introduced and have been awarded ever since, so submissions with specific aspects that the reading committees appreciated could be acknowledged, such as the 'Best Read for the General Public' or 'Groundbreaking Publication.' Even so, many excellent works still go unrewarded, but I am convinced that each submission makes a difference within or also beyond its field.

The IBP has been awarding prizes to books, dissertations, and articles of exceptional quality for 20 years. We are grateful that we can continue to recognise outstanding research being done in Asian Studies. On behalf of the IBP Secretariat, I would like to thank all publishers and authors who submitted their titles; our partnering sponsors and organisers for their support and work; all reading committee members for their time and efforts; and all colleagues who helped make this edition a success.

In the past weeks, we have announced the 13 prize winners in the different categories one by one. You can visit our announcement website (<https://icas.asia/winners-ibp-2023>) to view all award videos if you have missed these. In this supplement booklet, you will find all shortlisted submissions, the winners, and the accolades of the IBP 2023!

Wai Cheung is the Acting Secretary of the ICAS Book Prize at IAS.  
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# IBP 2023 English Language Edition – Humanities



Universiteit  
Leiden  
Leiden University Libraries



## TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

178 Books and 71 Dissertations

Coordinating Entity:  
ICAS Secretariat

Chair of 2023 Dissertations  
Edition: Anna Romanowicz

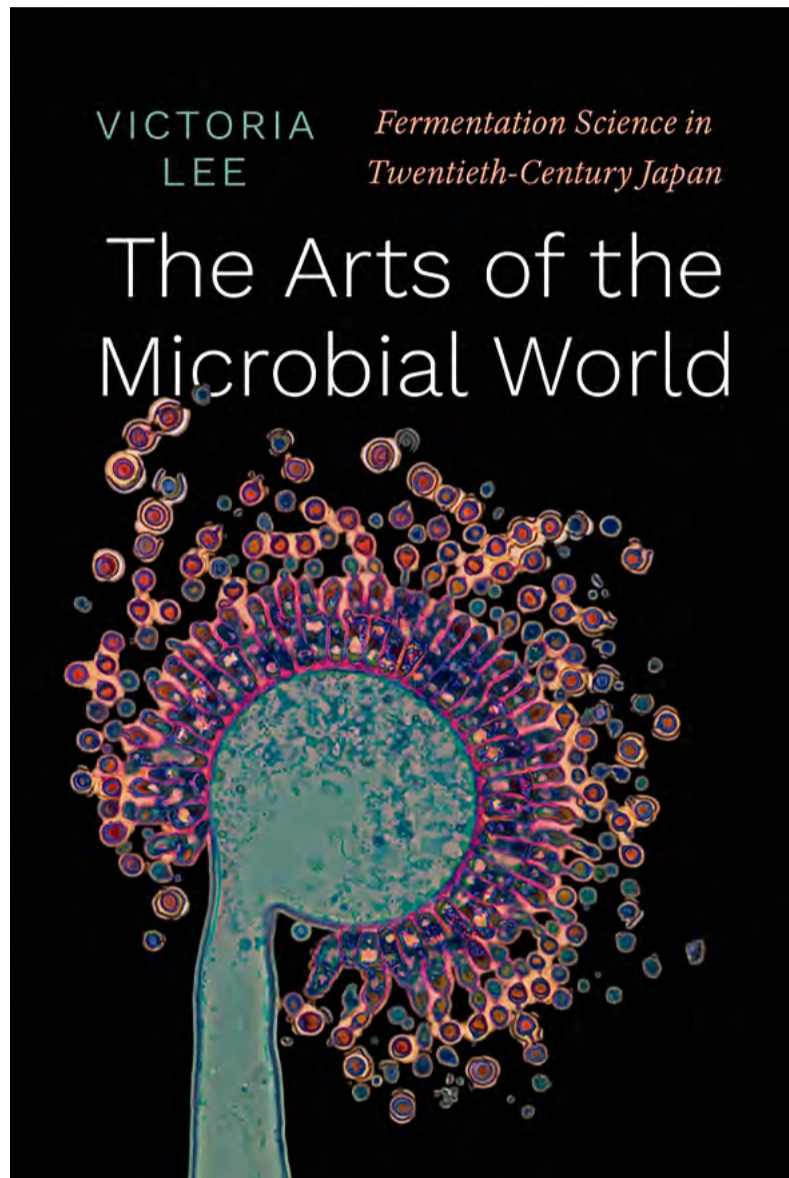
General Secretary IBP:  
Martina van den Haak

Reading Committee Members:  
Alex McKay and Paul van der Velde (books);  
Jayati Bhattacharya and Kathleen Gutierrez  
(dissertations)

Acting Secretary IBP:  
Wai Cheung

Sponsor of the IBP 2023  
English Language Edition:  
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Secretary IBP English  
Language Edition:  
Wai Cheung



## IBP 2023 Humanities Winner

### AUTHOR

Victoria Lee

### TITLE

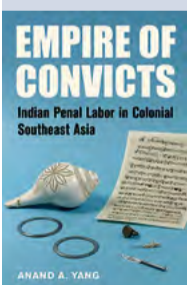
*The Arts of the Microbial World: Fermentation Science in Twentieth-Century Japan*

### PUBLISHER

The University of Chicago Press, 2021

In a highly original study, *The Arts of the Microbial World* demonstrates that twentieth-century Japanese fermentation science proceeded from a culturally situated approach that allowed microbial agency. It examines the deployment of fermentation in a variety of fields – science, medicine, food, etc. – within the political and cultural economy of Japanese modernity to demonstrate the independent trajectories of indigenous enquiry. An outstanding example of how the use of Asia-centred sources and approaches leads us towards what we might call “New Asia Scholarship”.

## IBP 2023 Humanities Shortlist



### AUTHOR

Anand A. Yang

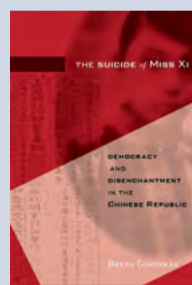
### TITLE

*Empire of Convicts: Indian Penal Labor in Colonial Southeast Asia*

### PUBLISHER

University of California Press, 2021

*Empire of Convicts* is a primary source-based social history centred on the political and criminal prisoners transported from India to detention in Southeast Asia under the colonial regime. Transportation was a particularly severe punishment in the Hindu cultural context, but in a sophisticated analysis the author demonstrates the prisoners shaping their confinement to establish degrees of agency over their own fate. This is a major contribution to the study of colonial power and its strategies of confinement, discipline and punishment.



### AUTHOR

Bryna Goodman

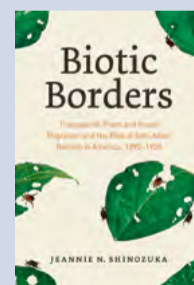
### TITLE

*The Suicide of Miss Xi: Democracy and Disenchantment in the Chinese Republic*

### PUBLISHER

Harvard University Press, 2021

Taking the suicide of a young female office worker in Shanghai in 1922 as a starting point, the author skillfully examines contemporary gender and morality constructions, legal systems and emerging capitalism and print economy in what is ultimately an engrossing study of Chinese urban society in transition. Well researched and written, this lucid work perfectly demonstrates the macrocosmic insights to be drawn from close examination of and reflection on microcosmic events.



### AUTHOR

Jeannie N. Shinozuka

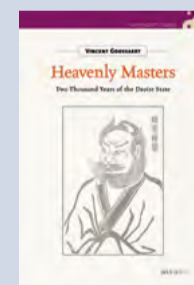
### TITLE

*Biotic Borders: Transpacific Plant and Insect Migration and the Rise of Anti-Asian Racism in America, 1890–1950*

### PUBLISHER

The University of Chicago Press, 2022

This ground-breaking work uncovers the linkage between American exclusion of both human and plant and animal immigration during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Focusing particularly on the Japanese experience, *Biotic Borders* demonstrates that terms such as ‘alien’ or ‘invasive’ were applied to both plants and humans, prompting both to be regulated or prevented. Of considerable contemporary relevance to studies of anti-Asian racism and the recent pandemic experience, this provocative and original study is of wide-ranging appeal and academic merit.



### AUTHOR

Vincent Goossaert

### TITLE

*Heavenly Masters: Two Thousand Years of the Daoist State*

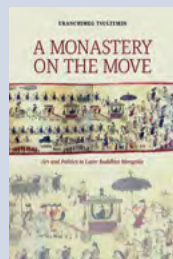
### PUBLISHER

The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press and University of Hawai'i Press, 2021

A masterly critical study of the emergence and development of the Daoist Heavenly Master institution from its semi-legendary origins in the second century CE down to the present 65th Master. Drawing on a vast range of primary and secondary sources and decades of work in the field of Daoist studies, this is a seminal scholarly monograph that demonstrates the extent to which the institution became a “state within a state” in late Imperial China.



## IBP 2023 Accolades in the Humanities



### Art Book Accolade

**AUTHOR** Uranchimeg Tsultemin  
**TITLE** *A Monastery on the Move: Art and Politics in Later Buddhist Mongolia*  
**PUBLISHER** University of Hawaii Press, 2021



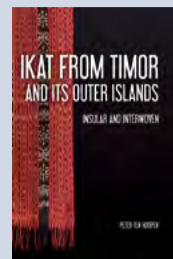
### Biography Accolade

**AUTHOR** David Jenkins  
**TITLE** *Young Soeharto: The Making of a Soldier, 1921-1945*  
**PUBLISHER** ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021



### Edited Volume Accolade

**AUTHOR** Olga V. Solovieva and Sho Konishi (eds)  
**TITLE** *Japan's Russia: Challenging the East-West Paradigm*  
**PUBLISHER** Cambria Press, 2021



### Publishers Accolade

**AUTHOR** Peter ten Hoopen  
**TITLE** *Ikat from Timor and Neighbouring Isles: Insular and Interwoven*  
**PUBLISHER** Sidestone Press, 2022



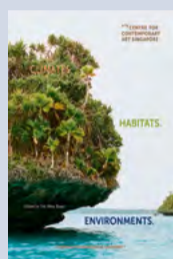
### Teaching Tool Accolade

**AUTHOR** Sumit Guha  
**TITLE** *Tribe and State in Asia through Twenty-Five Centuries*  
**PUBLISHER** Association for Asian Studies, 2021



### Best Read for the General Public Accolade

**AUTHOR** Tarini Bedi  
**TITLE** *Mumbai Taximen: Auto-biographies and Automobilities in India*  
**PUBLISHER** University of Washington Press, 2022



### Book Cover Accolade

**AUTHOR** Ute Meta Bauer  
**TITLE** *Climates. Habitats. Environments.*  
**PUBLISHER** NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and The MIT Press, 2022



### Ground-Breaking Publication Accolade

**AUTHOR** Tom G. Hoogervorst  
**TITLE** *Language Ungoverned: Indonesia's Chinese Print Entrepreneurs, 1911-1949*  
**PUBLISHER** Cornell University Press, 2021



### Specialist Publication Accolade

**AUTHOR** Lennart Bes  
**TITLE** *The Heirs of Vijayanagara Court: Politics in Early Modern South India*  
**PUBLISHER** Leiden University Press, 2022



### Translation Accolade

**AUTHOR** Qiancheng Li  
**TITLE** *Transmutations of Desire: Literature and Religion in Late Imperial China*  
**PUBLISHER** The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2020

## Dissertation Prize 2023 English Edition – Humanities Winner

### Adam K. Frost, *Speculation and Profiteering: The Entrepreneurial Transformation of Socialist China*

The dissertation focuses on the maneuvers and interplay between entrepreneurial progress and the socio-ideological changes in a socialist China for two decades between 1958 and 1978. This is groundbreaking research on the Mao Tse Tung period that emphasises the growth and sustenance of local entrepreneurship despite the persisting efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to suppress the same. It has been well-treated with both official archives and little-known and unconventional sources of information. The structure of governance and institutions were deeply explored through years of extensive field work, participant observation and nuanced comprehension of the structural mechanisms of Chinese society, and the transformations captured with critical, yet fluid presentation in writing style. The research opens an unknown chapter in China's history of strong socialist narratives.

### Humanities Dissertations Shortlist

Nicolo Paolo P. Ludovice, *Domesticated Geographies: Animals and the Making of Modern Health in the Philippines, 1860-1935*

*Domesticated Geographies* is a well written and extensive work on health in the colonial Philippines. The dissertation is the first of its kind to examine this important topic through animals—as commodities, wild species, domesticates, and resolutely, as the foundation of colonial bio-management. It demonstrates the co-constitution of colonial space, animal and human domestication, and health, a timely analysis in the unveiling aftermath of the pandemic. Ludovice relies considerably on novel archival sources, including cartographic and architectural materials, that bring animals to the centerstage of Philippine history. The author furthermore contributes to animal studies more broadly, offering a

swathe of case studies that span the late Spanish and early U.S. colonial periods that are situated sufficiently in intellectual debates and current scholarship.

Rui Hua, *Peasants Versus Empires: Transnational Civil Justice and National Legal Decolonization in Manchuria, 1881-1951*

*Peasants versus Empires* is a smartly written piece of scholarship that highlights the role of Manchuria in the development of transnational legal modernity. Interpreting Manchuria as a “borderland” from the late nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century, Hua provides an exciting legal history of those who lived and traversed the northeast Asian territory. The research is posited in the Manchurian borderland as a generative site of international lawmaking and critically deliberates on the consequential confluence of three imperial legal cultures. This complex research theme is based on several archival and non-archival sources across northeast China, Taiwan, Russia, Japan, USA and different other

nation states across the Pacific. Together, they paint a picture of how this seemingly out-of-the-way location influenced the notions of justice and law enforcement for multiple competing empires. The subject of anti-colonial resistance in the borderlands through civil justice is unique and commendable, especially that Hua contextualizes the decolonization of the global south. It is a welcome contribution to borderland studies, comparative imperialisms, and East Asian studies.

Sam H. Bass, *The Bound Steppe: Slavery, State, and Family in Qing Mongolia*

*The Bound Steppe* is a compelling dissertation. The work advances what we know of the history of Mongolia by examining the bonded sector of society from the eighteenth century through the nineteenth century. As the dissertation argues, a social flattening occurred over time as bonded individuals transformed into “commoners” from the late eighteenth century onward, contributing to a major social transformation that has remained embedded in popular Mongolian historiography since. Bass's historical sociology of the “slave,” “aristocrat,” and “retainer” positions – and their change over time – relies on an assortment of legal source material, including tax titles, religious donor records, and court testimonies. The dissertation's general topic, coverage, and notion of bondage make the work relevant to other world areas that have long grappled with, studied, and theorized enslavement.

Shoufu Yin, *The “Chinese” Rhetorical Curriculum and A Transcultural History of Political Thought, ca. 1250–1650*

Shoufu Yin's dissertation is a very well-written analysis of the ways in which Chinese ‘rhetorical’ curriculum, a specific form of instruction of literary Sinitic, evolved and influenced notions of the individual, bureaucracy, and politics in East Eurasia (East Asia and Inner Asia). In essence, Yin convincingly argues that ‘rhetorical’ curriculum sparked and brought about

new political theories from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. Impressively, Yin examines documents in multiple languages, including (among others) Chinese, Mongolian, Manchu, and Persian. Through this captivating and compelling narrative, we gain insights into how millions of individuals and many ideas were affected by this unique form of education; perhaps paradoxically, ‘rhetorical’ curriculum became a medium of articulation, a platform for expression, and a tool for empowerment. With crystal-clear arguments, an engaging writing style, and adept handling of source compilation and analysis, this dissertation will prove to be an engaging read not only for trained historians, political philosophers, and political scientists, but also for students and the general public.

### Humanities Dissertations Accolades

#### Ground-breaking Subject Matter Accolade:

Mark Bookman, *Politics and Prosthetics: 150 Years of Disability in Japan*

#### Most Accessible and Captivating Work for the Non-specialist Reader Accolade:

Biswajit Sarmah, *Park, People and Politics: An Environmental History of the Kaziranga National Park*

#### Specialist Accolade:

Julie Bellemare, *‘A New Creation of This Dynasty’: Enamels, Glass, and the Deployment of Color in Qing China, 1700-1735*

#### Chairwoman's Accolade:

Fumi Inoue, *The Politics of Extraterritoriality in Post-Occupation Japan and U.S.-Occupied Okinawa, 1952-1972*

#### Insightful and Rigorous Doctoral Study Accolade:

Matthew Woolgar, *Communism in Context: The Indonesian Communist Party in West Java, 1949-66*



# IBP 2023 English Language Edition – Social Sciences



Universiteit  
Leiden  
Leiden University Libraries



## TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

**163 Books and 55 Dissertations**

Coordinating Entity:  
ICAS Secretariat

Chair of 2023 Dissertations  
Edition: Anna Romanowicz

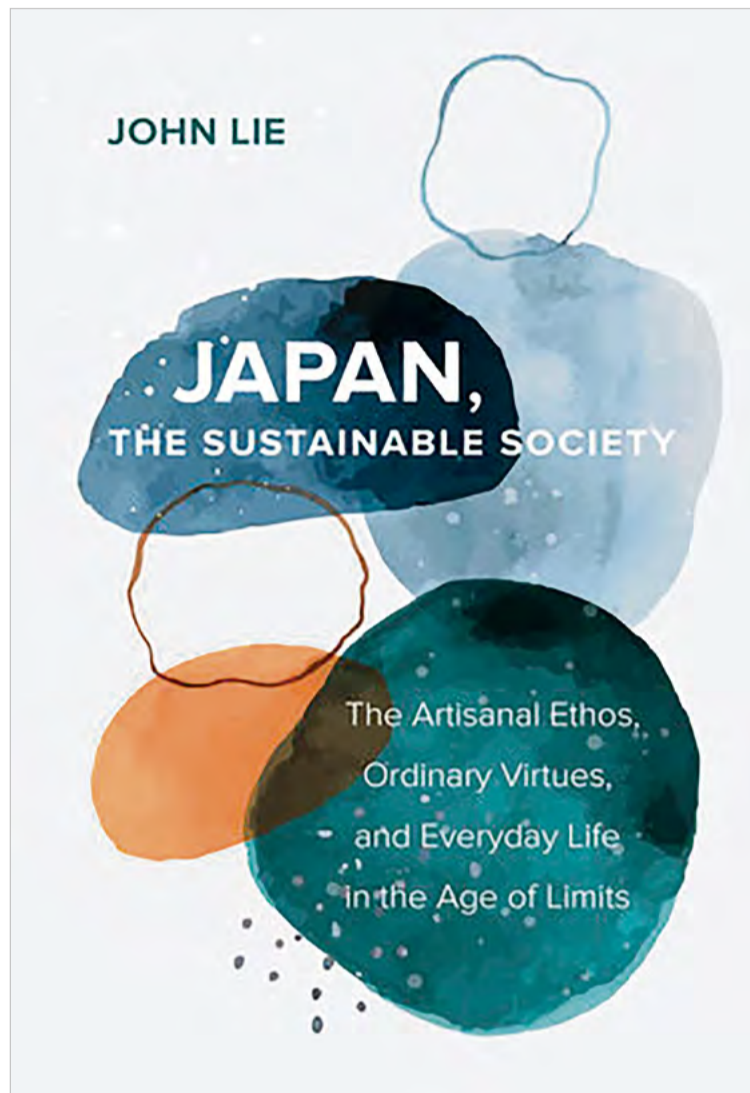
General Secretary IBP:  
Martina van den Haak

Reading Committee Members:  
Deborah Nadal and Lloyd G. Adu Amoah (books);  
Alyssa Paredes and Do Young Oh (dissertations)

Acting Secretary IBP:  
Wai Cheung

Sponsor of the IBP 2023  
English Language Edition:  
The Asian Library (Leiden University Libraries)

Secretary IBP English  
Language Edition:  
Wai Cheung



## IBP 2023 Social Sciences Winner

### AUTHOR

John Lie

### TITLE

*Japan, the Sustainable Society: The Artisanal Ethos, Ordinary Virtues, and Everyday Life in the Age of Limits*

### PUBLISHER

The University of California Press, 2021

Modern human conduct emblematically writ large in capitalism has left a devastating impact on life on Earth in what has come to be known in geologico-temporal terms as the Anthropocene. Lie, clearly troubled by the apocalypse that this epoch portends, offers some rather spirited and optimistic ways out of this planetary-scale destruction gnawing at the very elements that make the earth habitable: climate, air, and water, among others. Leveraging his intimate knowledge of its history, culture, and everyday life, Lie uses modern Japan as the symbolic trope of both how humanity orchestrated this dystopian environmental catastrophe and how this can be escaped. In this magisterial work, Lie offers a compelling reconsideration of – if not a convincing path away from – the fetishization of high growth rates, massive infrastructure projects, inordinate profits, and tireless consumption towards the more sustainable trajectory of the ancient artisanal know-how of, say, the sushi maker with the ethos this embodies and the attraction and virtue of “small is beautiful.” Seminal guidebook for sober reflection, indeed, in the age of palpable limits.

## IBP 2023 Social Sciences Shortlist



### AUTHOR

Antje Missbach

### TITLE

*The Criminalisation of People Smuggling in Indonesia and Australia*

### PUBLISHER

Routledge, 2022

In the Global North, from family conversations on television news to political campaigns, the topic treated by Antje Missbach – individuals facilitating the journey of people from the Global South across national borders – is among the most discussed ones. With its clear language and linear structure, this book is a much-needed contribution not only to academic debate, but hopefully also to societal discussion at large. Rooted in an intelligent mix of formal interviews, casual chats and collection of court verdicts, Missbach masterfully guides the reader through a journey into fresh thinking. It's a journey across the changing narratives of (Global North) migration and people smuggling over time, the stereotypical language used to define today's irregularised migrants and their facilitators, and the ideological use of angst – angst for the facilitators in charge of the transfers that result in a shipwreck as well as angst for those who safely bring their clients to destination. This book is indispensable for migration scholars and anybody interested in a deep and lucid analysis of injustice.



### AUTHOR

Ken MacLean

### TITLE

*Crimes in Archival Form: Human Rights, Fact Production, and Myanmar*

### PUBLISHER

Harvard University Press, 2021

Rich in theoretical references, ethnographic materials, and long-term knowledge of Myanmar's history of military dictatorship, Ken MacLean's book offers an engaged, powerful, and original reflection on two aspects of truth-seeking in the context of state-sponsored violence and human rights violations. First, the importance of distinguishing how facts are produced and how facts are found. Secondly, the fundamental importance of considering why this distinction matters, from an epistemological, methodological, and ethical point of view. The author patiently leads the reader through the scrupulous process towards transparency by navigating the interplay of facts and “facts” and by questioning what makes an archival document authentic. MacLean's final call for a direct conversation on the complexities of fact-finding with the local communities affected by human rights violations confirms the outstanding value of this scholarly work.



### AUTHOR

Syed Irfan Ashraf

### TITLE

*The Dark Side of News Fixing: The Culture and Political Economy of Global Media in Pakistan*

### PUBLISHER

Anthem Press, 2021

Syed Irfan Ashraf's book is not only a political project, like the author states in the first sentence of his work, but one that requires a lot of courage. The obvious courage to be a war journalist, the additional courage to be a “fixer” (a low-cost, disposable, nameless local journalist hired by foreign journalists to help them report for global media), the self-imposed courage to repeatedly ask oneself whether exposing the teenage activist Malala Yousafzai to the world in a documentary for the *New York Times* turned her into a target for the Taliban, and the courage to critically reflect on all this for writing a book. Through first-hand experience accounts and in-depths interviews with several Pashtun journalists, Ashraf meticulously describes the little-known role of fixers in the 24/7 frantic production of news from war zones that interest global media, highlighting the commodification of these local “eyes and ears” as professional journalists, members of already vulnerable families and ultimately individuals.



### AUTHOR

Timothy M. Yang

### TITLE

*A Medicated Empire: The Pharmaceutical Industry and Modern Japan*

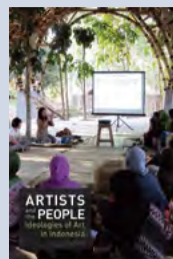
### PUBLISHER

Cornell University Press, 2021

The recent COVID-19 pandemic – which still casts a gloomy shadow on life across the globe despite its purported end – was marked by a frenetic race for a cure worldwide. Large, rich, powerful, globe-spanning pharmaceutical corporations (known as Big Pharma) were the ones which won the race for vaccines. In this groundbreaking work, Yang takes the reader on a timely journey on the emergence of Big Pharma in Asia – a region which has only recently joined the medicines producing club. Yang's work provides us with captivating historical insights on the rise and fall of the Japanese firm, Hoshi Pharmaceuticals. The book enriches our understanding of the industry through Hoshi, by exposing the entanglements and complications of Japanese modernization, state building, industrialization, politics, scientific knowhow, empire building, colonialism, cooperate capitalism, technology, warfare, humanitarian goals, and epic inhuman degeneration. A commendable intellectual effort well worth the read.



## IBP 2023 Accolades in the Social Sciences



### Art Book Accolade

**AUTHOR**  
Elly Kent  
**TITLE**  
*Artists and the People: Ideologies of Art in Indonesia*  
**PUBLISHER**  
NUS Press, 2022



### Best Read for the General Public Accolade

**AUTHOR**  
Claudio Sopranzetti, Sara Fabbri and Chiara Natalucci  
**TITLE**  
*The King of Bangkok*  
**PUBLISHER**  
University of Toronto Press, 2021



### Book Cover Accolade

**AUTHOR**  
Chang Kyung-Sup  
**TITLE**  
*The Logic of Compressed Modernity*  
**PUBLISHER**  
Polity Press, 2022



### Edited Volume Accolade

**AUTHOR**  
Sabella O. Abidde  
**TITLE**  
*China and Taiwan in Africa: The Struggle for Diplomatic Recognition and Hegemony*  
**PUBLISHER**  
Springer, 2022



### Specialist Publication Accolade

**AUTHOR**  
Mikkel Bunkenborg, Morten Nielsen and Morten Axel Pedersen  
**TITLE**  
*Collaborative Damage: An Experimental Ethnography of Chinese Globalisation*  
**PUBLISHER**  
Cornell University Press, 2022



### Teaching Tool Accolade

**AUTHOR** David Shambaugh  
**TITLE** *China's Leaders: From Mao to Now*  
**PUBLISHER** Polity Press, 2021

## Dissertation Prize 2023 English Edition – Social Sciences Winner

### Shozab Raza, *Theory from the Trenches: Revolutionary Decolonization on Pakistan's Landed Estates*

Raza's *Theory from the Trenches* is a remarkable account of peasant-led theorization in the pursuit of agrarian liberation and revolutionary decolonization in Pakistan. Each chapter is framed around a trench theory concept – on religion and its radical potential, populism's successes and failures, recognition and its implications for revolutionary organization, and the afterlife concepts in landlord theory – which altogether offer a comprehensive look into the intellectual lives that inform agrarian change. Raza's "theory-ography," is a testament to the intellectual project of finding emancipatory potential everywhere. It champions theory from the Global South without fetishizing it or replicating current decolonizing modes that tend to see Western sources as the "epistemic enemy." In all, *Theory from the Trenches* serves as a powerful call for unity-in-difference in a time of fractious, polarized politics the world over. Crystalline in clarity, authoritative in tone, and highly original in its focus and argumentation, this work has high potential for being widely read in critical agrarian studies, historical anthropology, and beyond.

### Social Sciences Dissertations Shortlist

Didi Kyoung-ae Han, *Practising Urban Commons Amidst Precarity: A Genealogical Analysis of the Urban Precariat Movements in Tokyo and Seoul*

Han's dissertation examines the development and production of the discourses, practices, and subjectivities evolving within urban precariat movements in Tokyo and Seoul, drawing from 17 months of ethnographic research, 70 in-depth interviews, and extensive archival data. Through a comparative analysis of two cities, this dissertation demonstrates how the precariat's alternative practices simultaneously shape and are shaped by uneven urbanisation processes. The author successfully develops theoretical and empirical understandings of the commons from a relational and comparative perspective by showing how urban commons and communities are practised based on their geographical and historical contexts. Notably, this thesis offers a fresh insight into the commons through 'co-research' in which researchers and activists collectively strive to translate discourse into practices and vice versa.

Farhana Afrin Rahman, *Making a Life for Themselves: Gender, Identity, and Everyday Negotiations of Rohingya Women in Bangladesh's Refugee Camps*

In her thesis, Farhana Afrin Rahman tackles the challenging topic of the everyday negotiations, contestations, and strategies of the Rohingya women who have been forced to abandon their homes and live in a refugee camp. Rahman's dissertation is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork conducted within a feminist framework at the Kutupalong-Balukhali refugee camp in Bangladesh. Her work presents a compelling narrative that delves into navigating power relations and asserting agency and identity under unimaginably difficult circumstances. Elegantly and compassionately written, this dissertation reflects the intricate reality faced by Rohingya women living in displacement. It explores topics such as marriages, divisions of labour within households, and humanitarian aid. This timely, vivid, and empathic portrayal of Rohingya refugees addressed a crucial gap in existing scholarship. Despite the sombre subject matter, this thoughtful analysis of power asymmetries provided readers with a glimmer of hope regarding the role of human agency.

Ping-hsiu Lin, *Precious Economies: Gems and Value Making in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Borderlands*

Lin's *Precious Economies* tracks the political transformation of pieces of rock into precious gems and markers of opulence against the backdrop of socio-politically fraught geographies from Pakistan to Thailand. It draws on an impressive array of multi-sited, archivally informed, and embodied methods, in part as an apprentice gem cutter herself, to understand how differential valuation across nodes form the infrastructural basis of a luxury economy. Much like the work of faceting a rough crystal itself, the author cuts across deep regional histories and changing values of the world beyond, market-mediated discourse and knowledge from the natural sciences, and technological devices and artisanal skill to tell her story. Elegantly and engagingly written, this dissertation accomplishes what even anthropologists in our global age still find difficult to do: transnational ethnography that is capacious in scope but thick in description. Already an admirable work of scholarship, future iterations of this dissertation will surely intervene even more boldly into commodity studies as it is currently done.

Rupak Shrestha, *The Border Came Between Us: Securing Development, Surveillance and Securitization, and Refugee Memory and Placemaking in Nepal*

Shrestha's dissertation is a richly illustrated ethnographic study on Tibetan refugees in Nepal related to the increasing Chinese influence in the region. This dissertation persuasively demonstrates how geopolitics affects the everyday life of Tibetan refugees by covering different themes such as borders, sovereignty, placemaking, memory, and indigeneity. In doing so, this thesis illustrates the northeastern Nepal borderlands as a conflicting site where various multi-scalar geopolitical, social, and economic issues intersect. The findings are vividly supported by more than 50 original photographs taken by the author at the field sites.

### Social Sciences Dissertations Accolades

#### Ground-breaking Subject Matter Accolade:

Kathrin Eitel, *Recycling Infrastructure: Practices of Waste Handling in Phnom Penh*

#### Most Accessible and Captivating Work for the Non-specialist Reader Accolade:

Farhana Afrin Rahman, *Making a Life for Themselves: Gender, Identity, and Everyday Negotiations of Rohingya Women in Bangladesh's Refugee Camps*

#### Specialist Accolade:

Yan Ho Lai, *Legal Resistance against Authoritarian Legal Transplantation: The Politics of the Rule of Law and the Legal Profession in Post-Umbrella Hong Kong*

#### Chairwoman's Accolade:

Franco Galdini, *The Post-Soviet Space and Uzbekistan in the International Division of Labour: From Transition to Capital Accumulation*

#### Insightful and Rigorous Doctoral Study Accolade:

Paankhi Agrawal, *Struggles for Decommodifying Housing: Protected Tenants and Rent Control in Mumbai, 1918-2018*



# IBP 2023 French Language Edition

## TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

22 Books

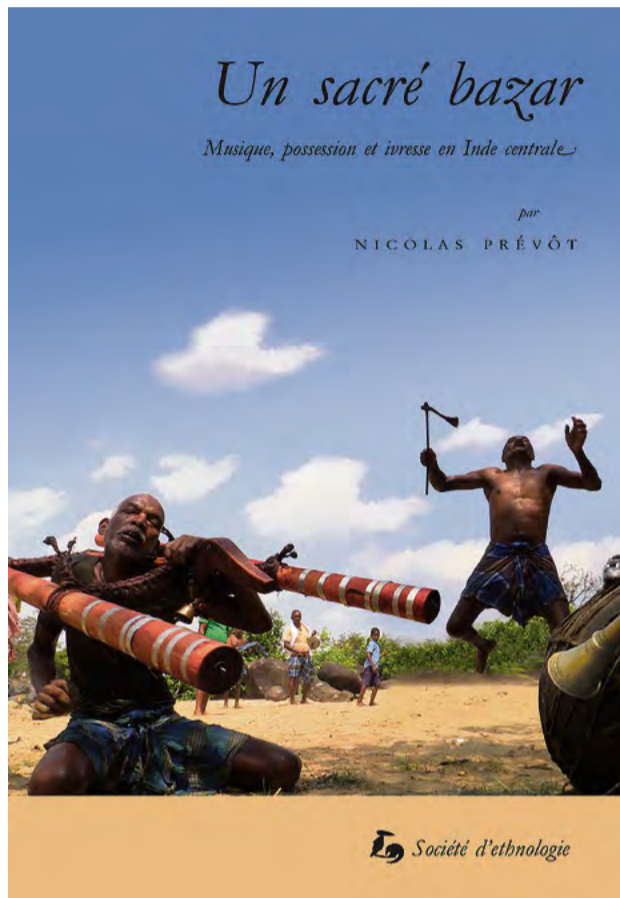
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Acting Secretary:  
Gosia Chwirot

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Matthias Hayek, Valérie Lavoix  
and Xavier Paulès

Sponsor of the IBP 2023  
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Network on Asian Studies



## IBP 2023 French Language Winner

### AUTHOR

Nicolas Prévot

### TITLE

*Un sacré bazar. Musique, possession et ivresse en Inde centrale*  
Playing with the Gods. Music, Spirit and Spirits in Central India

### PUBLISHER

Société d'Ethnologie, 2022

**P**laying with the Gods. Music, Spirit and Spirits in Central India (*Un sacré bazar* in French) is a fascinating volume guiding us into a two-day ritual in Bastar (Central India) through the prism of ethnomusicology. The author introduces us to the field and the multiple actors (divinities, devotees, religious practitioners, musicians) of this possession ritual with impressive skills of clarification. Then he takes us throughout the two days of ceremonies, describing and analyzing what is taking place and form with a permanent sense of detail, attention to vocabulary and reflexivity in order to make sense of his exceptional material based on participative observation as a musician. The volume combines ethnography and musicology with a writing and sketching talent that never leaves aside the readership, who also has access to visual and audio material available on an online repository. This book resulting from a long engagement with the field and Indian musical practitioners renews the scholarship on popular religious practices and possession rituals, and it will definitely become a reference in anthropology of India and ethnomusicology.

## IBP 2023 French Language Shortlist and Accolades

### Most Accessible and Captivating Work for the Non-Specialist Reader



#### AUTHOR

César Castellvi

#### TITLE

*Le dernier empire de la presse. Une Sociologie du journalisme au Japon*  
The Last Empire of the Press: A Sociology of Journalism in Japan

#### PUBLISHER

CNRS Editions, 2022

In this book, based on his doctoral thesis, César Castellvi highlights a double paradox. On the one hand, Japan, a country that made a digital shift very early on, is the country where printed media is the healthiest in the world. On the other hand, there is no school, association or union of journalism in the Archipelago. Based on the results of an immersive fieldwork, Castellvi offers a detailed sociological analysis of journalistic work in Japan. The space given to the voices of the interviewees, as well as the introspective returns on the experience of the investigation, are two welcomed additions to a fascinating work. This book is also on the Shortlist.

### Landmark Contribution to the Field



#### AUTHOR

Christian Lamouroux

#### TITLE

*La Dynastie des Song. Histoire Générale de la Chine (960-1279)*  
The Song Dynasty. General History of China (960-1279)

#### PUBLISHER

Les Belles Lettres, 2022

In this dense and masterful volume, Christian Lamouroux delivers much more than a synthetic history – chronological and thematic, in keeping with the format of the General History of China series at “Belles Lettres” press – of one of the most complex and founding periods of Chinese history, the Song “open world”. The book brings together the fruits of decades of research both on the author’s favourite topics – spaces and territories, economy and finance – and by large on Song political and social bodies of power. Every single page is matured and vitalized by an impressive command over modern Japanese, Chinese and Western historiography, offering “a history of Song history” that is meant to be a major reference. This book is also on the Shortlist.



#### AUTHOR

François Robinne

#### TITLE

*Birmanie. Par-delà l'ethnicité*  
Burma. Beyond Ethnicity

#### PUBLISHER

Dépaysage, 2021

Both an intellectual and a theoretical journey, François Robinne's book opens new perspectives for the understanding of Burma's ethnic heterogeneity. Transcending the studies of ethnic specificities, the author is interested in the junction points of these different peoples and develops the concept of “social crossroads”, where networks and dynamics intersect and intertwine. Director of research at the CNRS, François Robinne has been working for nearly 40 years in Burma and Southeast Asia. Beyond the anthropological work, it is also the itinerary of the researcher that is retraced here, which makes the work all the more fascinating.



#### AUTHOR

Nathanel Amar

#### TITLE

*Scream for Life. L'invention d'une contra-culture punk en Chine populaire*  
Scream for Life. The invention of a punk counterculture in the People's Republic of China

#### PUBLISHER

Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2022

This book tells the history of Chinese punk based on a superb ethnographic work conducted between the late 2000s and mid-2010s. Amar takes us into the intimacy of punk communities, showing how forms of *modus vivendi* are established on a daily basis with law and order and the administration. It highlights the importance of the most modern means of communication (social media) in structuring the punk movement, while brilliantly situating this movement in the long temporality of the history of marginality in China.



# IBP 2023 Chinese Language Edition



霽茂潮中華文化研究中心  
Wan Bo Sow Research Centre for Chinese Culture

## TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

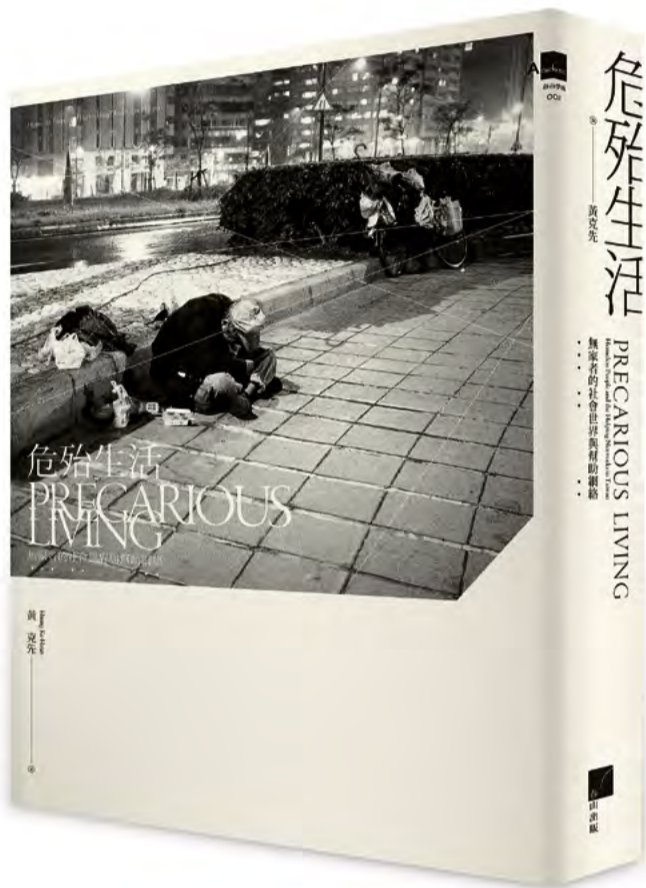
16 Books

**Organizing Entity:**  
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**Sponsor of the IBP 2023 Chinese Language Edition:**  
Wan Bo Sow Research Centre for Chinese Culture, Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore

**Secretary:**  
Ying-kit Chan



## IBP 2023 Chinese Language Winner

### AUTHOR

黃克先 Ke-hsien Huang

### TITLE

危殆生活：無家者的社會世界與幫助網絡  
**Precarious Living: Homeless People and the Helping Networks in Taiwan**

### PUBLISHER

春山出版有限公司 SpringHill Publishing Ltd., 2021

**P**recarious Living is a comprehensive sociological study on the precarity of homeless (or “unhoused”) people at a park in Taiwan. The book examines their personal trajectory and social life in the context of the moral economy and helping networks surrounding this marginalized group. It is truly a gripping ethnography of homelessness in Taiwan. It paints a vivid picture of the networks formed by Taipei’s homeless people to fulfil their basic human needs, as well as of the institutions that support them while exploiting their fragilities. The book offers not only keen scholarly insights but also a powerful intervention calling for a fairer society and economic system.

## IBP 2023 Chinese Language Shortlist



### AUTHOR

徐頌雯  
Chung Man Carmen Tsui

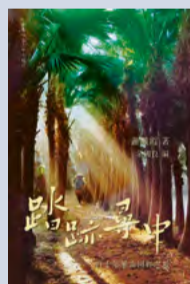
### TITLE

香港街市：日常建築裏的城市脈絡  
**Everyday Architecture in Context: Public Markets in Hong Kong (1842-1981)**

### PUBLISHER

香港中文大學出版社  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2022

*Everyday Architecture in Context: Public Markets in Hong Kong (1842-1981)* takes its readers into a deep dive into the past and present of public markets in Hong Kong. The book is not only a richly illustrated book about architecture, but also a social and economic history of Hong Kong centered around some of the spaces that have most profoundly shaped the city. Inviting deeper reflections on essential questions of modern urbanism, it is also immensely insightful for readers from other urban contexts.



### AUTHOR

蕭鳳霞  
Helen F. Siu  
余國良  
Kwok-leung Yu (ed.)

### TITLE

踏跡尋中：四十年華南田野之旅  
**Tracing China: A Forty-Year Ethnographic Journey**

### PUBLISHER

香港中文大學出版社  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2022

*Tracing China: A Forty-Year Ethnographic Journey* benefits from the author’s four decades of fieldwork experience in the southern provinces of China. The anthropological work presented in this book is insightful and astonishing, and the part-scholarly, part-autobiographical approach renders it a most engaging read.



### AUTHOR

王宏志  
Lawrence Wong

### TITLE

龍與獅的對話：翻譯與馬戛爾尼訪華使團  
**Dialogue Between the Dragon and the Lion: Translation and the Macartney Mission**

### PUBLISHER

香港中文大學出版社、香港中文大學翻譯研究中心  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, Research Centre for Translation, CUHK, 2022

*Dialogue Between the Dragon and the Lion: Translation and the Macartney Mission* illuminates a historic episode in East-West relations: the 1793 Macartney Embassy to Qing China. Unlike most studies that focus on British arrogance and Chinese resistance to change, this book highlights the shifting dynamics of power and diplomacy through its expert analysis of the role of translation in the ill-fated exchange, which was marked by biases, misunderstandings, and simply incompetencies.



### AUTHOR

布琮任  
Ronald C. Po

### TITLE

海不揚波：清代中國與亞洲海洋  
**The Placid Ocean: Qing China and the Asian Seas**

### PUBLISHER

時報文化出版  
China Times Publishing Company, 2021

*The Placid Ocean: Qing China and the Asian Seas* examines the maritime strategies of the Qing Empire and debunks the long-held view that the Qing dynasty was a land-based empire that lacked a maritime consciousness. The book is a captivating exploration of the Qing state’s shifting policies toward the maritime space. Challenging our vision of the Qing as an essentially land-based continental empire that was not interested in the oceanic domain, it considerably expands the scope of New Qing History, with significant implications for how we conceive of China’s role in the history of globalization.



# IBP 2023 German Language Edition

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18 Books

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and Transcultural  
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Talcott

Secretary:  
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German Language Edition:  
Centre for Asian and  
Transcultural Studies (CATS)

Acting Secretary:  
Corinna Mascherin



Centre for  
Asian and  
Transcultural  
Studies



Jan Schmidt

## Nach dem Krieg ist vor dem Krieg

Medialisierte Erfahrungen des  
Ersten Weltkriegs und Nachkriegs-  
diskurse in Japan (1914–1919)

Krieg und Konflikt

campus

## IBP 2023 German Language Winner

AUTHOR

Jan Schmidt

TITLE

*Nach dem Krieg ist vor dem Krieg: Medialisierte Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkriegs und Nachkriegsdiskurse in Japan (1914–1919)*

*After the War is Before the War: Medialized Experiences of the World War I and Postwar Discourses in Japan (1914–1919)*

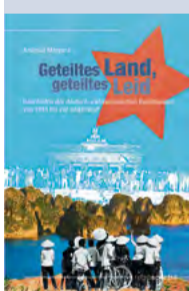
PUBLISHER

Campus Verlag, 2021

Did the experience of World War I open a new chapter not only in European history, but also in Japan? Research on WWI has almost entirely ignored Japan. Similarly, historians of Japan have attributed only limited influence on Japanese modernity to the experience of this war. This book sets out to challenge these conventional understandings and argues that WWI did have a significant impact on Japanese society at large. Through analysis of mass media, the author carefully fleshes out the ways in which the war was widely received in Japanese society. He then traces interpretations and popular discourses about

what the war experience meant for the country's future. Furthermore, he analyzes how government bureaucracy and military leadership leveraged these diverse popular discourses to develop and promote the agenda for Japanese politics, both domestically and internationally. He shows that such reflections also led to a re-evaluation of ongoing social discourses. Jan Schmidt's excellent study is thoroughly researched, including newly discovered archival material. His work, amongst other arguments, demonstrates that understanding the role of learning from global experiences requires going beyond conventional elite and intellectual history.

## IBP 2023 German Language Shortlist



AUTHOR

Andreas Margara

TITLE

*Geteiltes Land, geteiltes Leid: Geschichte der deutsch-vietnamesischen Beziehungen von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*  
Divided Country, Shared Suffering: A History of German-Vietnamese Relations from 1945 to the Present

PUBLISHER

Regiospectra, 2022

In the title of his book, Andreas Margara plays with the German word "geteilt", which can mean "divided" and "shared". Not only were Vietnam and Germany both divided, but they also share a lot of history, which is particularly true for East Germany. Margara highlights the ideological ties, but also the movement of people between the German Democratic Republic and Communist Vietnam both during the Vietnam War (military aid) and since 1973 (contract workers migrating to the GDR). Through tapping the rich resources of German state archives, Margara is also able to diligently reconstruct official contacts and the pro-Vietnamese projections of left-wing protest groups on the West German side. A brief chapter on the most recent history of the German-Vietnamese relations since 1990 rounds off this eminently readable volume.



AUTHOR

Björn Alpermann

TITLE

*Xinjiang: China und die Uiguren*  
*Xinjiang: China and the Uyghurs*

PUBLISHER

Würzburg University Press, 2021

In the only German-language book on the Northwestern Chinese region of Xinjiang, Björn Alpermann carefully surveys the history and socio-economic situation of its inhabitants, i.e. first and foremost the Muslim Uyghur minority. Although his interest lies mainly with the current conflict between inhabitants of the region and the central government, this book also satisfies the reader's curiosity concerning questions about ethnic identity or the cultural roots of the conflict. The work is especially commendable for its even-handedness: Alpermann refuses to subscribe to the one-sided anti-Chinese discourse of exile Uyghurs, but at the same time he is critical of the Chinese government's labeling of acts of resistance as "terrorism" and especially of recent Chinese policies in the region, which, after careful deliberation, he does not hesitate to characterize as "cultural genocide".



AUTHOR

Cairen Lin

TITLE

*Deutsche und chinesische Gaststättennamen: Eine kontrastive und sprachhistorische Untersuchung*  
German and Chinese Names of Restaurants: A Contrastive Language-historical Study

PUBLISHER

Peter Lang, 2022

The rather sober title of this book, a doctoral thesis that came out of German Studies at Magdeburg University, conceals a thorough historical and comparative study of onomastics between China and Germany. The author furnishes a solid introduction to the study of names and naming in general and the linguistic, functional and legal aspects of restaurant names in particular. Her corpus of appellations relies on a great variety of sources, such as historical lists of the names of buildings in 17th century Magdeburg, mentions of restaurant names in a Tang-dynasty collection of novels, or communist 20th century names. Lin analyses her material in morphological, stylistic and semantic terms, and arrives at a set of cultural differences, amongst which the Chinese tendency to stress wishes, virtues and moral values in restaurant names sticks out.



AUTHOR

Claudius Torp

TITLE

*Klavierwelten: Aufstieg und Verwandlung einer europäischen Kultur, 1830–1940*  
Piano Worlds: Rise and Transformation of a European Cultural Practice

PUBLISHER

Campus Verlag, 2022

This book traces the transnational history of an object – the piano – and its surrounding cultural practices in the framework of a global history of music. The author sketches the earlier European history of the piano up to the mid-19th century and then sets out to track its transmission to other climes. The case studies supply much fascinating material on the piano's "tropicalisation" through Christian missions, its appropriation for countercultural music in North America, or its position in divided, Apartheid South Africa. Torp also has a substantial and excellent chapter on the way the piano entered Japan in Meiji times and the central role it came to play within the reception of Western musical traditions. Sophisticated and well-written, Torp's book is an excellent example of how a historian not specialized in Asian cultures or languages can work out a reliable account and integrate Japan with his other case studies into an impressive whole.



# IBP 2023 Japanese Language Edition



TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

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Mika Ishino (humanities);  
Aysun Uyar Makibayashi and  
Suzuki Hitoshi (social sciences)

## IBP 2023 Japanese Language Winner

AUTHOR

下條尚志 Shimojyo Hisashi

TITLE

国家の「余白」—— メコンデルタ 生き残りの社会史

*The “Margins” of the State: A Social History of Survival in the Mekong Delta*

PUBLISHER

京都大学学術出版会 Kyoto University Academic Press, 2021

Hisashi Shimojyo's work on the social history of survival within the multi-ethnic societies of the Mekong Delta is a well-organized, dedicated, and focused work. While looking at the real-life experiences and the impact of socio-political changes on the local communities within their “spaces” and “margins of their states”, Shimojyo also skillfully draws our attention to the disciplinary reading of social histories in the Mekong Delta. This elegantly depicted picture of the intriguing past experiences, survival strategies, and resilient presences of local communities in the Mekong Delta is an essential contribution to ethnographic studies both in the Japanese and international literature of the region.



## IBP 2023 Japanese Language Shortlist



AUTHOR

シナン・レヴェント  
Sinan Levent

TITLE

石油とナショナリズム  
*Oil and Nationalism*

PUBLISHER

人文書院  
Jimbun Shoin, 2022

This book, written by a Turkish scholar, who spent nearly a decade studying in Japan, pleasantly surprises the Japanese readers. First, the author's near-perfect command of the Japanese language captivates readers. Secondly, the content of the book is equally intriguing. The author explores Japan's natural resource diplomacy and foreign policy towards the Middle Eastern countries in the post-World War II era, primarily from the perspective of influential figures in the private sector. The author focuses on the often-overlooked ideological motivations of these individuals, concluding that their actions were primarily driven by nationalistic and “Pan-Asiatic” sentiments. While at times the author's analysis may appear overly simplified and biased, his unique perspective on Japanese foreign policy-making offers a fresh stimulation, particularly to specialists in this field.



AUTHOR

戸川 和成  
Kazunari Togawa

TITLE

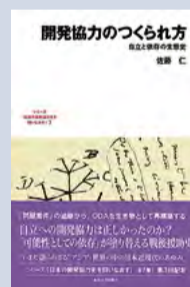
首都・東京の都市政策と  
ソーシャル・キャピタル  
—— 地域振興と市民活動  
5政策のQOLを高め、23  
区格差を改善するガバナンスの実現

Urban Policy and Social Capital in 23 Special Wards of Tokyo

PUBLISHER

晃洋書房  
Koyoshobo, 2022

Kazunari Togawa, the author of this book, fills a gap in social capital and local government research by presenting comprehensive, theoretical, and empirical analysis. Kazunari provides us with a unique insight into the social capitalism that exists in Tokyo, Japan, by combining large-scale survey data with a variety of analytical techniques. From the perspective of social capital, he elucidated the mechanisms that result in effective local governance for citizens. The study skillfully explores the influence of social capital on the efficiency of urban policy and the previously unknown connection between the two in terms of their effect on the administration of local affairs.



AUTHOR

佐藤 仁  
Jin Sato

TITLE

開発協力のつくられ方—  
自立と依存の生態史  
*The Making of Development Cooperation: Ecological History of Dependency and Self-Reliance*

PUBLISHER

東京大学出版会  
The University of Tokyo Press, 2021

Jin Sato's work is a thorough, well-organized, and systematically written documentation of the history, present issues, and the future projection of possible and responsible development aid settings. Part of the JICA “History of Japanese Development Cooperation” project, Sato's work presents us a valuable record of multifaceted development aid discourse in the literature with sound case studies from the field. With its focus on the ecological history of dependencies and self-reliance that the cases present, the book provides us with an in-depth analysis of the various aspects of the issue of development cooperation and becomes an essential contribution to the field.



AUTHOR

荻原真子  
Shinko Ogihara

TITLE

いのちの原点「ウマイ」—— シベリア狩猟  
民文化の生命観  
*“Umai”, the Origins of Life in Siberian Hunter Cultures*

PUBLISHER

藤原書店  
Fujiwara Shoten, 2021

Shinko Ogihara provides a compelling revisionist account of part of the diffusion of beliefs from the hunter societies of the Eurasian continent into northern Japan in the later Paleolithic Period. In equal parts ethnology, ethnography, religious studies, and cultural anthropology, Ogihara traces concepts pertaining to the mother goddess of life, “Umai”, and the spiritual world of the Siberian and other peoples. Emphases are on concepts of the unborn and childbirth, and these are convincingly connected to the system of beliefs developing within Japan's Ainu culture. In Ogihara's account, Eurasian spiritual origins of life are bound to concepts of the mountain god (or rather, goddess) after the development of rice cultivation on the Japanese archipelago.



# IBP 2023 Korean Language Edition

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62 Books

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University Asia  
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Hun Park, Joohee Kim

Secretary:  
Jong-Cheol Kim

Sponsor of the IBP 2023  
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Seoul National University Asia  
Center (SNUAC)

Acting Secretary:  
Bomi Min



## IBP 2023 Korean Language Winner

AUTHOR

유형근 Hyung-Geun Yoo

TITLE

분절된 노동, 변형된 계급: 울산 대공장 노동자의 생애와 노동운동  
**Labor Segmentation and the Decline of Class Solidarity:  
The Lives and Labor Movements of Large Factory Workers  
in Ulsan**

PUBLISHER

산지니 Sanzini, 2022

This book is an excellent study that analyzes the formation and the deformation characteristics of the working class in Korea through cases of blue-collar workers at Ulsan Hyundai Motors and Hyundai Heavy Industries. The author focuses on the changes over 40 years from the 1980s to the end of the 2010s in Ulsan, and widely surveys the factory as well as the workers' living space, their families, their living conditions, and the regional community. The author's attempt to show a sociological understanding of the life process and action-dispositions of large-factory workers becomes a new exemplar for studies in the labor movement and the working class. This work provides a complete analysis of the long-term dynamics of "labor segmentation and the decline of class solidarity."

## IBP 2023 Korean Language Shortlist



AUTHOR

이종구  
Chongkoo Lee

TITLE

기업사회 일본과 노동운동의 형성: 일본적 노사관계의 사회사  
Japanese Enterprise Society and Shaping of Labor Movement: Social History of Japanese Style Labor Relations

PUBLISHER

북인더갭  
BookintheGap, 2022

This book is a painstaking work, exemplary of regional studies in social sciences through empirical research and refinement of theoretical views accumulated over a long period to trace the social conditions and formative process of 'Japanese style labor relations'. The Japanese labor relations have been popular in Japanese cultural discourse and have produced many follow-ups so far. However, this study claims a significant place in the research history in the field, as it excludes any explanations based upon the specificity of cultural traditions. Instead, it mainly examines the customary practices of human resources and labor management that were formed during the industrialization process. It would surely set an example for regional studies in Korea, where the atmosphere in the field tends to place too much emphasis on the practical policy study to help understand current affairs or solve domestic issues at hand.



AUTHOR

도미엔  
Do Thanh Thao Mien

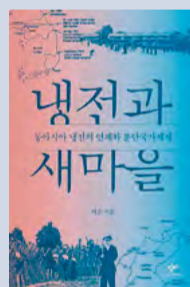
TITLE

붉은혈맹: 평양, 하노이 그리고 베트남전쟁  
Between Blood Ally and Self-Interest: Pyongyang, Hanoi and the War in Vietnam

PUBLISHER

서울대학교출판문화원  
Seoul National University Press, 2022

*Between Blood Ally and Self-Interest* investigates North Korea's support for North Vietnam. Along with existing research by Korean and Western academia, newly added research of a Vietnamese scholar completes this work. Above all, it is meaningful that this work comprehensively investigates, in a novel, stereoscopic and inclusive way, North Korea and North Vietnam's establishment and development of diplomatic ties and their mutual influences. It is an achievement to solve an important puzzle in the modern and contemporary history of East Asia and Cold War studies. The ties between North Korea and Vietnam persist today, as seen in the North Korean leader's route across China to visit Vietnam for the 2019 United States-North Korea Summit.



AUTHOR

허은  
Eun Heo

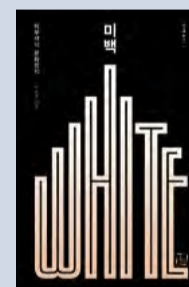
TITLE

냉전과 새마을: 동아시아 냉전의 연쇄와 분단국가체제  
The Cold War and the New Community: Successive Cold Wars in East Asia and the System of Divided Nation

PUBLISHER

창비  
Changbi Publishers, 2022

Many people know about Saemaul Undong or the New Community Movement in Korea. The positive image of the movement would consist of rural modernization, while the negative would be resident control and uniformization. This book adds to the images of the New Community Movement and argues that the concept of it created a strategic foothold of anti-Communist security during the Cold War era. The book suggests a perspective on the New Community as 'the combination of development and security' and 'the coexistence of modernization and anti-Communism', and strives to prove the elements of 'security' and 'anti-Communism'. Three historical contexts are presented as background. The book appears to have presented a new perspective on the New Community by employing a wide view and excavating a variety of materials. Yet, more precaution may have been needed on the characteristics of Korean military administration when comparing with Manchukuo and Southeast Asian countries.



AUTHOR

박소정  
Sojeong Park

TITLE

미백: 피부색의 문화정치  
Mibaek: The Cultural Politics of Skin Color

PUBLISHER

컬처룩  
Culturelook, 2022

This book is a result of post-colonial cultural studies that examine skin whitening as a matter of identity formation through body technology, deformation and the deconstruction of rigidity in skin color. The author transcends the view that whitening is simply a preference or envy for the Caucasian race and the West, and suggests a new perspective that white skin moves around bodies of many races and nationalities through the concept of whitening assemblage to blur the borders. Through the semantics that whitening bleaches the skin, the book overcomes the discursive effect of existing post-colonial racism. The author especially focuses on the network of objects and vividly illustrates whitening as practical beauty and the East Asian transversality of K-beauty. This book is an excellent study that captures whitening as a major phenomenon in media culture or communication and reveals the gendered and racialized discourse of whitening on the post-colonial horizon.



# IBP 2023 Portuguese/Spanish Language Edition

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## IBP 2023 Portuguese Language Winner

AUTHOR Andreas Hofbauer

TITLE *Diáspora africana na Índia: Sobre castas, raças e lutas*

African Diaspora in India: On Caste, Race and Struggle

PUBLISHER Unesp, 2021

In *Diáspora africana na Índia*, Andreas Hofbauer examines processes of inclusion, exclusion, hybridization, inequality, and differentiation involving Afro-descendant populations in India, referred to as *siddis* or *sidis*. Hofbauer presents an original methodological proposal through the notion of difference as a metacategory in which race, culture, or identity can be ways of conceiving and expressing human difference. The book is the result of extensive documentary research to reconstruct the historical relations that led to the presence of Africans in India and field research with contemporary Siddi communities.



## IBP 2023 Spanish Language Winner

AUTHOR Carles Brasó Broggi

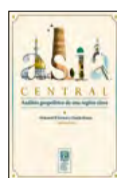
TITLE *Los médicos errantes: De las Brigadas Internacionales y la revolución china a la guerra fría*

Wandering Doctors: From the International Brigades and the Chinese Revolution to the Cold War

PUBLISHER Crítica, 2022

*Los Médicos Errantes* is an original study of 19 health professionals from Central Europe, mostly Communists and Jews, although cosmopolitan and polyglot in identity, who shared their experiences in the Spanish Civil War, in China's (and Burma's) war against the Japanese Empire. The book is the result of a solid ten-year research, in which Brasó Broggi offers a new vision of the relations between Spain and Asia at that time, expanding what was published by Rodao (*Franco y el Imperio Japonés*, 2013) and Hwei- Ru and Len Tsou (*Los brigadistas chinos en la Guerra Civil*, 2013), bringing to light unknown aspects of the International Brigades in Spain and the War of Resistance in China. The book tells history from below, focusing on the medical service rather than military elites, offering an innovative perspective that connects national histories that are considered distant to global history.

## IBP 2023 Portuguese/Spanish Language Accolades



Lesser Researched Areas

AUTHOR Mohamed El Yattoui

and Claudia Barona (eds)

TITLE *Asia Central. Análisis geopolítico de una región clave*Central Asia: Geopolitical  
Analysis of a Key RegionPUBLISHER Colección Universitaria de  
Estudios sobre Asia y África and Universidad  
Nacional Autónoma de México, 2021Educational Book for  
Readers in Spanish-  
Portuguese Language

AUTHOR Gabriel Terol Rojo

TITLE *Filosofía, intelectualidad  
y sinidad*

Philosophy, Scholarship and Sinology

PUBLISHER Edicions Bellaterra, 2022

Book on Asian Film,  
Media and Communication  
Sciences

AUTHOR Antonio Loriguillo

TITLE *Anime complejo.*La ambigüedad narrativa  
en la animación japonesaComplex Anime: Narrative Ambiguity  
in Japanese Animation

PUBLISHER Aldea Global, 2021



Best Organized Volume

AUTHOR Jesús Sosa

TITLE *La indústria farmacêutica em  
Índia: globalização, competência  
y financiarización*The Pharmaceutical Industry in  
India: Globalization, Competitiveness and  
FinancingPUBLISHER Universidad Nacional Autónoma  
de México, 2022

Promoting of Asian Studies

AUTHOR Rafael Moura

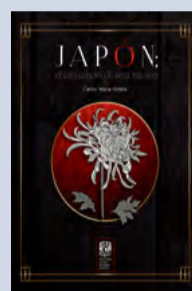
TITLE *Industrialização,  
Desenvolvimento e  
Emparelhamento Tecnológico  
no Leste Asiático: os casos de*

Japão, Taiwan, Coreia do Sul e China

Industrialisation, Development and Techno-  
logical Leveling off in East Asia: The cases  
of Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and China

PUBLISHER INCT and Ideia D, 2021.

## IBP 2023 Portuguese/Spanish Language Shortlist



AUTHOR

Carlos Maya-Ambía

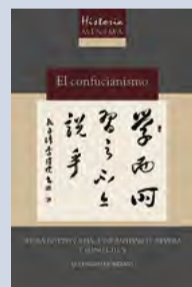
TITLE

*Japón: El cansancio  
de una nación*Japan: The Fatigue  
of a Nation

PUBLISHER

Universidad Nacional  
Autónoma de México,  
2021

In *Japón, El cansancio de una nación*, Maya-Ambía offers a critical analysis of contemporary Japanese society from an original perspective, using the South Korean philosopher Byung-Chul's idea of "burnout" as a guide. The book is an antithesis to idealized views of Japanese society, proposing a journey through some of its darkest aspects. Maya-Ambía uses burnout to explain phenomena such as *hikikomori*, or voluntary isolation, which she interprets as the burnout of dealing with others; *karoshi*, or death from work exhaustion, caused by excessive working hours; the increase in suicides, especially among children and adolescents tired of academic demands and bullying; or the *otaku* phenomenon, which consumes a fantasy as a consequence of real-world tiredness. Finally, she analyzes the term in relation to the gender roles imposed on men and women, with the ideas of the salaryman and the traditional wife-mother.



AUTHOR

Flora Botton Beja,  
José Antonio Cervera  
and Yong Chen

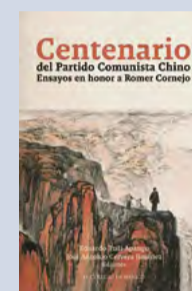
TITLE

*Historia mínima del  
confucianismo*Brief History of  
Confucianism

PUBLISHER

El Colegio de México,  
2021

*Historia mínima del Confucianismo* is a work by three authors – Flora Botton Beja, José Antonio Cervera and Yong Che – who present the evolution of Confucianism throughout history to a non-specialist audience. The authors provide the keys to understanding an aspect that has been fundamental not only to Chinese civilization, but also to other East Asian societies. The book is clearly organized into three blocks. First, Botton Beja provides an up-to-date overview of the best-known writers on Confucianism in the classical period. Second, Cervera proposes, for the first time in Spanish, a synthesis of the lesser-known authors of neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties that emerged in response to the introduction of Buddhism in China, including their interactions with European Jesuits. Third, Yong Chen contextualizes the contemporary revival of Confucianism, drawing primarily on original Chinese sources.



AUTHOR

Eduardo Tzili-Apango  
and José Antonio  
Cervera Jiménez (eds)

TITLE

*Centenario del Partido  
Comunista Chino:  
Ensayos en honor a  
Romer Cornejo*Centenary of the  
Chinese Communist  
Party: Essays in Honor  
of Romer CornejoPUBLISHER  
El Colegio de México and  
Centro de Estudios de  
Asia y África, 2022

This book, edited by Cervera Jiménez, takes as its guiding principle the multi-disciplinary analysis of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), one of the most important political actors in the world. This collective work presents a key contextualization for understanding the functioning of the Asian giant, examining a variety of topics such as: the evolution of the CCP and its contradictions throughout history, cyberpolitics and digital control, the emergence of the business class and the country's adaptation to globalization, and the difficult role of women in the political scene. The final chapters examine foreign policy, from historical relations with Western powers, Hong Kong, mobilization during the Korean War, and exchanges with South America, to contemporary policies, including the crystallization of "soft power," international action through its International Liaison Department, the diaspora, and relations with Southeast Asia.



AUTHOR

Claudia Ribeiro

TITLE

*Uma escrita celeste.  
Distância lexical e  
imanência de significado  
no Tianshu (Livro do  
Ceu), de Xu Bing*Lexical Distance and  
Immanence of Meaning  
in TianshuPUBLISHER  
Instituto Internacional  
de Macau, 2021

Based on works produced in China and texts by Western critics, Claudia Ribeiro approaches Xu Bing's trajectory in *Uma escrita celeste*, focusing on the conditions of production of the work *Tianshu (Livro del Cielo)* in China in the 1980s, influenced by the opening and translation of Western works that began to be read. After an extensive review of the criticism of the work, the author presents her own interpretation of it, combining an aesthetic and historical analysis of Xu Bing's work. Through short chapters with a pleasant and clear writing, the book presents a rigorous analysis and concerns the reader with the complexity of a concrete production of Chinese culture.



# IBP 2023 Best Article on Global Hong Kong Studies

## IBP 2023 Winner - Social Sciences

### AUTHOR

Maurice Yip

### TITLE

**New town planning as diplomatic planning: Scalar politics, British–Chinese relations, and Hong Kong**  
*Journal of Urban History* 48(2), 2022: 361–380

The article by Maurice Yip offers an original, insightful, and intriguing interpretation of the planning and development of Tin Shui Wai new town against the backdrop of Sino-British diplomacy. It not only fills our knowledge gap regarding Hong Kong's political history in the few years between Governor MacLehose's visit to Beijing in 1979 and the beginning of Sino-British negotiations in 1982, a period that has often been overlooked. It also sheds a profoundly new light on how local urban development engages with scalar politics, and vice versa, in the unique context of Hong Kong. Through a meticulous examination of archival materials, the author debunks common misunderstandings and uncovers how actors at different spatial scales attempted to sort out the ways to handle the question of Hong Kong's future under the conditions of imperfect information and shifting power relations. The article has opened a new door to the study of Hong Kong history.

### TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

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## IBP 2023 Winner - Humanities

### AUTHOR

Carmen C. M. Tsui

### TITLE

**Housing the nascent middle class: The first high-rise planned community in post-war Hong Kong**  
*Planning Perspectives* 37(4), 2022: 735–759

Tsui's fascinating case study of Mei Foo Sun Chuen as a form of new planned housing in the 1960s and 1970s shows convincingly how a mega-scale residential development became the modern ideal for the middle class. It reveals how the middle class in Hong Kong imagined how their life could become in a period of rapid economic development.

## IBP 2023 Social Sciences Shortlist

### AUTHOR Samson Yuen

**TITLE** The institutional foundation of countermobilization: Elites and pro-regime grassroots organizations in post-handover Hong Kong, *Government and Opposition* 58(2), 2023: 316–337

This excellent study explores linkages between center and locality in the use of countermobilization strategies and how these linkages are maintained in Hong Kong through the appointment of local elites to the Chinese People's Consultative Committee. The author describes the number and organization of countermobilization protests and petitions up until 2019. Using statistical analysis, he shows how the protest organizers were rewarded with appointments to higher positions. The article makes a significant contribution to an understanding of how authoritarian leaders can build a grassroots base of support through patronage, an area that has not been widely or sufficiently examined in the literature.

**AUTHOR** Ngai Keung Chan and Chi Kwok  
**TITLE** Guerilla capitalism and the platform economy: Governing Uber in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, *Information, Communication & Society* 24(6), 2021: 780–796

Derived from the varieties of capitalism approach, the authors develop an original comparative framework based on the concept of guerilla capitalism. They demonstrate how a firm operating in a legally-unclear regulatory area can exert pressure on governments to attempt to prevent the introduction of new, potentially disadvantageous, regulatory measures. The comparative framework enables the authors to show differences in the types of pressure exerted depending on the nature of the regime. This opens up possibilities for further research on firms, such as Uber, that seek to exploit regulatory loopholes in their competition with businesses operating within an established regulatory framework.

**AUTHOR** Katherine Whitworth  
and Yao-Tai Li

**TITLE** Visual framing: The use of COVID-19 in the mobilization of Hong Kong Protest, *The China Quarterly*, no. 253, 2023: 19–34

This article by Whitworth and Li brings innovative methods to provide insights into the mobilization of protest in Hong Kong. The methods of rigorously analyzing posts on Lennon Walls offers useful possibilities for research, especially when interviewing is constrained, as during COVID-19. These analyses are then considered through a combination of social semiotics and social movement theory. In concrete terms, they found that COVID-19 had provided fertile ground for mobilizing critique of the local and central governments. The findings include fascinating examples of framing critique in innovative ways to take advantage of current events to offer novel criticism of ongoing concerns. Their work indicates the importance of bringing together social semiotics and social movement theory.

### AUTHOR Tommy Tse

**TITLE** Work faster, harder, cheaper? Global, local and sectoral co-configurations of job insecurities among Hong Kong creative workers, *Critical Sociology* 48(7–8), 2022: 1141–1167.

Creative work as a distinctive form of labor has been undergoing precarization worldwide. The article by Tommy Tse presents a brilliant attempt to unpack and theorize the multi-faceted nature of job insecurity in the cultural and creative industries in Hong Kong at the intersections of global, local and sectoral forces. It adopts a pluralist epistemological approach that taps the concrete and subjective experiences among the creative workers as well as examines their divergent responses to job insecurities. The analysis presents a nuanced, holistic and densely contextualized understanding of job insecurity in the industries. This is a highly commendable piece of work that contributes significantly to the scholarship on labor, precarity, and creative work.

## IBP 2023 Humanities Shortlist

### AUTHOR Allan T. F. Pang

**TITLE** Stamping 'imagination and sensibility': Objects, culture, and governance in late colonial Hong Kong, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 50(4), 2022: 789–816

In this fascinating article, Allan Pang examines how colonial officials 'preserved' local culture to preserve loyalty and trust towards the British regime. By creating and selling stamps and coins that featured Chinese festivals and customs, colonial officials tried to project an image of a caring government. Pang convincingly draws readers' attention from the high diplomacy of colonialism to everyday colonialism in Hong Kong history. He shows that in addition to violence, discrimination and repression, there are a lot more 'soft' skills of colonial governance which are equally impactful that await discovery.

### AUTHOR Eunice Seng

**TITLE** Working women and architectural work: Hong Kong 1945–1985, *Aggregate*, 2022, doi.org/10.53965/jpie9054

Eunice Seng, in this unprecedented archive-building work, maps the role of women in the architectural and construction industries of post-war Hong Kong. Drawing on a variety of records, including colonial records and industry journals, Seng meticulously studies how working women were defined, described, and represented in colonial public institutions where inequality was inbuilt and normalized. This article puts forward new narratives and uncovers new archival materials that will provide a very significant foundation for future research in studying the patriarchy of Hong Kong's post-war economic development.

### AUTHOR John D. Wong

**TITLE** Making Vitasoy 'local' in post-WWII Hong Kong: Traditionalizing modernity, engineering progress, nurturing aspirations, *Business History Review* 95(2), 2021: 275–300

In this well-researched and wide-ranging essay, John Wong uses Vitasoy, a well-known soy-based drink, to weave together a story that touches on the discourse on modern nutritional science, technological and business transformations, the power of marketing, as well as the sociocultural changes associated with the economic growth in postwar Hong Kong. In so doing, Wong not only offers an insightful analysis of how an individual company was able to take advantage of both structural changes and particular contingencies to advance its business, but also provides a convincing argument about how important – in fact, vital – 'foreign' ingredients have been in the success of a seemingly 'local' beverage.

### AUTHOR Vivien Chan

**TITLE** Markets made modular: Constructing the modern 'wet' market in Hong Kong's public housing estates, 1969–1975, *Urban History*; 1–19, doi.org/10.1017/S0963926822000153

Vivien Chan's article traces the development of modular wet markets in Hong Kong from the 1960s to the 1970s. It reveals the colonial ideas of health, food hygiene, and social and spatial order against the bigger architectural and social trends of modularization in spatial and building design. It also examines the exciting competition and negotiation among the Chinese hawkers and colonial officials regarding the limit of 'wetness' in an orderly and hygienic market, reflecting the colonial vision of spatial and social disciplining in a modernized society. It makes a significant contribution not only to the social history but also to the architectural history of colonial Hong Kong.