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## **ICAS at TEN**

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# ICAS at TEN

In ten years of existence the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) has brought more than 5,000 academics from 60 countries together at five conventions where four thousand papers were presented during more than a thousand panels. Behind these figures lies a world of multiple interactions across borders and disciplines which has resulted in new long term international research partnerships. ICAS is established as one of the largest gatherings of Asia scholars in the world. In the run up to ICAS 5 in Kuala Lumpur, it's a good time to both reflect on the last decade and look to the future.

Josine Stremmelaar & Paul van der Velde

Since 1995 the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) was looking for ways of internationalising Asia Studies. The main goals were to transcend the boundaries between disciplines, between nations and regions studied and between the geographic origins of the scholars involved. This concept acquired a name: International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) and it became a platform on which Asia scholars from across the globe could study problems of interest to all.

ICAS was officially launched in 1997 and IIAS became the host of ICAS 1. The announcement of the convention brought enthusiastic responses from every corner of the world. Nearly one thousand participants from 40 countries attended ICAS 1 in Leiden, the Netherlands. More than 350 universities, institutes, and organisations were represented. In 2001 the Freie Universitat Berlin hosted ICAS 2. Two key decisions were taken in Berlin: 1) it was agreed that future editions of ICAS should, (for obvious reasons), be held in Asia; and 2) the ICAS Secretariat was founded to safeguard the continuity of the ICAS process. The main tasks of the Secretariat are: assessing new ideas concerning ICAS; publicising ICAS and its activities; organising the ICAS Book Prize; monitoring the ICAS Publication Series and keeping an up-to-date database of participants, institutions, exhibitors and advertisers. The Secretariat is hosted by the IIAS.

Following the Berlin decision, ICAS 3 was hosted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. The attendance was much higher than in Berlin both in terms of participants, (in particular those from Asia), and papers presented. Two years later, in 2005, ICAS 4 was held in China hosted by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. It was equally as succesful as ICAS 3. At the opening ceremony of ICAS 4 the ICAS Book Prizes were

awarded for the first time and the ICAS Publication Series was announced.

### The ICAS Book Prize

The bi-annual ICAS Book Prize (IBP) is a global competition which provides an international focus for publications on Asia. The book prizes are awarded for: (1) best study in the humanities; (2) best study in the social sciences. Furthermore there is a prize for the most outstanding PhD dissertation in the field of Asia Studies. The 2005 winners in the social science category were: Elizabeth C. Economy (Institute for Foreign Affairs, New York) with *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* and Christopher Reed (Ohio State University) for *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937*. Sam Wong (University of Leeds) was awarded Best Book Dissertation for his thesis on *Community participation of Mainland Chinese migrants in Hong Kong – rethinking agency, institutions and authority in social capital theory*. Wong's thesis is published as part of the ICAS Publication Series (AUP) and will be launched at ICAS 5.

Eighty new publications (46 humanities and 34 social sciences) and 10 PhD theses have been submitted for the 2007 ICAS Book Prize. This is 50% more entrants than IBP 2005. The Reading Committee - consisting of six respected scholars in the field of Asia Studies - has been particularly impressed by the high quality of the PhD theses and calls upon PhD supervisors to stimulate our young colleagues to submit their doctoral theses for the next IBP in 2009. The long lists, (consisting of 10 books in both categories), were announced in March 2007 at the AAS Annual Meeting in Boston. (For details see 'The ICAS Book Prize: A Showcase for Asia Studies' p 4-5 ICAS supplement to IIAS Newsletter 44). The 2007 IBP sees the launch of the Colleagues Choice Award. This new award has been established following numerous requests to give the academic community the opportunity to voice their choice. To cast your vote visit the virtual polling station at www.

| International Convention of Asia Scholars |              |              |        |        |           |              |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------|--------|-----------|--------------|
| Year                                      | Place        | Participants | Panels | Papers | Countries | Institutions |
| 1998                                      | Leiden       | 1000         | 130    | 640    | 40        | 350          |
| 2001                                      | Berlin       | 800          | 100    | 500    | 35        | 280          |
| 2003                                      | Singapore    | 1100         | 250    | 940    | 54        | 400          |
| 2005                                      | Shanghai     | 1200         | 270    | 1020   | 58        | 420          |
| 2007*                                     | Kuala Lumpur | 1400         | 350    | 1400   | 60        | 500          |
| * Estimated figures                       |              |              |        |        |           |              |

icassecretariat.org which will be open until 15 July 2007.

### ICAS publication series

Recently ICAS signed a contract with the Amsterdam University Press (AUP) to produce an ICAS Publication Series consisting of monographs, edited volumes and Proceedings. Five volumes of Proceedings are currently being produced. The contents include 65 out of a total of 130 papers submitted to ICAS. The ICAS 4 Proceedings are planned for publication in the course of this year and beginning of next year.

The first edited volume appeared in 2006 and is entitled *Multiregionalism and Multilateralism. Asian-European Relations in a Global Context* (Sebastian Bersick et al eds.). More titles are in the pipeline. The first volume to appear in the monograph series will be the re-worked thesis of the IBP prize winner Samuel Wong. (The prize is the publication of his thesis). ICAS 5 also sees the launch of Marleen Dieleman's *The Rhythm of Strategy: A Corporate Biography of the Salim Group of Indonesia* as part of the ICAS Monograph Series. All friends and sponsors of ICAS will receive a free copy of one of these books or the aforementioned *Multiregionalism and Multilateralism* at ICAS 5. The hallmark for all books in the ICAS Publication Series is sound academic work that appeals to a wider public.

### Sharing a future in Asia

At ICAS 4 in Shanghai it was announced that the Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON) and the Institute of the Malay World and Civilisation (ATMA) at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) are to host ICAS 5. It takes place 2-5 August 2007 in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center and will be the largest gathering of Asia scholars in the world. ICAS 5 has the theme 'Sharing a Future in Asia' and the programme offers more than 300 sessions with 1500 active participants from 60 countries. In total 185 panels have been submitted of which 136 organised panels, (panels formed by a group of scholars who will present their papers within one

or more sessions), and 45 institutional panels (sponsored by various organisations studying Asia in the broadest sense), have been accepted. A further 168 panels have been formed on the basis of individual submissions. This combination of organised and individual panels is an ideal mix and also a confluence of various paradigmatic approaches which typify the multidisciplinary and border transcending character of ICAS. The wide variety of themes, disciplines, and regions covered promises an intellectually challenging convention.

One of the new features at ICAS 5 will be the ICAS Institutions' Carousel: To showcase the different institutions that are participating, while at the same time (re)acquainting scholars with their activities, academic organisations have been invited to represent their institutions in the exhibition hall or have virtual presentations. In the ICAS Carousel, institutions will inform the

audience about new developments and activities. Participants can explore new developments by visiting the exhibition hall where personal and virtual presentations will alternate. Presentations will be between five and 15 minutes.

### ICAS 6 and beyond

The venue for ICAS 6 will be announced in the course of this year. At the time of writing, the secretariat is finalising the negotiations with the future hosts of ICAS 6. We can confirm that it will be an institution in East Asia. In cooperation with the local host we are striving to widen the platform in order to involve representatives from applied sciences and the field of innovative technology in particular. We are convinced that the ICAS activities will solicit strong support from Asia scholars and others worldwide and hope that as many as possible will become friends of ICAS enabling us to make ICAS stronger for the sake of all Asia scholars. <

