ICAS 3 Secretariat

In June 1998 the first International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS) materialized. The convention, which was hosted by the Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie der Wetenschappen (KNAW) in The Hague, and the Amsterdam Institute for Asia (IIAS), the Netherlands and the Association for Asian Studies (AAS, USA), was brought into existence because Euro- pean and American scholars felt a need for closer interaction. Although many individual contacts between re- searchers from both sides of the Atlantic had already been established, an open, loosely organized forum for discussion was still missing. This forum would allow specialists from all disciplines, regions, and paradigms to informally meet, exchange ideas, and engage in new plans for joint research activities. At ICAS 3 in Berlin it was decided to establish a permanent ICAS Secretariat.

Some 1,000 participants are expected to attend the conference and the concurrent exhibition for delegates to attend, which will include the latest publications, films, software and services.

ICAS 3 General Information

The Third International Convention of Asian Scholars will be held at the Raf- fles City Convention Centre, Singapore. The ICAS 3 will be organized by the National University of Singapore (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences & Asia Research Institute) and is endorsed by the Asian Studies Association of Aus- tralia (ASAA), the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

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More info >
TANAP Extends into Iran

In the past year the history research programme ‘Towards A New Age of Partnership’ (TANAP) has received several applications from young Iranian history scholars, eager to gain access to European sources concerning Iran’s Safavid period (AD 1501–1722). Though there are several Safavid specialists at various history departments in Iran, from the time of the Islamic Revolution they have not been encouraged to use Western sources. Ever since Khatami came to power, some universities have taken up the challenge of internationalization and one cannot but wonder if this is a wind of change.

By Henk Niemeijer

With Willem Floor and Rudolph Matthey’s publications, Iranian his- torians have become increasingly aware of the importance of European sources for the writing and understanding of Iranian history. The universities of Tabriz, Esfahan, Shiraz, and Tehran all have well-known history departments and although Shiraz does not have a PhD programme in History, it is an attractive place to which to study the subject. Not only is Shiraz located close to important Persian archaeological sites such as Persepolis and Pasargardae, but the city also oozes an artistic and open intellectual atmosphere. One visit to the mausoleum of the great Persian poet, Khaje Shams ad-Din Mohammad Shirazi, also known as Hafez, says it all.

Before the Islamic Revolution, the University of Shiraz had an outstanding international reputation, partly due to its famous Asian Institute and partly because English was the language of instruction. In order to start rebuilding a new international reputation, the un- iversity established the Shiraz Universi- ty International Relations Office (SIURO), under Dr Khadem two years ago. According to the vice chancellor, Dr. Shariat, the university wants to create opportunities in study programmes abroad for some of its more than 14,000 students. In exchange they would wel- come students from the Netherlands, in particular from Leiden, for instance on the PhD programme of the Department of Farsi Language and Literature. This was succeeded in establishing cooperation, which aims at attracting postgraduate students from the Depart- ment of History (around 280 under- graduates) who are presently trained by Dr Cholamert Vatandasot. Tehran University is another institu- tion that has a good number of Safavi specialists. Dr Zargarian, head of the department, explained that the examinations for the PhD programme in history are of an exceptionally high standard. The special library of the department reflects a strong interest in Iranian history, but shelves only a few books on Asian history in general – this lack of expertise is strongly felt.

One of the students of the Safavid specialist, Mansur Seafog, has been selected for the TANAP Advanced Mas- ter’s Programme. Rahaff Karni Gerkhloo has written an excellent the- sis on the Nostavi sect under the Savafids and aims to study Iran’s con- nections with the Indian Ocean World at large during the seventeenth century, next year. We are glad to involve a student with expertise in handling Persian papers, with expects fruitful cooperation with the other students.

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By Nirmal Devasiri & Anjaya Singh

Due to the exceptional standard of applications and the encouraging performance in course work, eight students in the TANAP AMP [Towards A New Age of Partnership Advanced Master’s Programme] have been awarded scholarships and admittance to its PhD programme. Two students from South Africa, two from Indonesia and one from Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Taiwan each, will be able to continue their research at Leiden University.

TANAP Diary: Unequalled Success

The submittent of the PhD propos- als on a hardly auspicious ‘Friday the thirteenth of September’ symbol- ically marked the end of the Advanced Master’s Programme. Shortly after, the students received diplomas for the suc- cessful completion of the rigorous ten- month TANAP training programme, which was concluded with seminars in Bangkok on 24–26 October.

Struck by a tsunami of research material in the National Archival, the Hague, was organized by the International Newsletter for African, Asian, and Amerindian Studies (CNWS) gave them an oppor- tunity to exchange ideas with Dutch scholars and debate perceptions and the usefulness of the VOC archives in reconstructing history.

Eight of the eleven students who start- ed the AMP 2002 will continue their research next year as TANAP PhD stu- dents, proving the success of the pro- gramme. With the selection of these eight students, new research in the Dutch records in Chennai, Colombo, Jakarta, and Cape Town will soon commence.

Anjaya Singh, MPH, has studied at Mon- treal University, India and researched the social world of Dutch colonial Cochin 1733–1851, as a member of the TANAP AMP group in 2001. A.Singh@let.leidenuniv.nl

Nirmal Devasiri, MPHJ has studied at the Graduate University for Social Sciences, Leiden and researched Dutch Colonialism and Social and Economic Transformations in south- western Ceylon 1756–1796 as a member of the TANAP AMP group in 2002. N.Devasiri@let.leidenuniv.nl

Dr Cholamert Vatandasot, Dr Henk Niemeijer, and some of the MA students of the University of Shiraz, Iran

By Henk Niemeijer

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