

IIAS Fellowship Programme

Along with the research fellows who are attached to one of the IIAS research programmes, the Institute yearly hosts a large number of visiting researchers (affiliated fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.

CURRENT FELLOWS

Mehdi Amineh

Coordinator
'Energy Programme Asia (EPA)'
Domestic and geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union
1 Sept 2007 – 31 Mar 2017

Alessandro Battistini

The 'Nepalese Anonymous': an original (?) commentary to Ānandavardhana's Devisatoka (edition and translation)
15 Oct 2016 – 15 Apr 2017

Somdev Battistini

Śobhākara's Logic of Aesthetics
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Mar 2017

Debjeni Bhattacharyya

Hydrologics: Property, law and the urban environment in the Bengal Delta
5 Oct 2016 – 31 Mar 2017

Liz Cecil

Mapping the Pāsupata Landscape: Polity, Place, and the Śaiva Imaginary in Northwest India (7th-10th century)
1 Feb – 31 Jul 2017

Lung-hsing Chu

Meeting in Nagasaki: Rethinking Western Influence on Japanese Material Culture in the later Edo Peri
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

Jatin Dua

A Sea of Protection: Piracy, Trade, and Regulation in the Indian Ocean
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

Gregory Goulding

The Cold War poetics of Muktibodh: a study of Hindi internationalism, 1943-1964
1 Sept 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

Anna Grasskamp

Maritime Material Culture in a Global Context
1 Feb – 31 Jul 2017

Jiri Jakl

Alcohol in Pre-Islamic Java (c. 800 – 1500 CE): Cultural, Social, and Ritual Uses of an 'Unholy' Brew
1 Feb – 31 Jul 2017

Pralay Kanungo

Visiting Professor,
India Studies Chair (ICCR)
Indian politics
1 Sept 2013 – 30 Jun 2017

Neena Talwar Kanungo

The arrival of digital democracy in India: Social media and political parties
1 Jul 2016 – 30 Jun 2017

Nino Kilarjani

Buddhist philosophy of origination in Vasubandhu's 'Lokanirdesha' ('Abhidharmakoshaśāstram', Chapt. III)
27 Feb – 10 May 2017

Adam Knee

Kingdom of the imagination: Thailand in world cinema
1 Sept 2016 – 30 Jun 2017

Radu Leca

Myriad Countries: The Outside World on Historical Maps of Japan
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

Carola Erika Lorea

Folklore, religion and diaspora: the migration of oral traditions across and beyond the East Bengal border
1 Sept 2016 – 30 Jun 2017

Giacomo Mantovan

Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora
1 Sept 2016 – 30 Jun 2017

Sayana Namsaraeva

Nested Subjects on the China - Russia - Mongolia border
1 Jun 2016 – 30 Nov 2016

Steffen Rimner

The Asian origins of global drug control
1 Jul 2016 – 31 May 2017

Bal Gopal Shrestha

Religiosity among the Nepalese Diaspora
1 Jan 2015 – 31 Dec 2017

Sebastian Schwecke

Informal monetary markets
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jan 2018

Ady van den Stock

'Wisdom' as a category of knowledge and a marker of cultural identity: reinterpretations of Wang Yangming in modern China
26 Sept 2016 – 26 Jul 2017

Shu-li WANG

The Politics of China's cultural heritage on display: Yin Xu Archaeological Park in the making
1 Sept 2015 – 31 Aug 2017

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Carola Lorea

Italian Institute of Oriental Studies,
University of Rome La Sapienza

Refugees from East Bengal: Performing home away from home

IN 2011, MY ACADEMIC LIFE shifted from Rome, where I worked on Bengali sociolinguistics and lexicography with Bangladeshi diasporic communities in Italy, to West Bengal, where I explored, during a three year field-work, some intersections between Bengali oral literature, folk songs and subversive religious identities. When my doctoral research was completed, and my first research monograph (*Folklore, Religion and the Songs of a Bengali Madman*) was submitted for publication, I decided to bring together those two areas: migration and resettlement of Bengali communities on one hand, and oral traditions and traveling archives of oral literature on the other – an unexplored conjunction that deserves particular attention.

Previous experiences – the participation in ICAS 8 (8th International Convention of Asia Scholars) in Macao among others – showed me that IIAS has been consistently supporting research about migration and movements across borders, about truly transnational and interdisciplinary projects, and about social and political dynamics across and beyond the Indian Ocean. I knew that working at my new project at IIAS would be a perfect match, a sort of lucky arranged marriage, celebrated on an auspicious astrological moment. In fact, my new research follows the consequences of the migration of millions of low class Hindus from East Bengal and their more or less coercive relocation in particular areas of West Bengal as well as on the far away Andaman islands. Numerous families of dislocated practitioners, escaping post-Partition violence and persecution, settled into alien environments bringing along a symbolic baggage of songs, tunes and traditional knowledge. This cross-border exodus had a tremendous impact not only on the political life of the areas of resettlement, but also on their literary and religious culture.

Apart from a great library around the corner, Leiden gave me the chance to dive into this project in good company: as part of my lucky arranged marriage, I found very good in-laws. With the other fellows at IIAS we share our unpublished writings to discuss how to improve our arguments and style, we share some free time to watch and discuss movies in the conference room, and we share delicious dishes through an informally created workshop of ethnic cuisine where we exchange new recipes and all the topics of conversation that go along well with food and friendship.

A further factor of great enjoyment for a scholar who also happens to be an aerial acrobat, is the possibility to teach and practice at the University Sport Center, that happens to be fully equipped for those who like to hang upside-down after a long working day. To conclude, being a research fellow in the Netherlands has so far proven to be a learning experience... in many aspects, from riding a bicycle without hand-breaks without running over the local students, to consulting accessible bibliographic treasures and a thick spiders web of international scholars.

Gonda Fellowships for Indologists

FOR PROMISING YOUNG INDOLOGISTS at the post-doctorate level, it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation, to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS. Please send your application to the J. Gonda Foundation by the appropriate deadline below. The J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) supports the scholarly study of Sanskrit, other Indian languages and literature, and Indian cultural history. In addition to enabling Indologists to spend time at IIAS, the foundation offers funding for projects or publications in Indology of both researchers and scientific publishers, as well as PhD grants.

Application form: www.knaw.nl/en/awards/subsidies/gonda-fund
Application deadline: 1 April and 1 October every year



ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme

A joint fellowship offered by the African Studies Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies

THIS FELLOWSHIP is intended for researchers specialising in Asian-African interactions. It aims to attract researchers whose work is informed by current theoretical debates, in the social sciences and humanities, on global connectivities and who are able to critically engage with shifting paradigms in 'area studies' beyond the ways in which these have traditionally been conceived in the West. We are particularly interested in receiving fellowship proposals that go beyond a mere analysis of current issues associated with African-Asian comparative economic developments or Chinese investments in Africa – although none of these themes, if appraised critically and for their societal consequences, will of course be excluded. Our definition of Asia and Africa is broad and inclusive, Asia ranging from the Middle-East to the Pacific Coast, and Africa from North-Africa to the southern tip of the continent.

Application deadline: 15 March and 15 September each year.
For more information and application form, go to: www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme





Debjani Bhattacharyya

Drexel University, USA

Hydrologics: Property, law and the urban environment in the Bengal Delta

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that in a few weeks I will bid goodbye to all the friendships I forged in my short time in Leiden. I arrived in October 2016 hoping to finish my book manuscript *Hydrologics: Property and Law in the Manufacturing of Calcutta*, which rethinks the process of urbanization and the production of hinterlands in a marshy deltaic space surrounding Calcutta. Within the span of the first two months, I managed to finish the manuscript and was able to delve into a second project. Both my book manuscript and my current project seek to connect multiple historiographies – legal, urban, economic with the environment. IIAS, with its robust focus on oceanic histories, legal and urban histories was a perfect place to deepen and develop the questions I have been engaged with in my book.

My book argues that the materiality of colonial landscapes and their ecologies played a decisive role in the making of property laws and shaping the urban land market. The book proceeds by elaborating how – in the indeterminate and shifting landscape of deltaic Bengal – the concept of ‘property-thinking’ became critical in dividing land and water into discrete legal elements, with each being governed by separate arenas: riparian and land laws. At the same time, this delta space then became home to many urban infrastructural and legal experiments from the late eighteenth century that were transferred and transplanted to various parts of the world. *Hydrologics* concluded by illuminating how property-thinking, the revenue-economy and extractive principles have shaped and continue to shape patterns of urbanization in the region and the legal frameworks surrounding the property market. These developments have had devastating consequences, as evidenced in the receding coastline in the Bengal Delta and elsewhere across the world. My second project links the financial port towns of Asia with the maritime world of the Bay of Bengal in order to investigate how climactic and environmental changes from the eighteenth century shaped ideas about risk and the instruments of insurance in the expansion of imperial trade.

Formal conversation with fellows, staff members and faculty at IIAS and Leiden University, as well as informal conversations at various bars (but mainly at De Bonte Koe) and over the Friday film screenings at the Institute have expanded my understandings around questions of political economy, law and history-writing. At IIAS I was also very fortunate to participate in the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UNKA), whose coordinator Paul Rabé opened up a new world of intellectual engagement by introducing me to the work of the Dutch urban planners and their engagements with canals. IIAS is a place where nebulous ideas take a concrete form and, with the encouragement, support and input I received from everyone here, I hope, in the coming years, to help IIAS organize a Summer School (see p.12 of this issue) on the theme of soaking ecologies as a new form of urbanism.

No reflection on my time here would be complete without a mention of the excursions organized by IIAS. Given my keen interest in the relation between land and water, Sandra Dehue kindly drove us to the ‘Neeltje Jans’, the impressive delta water works in Zeeland (province), which was critical for us to appreciate the place of water in Dutch history beyond the quaint canals. By the time this piece goes into print production, I will be busy packing my bags to head back to Drexel University to resume teaching, and wondering when I will again wake up to the cries of seagulls.

IIAS FELLOWSHIPS

Yearly
application
deadlines:
1 March and
1 October

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to apply for a fellowship to work on a relevant piece of research in the social sciences and humanities.

WE ARE PARTICULARLY interested in researchers focusing on one of the Institute’s three thematic clusters. However, some positions will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed.

Asian Cities

The Asian Cities cluster explores modes of urban development, and deals with cities and urban cultures with related issues of flows and fluxes, ideas and goods, cosmopolitanism and connectivity at their core, framing the existence of vibrant ‘civil societies’ and political micro-cultures. Through an international knowledge network, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities ‘in context’ and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

Asian Heritages

This cluster focuses on the politics of culture and cultural heritages in Asia. It addresses a variety of definitions associated with cultural heritage and their implications for social agency. In general, the cluster engages with a broad range of concepts and issues related to culture and cultural heritage, and their importance in defining one’s identity vis-à-vis those of others.

Global Asia

The Global Asia cluster examines examples of and issues related to multiple, transnational intra-Asian interactions as well as Asia’s projection in the world. Historical experiences as well as more contemporary trends are addressed.

Research projects that can contribute to new, historically contextualised, multidisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged.

For information on the research clusters and application form visit our website:

www.iias.nl

