The ESF Asia Committee after 2001

After having been active in two mandate periods of three years each between 1994 and 2001, the ESF Asia Committee ceased to exist as of 1 January 2002. Yet, in the spirit of the Asia Committee, many activities are flourishing and will continue to do so.

The European Science Foundation Asia Committee

The Committee selected ten workshops to support during the course of 2001, which have now all been held. Abstracts of these workshops were published in Newsletter issues in 2001, and the final report of the ESF AC-sponsored workshop, “Intellectual and Spiritual Dimensions of the Asian Past”, was published in Newsletter issue 27 (p. 55). The European Association for Asian Studies (EAFS), EASJ, ESCAS, EUROSEAS, and EASAS, whether or not in the form of the “Conference of Presidents of the European Associations for Asian Studies”, will continue to meet and their visibility for the outside world will be enhanced.

The Assembly Committee started off as an initiative of the French and Dutch ministers for Education: Curien and Ritzen respectively. With financial support from bilateral and multilateral institutions, and later through contributions by many national research councils that were member of the European Science Foundation, the Assembly Committee was funded. A unique phenomenon in Asian Studies, for which we should be grateful to the initiators at the respective ministries and at the ESF Secretariat.

We should acknowledge here again the support given between 1993–2001 by two foundations in Asia: the Toyota Foundation for the Asian Cultural Studies and the Ford Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange. We thank all programme participants, research fellows, and workshop contributors for their support to European and Asian studies. It is encouraging to see the institutions in Asia and Europe last but not least, words of gratitude should be directed towards all scholars that have been active members of the Assembly Committee, representing their own country and European spirit at the same time.

Information about the Assembly committee will remain available on: www.iias.esac

The ESF Asia Committee has been a body for cooperation with Asia. In

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The ESF Asia Committee is composed of authoritative, senior scholars from European universities, who have an interest in Asian Studies. The Committee meets twice a year, to implement decisions taken in Bonn. Without the ESF Asia Committee we felt (I refer again to our proposal for an extension of the ESF programme) that the role of ESF should rather be to set incentives and to be an instigator rather than to support the same area of research for a longer period.

The Committee was composed of members who have an interest in Asian Studies, and the members represent their respective countries or organisations to support an extension. The Committee unanimously felt that within the frame of a programme of a maximum of six years and that the aim of ESF should be to promote new ideas and launch new programmes rather than to fund permanent activities. The Committee wanted however, to express their gratitude to the Asia Studies Programme and to forward their appreciation for the high quality of research during the second term of the programme (from the SCH minutes).

A Last Asia Committee Meeting in Bonn

On 2 October 2001, the Asia Committee’s Executive Group met for the last time. This meeting was decided to draft a final report of the Asia Committee activities, to be sent to the ESF by the end of March 2002. Furthermore it was agreed that the implementation of Asia Committee activities would continue in 2002, in accordance with earlier commitments with regard to workshops and travel grants. The Executive Group decided to allocate the funds that remained from previous years to the following activities: (1) support for the six European Associations of Asian Studies (see below); (2) thirteen travel grants; and (3) support for the new initiative for Asian Studies Workshops (the ASEF- Alliance Annual Asia-Europe Workshop Series). Although the ESF Asia Committee will no longer exist after 2001, the Secretariat in Leiden declared its willingness to take care of the administrative work resulting from the decisions taken in Bonn.

What European Asian Studies future?

Committee members have always felt (I refer again to our proposal for extension, see IAS Newsletter 27) the need to continue the Asia Committee’s role as a Forum for Asian Studies in whatever way possible and, as such, as a body for cooperation with Asia. In

The “European Asian Studies” are also represented in the International University of the Humanities (ICHAS). In 1998, the ICHAS and the AAS organized ICAS 1, in cooperation with the European Associations: AKSE, EACS, EAJS, ESCAS, EUROSEAS, and EASAS, whether or not in the form of the “Conference of Presidents of the European Associations for Asian Studies”, will continue to meet and their visibility for the outside world will be enhanced.

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Sabine Kuypers, MA is Coordinator of the programme “Islam in Indonesia: The demarcation of Religious Authority in the Twentieth Century” and Deputy Director of the International Institute for Asian Studies, the Netherlands.

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The European Associations for Asian Studies

Through ICAS (preparatory) meetings the following European Associations: AKSE, EACS, EAJS, ESCAS, EUROSEAS, and EASAS, whether or not in the form of the “Conference of Presidents of the European Associations for Asian Studies”, will continue to meet and their visibility for the outside world will be enhanced.

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