

Editorial

In the previous editorial, this publication was described as a platform for Asian Studies in a broad sense. Readers' reactions suggest that the paper is perceived to be more than just a mixed bag and that many appreciate the choices we make. Within the field of Asian Studies, the *IIAS Newsletter* could see its task as being to pick up new and promising areas of research. Obviously, simply stimulating any uncharted area whatsoever is not a justifiable goal in itself, but I do find it worth pursuing to provide a space for themes that, whilst specifically Asian, are of universal interest. In this issue, international security and Asian views on genomics and biotechnology feature prominently alongside more traditional and equally important topics in fields such as linguistics and economics. One field of research that has emerged over the last decade has therefore been chosen as the current theme, namely 'Asian Homosexualities'. Here, Giovanni Vitiello has managed to compile articles of both a generally descriptive and personal kind. These articles, and those on international security, biotechnology, and genomics show how issues may be of universal interest, but at the same time may be potentially divisive. The specific articles in this theme, however, not only stimulate this field of research, but also provide an insight for those in other fields. To my mind, this can only be fruitful for further discussion and understanding.

Regarding the newsletter itself, it is my pleasure to announce that my colleague Lena Scheen, who collaborated in the completion of this past issue, will continue working at the IIAS, while Natasja Kershof has now joined us as editor for the issues to come. We hope you appreciate this issue and as always welcome your comments. < **Maurice Sijm**

Director's Note on ASEM 4

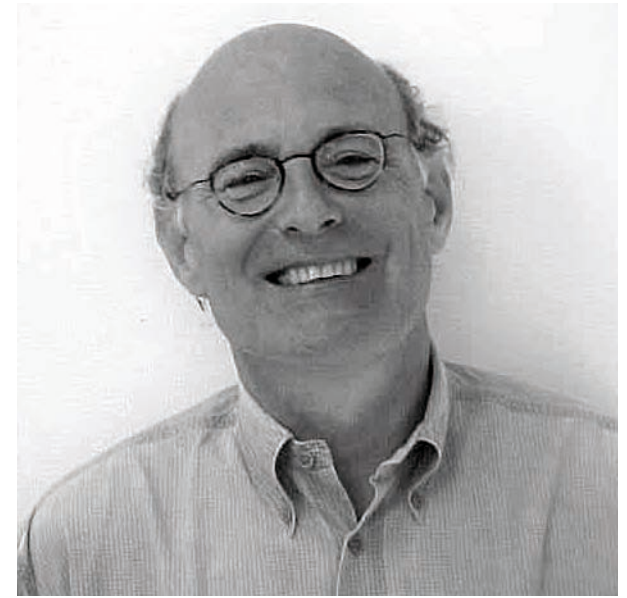
On earlier occasions we emphasized the crucial importance of the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) as a unique instrument for dialogue, cooperation, and inter-civilizational understanding between the European and Asian countries participating in the ASEM.* Not all our readers will appear to be informed about the recent summit in Copenhagen, yet with decisions taken by the heads of state – at times reaching a practical level – it could be useful to take note of this summit and the decisions.

Director's note >

By Wim Stokhof

On the web links listed below you will find the chairman's statement of the ASEM 4 summit. In a previous director's note, it was suggested that if we really want ASEM to become engrained in the daily life of ASEM states' 'inhabitants', more attention ought to be given to the numerous initiatives ventured by various sectors from civil society (a bottom-up trajectory) such as universities, research groups, sport associations, professional associations, labour unions, think-tanks, and artists. It was proposed to introduce consultative forums such as a workers' platform and a research platform – just like the Asia-Europe Business Forum or the newly planned taskforce – where decisions could be shaped and advice formulated. In the current chairman's statement, however, not much can be found about enhancing links between ASEM and sections of civil society. Although this can easily be explained by the fact that ASEM is a construct invented by heads of state (a top-down trajectory), we believe that this lack of interest in connecting with ASEM's basic constituency is a missed chance.

As you can see from the chairman's statement, the leaders discussed quite a range of topics: terrorism, education, human resources development, environmental cooperation, enhancement of ASEM cooperation, and the Korean Peninsula. In addition, it was decided to set up several conferences



and meetings. What will really happen after these gatherings is difficult to predict. ASEM is in need of well-planned long-term comprehensive programmes with concrete deliverables, good monitoring, evaluation, reporting procedures, and relevant down-to-earth follow-up activities. Decisions must be taken and carried out in terms of clear objectives, effective instrumentation, timetables, sound sustainable financing, and a smoothly running non-virtual (!) secretariat.

It cannot be denied that the ASEM dialogue has proved to be essential in building mutual awareness and understanding between our two regions. The ASEM process is a slow and very complicated exercise that will not so easily yield tangible results. Yet, much more can be obtained if ASEM's gratuitous, ad hoc character – now celebrated by the European Commission as one of its key characteristics, 'informality', but to my mind one of its weaknesses – could be abolished. <

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Note >

* The participating countries are Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam (seven ASEAN countries), China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, the fifteen members of the European Union plus the European Commission.

More information

For the full text of the chairman's statement at the Fourth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 4) held in Copenhagen, 23–24 September 2002, refer to: www.iias.nl/iiasn/29/index.html or www.iias.nl/asem/events/summits/asem4
More information on ASEM can be found at: www.iias.nl/asem
Pleasant reading!



Prof. De Casparis teaching epigraphy at the Kern Institute (1979).

In Memoriam: Hans de Casparis

On behalf of the Departments of the Languages and Cultures of South and Southeast Asia, I would like to try and express the respect and gratitude that we all feel as we say goodbye to our teacher and colleague Hans de Casparis. He began his appointment at Leiden University in 1978 and worked here nearly every day since, almost to the very end of his life. In his youth already he worked here: as an assistant before the war, from 1937 to 1939. Later, he came here regularly from London to study the so-called *Abklatschen*, or prints, of the Indonesian inscriptions stored at the Kern Institute. Above all, Hans de Casparis was a researcher. It is said that when he arrived at Schiphol from London he hired a car for the entire duration of his stay in the Netherlands in order not to lose any time that could be spent on research. His classes were of high standard; they were about

research – and indeed *were* research. The field that he covered in his teaching was broad; and in this vast field he saw the greater connections, above all the long-lasting relationship between the worlds of ancient India and of the Archipelago. His inaugural address here in Leiden in 1979 covered the entire South and Southeast Asian terrain. With that broad erudition he was an eminent representative of a predominantly Dutch academic tradition – one of the best things that remain from the colonial period.

Besides the breadth he had depth, the ability to do justice to the details of the epigraphic sources and to always discover something new. He laid the foundations for modern Indonesian epigraphy. The study of Indonesia's ancient history was immeasurably enriched by his erudite interpretations, that it now stands at a richer and more complex level.

As polite and friendly as he was in his personal life, as a scientist he was critical and outspoken. This could even be expressed when his students were defending their doctoral theses, as he would point out weaknesses in their argumentation. He genuinely *formed* and inspired many of his doctoral students by his love of the field. Young people who otherwise would have become discouraged could, if they would just give all their energy to it, count on him and were given a new chance to successfully finish their work. Thirty-three of them expressed their gratitude and their bond with him as their teacher by offering him a collection of studies, under the beautifully chosen title *Fruits of Inspiration*, for his 85th birthday last year. Writing from India this week, one of them referred to him as 'a guru in the true sense of the term'.

There was much power in Hans de

Casparis. He was not one to complain: even last year when it was so clear that he was in pain, he did not deviate from his self-imposed discipline. His will was strong and he was a brave person. He was brave in spirit but also physically brave. For example, already after his retirement, two robbers attempted to mug him in Amsterdam, and though he was small, he was athletic, and he managed to shake them off. Hans de Casparis was consistent in everything, but especially in his loyalty: to his colleagues and students, to his subject, and to Indonesia, the country where he felt at home and where he had friends. Hans will always be remembered by many, who will continue to be inspired by him. <

Leiden, 28 June 2002
D.H.A. Kolff



The IIAS logo

The IIAS logo is a *chandrasa*, or bronze axe-head, found in East Java. It was probably produced during the Early Bronze Age (c. 500 BC) in North Vietnam (Dong Son). The flying bird holds another *chandrasa* in its claws. The function of the object is unclear.

To our subscribers,

In the previous newsletter the IIAS requested all subscribers to return the enclosed mutation form with their personal data to the IIAS in order to keep the database up to date. We would like to thank everybody for their kind cooperation.
< **Kind regards, IIAS**

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The *IIAS Newsletter* is published by the IIAS and is available free of charge. If you wish to subscribe to the newsletter, please return a completed questionnaire to the IIAS secretariat. Questionnaires can be obtained from either the secretariat or the website:
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