History and early institutional set-up

Education and research on Asia have been conducted at Lund University since the 1970s, mainly at the Department of East Asian Languages. The focus was on China and Japan although languages such as Thai and Indonesian were taught until 2006 (when there was a general cut-back on languages with the result that no Swedish universities any longer offer Thai or Indonesian). The department began an undergraduate programme in East and South-East Asian Studies in 1984 that combined languages with area studies. Only in 1989 did the department get its first professor, who had a focus on China. The department had started its Ph.D. programme the year previously with a focus on Chinese modern history, literature, and language. Individual scholars at Lund University were involved in research on East and South-East Asia, as well as on South Asia, but they were few and scattered across departments of anthropology, sociology, history and political science.

Sweden has quite a strong tradition in Sinology, represented by eminent scholars such as Bernard Karlgren and Göran Malmkvist, but it was an interest in contemporary socio-economic and political developments, as well as the growing global importance of some countries in East and South-East Asia, that motivated the establishment of the Centre in 1996. The aim was thus to stimulate research and education on East and South-East Asian contemporary societies. In the period up until 2012, the Centre’s permanent staff was quite small and consisted only of a professor, who served as the director, administrative staff and librarians, whereas researchers were either postdoctoral fellows or researchers with external funding on a non-permanent basis. The Centre from the beginning ran a master’s programme in Asian studies that has developed over the years (see further below). The Centre also established its own library and in 1999 it was merged with the library at the Department of East Asian Languages. The Asia library was then run jointly until 2006, when the Centre took over sole responsibility as the Department of East Asian Languages was incorporated in the newly established Centre for Languages and Literature. Although the postdoctoral fellows and other researchers at the Centre were very active, the nature of their positions made it difficult to develop a sustainable teaching and research environment. The restriction on permanent staff was lifted in 2012-2013 when new directives were adopted, which led to two lecturers being appointed (and one later promoted to professor). In mid-2016, planning ahead of the retirement of the director and the future retirement of one of the two lecturers, the Centre was allowed to recruit three associate senior lecturers on a tenure track, and in late 2018 to promote one researcher to lecturer. This means that the Centre today has a permanent staff consisting of one professor and four lecturers. It also has one researcher, and in 2020 two postdoctoral fellows will join the Centre. It is currently the only institution in the Nordic countries that conducts both teaching and research on contemporary East and South-East Asia.

New institutional set-up

When the Centre was established it was decided that it would be based outside of the faculties as were all other interdisciplinary centres. This had several advantages but also meant, among other things, that the Centre was not allowed to develop its own Ph.D. programme. With a new university management came a decision around 2016 to transfer all the existing interdisciplinary centres, including for example the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, to a faculty. This was more of a pragmatic rather than a visionary decision, and raised concerns about how to maintain the interdisciplinary nature in a new institutional environment. After much discussion, the Centre decided to choose the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology rather than the Faculty of Social Sciences. This choice was motivated by the promise by the former that the Centre could establish a Ph.D. programme, and by, a generally more positive view on and experience of area studies.

Due to the institutional and administrative set-up at the faculty the transfer in January 2019 also meant that the Centre became a division within the larger Department of History that apart from the division of history also houses the division of human rights. The Asia Library remains at the same premises as the Centre but is now run by the faculty library management. The Centre has adopted new directives to ensure its interdisciplinary focus, something which is also reflected in the advisory board that has members from other faculties as well as one external member. Furthermore, the Centre maintains its social science focused master’s programme and aims to promote cross-faculty interdisciplinary research. During this first year, the Centre has begun a number of undergraduate courses as well as had its Ph.D. programme in East and South-East Asian Studies approved. The programme will begin in September 2020.
The above overview of the background to the establishment of the Centre and its development shows that the Centre is motivated by a public and governmental interest in the region coupled with some visionary thinking at Lund University. But university politics, administrative restrictions, and the strong power of faculties and disciplines at Swedish universities have dominated its development. Interdisciplinary area studies have difficulties to get a footing at universities due to quite conservative institutional set-ups that privilege more disciplinary institutions. Right now, however, the Centre is in a more favourable and stable position than before with a larger permanent staff and the ability to develop its own interdisciplinary Ph.D. programmes.

Interdisciplinary education

The master’s programme is today a two-year long interdisciplinary programme conducted in English with a focus on contemporary East and South-East Asia. Each year around 25 students begin the programme. The first semester consists of an introduction to area studies and the region’s economic and political developments. In the second semester students choose two tracks: one on a sub-region or a country, currently China, Japan and Korea, and South-East Asia, as well as take a course on research methodology. The master’s programme consists of several elective courses on topics such as economics, development issues, human rights and security, environmental studies, and international relations in East Asia more generally. The Centre has been working to consolidate its research profile. There are currently three interlinked interdisciplinary research themes. The first, ‘Digital Asia’, builds on the Centre’s earlier work on Digital Imaginaries (funded by the Swedish Research Council from 2013 to 2018) as manifested in a recent conference and PhD. workshops (see opposite page). The second, ‘Human Rights and Social Justice’, addresses topics such as academic freedom, freedom of speech, labour rights, and civil society organisations. The Centre is a member of the Human Rights Research Hub Lund, Sweden. A new call for a postdoctoral fellow in human rights in East and South-East Asia is also part of this research focus. The third theme, ‘Global Challenges and International Relations’, addresses the region’s role in global economic development and governance. This theme is also reflected in individual projects dealing with sustainability issues, human rights and security issues, and flows of cultural products. The research agenda at the Centre is thus underpinned by a focus on human rights, democracy and – and the impact of these flows on individual communities, the environment, and human security. The Centre also opens up for an interest in studying the region, and links between domestic, regional and global developments. The Centre hosts visiting scholars from recent years who have provided accommodation and office space as well as possibilities to organise research seminars. Ph.D. students. The Centre organises public lectures, film screenings and photo exhibitions in line with the engagement with academic freedom, interested students and staff at the university. It also organises workshops and international conferences.

The Centre has extensive contacts with scholars and institutions in East and South-East Asia. It is a member of East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. The Centre has been involved in discussions and seminars on academic freedom with new best to support scholars from the region. This was also the topic for a panel at ICAS 11 in 2019 that the Centre was invited to. Another initiative of the European Alliance for Asian Studies. The Centre is a paying member of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Nordic Council. This for example means that students and staff at Lund University can access data bases and journals held by NIAS. It has also resulted in collaboration such as the recent conference ‘Digital Asia’.

Future work and challenges

At the Centre we are confident that the interdisciplinary field of area studies will remain relevant. Knowledge of individual countries and the region is necessary in order to understand many current global challenges such as climate change, human rights and security issues, and the growth of populism. Furthermore, the region is a site for new developments and applications of digital technologies that both harbour possibilities and new dangers, e.g., increase states’ surveillance capacities. Another cause of concern is the lack of and threats to academic freedom in many countries, including in particular the East Asia region. Various initiatives for research as well as make collaboration difficult. Being able to engage and collaborate with researchers in the region is central for the future of future studies. The Centre has therefore been involved in discussions and seminars on academic freedom with new partners to support scholars from the region. This was the topic for a panel at ICAS 11 in 2019 that the Centre was also involved in. Another initiative of the European Alliance for Asian Studies. The Centre is a paying member of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Nordic Council. This for example means that students and staff at Lund University can access data bases and journals held by NIAS. It has also resulted in collaboration such as the recent conference ‘Digital Asia’.

Preparing for the next generation of digital scholars

The conference concluded with a two-day course for PhD students working on topics related to digital society and/or digital methodologies. This included presentations on digital ethnography, digital data visualisation tools, and techniques for gathering and organising rich data from social media. There were animated discussions in sessions on emerging ethical issues in digital research and the role of digitisation in transforming academic publishing. Participants also broke into small groups for peer review sessions, providing an opportunity for detailed discussions about ongoing research projects and facilitating collaborative thinking for future research directions. All in all, the conference provided fertile ground for researchers across disciplines, fields, and areas of expertise to come together and compare notes on the digital challenges that both shape and challenge society and life in Asian contexts.

Nicholas Loubere, Astrid Norén Nilsson, and Paul O'Shea,

News from the European Alliance for Asian Studies

The Newsletter No. 85 Spring 2020

The above overview of the background to the establishment of the Centre and its development shows that the Centre is motivated by a public and governmental interest in the region coupled with some visionary thinking at Lund University. But university politics, administrative restrictions, and the strong power of faculties and disciplines at Swedish universities have dominated its development. Interdisciplinary area studies have difficulties to get a footing at universities due to quite conservative institutional set-ups that privilege more disciplinary institutions. Right now, however, the Centre is in a more favourable and stable position than before with a larger permanent staff and the ability to develop its own interdisciplinary Ph.D. programmes.

Interdisciplinary education

The master’s programme is today a two-year long interdisciplinary programme conducted in English with a focus on contemporary East and South-East Asia. Each year around 25 students begin the programme. The first semester consists of an introduction to area studies and the region’s economic and political developments. In the second semester students choose two tracks: one on a sub-region or a country, currently China, Japan and Korea, and South-East Asia, as well as take a course on research methodology. The master’s programme consists of several elective courses on topics such as economics, development issues, human rights and security, environmental studies, and international relations in East Asia more generally. The Centre has been working to consolidate its research profile. There are currently three interlinked interdisciplinary research themes. The first, ‘Digital Asia’, builds on the Centre’s earlier work on Digital Imaginaries (funded by the Swedish Research Council from 2013 to 2018) as manifested in a recent conference and PhD. workshops (see opposite page). The second, ‘Human Rights and Social Justice’, addresses topics such as academic freedom, freedom of speech, labour rights, and civil society organisations. The Centre is a member of the Human Rights Research Hub Lund, Sweden. A new call for a postdoctoral fellow in human rights in East and South-East Asia is also part of this research focus. The third theme, ‘Global Challenges and International Relations’, addresses the region’s role in global economic development and governance. This theme is also reflected in individual projects dealing with sustainability issues, human rights and security issues, and flows of cultural products. The research agenda at the Centre is thus underpinned by a focus on human rights, democracy and – and the impact of these flows on individual communities, the environment, and human security. The Centre also opens up for an interest in studying the region, and links between domestic, regional and global developments. The Centre hosts visiting scholars from recent years who have provided accommodation and office space as well as possibilities to organise research seminars. Ph.D. students. The Centre organises public lectures, film screenings and photo exhibitions in line with the engagement with academic freedom, interested students and staff at the university. It also organises workshops and international conferences.

The Centre has extensive contacts with scholars and institutions in East and South-East Asia. It is a member of East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. The Centre has been involved in discussions and seminars on academic freedom with new partners to support scholars from the region. This was the topic for a panel at ICAS 11 in 2019 that the Centre was also involved in. Another initiative of the European Alliance for Asian Studies. The Centre is a paying member of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Nordic Council. This for example means that students and staff at Lund University can access data bases and journals held by NIAS. It has also resulted in collaboration such as the recent conference ‘Digital Asia’.

Preparing for the next generation of digital scholars

The conference concluded with a two-day course for PhD students working on topics related to digital society and/or digital methodologies. This included presentations on digital ethnography, digital data visualisation tools, and techniques for gathering and organising rich data from social media. There were animated discussions in sessions on emerging ethical issues in digital research and the role of digitisation in transforming academic publishing. Participants also broke into small groups for peer review sessions, providing an opportunity for detailed discussions about ongoing research projects and facilitating collaborative thinking for future research directions. All in all, the conference provided fertile ground for researchers across disciplines, fields, and areas of expertise to come together and compare notes on the digital challenges that both shape and challenge society and life in Asian contexts.

Nicholas Loubere, Astrid Norén Nilsson, and Paul O'Shea,
Olomouc, the historical capital of Moravia, is home to the second-oldest Czech university. The history of Oriental and Asian Studies at this institution spans three periods of bloom up to periods of political gloom. The first period (1573–1773) coincides with the founding of the Bohemian province of the Jesuit order. Jesuits opened their college in Olomouc and recruited the brightest minds for missionary work in Asia and the New World. Shortly after the suppression of the Jesuit order, Olomouc lost its university status for fifty years, only to be restored in 1826. The institution changed its status several times: diocesan, public, imperial and royal, before being reduced to the Faculty of Theology, which alone survived until 1939, when the Nazi regime closed all Czech universities. The university was reopened in 1946 but the brief bloom period for Oriental Studies (1946–1951) ended with their transfer to Prague. When in 1991 the Rector Josef Jařab initiated the reopening of Asian studies in Olomouc, the current period started.

Jesuit college (1573–1762)

“shedding own blood in the vineyard of the Lord”

So characterises Bohuslavus Carolus Ledniczus (born in 1623). In his litterae indipetae, his own desire to join the mission of the Jesuit mission in China. The Kirwitzer’s report was sent from China back to Europe by missionaries to China, brought together in the historical seat of Moravian bishops. The company, consisting of medics and pharmacists, sailed from Spain via Mexico (1681) and arrived in the Philippines in 1682. Pavel Klein (also Pablo Clain, 1652–1717) joined the fourth mission from Bohemia and Moravia to the Philippines in 1678. The company, consisting of medics and pharmacists, sailed from Spain via Mexico (1681) and arrived in the Philippines in 1682. Klein became the Jesuit Provincial Superior, a professor at the Jesuit college and later the rector of Colegio de Covila and Colegio de San José. He is known for his linguistic work: he compiled the first substantial Tagalog dictionary which was published after his death in Manila in 1759 as Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala. Building on his pharmaceutical training, Klein compiled a herbarium of medicinal plants of the Philippines. Besides their medicinal use, he collected the local names in Tagalog, Visayan and Kapampangan, and added Latin and Spanish names. Finally, Klein is associated with the Spanish discovery of the islands of the Carolines, the Marianas, and the Mariana Islands.

Matěj Kukulín (Mathias Cuculinus, 1611–1696) finished a doctoral degree in philosophy in Olomouc and joined Strabach on the mission to the Marianas. He described the local revolt against the Spanish colonial government. His letters documented the local culture. Kukulín is also known for his reports, compiled from a knowledgeable source, on Tonkin (Relatio continens quaedam de statu Christianitatis in Regno Tunqvin), Cochinchina (De Cochinchina), Cambodia (De Cambouga), and Siam (De Regno Siam). He described in detail the Siam kingdom, its local customs and the position and treatment of Christians. He praised the Siam king for his benevolent attitude towards Christianity. The autograph of the report is kept in the Moravian Provincial Archive in Brno.

Matěj Kukulín (Mathias Cuculinus, 1611–1696) finished a doctoral degree in philosophy in Olomouc and joined Strabach on the mission to the Marianas. He described the local revolt against the Spanish colonial government. His letters documented the local culture. Kukulín is also known for his reports, compiled from a knowledgeable source, on Tonkin (Relatio continens quaedam de statu Christianitatis in Regno Tunqvin), Cochinchina (De Cochinchina), Cambodia (De Cambouga), and Siam (De Regno Siam). He described in detail the Siam kingdom, its local customs and the position and treatment of Christians. He praised the Siam king for his benevolent attitude towards Christianity. The autograph of the report is kept in the Moravian Provincial Archive in Brno.

Karel Slavíček (萧嘉乐, 1615–1673) studied theology and philosophy in Olomouc. In 1613 he was appointed professor of mathematics and Hebrew. Slavíček came from a family of organ builders and had a keen interest in music, astronomy, mathematics and linguistics. He joined the Jesuit order and for his knowledge of mathematics and astronomy was selected to be sent to China. In 1716 he travelled to China from Portugal. After his arrival in Macau in 1717 he was sent to the Beijing court and was introduced to the Kangxi Emperor. Slavíček learned Chinese and is considered to be the first Czech sinologist. The Emperor ordered Slavíček to make a map of Beijing. It was the first precise map of Beijing and Slavíček clarified the exact latitude of the city and its landmarks. Slavíček also wrote a treatise on Chinese music but it did not survive. His stay in Beijing is described in his many letters to various European scientists. After he passed away in 1735, he was succeeded in the position of the Court musician by another Czech Jesuit, Jan Waler (1708–1795), about whom much less is known.
Ignotius Sichelbart (AI Oi Meng 石耐德, 1708–1780) was a Jesuit missionary in China, a painter and a musician. He studied theology in Olomouc and was selected for the China mission in 1745 with two more painters: Giuseppe Castiglione and Jean Denis Attiret. All three served as artists at the imperial court and combined Chinese and western painting techniques. He was named a mandarin in 1777 by the Qianlong Emperor and given a state funeral. Only about 25 of his paintings are preserved.

Christian Schneider (1712–1824) was a Franciscan missionary and an orientalist. He studied theology in Olomouc but following the example of his uncle, Herculanus Schneider, a Franciscan missionary to China (石霑良, or 石毛信, d. 1714), Christian decided on missionary work. In 1772 he departed on a mission to Egypt and Ethiopia which lasted seven years. Although the mission failed to establish a missionary base, Schneider gained direct experience with the area which influenced his later work about the history and anthropology of Egypt.

Jan Koffler (1711–1780) studied philosophy and theology in Olomouc. In 1738 he travelled to Lisbon to join the next Jesuit voyage to China, arriving in Macau in 1740. He was sent to the city of Sin-hoa (present-day Hui) in Cochinchina, where he served as a mathematician and a medical doctor at the court of the Nguyễn Lord Nguyễn Phò KhROADCAST (1716–1765). In 1759 Koffler was expelled from Cochinchina and returned to Macau until 1759 when he was transferred to Paraguay. In 1762 he was arrested and deported to Portugal and imprisoned. Upon the intervention of the Empress Maria Theresia, Koffler was released and returned home. He briefly worked as a prefect in the Jesuit college in Litoměřice before leaving again as a missionary to Transylvania where he died.

During the reign of Queen Maria Theresia of Austria, tertiary education in the Habsburg monarchy underwent a reform that escalated with the Prussian expansion in Silesia. Her son, Joseph II pressured Pope Clement XIV to dissolve the Jesuit Order and in 1773 the Pope obliged. Several university buildings were assigned to the Habsburg army, leaving the university with a single building. Finally, in 1777 the university was downgraded to a lyceum. The Habsburgs decided to centralise the teaching of their languages in their monarchy to Prague, Vienna and Lviv. Olomouc regained its university status after half a century, in 1827. Only a few remarkable Orientalists are known from this period.

Johann Martin Jahn (1750–1816) was a theologian and orientalist. After studying philosophy and theology in Olomouc he was recruited to teach exegesis and oriental languages in 1784. In 1789 he moved to Vienna where he taught oriental languages, biblical archaeology and dogmatics until 1806. He published a Hebrew grammar and works on Chaldean, Aramaic, Syrian, and Arabic. He was forced to give up his position and accept canonry at St. Stephan’s cathedral.

Olomouc into a fortress to counter the Prussian expansion in Silesia. Her son, Joseph II pressured Pope Clement XIV to dissolve the Jesuit Order and in 1773 the Pope obliged. Several university buildings were assigned to the Habsburg army, leaving the university with a single building. Finally, in 1777 the university was downgraded to a lyceum. The Habsburgs decided to centralise the teaching of their languages in their monarchy to Prague, Vienna and Lviv. Olomouc regained its university status after half a century, in 1827. Only a few remarkable Orientalists are known from this period.

Johann Martin Jahn (1750–1816) was a theologian and orientalist. After studying philosophy and theology in Olomouc he was recruited to teach exegesis and oriental languages in 1784. In 1789 he moved to Vienna where he taught oriental languages, biblical archaeology and dogmatics until 1806. He published a Hebrew grammar and works on Chaldean, Aramaic, Syrian, and Arabic. He was forced to give up his position and accept canonry at St. Stephan’s cathedral.

Alois Musil (1868–1944) was a theologian, orientalist, and explorer. In Olomouc he studied theology and obtained his doctoral degree in 1895. He continued his studies in Jerusalem, Beirut, London, Cambridge and Berlin. He is known for his discovery of the 8th-century desert castle Qusayr ‘Amra in Jordan. In 1902 he was appointed professor of theology in Olomouc and in 1905 professor of Biblical studies and Arabic at Vienna University. After WWII he became a professor at Charles University in Prague. He was one of the founders of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences.

The Analects of Confucius.

The funding allows a substantial upgrade of the infrastructure of the research centres. Laboratories are being built for instrumental study of language, material culture, and statistical analysis of social science. Once completed, these laboratories will enable the team to measure trends in language change, manufacturing competition, public opinion, or migration between China and its neighbours.

It is our long-term ambition to develop a permanent Research Centre for Asian studies in Olomouc and this project is an important milestone to that goal. The project brings an opportunity to host a number of important events in the near future which may bring you to Olomouc:

- 28–29 September 2020: 15th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics (ICAL15)
- Spring 2021: The European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS 2021)

Detailed information about the project can be found at its website and social media: http://ainsofon.cz
Jaroslav Průšek (普實克, 1906–1980) was a sinologist. He graduated from Charles University in classical history. He studied Chinese in private before continuing his studies under Bernard Karlík (1889–1978) and Gustav Haloun (1908–1995) first in Göteborg and later in Halla, where he finished his doctoral degree in 1930. Průšek was employed by the Oriental Institute and in 1932 sent to China and Japan. He returned to Czechoslovakia in 1937 and taught Chinese and Japanese. In 1945 Průšek started the Department of East Asian Studies at Charles University and was one of the founders of the Journal Nový Orient (New Orient). Průšek was a close friend of Fischer and between 1946–1948 taught in Olomouc. He developed the Omolouc sinology program and trained Augustin Palát, who replaced Průšek in 1948. In 1952 Průšek became the director of the Oriental Institute in Prague. He was forced out in 1971 during the Normalisation that followed the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia of 1968. He is known for his work on mediaval and modern Chinese literature, oral tradition and history of Chinese civilization.

Augustin Palát (1923–2016) was a student of Průšek and replaced him in Olomouc in 1948, when Průšek could no longer fulfill his commitments in both Prague and Olomouc. Palát taught in Olomouc until 1951, when the Oriental Studies were closed. After several years in the diplomatic services he returned to the Oriental Institute until his forced retirement in 1973, under similar circumstances as Průšek. He produced a number of language textbooks and works on Chinese medieval history. He is known for his translations of Tang poetry.

Karel Werner (1925–2019) was an linguist and religious studies scholar. He belonged to the circle around Josef Ludvík Fischer who attracted him to Olomouc. He studied philosophy and classical Chinese with Jaroslav Průšek. Privately he learned Sanskrit and modern Chinese. Later he pursued the studies of Chinese under Vincenc Lesný and became an assistant in the Indology section. He defended his PhD in comparative linguistics and appointed to teach Sanskrit and Indian History. After the Oriental Studies in Olomouc were closed down in the autumn of 1951, Werner became one of the early victims of Communist prosecution. He lost his academic vocation, despite the scholarship of Lesný and Fischer. During the 1950s he worked as a clerk. Privately he continued his studies published, despite the ban, in the UK, Germany, India and Sri Lanka, which led the Secret Police to bring spying charges against him. He was sent to work in coal mines, worked as a plumber and a tram driver during the 1960s.

During the same period Werner turned his attention to hatha yoga and led a secret circle of practitioners and published about it in semidetected contexts. His appeal for rehabilitation in 1968 was turned down and he left to exile two days after the Soviet occupation in August 1968. He became a Cambridge University librarian and was appointed as a supervisor of Sanskrit in Churchill College. In 1969 Werner was appointed Lecturer in Indian Philosophy and Religion in the University of Durham where he remained for the rest of his career.

1991: Asian studies starts for the third time

In 1991 the rector of UP, Josef Jafáb, initiated the reopening of Chinese philology. This academic attracted to Jiří Černý, Head of Department of Romance languages. The Far East Section was established and scholars were recruited to prepare the Chinese and Japanese programmes. In the pre-Bologna system, these were five-year double-degree programs. Initially in collaboration with English philology, both programmes admitted their first students in September 1993. The Chinese program was developed by Lucie Olivo (1956, presently at Masaryk University in Brno) and Oldřich Švarný (1992). The Japanese program was developed by Alena Kramarevová (*1950) and Pavel Flanderka (*1942).

The Far East section became the Department of Asian Studies. The department was led between 2002–2016 by David Uher (*1970), between 2019 by Marieška Borešová (*1979) and since 2017 by František Kotschal (*1971). The department gradually expanded in both student numbers and its programme offer. It started language courses for Korean and Malay, which were developed into full-flagad programs. Korean for Business (BA) was opened in 2015. It was followed in 2016 by Indonesian for Tourism (BA) and Vietnamese (BA) in 2019. All five language specialisations are included within a single MA programme in Asian studies from 2019. Finally, the department offers two doctoral programmes (Languages and Cultures of China and Japan & Asian Studies). Over the last three decades the student enrolment has grown steadily in both BA and MA programmes. In 2019, over 200 students were admitted to the five undergraduate programmes and about 40 to the MA programme.

An important figure for the department was Oldřich Švarný (1920–2011), a phonologist and orientalist. Švarný studied European languages and later also Chinese and phonetics at the Charles University in Prague. In 1953 he joined the Oriental Institute in Prague, where Jaroslav Průšek assigned him to study Spoken Chinese and to develop a Czech romanisation system for Chinese. He lost his position at the Oriental Institute under similar circumstances as Průšek and Palát in 1976. He returned to the academic life in 1990s and taught in Olomouc from 1994. His life-work was a prosodic description of spoken Chinese, based on a large transcribed corpus of recordings accompanied by a grammatical description. A research cluster led by David Uher continues Švarný’s work on Chinese prosody.

The department publishes its own journal Dálný východ [Far East]; its editor-in-chief is David Uher (https://kas.upol.cz/en/academics/ceias-association/dalny-vychod-far-east/). Its most recent issue is dedicated to Švarný’s work on the prosody of Spoken Chinese that appeared in English for the first time, and summarises his work published in Czech. Research interests of the department members cover a wide range, including Chinese linguistics to international relations and history. Recent titles published in English are:

- Koreas in Central Europe: To Yu-ho, Han Ailing-su, and Others (A. Schirmer, 2018),
- The exotic other and negotiation of Tibetan self; representation of Tibet in Chinese and Tibetan fiction of the 1980s (K. Hladíková, 2013).

The Department also organises an Annual Conference of Asian Studies (https://cas.upol.cz) and a Summer School for graduate students.

While we still face various challenges, we believe that we are becoming a mature member of the European Alliance of Asian Studies (www.cas.cz) and attract a wider range of Chinese and Asian scholars and offer a different view on Asian cultures and peoples worthy of our attention.

Contributors to article:

Franštálek Kotschal, Sylva Martinásková, Iveta Někladová, Joanna Uh-Seeung Suo, Richard Tursunajew.

Notes

1 Litteovna indiápská [short for Litteovna ad Indiánte paternio letters] are petitionary letters by Jesuits sent to their generals asking for foreign missions. Only a friction were granted their wish; for example, out of 11 such petitions in Poland, only 4 were granted. See Miroslav Matyášik, M. 2018. “Polish Jesuits and Their Dreams about Missions in China,” According to the Litteovna indiápská. *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 17(3):404–420. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1386/jjs.2018.3.404

