

## PREFACE

# The Asian Studies Parade

The title of this edited volume or anthology of articles (co)written by Paul van der Velde, *The Asian Studies Parade*, derives its inspiration from the parade in which all 2500 participants of ICAS 11 (2019) in Leiden walked through the city in the direction of the translucent church where the official opening was taking place. It was a colourful parade consisting of academicians, practitioners and artists in the field of Asian Studies from all over the world and highlighted Leiden as a legitimate global centre of knowledge on and with Asia, not least due to Paul's efforts as ICAS pioneer and Secretary.

The volume consists of seven chapters which mirror Paul's fields of interest, the range of which can be gleaned from the subtitle of this book: *Archival, Biographical, Institutional and Post-Colonial Approaches*. In editing the thirty articles it was unavoidable that some of the articles overlap. Needless to say, the articles stretching over a period of forty years also reflect the state of science at the time they were written. A third of the articles are published for the first time in English, with Paul, just as with all non-native speakers of English, spending a lot of time on the translation of articles into the academic lingua franca.

Although as a historian Paul has delved into archives all over the world, the archival aspect of *The Asian Studies Parade* mainly refers to the first chapter of this book, "Deshima, mon amour". For a period of five years Paul was virtually resident on this island in Nagasaki Bay, which has recently been reconstructed in its original form as the home of the United Dutch East India Company (VOC) factory. Paul participated in the Deshima Diaries Source Publication Project (DDSPP) which consists of translations of the marginalia of the diaries kept by the chiefs of the Dutch factory in Deshima during the period from 1641 to 1853. This VOC archive includes some 35,000 handwritten diary pages and Paul summarised and indexed 20,000 pages covering the years 1700-1780. As a source editor, one is bound to unearth a lot of new material but at the same time one has to refrain from picking all the cherries. The ones Paul did pick relate primarily to the eighteenth century spread of Dutch (Western) learning or *rangaku* in Japan, knowledge which laid the basis for the rapid industrial development of Japan during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

During the time he worked on Japan, Paul was a researcher at the Institute for the European Expansion and Its Reaction (IGEER) at Leiden University which was a beehive of researchers from all over the world studying modern imperialism.

All articles in Chapter 2 “The Colonial Clash” stem from that period. Paul’s partial background in Sinology and his study in Taipei explains why one of the first articles he wrote is on the Dutch colonial war in Taiwan in the seventeenth century, which he clearly distinguishes from what he labels the “emporial war”. Western colonial empire building only speeded up in the nineteenth century but because the Dutch possessions were not in Africa where the scramble for that continent among the other colonial powers took place, the Netherlands was absent from the hot debate on empire-building that occurred in historical circles at the end of the twentieth century. Both in a review article on that topic in general and on the Royal Dutch Geographical Society in particular, Paul demonstrates that from the outbreak of the Aceh War in 1873 there was an increasingly imperialist mood in the Netherlands. This only gathered force when imperialism really became globalised as both the United States and Japan joined the race at the end of the nineteenth century in Asia, threatening the position of the Netherlands East Indies. Together with his colleague Jaap de Moor, Paul also edited the complete works of the anti-colonialist and travel writer Jacob Haafner and his important treatise against missionaries and missionary societies. Haafner fitted into a tradition of writers who were highly critical of the behavior of Westerners overseas.

Paul’s attraction to biography as an historical genre becomes evident from Chapter 3 “The Biographical Embrace”. “Who is afraid of the Historical Biography?” is a non-sensical question in the English language realm but the Netherlands, for various reasons, never had a vibrant tradition of historical biography. Paul helped found the Historical Biographical Committee which actively stimulated historical biography writing at the end of the previous century and it has now become the most popular historical genre in the Netherlands. Paul’s dissertation was a biography of the Asian and African scholar P.J. Veth, who was a populariser of Indonesia and Indonesian Studies in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century. Thus the Archipelago very much became part of Dutch identity at the end of that century exemplified in the saying “Indies lost, disastrous cost”. But because he was a universal scholar rather than a specialist, Veth was completely forgotten in the subsequent specialist era. Nevertheless, Leiden University honoured his contributions to science and named a building after him in 1996 where until the beginning of this century Asian and African Studies were housed, reflecting the broad field of Veth’s interest. In the previous chapter, Haafner’s anti-colonial stance was highlighted. In the article “The World According to Jacob Haafner” which is based on Paul’s biography *Life under the Palms: The Sublime World of Jacob Haafner* (2020), Haafner’s at that time quite revolutionary worldview comes to the fore. Paul’s interest in colonial settings and art history is further reflected in the article “The Painter Willem Imandt Revisited: A European Painter in Indonesia”, which is

based on Paul's monograph on Imandt. We may note that they both stem from the same village on the Belgian border.

Chapter 4 "The Post-Colonial Meeting of Asia and Europe" and Chapter 5 "The Eurasian Space" pertain to Asian Studies developments in the period 1995 to 2010. After decolonisation, interest in relations between Asia and Europe was minimal. A marked upsurge in interest on this topic then became noticeable as awareness grew, both in Asia and Europe, of the necessity for improving relations between the two continents. The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) was very much involved in the so-called Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. Drawn from the author's co-authored articles on this issue, the development of this process becomes clear. It emphasises the point that it is vitally important to strengthen this process not only for its own sake but also in order to create a strong and stable global, triangular relationship for the 21st century in which Asia, the United States, and Europe form the pillars. The interest in this relationship waned in the second decade of this century but recent developments in the political sphere have brought this issue once more center stage.

The next two chapters "Asian Studies for the 21st century" and "The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)" zoom in on Asian Studies per se and span the period from 1993 until now. Globalisation was the buzz-word in the 1990s and from the first year of its creation in 1993, the IIAS was a promoter of the internationalization of Asian Studies. The IIAS's periodical *The Newsletter* quickly established itself as a well-read communication channel in the fragmented field of Asian Studies. Many new initiatives were taken by IIAS and the ones Paul was most involved in were ICAS and the multilingual ICAS Book Prize (IBP), which is now in its tenth edition. Paul was co-instrumental in facilitating a dynamic network of what he labelled "New Asia Scholars", those who share a transregional, multi-disciplinary and multilingual approach to Asian Studies. This approach lies at the heart of IIAS, ICAS and its book prize. In the closing article of this book, Paul looks back on forty years of publishing during which he has been responsible for several ground-breaking academic series. The love of books is certainly a thing we have shared during our long association and therefore it was my great pleasure to edit this collection of articles which sheds light on the continuing Asian Studies Parade.

Alex McKay, editor