

# News

## IIAS Fellow Symposium

TO REFLECT ITS BROAD SPECTRUM of research themes, the International Institute for Asian Studies held a symposium on 17 December, 2009, during which three IIAS researchers showcased their work in progress to their professional colleagues in the Netherlands:

### Kalsang Gurung

*Where Do They Come From? Expansion of Shenrab Miwo's Ancestors*

### Ya-Pei Kuo

*The Second Encounter between Confucianism and Christianity: Chinese Conception of 'Religion' and Missionary Discourse of Jiao*

### Richard Boyd

*The Comparative Politics of Rent Seeking and Development*

Each presentation was followed by the comments of a discussant. The symposium was open to all: MA and PhD students, researchers and lecturers.

As part of the same event, IIAS launched a new IIAS/Amsterdam University Press book: *China with a Cut: Globalisation, Urban Youth and Popular Music* by Jeroen de Kloet.



The winner of the National MA thesis prize was also announced. This award consists of the honorary title of Best MA Thesis in Asian Studies and a 3 months fellowship at IIAS to write a PhD project proposal or a research article. The prize was awarded by Professor Henk Schulte Nordholt, chairman of the IIAS board.

## The Research Cooperative: an online network for the research publishing community

PETER J. MATTHEWS, of the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, and founder of The Research Cooperative describes the origins and aims of this new online network for students and researchers which aims to facilitate their work being published in 'a suitable form that will reach suitable audiences'.

The Research Cooperative is a result of my long involvement with research and research publishing in different countries, disciplines, and linguistic settings. In 2001, I asked a computer programmer to customise a standard online bulletin board so that offers and requests could be made for help with editing and translation. The original site attracted a few hundred members, but little activity. The members could not easily learn about each other, and could not communicate outside the work forums provided. There was little room for free association and serendipity. In 2008 I adopted a generic social network system created by Ning.com. At little cost, commercial advertising has been removed, and management of the site requires no programming knowledge.

Since May 2008, more than 1000 people have joined. Our members come from a wide spectrum of countries, linguistic settings, and disciplines, and include researchers, research students, science writers, editors, translators, illustrators, publishers and others.

The Research Cooperative is distinct from all other research-related networks that I know of. Our purpose is not to encourage online discussion of research topics – innumerable sites already provide such opportunities.

We are strictly focused on developing a broad community that can:

1. Raise the quality of manuscripts submitted for publishing,
2. Promote more effective communication among all the people involved in research-based writing and publishing,
3. Promote the spirit of mutual support among researchers, so that they help each other and publishers through reading, editing, translation, peer review and in other ways, and
4. Give inexperienced editors, translators, illustrators and others opportunities to offer volunteer or low-cost trial services, in order to gain experience and become professional, if that is their goal.

I view the Research Cooperative as an experiment in applied anthropology. Like any other human community, the research publishing community needs to recognise itself as a community, it needs to recruit new members in order to maintain physical continuity, and it needs to transfer knowledge from older to younger generations. The Research Cooperative has been created to help students and researchers worldwide get their work published in a suitable form that will reach suitable audiences. The academic world cannot exist without communicating with society in general. Our logo shows two individuals facing out to the world, while giving each other mutual support, back to back. The logo symbolises the basic individuality and communality of all researchers, and all people.

Finally, I would like to note that an exponential increase in publishing initiatives in recent years has not been matched by an exponential increase in the human networks needed to support publishing. Publishers need not only contributors, but also editors, translators, reviewers, and readers. There can be no effective public library of science (in the broadest sense) if our efforts are spread across too many initiatives, online and in print. The Research Cooperative can help, but only to the extent that we succeed in building a large membership that includes publishers, while staying focused on the main bottlenecks in research communication: writing, editing, translation, review.

For more information visit: <http://cooperative.niing.com>