

standen hatte, nach Lao Shes Rehabilitierung 1978 wieder ans Tageslicht. Da sich die originalen Dialoge erst vor kurzem fanden, verband die Truppe die vorhandenen Lieder mit selbst entworfenen Dialogen zu einer Einheit.

Lao Shes Romane *Er Ma* ("Die beiden Ma"), *Luotuo Xiangzi*, und *Lihun* ("Die Blühträume des Lao Li") wurden in Fernsehverfilmungen vom zentralen Fernsehsender ausgestrahlt.

Die nächste Lao-She-Konferenz soll im Jahr 2001 in Paris stattfinden, wo Lao She einige Wochen nach seinem England-Aufenthalt (1924-1929) verbrachte.

Silvia Kettelhut

Second Workshop on Small and Medium Entrepreneurship in Asia and Europe Compared: Organisations Business Behaviour and the State

Kuala Lumpur, 9-11 December 1998

In 1995 a workshop on 'Asian Entrepreneurs in Comparative Perspective' was held at the University of Amsterdam, financially supported by the Asia Committee of the European Science Foundation. This workshop resulted in an edited volume entitled *Small Business Entrepreneurs in Asia and Europe* (Sage Publications, 1997). In December 1998, a second gathering on the same theme was organised by the Department of Chinese Studies of the University of Malay in Kuala Lumpur.

The starting point of this second workshop was that as a class, rural/regional entrepreneurs have, over the past two decades, come to form one of the most powerful categories within the emerging middle class of Asia. Viewing their importance, also in the wake of the recent crisis in Asia, the organisers held that the study of entrepreneurship in Asia is more specifically defined and problematised through the comparative approach.

For this second workshop, the comparative approach was operationalised by inviting the paper writers to incorporate cross-regional comparison in the papers themselves. Of course, analysis based on sets of empirical data gathered in various regions of Asia and/or Europe would constitute the ideal basis for an interesting paper, but the minimum requirement placed upon the paper writers was that they at least complement their regional case study with a thorough discussion of similar problems and processes in another region. Two specific themes were singled out: 1) Organisation and business behaviour of small scale entrepreneurs (family businesses, networking, partnerships, business associations, etc.), 2) Relations between small scale entrepreneurs and the state in its various guises.

In total, 22 researchers from eight different countries participated in the conference. The 14 papers presented covered small and medium-scale entrepreneurs in 14 countries in South, Southeast and East Asia, sometimes taking into their analysis European experiences.

In the course of the presentations and the discussions ignited by them, 4 main themes resurfaced. Firstly, discussing how entrepreneurial behaviour can be promoted, two distinct views were presented: a top-down and a bottom-up approach.

Tan Sri Dato' Soong Siew Hoong, Senior Advisor to the government of Malaysia and long-term leader of a number of Malaysian business organisations gave a rare glimpse of policy making in progress. He discussed how Malaysia is trying to promote its small and medium enterprise (SME) sector by well-integrated and detailed government intervention. Prof. Thomas Heberer (Gerhard-Mercator University in Duisburg, Germany), in contrast, showed in the cases of the People's Republic of China and Vietnam that "spontaneous" developments on the ground were always a step ahead of legislation and government policy.

Secondly, and closely related to the first theme, the effects of policy and socio-economic conditions on SME's were analysed in two papers. Prof. Chia Oai Peng (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur) compared the historical development of the sectors in Taiwan and Malaysia respectively, whereas Prof. Philippe Regnier (University of Geneva) looked at the East and Southeast Asian regions analysing the effects of the recent economic crisis on SME's.

Thirdly, a number of papers focused on organisational forms and strategies. Drs. Sikko Visscher (CASA, University of Amsterdam) concentrated on long-term developments and circumstances determining the establishment of chambers of commerce in Europe and Southeast Asia. Prof. David Schak (Griffith University, Australia) and Dr. Mario Rutten (CASA, University of Amsterdam) analysed the importance of family and non-family forms of business organisation in different regions of South Asia (India), Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Indonesia) and East Asia (Taiwan and China).

Finally, some papers presented the local perspective, analysing themes such as company loyalty in Malaysian small enterprises (Dr. Moha Asri Abdullah of University Sains Malaysia, Penang), gender aspects of women entrepreneurs in South India (Dr. K. Shanti, University of Madras) and rural arts and crafts industries in India (Prof. S.R. Mondal University of North Bengal; Prof. K.A. Bhat, University of Kashmir; Prof. S.S. Solanki of NISTDS, New Delhi). These contributions focused on how groups within the sector could be empowered or stimulated through local or national policy initiatives.

Participants agreed on the need for theoretical and most of all empirical comparative research and expressed their appreciation for the format and thematic approach of the workshop. In that light, the participants agreed to organise a third workshop on small and medium enterprises compared (focusing on Entrepreneurship and the State) at the end of the year 2000.

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