

Die Mönche hinterließen nicht nur buddhistische Sutren, sondern auch Gebote und Lebensregeln. Wie pflanzt man Bäume richtig? Wie verhindert man Seuchen und Hungersnöte? Es ist der Kanon einer gesamten Kultur.

In diesem Jahr sammelten die Heidelberger Forscher Datenmaterial in der Provinz Shandong. Weil ihre digitale Datenbank auf chinesischer Schriftzeichen zugeschnitten ist, können die Kunsthistoriker auch Zeichen entziffern, die nur noch bruchstückhaft erkennbar sind. Doch noch steht das Team von Lothar Ledderose vor vielen Rätseln. Wie sah die Praxis der Beicht- und Meditationsrituale aus? Welche politische Funktion hatte der Buddhismus für eine bestimmte Zeit? Zur Beantwortung dieser Fragen haben die Heidelberger viel Zeit: Das Forschungsprojekt ist auf 16 Jahre angelegt.

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Portrait:

Euro-Asian Cultural Exchange and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

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Since the post-Cold War era, after the demise of the ideological confrontation in Europe the significance of culture in international relations has attracted more and more attention.¹ In Although the Cold War in East Asia has not yet completely ended, especially if we take the Korean and Cross Strait issues between China and Taiwan into account, the emerge of the so-called "Asian values" in the 1990s was a clear sign of the rising significance of cultural identity in this region.² In view of the acceleration of the interrelations among nations in the era of globalization and to prevent a "clash of civilizations", cultural exchange gains increasingly significance despite different historical experiences and values between Europe and Asia.

Since its inception in 1996 the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) is a new channel for communication and cooperation between the two continents. It is known for its characteristics as official but informal.³ The Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), the so-called third – cultural – pillar of ASEM, is a very important established institution under the auspices of ASEM. Since its founding in 1997 hundreds of activities have been implemented.⁴ In this essay the author tries

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1996, p. 21.

² *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2004*, <http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/us/2004/2004PRC.html>; *East Asia Strategic Review 2004*, Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2004. About the Asian value: Han Sung-Joo (ed.), *Changing Values in Asia. Their Impact on Governance and Development*, Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999; Richard Robinson, "The Politics of Asian Value", in: *The Pacific Review*, vol. 9, no. 3, Sept. 1996, pp. 309-327; Mark R. Thompson, "Whatever Happened to Asian Values," in: *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 12, no. 4, Oct. 2001, pp. 154-165; Lee Kuan Yew, *Memory of Lee Kuan Yew*, Beijing, Foreign Language Publisher, 2001.

³ Liu Fu-Kuo, "East Asian regionalism: Theoretical perspectives", in: Liu Fu-Kuo/Philippe Régnier (ed.), *Regionalism in East Asia, Paradigm shifting?*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2003, pp. 3-29.

⁴ Yeo Lay Hwee, *Asia and Europe. The development and different dimensions of ASEM*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 28-31; Wim Stokhof/Paul van der Velde (ed.), *ASEM, The Asia-*

to examine the differences and imbalances between Europe and Asia in their cultural relations. Also a closer look will be taken on ASEF, especially by means of quantitative content analysis based on the numeric data of the Foundation.⁵

1 Different Backgrounds

During the first half of the Cold War era in the 1950s and 1960s Western Europe was basically free from war and economic reconstruction was making progress within a rather secured collective defense system.⁶ Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cultural activities gained their significance among Western European nations not until late 1960s.⁷

The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, the oldest European international political organization since the end of Second World War, dedicated to human rights, education and cultural affairs.⁸ In 1954 the European Cultural Convention was signed by its member states to promote cultural preservation and exchange but their activities were limited due to political and economic constraints until 1969.⁹ Especially along with the then changing international environment West Europe was further secured and stabilized by creating a kind of *modus vivendi* through *détente* policy with their Eastern neighbors.¹⁰ Therefore cultural exchange became one of the best media to promote mutual understanding under such favorable circumstances in Europe, which was first codified in the CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) Final Act in Helsinki 1975.¹¹

It became more vivid in Western Europe especially after 1979 since a cultural committee was set up in the European Parliament.¹² The Maastricht Treaty in 1992 has also stipulated in

Europe Meeting, A Window of Opportunity, Leiden and Amsterdam: Kegan Paul International, London and New York, in association with International Institute for Asian Studies, 1999; Jacques Pelkmans/Hiroko Shinkai, *ASEM: How promising a partnership?*, Brussels: European Institute for Asian Studies, 1997; Michael Reiterer, *Asia-Europe, Do they Meet? Reflections on the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)*, Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation, 2002, pp. 223-251. The others are "Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre, AEETC" in Bangkok. See: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asem/cluster/env.htm; <http://www.iias.nl/asem/relatedm/aeetc.html> and Asia Europe Institute in the University of Malaysia. www.asia-europe-institute.org.

⁵ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis, An Introduction to Its Methodology*, London: Sage Publications, 1980; Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Science and Humanities*, Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1969; http://writing.colostate.edu/references/research/glossary/#empirical_research.

⁶ Alan Ned Sabrosky, *Alliances in U.S. foreign policy: issues in the quest for collective defense*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988.

⁷ Werner Weidenfeld/Wolfgang Wessels (ed.), *Europa von A bis Z*, Bonn, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002, pp. 274-277.

⁸ <http://www.coe.int/DefaultEN.asp>.

⁹ http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Heritage/Resources/RefTxtCultHer.asp.

¹⁰ John van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe, The Soviet Union and the West since 1953*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991; Benno Zuendorf, *Die Ostverträge: Die Verträge von Moskau, Warschau, Prag, das Berlin-Abkommen und die Verträge mit der DDR*, München: Beck, 1979; Horst Ehmke/Karlheinz Koppe/Herbert Wehner (ed.), *Zwanzig Jahre Ostpolitik. Bilanz und Perspektiven*, Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft 1986.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, John van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, pp. 319-347.

¹² http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Heritage/Resources/RefTxtCultHer.asp; Nuria Sanz, "The Current Work of the Council of Europe in the Framework of the Protection and Development of Cultural Pluralism: the Role of Heritage", in: *Asia-Europe Seminar on Ethnic Cultural Promotion*,

Article 128, the first legal basis for the European Union, to promote the culture within Member States and to foster the cultural exchange also with third countries.¹³ Finally "Culture 2000" is the Union's cultural program planned for the time period from 2000 to 2007 with various kinds of projects and subsidies to cultural activities.¹⁴

Moreover since the end of 19th century Alliance Française (since 1883) was the first organization in the world to promote official cultural policy in foreign countries. It was followed by the British Council (since 1934) and the German Goethe Institute (since 1951) etc.¹⁵ Besides, in Germany, there are different political-party-affiliated foundations, e.g. the Konrad Adenauer-Foundation, conducting the development policy around the world.¹⁶ All these institutions also have their branch offices operating in most of the East Asian countries. Recently, in June 2004, the Goethe Institute has opened its office in Pyongyang, North Korea, the 128th of its kind in its world wide network. It was the first Western cultural organization that has ever been officially permitted in this almost completely isolated Stalinist state.¹⁷

During the 1950s and 1960s, in the time of ideological confrontation and the advancing development of nuclear weapons, studies of international politics and strategy dominated the research in the field of international relations. Since the oil crisis 1973 the studies of international economics have gained significance. Therefore intercultural communication became an independent course in the field of IR not until the early 1980s. Thanks to the assertion of Professor Huntington's thesis of a "clash of civilizations" and the efforts of the social constructivists since the 1990s the concepts of culture, value and identity began to attract attention.¹⁸

In East Asia the situation was quite different. Since the middle of the 19th century the colonial rule, followed by several serious regional conflicts after the Second World War and the rather low level of economic development were all unfavorable conditions for expanding cultural exchange. With some exceptions, all East Asian countries have their own experiences with

Bangkok: Office of the National Education Commission, Office of the Prime Minister, Royal Thai Government, 2002, pp. 113-115.

¹³ Corrado G.M. Letta, *ASEM's Future*, vol. II, Bologna: Lo Scarabeo Editrice, 2002, p. 149, compare also the Chinese translation of the book, in which there are certain useful modifications of the original. The future of ASEM Translation Group, *ASEM's Future*, Beijing: Shishi Publisher, 2003, pp. 420-421; <http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf>.

¹⁴ http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/culture2000/cult_2000_en.html.

¹⁵ J.M. Mitchell, *International Cultural Relations*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1986, pp. 22-27; <http://www.britishcouncil.org/history/history-when>. Besides there are Friedrich Ebert Foundation (www.fes.de), Friedrich Naumann Foundation (www.fnst.org/), Hans Seidel Foundation (www.hss.de) and Heinrich Boell Foundation (www.boell.de).

¹⁶ Ibid., Laxman Rajbanshi, "Culture: What I Understand It to Be, Searching for Asian Cultural Integrity", Papers from the Inter-Cultural Seminar, Bangkok: Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 1991, pp. 115-119; Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics. The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985; Friedrich Naumann Foundation has set up *The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats*; Tang Shaocheng, "EU's Taiwan policy in the light of its China policy", in: *Asia Europe Journal* (Singapore), 2003, 1: pp. 511-525, and website: <http://www.cald.org/>. Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson, *Culture and politics: A comparative approach*, Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002, p. 19.

¹⁷ <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1224511,00.html>.

¹⁸ J.M. Mitchell, *International Cultural Relations*, p. x.; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Western colonization, which ended not until the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁹ Moreover the Chinese revolution 1949, the Korean War (1950-1953), the Cross Strait conflict (1958), the Vietnam War (1960-1975) and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) destabilized security and hindered the economic development in most of the countries in this region.²⁰

Nonetheless ASEAN, founded in 1967, the most effective integration mechanism in South East Asia, remains an economic area with the goal to become a free trade area in the near future because the member states are rather reluctant to surrender their sovereignty. There have long been plans for cultural activities but its exchanges remained rather sporadic.²¹ Even the so-called ASEAN+3 (China, Korea and Japan) founded after the Asian financial crisis at the end of 1997 still remains a network for financial cooperation.²² Only the Asia Pacific Cultural Center of UNESCO (ACCU), established in 1971 in Tokyo, has made contributions Asia wide to promote mutual understanding as well as cultural cooperation, youth exchanges as well as eradication of illiteracy.²³

Therefore the Asian part of ASEM, almost identical to ASEAN+3, could also be seen as a functional platform for their own cooperation.²⁴ Moreover to cooperate with the most advanced integration mechanism, the European Union could also add momentum to the Asian cooperation process. Ever since 2001 the Boao Forum for Asia has officially stressed the significance of cultural affairs in their declaration and different cultural activities have been implemented.²⁵

Nonetheless, there are also the Japan Foundation²⁶ and the Korea Foundation.²⁷ While the former operates world wide the latter one presents relevant programs domestically. Besides language training they also offer different promoting grants to foster cultural exchange. But based on its rapid economic development China has tried hard to catch up. With the goal to set up more than one hundred Confucius Institutes in the world to promote the Chinese language the first one was already opened in Seoul, Korea, in November 2004.²⁸

In the West values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law have deep historical and political roots. The "democratic peace theory" that derived from Kant's thesis of "Perpetual Peace" ("Zum Ewigen Frieden") is the best example of these values and one of the funda-

¹⁹ Korea was colonized by Japan and Thailand is the only exception that was not colonized. But if we take Hong Kong (1997) and Macao (1999) into consideration it will be much later.

²⁰ Stephen P. Gibert, *Security in Northeast Asia: approaching the Pacific century*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1988; Douglas T. Stuart, *Security within the Pacific rim*, Aldershot, Hants, England; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Gower Pub. Co., 1987; http://www.tacogame.com/tacowar.war.vn_war.htm.

²¹ <http://www.aseansec.org/64.htm>.

²² Liu Fu-Kuo 2003, pp. 3-29.

²³ Megumi Takimoto, "ACCU Programmes for Regional Cooperation in Cultural Heritage Promotion in Asia and the Pacific", in: *Asia-Europe Seminar on Ethnic Cultural Promotion*, Bangkok: Office of the National Education Commission, Office of the Prime Minister, Royal Thai Government, 2002, pp. 181-191; <http://www.accu.or.jp/en/index.shtml>.

²⁴ The ASEAN member states Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar (Burma) just joined the ASEM on the ASEM 5 Summit in October 2004. www.asean5.gov.vn.

²⁵ <http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/zhuanti/boao/540826.htm>.

²⁶ <http://www.jpff.go.jp/>.

²⁷ <http://www.kofo.or.kr/>.

²⁸ http://211.151.90.1/newchisa/web/0/2004-11-24/news_359195.asp; http://211.151.90.1/newchisa/web/0/2004-11-24/news_359133.asp.

ment of the foreign policy of the European nations.²⁹ In East Asia the situation is more complex. The Pancasila democracy from President Mohamed Suharto, which could not endure the Western style of political opposition³⁰ and the firm belief of Lee Kuan Yew³¹ to refuse the transplantation of Western democracy to the East as well as the similar stands of former Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohammad of Malaysia are the best examples of value systems in the South East Asian countries that clearly contrast with those of the West. On the contrary the Western style of democracy has been functioning well for decades in Japan, and since the 1990s it has also started taking roots in Korea and Taiwan while China, Vietnam and North Korea still remain socialist.³²

In terms of the definition of culture it is also quite different between Asia, first of all China, and Europe.³³ According to the *Yi Jing (Book of Changes)*, one of the oldest books in China, culture is to observe human development and to incarnate it. It means both civil governance and to enlighten the people by education. But the word culture derives from the Latin word *cultura*, which means to cultivate not only the land but also the people that something valuable results. Nonetheless the meaning of culture in China "educate" is very much similar to that of the meaning in Europe "cultivate".³⁴ Besides, culture is the product of human beings and it is preserved by the people. Culture can only exist within different forms of community e.g. tribes, nations and states.

As for civilization, which originated from *civis*, denoting citizen, a civilized person, is quite similar to a person with culture.³⁵ But civilization has a much larger scale than culture and it

²⁹ Edward D. Mansfield/Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," in: *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1995, pp. 79-97; Spencer R. Weart, *Never At War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. According to statistic between 1816 and 1991 there are 353 wars occurred with casualties of more than one thousand people. There are 155 wars fought among democratic and undemocratic states and 198 wars among undemocratic states, but none of them is fought among democratic states. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/MIRACLE.HTM>. Immanuel Kant: "Zum Ewigen Frieden – Ein philosophischer Entwurf", in: Kant, Immanuel: *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik I*, Werkausgabe Band XI, Frankfurt/M: Weischedel, Wilhelm, 1993.

³⁰ It was proclaimed by President Sucarno in 1945. Rizal Sukma, "Values, Governance, and Indonesia's Internal and External Political Relations", in: Han Sung-Joo (ed.), *Changing Values in Asia. Their Impact on Governance and Development*, Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999, pp.115-145; Richard Robinson, "The Politics of Asian Value," in: *The Pacific Review*, vol. 9, no. 3, Sept. 1996, pp. 309-327; Mark R. Thompson 2001, pp. 154-165.

³¹ *Ibid.*, *Memory of Lee Kuan Yew*; Lu Yuanli, *Asian Value*, pp. 304-515; *ibid.*, Mark R. Thompson 2001.

³² Robert W. Compton, *East Asian democratization: impact of globalization, culture, and economy*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000; Edward Friedman, *The politics of democratization: generalizing East Asian experiences*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994.

³³ Dietmar Rothermund, "Cultural Partnership between Asia and Europe", in: Suthiphand Chirathivat, Franz Knipping, Poul Henrik Lassen, Chia Siow Yue (ed.), *Asia-Europe on the Eve of the 21st Century*, Bangkok: Centre for European Studies at Chulalongkorn University; Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001, pp. 9-16.

³⁴ *Chinese Encyclopedia*, Taipei: Chinese Culture University, 1981, Vol. 1, pp. 387-388; Cai Juanshen et al., *On Culture*, Beijing Renmin Publisher, 2003, pp. 1-5; *ibid.* R. P. Anand, *Cultural Factors in International Relations*, pp. 16-17; Eberhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Nation in Europa*, Bonn: Europa Union Verlag GmbH, 1982, pp. 37-48; Hans-Werner Gille, *Nation Heute. Probleme des Staatsbewusstseins und Nationalgefühls*, München: Bayerische Landeszentrale für Politische Bildungsarbeit, 1977, pp. 13-19; Karlheinz, Nicolauss, *Kontroverse Deutschlandpolitik. Die politische Auseinandersetzung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland über den Grundlagenvertrag mit der DDR*, Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1977, pp.115-132; J.M. Mitchell 1986, pp. 7-9.

³⁵ Lane and Ersson, op. cit., p. 21.

can be quantified and accumulated, e.g. the scientific civilization or Islamic civilization. Thus civilization must be composed of certain culture(s) and cultures are not certainly civilizations. According to Huntington in the post-Cold War era the whole world is divided by civilizations instead by ideologies and economic interests. He insists that the clash between civilizations will be much more disastrous than conflicts within certain civilizations.³⁶ Regardless of his argument and intention he strengthened the world wide discussion about the significance of civilization.

Europe is a continent with a long history and a rich cultural heritage, deeply influenced by Christianity, which, despite schism and reformation, remains one of the most important foundation of its civilization.³⁷ The situation in East Asia is much more pluralistic. There are at least three major spheres of influences:³⁸ China/Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam belong to spheres of influences of Confucianism whereas Thailand and Indochina are strongly influenced by Buddhism. Islamic nations in this region are Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, while more than 90% of the Philippines are Christian. Nonetheless the impact of Christianity on East Asia is much stronger than that of Asian religions and philosophy (Confucianism) on Europe.³⁹ On the ground of its plurality East Asia is the most diversified area of the world in terms of cultural heritage.⁴⁰ Given these Asian varieties it seems that cultural exchange in Asia is more essential than in Europe.

Thanks to its rapid economic development since the 1970s the emergence of the so-called "Asian value" debate in the early 1990s is a clear sign of Asian self-consciousness and independence.⁴¹ It is not only a reaction to the US hegemony but also a form of resistance to Eurocentrism. Also the unforgettable memory of humiliation of many Asian nations during the colonial rule since the 19th century could be easily recalled while meeting with the West. Therefore official but informal ways to deal with each other could have been a suitable arrangement for Asians and Europeans when they met again in the mid 1990s.

Since ASEM 1 took place in Bangkok in 1996 many member states have come up with their suggestions in the fields of economic, technological and cultural cooperation to further the ASEM process, such as the Asia Europe Institute in Kuala Lumpur and the Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre, AEETC, in Bangkok.⁴² It fully confirms with the theory of neo-functionism to foster the multilateral relations by means of different approaches.⁴³ In

³⁶ Samuel P. Huntington 1996.

³⁷ Edwyn Robert Bevan, *Christianity*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955; Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and history*, New York: Charles Scribner, 1950.

³⁸ Zhang Yumei, *Pacific Asia. The politics of development*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003; Lee Wen, *The Change of East-Asian Societies*, Beijing: World Knowledge, 2003.

³⁹ Wang Gungwu, "Europe's Heritage in Asia", in: Suthiphand Chirathivat, Franz Knipping, Poul Henrik Lassen, Chia Siow Yue (ed.), op. cit., pp. 17-27.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Huntington, pp. 21-47.

⁴¹ Wang Yanzhong, "Chinese Values, Governance, and International Relation: Historical Development and Present Situation", in: Han Sung-Joo (ed.), *Changing Values in Asia. Their Impact on Governance and Development*, Tokyo, New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999, pp. 13-63; Zhang Yumei 2003, pp. 32-59.

⁴² www.asia-europe-institute.org; Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre, AEETC, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asem/cluster/env.htm; http://www.ias.nl/asem/relate_dm/aeetc.html.

⁴³ Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958; Paul R. Viotti/Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory. Realism, Pluralism, Globalism and Beyond*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 212-214; Marie Burley/Walter Mattli, "Europe Before the Court: A Political Theory of Legal Integration", in: *International Organization* 47 (1993), pp. 41-76.

the framework of ASEM, unlike the other international economic organizations such as APEC, the issues such as regional security and technical, economic and cultural cooperation are all handled separately but simultaneously. In fact, the political, economic and cultural relations are very much intertwined and have a functional relation to each other.⁴⁴ Therefore the spill-over effect could be derived from the fields with less dissents and larger rooms of cooperation and cultural exchange could serve as a good functioning catalyst to enhance the ASEM process.

2 The Role of ASEF

As a whole, given its informal character the ASEM process goes on even without a permanent secretariat whereas ASEF could be seen as its best known established institutional mechanism.⁴⁵ ASEF is a very active institution in the field of intercultural exchange and it is also a good circumstantial evidence to examine how the ASEM Member States value their exchange and cooperation in this field. During the ASEM 5 in Hanoi in October 2004 ten new EU Member States and Cambodia, Laos and Burma/Myanmar from the Asian side joined the meeting.⁴⁶ So as the members of ASEF have expanded from 26 to 39 in which 26 from the EU, all Member States plus the Union, and 13 from Asia, ASEAN+3. The Europeans are just double the Asians.⁴⁷

Given the afore mentioned differences and asymmetries between Europe and Asia the former is still very much advanced in various fields than the latter one in intercultural exchange. For instance, there are much more students from Asia studying in Europe than vice versa. Between 2001 and 2002 there were 241,552 Asian students studying in Europe and only 11,482 European students studying in Asia.⁴⁸ But many signs have shown that the Asian countries are more devoted to ASEF's activities than their European partners.

During the fiscal years from 1998 to 2004 there were altogether 256 ASEF activities taking place, which attracted 10,925 participants at the total costs of US\$ 18,226,208.⁴⁹ Nevertheless the activities occurred in Asian (163 or 64%) are much more than those in Europe (93 or 36%).⁵⁰ According to all the relevant figures Singapore is really the locomotive of ASEF

⁴⁴ Robert O. Keohane/Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (ed.), *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

⁴⁵ The "Asia Europe Institute" is developing itself in the direction of a university whereas the AEETC was shut down in 2002. See: www.asia-europe-institute.org; and http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asef/cluster/env.htm; <http://www.iias.nl/asef/relatedm/aeetc.html>.

⁴⁶ http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asef/asef_summits/asef5/news/ip04_1178.htm.

⁴⁷ Because of the lack of the latest figures from the new Member States this essay must limited its data until 2004.

⁴⁸ Among European countries Germany (75,500) and the UK (74,400) receive most of the Asian students. See: Global Education Digest 2004, http://www.unesco.org/education/docs/EN_GD2004_v2.pdf. Besides there are around 10% of Christian population in Korea. Huang Xinchuang, *Contemporary Religion in Asia Pacific*, Beijing, 2003, pp. 29-47.

⁴⁹ *ASEF Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis*, 15 April 2004, p. 20, Table 4. Compare to the annual budget of US\$ 60 million of California-based Asia Foundation, which was created to foster relations between Asia and the USA, ASEF has really done a great job. See: "Asia-Europe Foundation Future Sustainability", Paper prepared by ASEF Executive Office, October 2003, p. 11.

⁵⁰ *ASEF Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis*, 15 April 2004, p. 20, pp. 8-18. The five activities taken place in "Asia and Europe" of P2P are not calculated because it is not to be classified. Therefore there are only 58 instead of 63 activities of P2P.

activities.⁵¹ Thanks to its colonial rule from the UK Singapore is the only capital in East Asia which takes English as its working language. Besides its rule of law, geographic middle point between Europe and East Asia, plus efficiency and enthusiasm of its government, initiators of both ASEM and ASEF, these are all advantages for Singapore to serve as an efficient hub for Asia European cultural exchange.⁵²

ASEF's activities touch upon almost all important groups of society ranging from intellectuals, think tanks, government officials to NGOs, students and ordinary people. Also the themes and topics cover a rather wide spectrum that stretches from international security, trade, and environment to gender, museums, and cinemas. It is a very fine division of labor and an efficient network of exchange.⁵³

In Asia, after Singapore Korea, Thailand, and China have also shown great interest whereas Japan lies in the rearmost of the activities table.⁵⁴ But still there are four activities taking place in this richest Asian nation. Nonetheless Japan is the most generous financial contributor followed by the European Commission and Singapore.⁵⁵ Although there are only ten Asian partners within ASEF their contributions until March 2003 amount to US\$ 11,064,631 (45%). The Europeans, fifteen Member States plus the European Commission, have donated US\$ 13,438,589 (55%).⁵⁶ Although the European partners are richer in terms of their GDP, each Asian country has contributed 4.5% in average whereas each European partner 3.7% of the funding. Is this another sign of stronger interest of the Asians?

In Europe, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands are the biggest donors while France, the UK, and Germany take the lead in organizing activities.⁵⁷ But Ireland seems to be totally alienated to all ASEF activities and Greece as well as Austria have organized only one activity within this time period of six years.⁵⁸ As a whole the four leading Asian nations in carrying out activities are also leading partners among all ASEF members while these three Euro-

⁵¹ EC Study Mission on ASEF's Strategy and Long-term Financial Sustainability, April 12, 2004, *Intellectual Exchange Mission, Strategy, Programmes and Evaluation*, p. 21-22, Table 6; EC Study Mission on ASEF's Strategy and Long-term Financial Sustainability, April 12, 2004, *Cultural Exchange Mission, Strategy, Programmes and Evaluation*, p. 23-27, Table 6; EC Study Mission on ASEF's Strategy and Long-term Financial Sustainability, April 12, 2004, *P2P Mission, Strategy, Programmes and Evaluation*, pp. 23-27, Table 6; EC Study Mission on ASEF's Strategy and Long-term Financial Sustainability, April 12, 2004, *Public Affairs, Mission, Strategy, Programmes and Evaluation*, p. 10, Table 6; *ASEF Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis*, 15 April 2004, pp. 8-18, Table 1.

⁵² Since the very beginning the Singapore government has been the most significant initiator and supporter or even guardian of ASEF. Generous donations, offering of headquarter building, diplomatic status to its staff, and the most frequent activities taken place in this small country these are all so substantial to the development of ASEF to this date. Jung Chang-Hwa, *Kooperation zwischen der Europäischen Union und Ostasien am Beispiel der neuen asiatisch-europäischen Zusammenarbeit im Rahmen des ASEM, (Asia-Europe Meeting)*, Marburg, Tectum Verlag, 2002, p. 182. Tommy Koh, "ya ou jijing hue" (Asia-Europe Foundation), "zenjing ya ou xianhu lijie" (Promoting Asia-Europe Mutual Understanding), in: Yeo Lay Hwee/Asad Latif (ed.), *ya ou zon heng tan, xu tong mei yien jiang u yien lung ji, (Talks on Asia and Europe, Addresses and Talks of Tommy Koh)*, Singapore, World Technology, January 2001, pp. 146.

⁵³ See footnote 51.

⁵⁴ *ASEF Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis*, 15 April 2004, p. 20, Table 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22, Table 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-18., Table 1.

pean partners were left rear behind.⁵⁹ Since, it is evident, although the cross-continental exchanges are interesting to all member states the Asian partners might put more weight on it whereas the interests in intra-Asian interactions could play a role.

3 Conclusion

It is clear to conclude that, in the field of cultural exchange, the Europeans started much earlier and they are much more active in their efforts than the Asians. Since the 1950s a relative favourable environment in Europe must be a good reason for it. An asymmetry in favour of Europe is here to be established. But in the case of ASEF the Asians have been showing stronger interest than the Europeans and, especially, Singapore has been playing an extremely constructive role within the framework of ASEF. Also China, the emerging great power, given its strong ambition and enormous potential, could enlarge the demand of Chinese language learning in the world by setting up Confucius Institutes. In some way the Asian efforts could possibly balance the advantages of the Europeans in the near future.

With only less than 40 staff persons ASEF is relatively small in capacity and could act more flexibly to reflect the changing international constellations.⁶⁰ But in the framework of ASEF Japan's role is rather inconsistent. With a traditional huge amount of trade surplus in favour of Japan the EU becomes its second biggest trading partner just next to the US in recent years.⁶¹ Besides, since decades, Japan, the leading country in East Asia in terms of trade and technology, has tremendous interests and deep roots in its own region. Therefore the facility which ASEM has to offer would not be much favourable to the most powerful Asian economy. Moreover could the institution of ASEM support the Europeans, in cooperation with other Asian countries, to compete with Japanese in their Asian sphere of influence?

Regarding the human rights issue the Japanese government has not yet officially reconciled with its war time counterparts in Asia. Therefore less activity in order to avoid embarrassment but not less donation to ease the antiparty sounds reasonable. Moreover the USA is excluded from the ASEM process. It is a rare exception for the sole superpower and its unpleasant attitude towards ASEM could also affect its most reliable partner in Asia. Along with its political significance it is understandable that Japan has an ambivalent attitude towards ASEM and ASEF.

The Member States provide the main financial support to ASEF and its autonomy to promote multilateral interests with its partners should be preserved. The role of ASEF as interface between governmental and non-governmental organizations should be maintained. Moreover the ASEM partners are still not in the position to come up with long-term commitments to ASEF therefore the originally planned endowment fund is only partially realized.

Although ASEF has reached the stage of consolidation it still lacks a solid financial basis. Nevertheless according to the European Commission assessment with criteria e.g. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability all four results were positive.⁶² Due to tremendous interests of the Member States in cultural exchange the future of ASEF seems rather promising. Despite different experiences between Europe and Asia in their cultural development their cooperation in the framework of ASEF can be seen as a success.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ <http://www.asef.org/>.

⁶¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/japan/index_en.htm.

⁶² Ibid., EC Study Mission, CE, pp. 5-12; IE, pp. 4-11; P2P, pp. 10-17; PA, pp. 2-3.