

## Article

# Network Formation Challenges for African Studies in Asia<sup>1)</sup>

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## Abstract

This article aims to study the African studies network formation process in Asian countries compared to the networking process for Asian studies in African countries, and then to reflect on the perspectives on Africa–Asia academic cooperation in the twenty-first century.

This article first examines the genealogy of African studies in Japan, China, and India, and then focuses on the African studies network formation process in Asian countries. Today, Asian Africanists are highly conscious of the need for international collaboration and networking in African studies. In Asian countries, academic exchanges and interactions among scholars and institutes of African studies have accelerated in recent years.

In addition, this article discusses the networking history of African studies in European countries, while considering the Africa–Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS), one of the most successful networks in the world. Finally, this article examines European initiatives aiming to bridge between African and Asian academic societies and to establish an African network for Asian studies.

Through these reflections, this article highlights the challenges and potentialities for new international academic networks for African studies in Asia, and shows the perspectives on the linkage of these nascent transcontinental academic networks for area studies in the near future.

## 1. Introduction

This paper principally aims to reflect on the African studies network formation process in Asian countries compared to the Asian studies networking process in African countries<sup>2)</sup>. In Asia, the academic exchanges and interactions among scholars and institutes of African studies have accelerated in recent years. Institutes of African studies in Asian countries, such as China, India, Japan, and South Korea, have increasingly organized international conferences, workshops, and seminars, and not only invited African and Western scholars but also other Asian scholars. Since the international conference on African studies successfully organized in South Korea in April 2012<sup>3)</sup>, the academic communication among Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean Africanists has increased. Now, closer collaboration

is required in these Asian countries to globalize African studies, while respecting each country's background and contexts.

As compared to the Asian situation, Africa has been simply considered and treated as a passive actor or site for Asian scholars to conduct their research activities. Indeed, African scholars have not been considered leading academic stakeholders in Asian studies. However, we have recently observed remarkable change in the academic landscape of the world. In African countries, the Asian studies network started to sprout through intercontinental cooperation between African and Asian scholars and institutes.

This change in the academic landscape not only affects the Asian and African academic worlds; it affects the Western one as well. In the context of global competition, Western institutes need more academic cooperation with non-Western partners. Thus, it is a crucial challenge for Western universities to promote closer relationships with their Asian counterparts.

This paper analyzes the African studies network formation process in Asian countries compared to the networking trials for Asian studies in African countries, and then reflects on the perspectives on Africa-Asia research cooperation.

This paper describes the history and contemporary situation of African studies in Asian countries to provide an image on the genealogy of African studies in Asian countries. Then it moves to focus on the African studies network formation in Asia in comparison to the international networking process that was earlier established in Europe and the nascent network for Asian studies in African countries. Finally, this paper considers the linkage among these new international networks in Africa and Asia as both sides of same coin. By comparing these academic networks that have been developing in Africa and Asia, this paper seeks to understand the potentialities and challenges of newly formed international academic networks for area studies.

## 2. Genealogy of African studies in Asian countries

This section aims to examine the genealogy<sup>4)</sup> of African studies in Asia. First, it briefly traces the history of African studies in Japan. Then it compares this to the progress of African studies in other Asian countries.

### 2.1 Japan

In 1984, the Japan Association for African Studies (JAAS) celebrated its twentieth anniversary. JAAS organized a round-table talk to retrace its twenty years of activities with its executive members. JAAS published the minutes of the round-table in a special issue of its main journal, *Journal of African Studies* (*Afurika Kenkyu* in Japanese, No. supplement, 1983) (*JAS-JAAS*)<sup>5)</sup> and reviews by specialists from different academic fields (geology, geophysics, physical geography, animal ecology, primatology, physical anthropology, ecological anthropology, cultural anthropology, study on crafts, sociology, medical science, archaeology, history, literature, linguistics, law, political science, international relations, economics, and economic history, order by pages, 18 reviews) in another special issue of *JAS-JAAS* (No. 25, 1984). These issues of *JAS-JAAS* would enable

us to trace the history of African studies in Japan. What follows briefly discusses the history of African studies in Japan, in reference to the abovementioned special issues of *JAS-JAAS*.

JAAS was founded in April 1964 in Tokyo. After its 20 years of existence, JAAS had about 400 members who had majored in various academic disciplines, from natural to human and social sciences. However, the history of African studies in Japan is short compared to Western countries. In general, Japanese academia began to establish an academic relationship with Africa only after the Second World War. A Japanese research team conducted its first fieldwork only in 1958. Japan Monkey Center sent a research team from Kyoto University to study the origin and evolution of human beings through fieldwork on gorillas and primitive hunting tribes in Congo (Zaire) (Matsuzawa 1983:1). Hence, in the early years, African studies in Japan focused on primatology, and then cultural anthropology (Miyamoto 1984:121).

After Imanishi's Kyoto University team conducted this research, sponsored by Japan Monkey Center<sup>6)</sup> (*JAS-JAAS* 1983:6), a research group from Nagoya University conducted archeological field research in Kenya and Tanzania in 1968 (Omi 1984:107). Researchers would begin to conduct physical anthropological fieldwork in Africa in the late 1960s (Ishida 1984:50).

For the first generation of Japanese Africanists, raising the required funds was the most difficult part of conducting their research in Africa, before the Ministry of Education began according research subsidies (*Kakenhi*, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science). Research groups had received funds ad hoc from Japanese enterprises. At that time, Japan was still classified as a developing country in the recovery process after having been defeated in the Second World War. During this initial period, JAAS received financial support from Tenri-kyo<sup>7)</sup>, a religious organization (*JAS-JAAS* 1983:5).

In the 1960s, the field research was principally conducted by teams. However, some researchers individually visited Africa. In the early 1960s, Kawada stayed in Haut-Volta (Burkina Faso) to carry out his research on the Mossi society. Yamaguchi conducted his research in Nigeria as a visiting lecturer at the University of Ibadan (Yoneyama 1984:72). These two Japanese anthropologists would become internationally renowned scholars. Cultural anthropology became one of the most representative disciplines of African studies in Japan. The Foundation of the National Museum of Ethnology<sup>8)</sup> contributed to the development of anthropological studies in Japan (Yoneyama 1984:75).

In the field of medical studies, Japanese medical researcher Hideyo Noguchi<sup>9)</sup> would come to symbolize the bridge between Japan and Africa. Noguchi was the first Japanese medical researcher to conduct research in Africa in the 1920s, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. Noguchi dedicated his life to infectious disease studies and died in Ghana due to yellow fever, which he had studied. To honor Noguchi's legacy, the Japanese government founded the Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research<sup>10)</sup> at the University of Ghana (Otatsume and Minami 1984:100, 102).

History studies were begun in the translation of works of Western scholars, such as Basil Davidson. While the study of history gradually advanced, there were no courses on African history and no professors who had majored in African history at a Japanese

university (Miyaji 1984:114). Linguistic studies were begun to conduct more through interviews in addition to text-based research (Yukawa 1984:128). The studies of political science and international relations focused on current issues during the independence period, such as liberation from colonial rule, nationalism, pan-Africanism, African socialism, and military regime (Oda 1984:139-142, Urano 1984:147). While African political studies were developing in Japan, it was still the “time of frontier” (Oda 1984:143). Further, for a long time, Japanese Africanists were afflicted with an inferiority complex for being “latecomers” to the field (Oda 1984:138) as compared to Western scholars.

Twenty years later, in 2004, on the occasion of JAAS’ fortieth anniversary, President Miyamoto remarked as follows. After having started with 200 members, 40 years later, JAAS had about 900 members and had become one of the biggest academic associations of area studies in Japan. JAAS covers almost all disciplines in the human, natural, and social sciences. However, African studies in Japan face the significant challenge to go a step further in its international activities while working with foreign Africanists, particularly with African scholars. Thus, African studies in Japan should be more open to the world (Miyamoto 2004:1-2).

In 2004, JAAS organized another special round-table at its annual academic meeting and then published a report in a special issue of *JAS-JAAS*. There are still very few research institutes in Japan that exclusively conduct research and educational activities in African studies. Two remarkable exceptions that have led African studies in Japan are the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa<sup>11)</sup>, known as “AA-ken,” at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (founded in 1964) and The Center for African Area Studies<sup>12)</sup>, known as “Africa Center,” at Kyoto University (founded in 1986) (*JAS-JAAS* 2004:133-134). Another remarkable exception is the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE, *Asia Keizai Kenkyu-jo*, founded in 1958)<sup>13)</sup> that is one of the most important research institutes to lead African studies in the domain of social science.

In general, the institutes or professors at Japanese universities have individually trained future Africanists in each disciplinary program, such as development studies, international relations, agriculture, anthropological and political studies, etc. Future Africanist researchers are not necessarily trained in African studies in the institutionalized system in Japan.

Before its fortieth anniversary, JAAS published a special issue of its journal, “African Studies in the twenty-first Century” (*JAS-JAAS* Nos. 57-58, 2001), which was composed of reviews from the principal fields (international relations, linguistics, literature, economics, medical science, primatology, cultural and social anthropology, physical geography, gender, human geography, ecological anthropology, earth science, agriculture, political science, primatology, history, order by pages, 16 reviews). I would like to introduce some remarkable arguments from representative scholars in different fields.

Some authors published in *JAS-JAAS* were conscious of the previous special issue of the journal (No. 25, 1984) that reviewed Japan’s 40-year history of African studies. In the previous special issue (1984), gender studies within the field of African studies were not on the agenda. However, in recent years, the gender issue has been considered an important research subject in the African studies of Japan. In fact, a women’s forum was set up at

JAAS (Miyamoto Ritsuko 2001:33). However, African history studies currently remain underdeveloped in Japan. African pessimism since the 1980s has denied the value of the history of Africa (Yoshikuni 2001:37, 39). In political science, 16 years after Oda's (1984) publication in *JAS-JAAS*, the situation of the political scientist-Africanist did not seem to have drastically improved in Japanese academia. There were still very few universities offering African studies (Toda 2001:23). However, after previous review published in 1984, new research agendas were pursued, such as democratization, civil society, and election (Toda 2001:24).

In physical geography, the researchers' work on Africa was still inferior to that on the Antarctic region (Mizuno 2001:30). In primatology, the research activities were affected by conflicts in Congo, and they had to shift from gorillas to chimpanzees, and from Congo to Tanzania in the 1960s. Many gorillas had been eaten as bush meat during contemporary conflicts. Therefore, protecting species became an important activity for primatologists (Yamagiwa 2001:28, 29, 34-35). In ecological anthropology, the approaches have been changing. The changes in the world due to globalization have influenced how nature is perceived. Nature has been established through historical, social, and cultural human activities (Kawai 2001:5, 8).

Comparing the two special issues (No. 25, 1984, and Nos. 57-58, 2001)<sup>14)</sup> in terms of how they reviewed African studies in Japan, we can observe the progress in African studies as well as the many challenges that the field faced. In addition, Japanese Africanists are particularly conscious of the community issue in their studies, because the Japanese people retain their memory of the home village despite the swift disappearance of traditional Japanese society (Yoshida 2007:376).

However, we should always be careful not to generalize the trend of African studies in Japan on the sole basis of these reviews, because these publications sometimes reflected each author's individual experiences and opinions. Keeping this in mind, these issues are good resources for obtaining an image of the genealogy of African studies in Japan<sup>15)</sup>.

## 2.2 Other major Asian countries

This section outlines African studies in other major Asian countries that have established remarkable relationships with African countries and have developed African studies for a long time. It is not only interesting to outline the progress and trend of African studies in Asia in a comparative fashion; this endeavor is also indispensable for understanding the established relationship between Africa and Asia<sup>16)</sup>. Here, I would like to outline the progress in African studies in China and India<sup>17)</sup>.

For the last decade, the Western world has regarded the issue of "China in Africa" with some fear. Western journalism has focused on economic and commercial issues, but not on the academic activities of Chinese scholars in Africa. I have been keenly interested in how Chinese Africanists have conducted their studies on and in Africa and what their academic interests are. I am still uncovering the answers to these questions through my communications with Chinese scholars.

The Chinese government has rapidly expanded the Confucian institutes throughout the world, including in Africa. These institutes were not only established in order to teach

the Chinese language and introduce Chinese culture to the local people but also to provide young Chinese scholars opportunities to expand their knowledge and research on the country and society where they have been dispatched. Indeed, the Chinese government has sent young Chinese Africanists to these institutes in African countries with the expectation that the Confucian institutes will enhance China's soft power around the world.

The following quotations exemplify the trend of African studies in China:

*In recent years, African studies have gradually become a growing "new frontier" of China's academic domain... We hope more young Chinese scholars would step into African studies to discover academic treasures and create an "Africology" with Chinese characteristics (Liu Hongwu 2009a:4).*

*We usually cherish the belief that China is a nation with a great ancient civilization and a big power in the world. Chinese people always have a world-oriented ideology and an idea of universal love with Chinese characteristics (Liu Hongwu 2009a:12).*

I would like to trace the history of African studies in China from the 1960s.

Beijing Foreign Studies Institute (now Beijing Foreign Studies University) began teaching Swahili in 1961 and the Hausa language in 1964, thereby contributing to the Sino-African cultural exchange (Sun 2009:270-271). Today, this university offers four African language majors; besides Swahili and Hausa, one can study Zulu and Amharic. This is the richest university in Asia in terms of the variety of the African language teaching<sup>18)</sup>.

In the 1970s, ideology was an influential factor in Sino-African relations (Liu Hongwu 2009b:29). Further, it is reasonable to expect that the political situation greatly influenced African studies. Until the end of the Cultural Revolution, African studies were conducted in an ideology-oriented fashion in China.

In the 1980s, after the end of the Cultural Revolution, China initiated its economic reform and decreased the ideological influence over national politics. Moreover, it developed a more practical relationship with Africa, except with regard to the Taiwan issue. As China's influence spread across the world, the country started to become more conscious of the great historical legacy of its civilization (Liu Hongwu 2009b:30). However, such Chinese behavior would be more careful due to the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 and democratization process in African countries at the beginning of the 1990s.

*Along with the political democratization of African and the deepening of China's reform and opening-up, the domestic situations and foreign relations of both sides have witnessed some changes, which have posed new problems and challenges to the fast-growing China-Africa economic relations (Zhang Hongming 2009:73).*

After the Tiananmen Square incident, China needed to establish a closer relationship with Africa. Accordingly, African studies became more important in Chinese academia.

*From an academic perspective, we need to move from the theoretical system dominated*



*by western idea to a new theoretical system based on the experiences of Asian and African development. A new theoretical system is bound to draw lessons from Chinese history and civilization (Liu Hongwu 2009b:53).*

In the twenty-first century, China's confidence has increased as a great world power. Consequently, Chinese academia became more influential, launching an alternative academic paradigm reflecting the Chinese perspective, against the criticism from the Western world concerning China's activities in Africa.

Li Anshan, one of the most internationally recognized Chinese Africanists, summarized African Studies in China.

For Western Africanists, African studies in China have been a mystery. However, China has a long history with Africa (Li 2005:59-60). In the period of 1945–65, African studies were encouraged by Communist Party leader, Mao Zedong, because China was focusing on the nationalist independent movements in the third world and the areas under colonial rule (Li 2005:62). In 1961, the Institute of Asian-African Studies was founded under the Central Party External Ministry and the Chinese Academy of Science (Li 2005:63).

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), African studies had almost ceased due to the political turbulence, except for Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought related studies (Li 2005:64). In tandem with the political and economic reforms initiated under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, African studies restarted in a more academic and practical fashion than an ideology-oriented style. Two nationwide associations of African studies were established: the Chinese Association of African Studies (1979) and the Chinese Society of African Historical Studies (1980). Furthermore, research institutions were reformed to empower African studies. Centers for African Studies were established at Peking University, Xiangtan University, and Zhejiang Normal University (Li 2005:66). The principal subjects within this field of study in the 1990s were socialism, ethnic issues, international relations, South Africa, cultural studies, economic studies, Sino-Africa relations, and African democratization (Li 2005:69).

Finally, Li pointed out the crucial challenge of improving African studies in China, such as the overconcentration of research institutes in Beijing and Shanghai, dependence on secondary research resources published in English, insufficient fieldwork experience, insufficient development of anthropological and ethnographic studies, few country-based case studies, and insufficient international communication (Li 2005:73-74).

After the publication of Li's article, African studies in China rapidly progressed. As China became an economic giant, many young Chinese Africanists were sent to African countries to conduct long-term fieldwork. The disciplines within African studies became more diversified to include traditionally unfamiliar majors, like anthropology. Thus, besides the development between Africa and China in terms of business and diplomacy, an academic relationship also flourished. In considering China–Africa relations, we cannot ignore China's academic power, in addition to the economic and diplomatic elements.

Indian political leaders, remarkably Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, encouraged the establishment of African Studies in India. Their idea derived considerably from Gandhi's personal experiences in South Africa and India's position in the world in its

earlier independent years. India was acutely conscious of the African liberation movements. Nehru expected newly independent African states to support his Non-Aligned Movement. Area studies emerged in the 1950s as part of India's world strategy (Biswas 2007:305).

The Department of African Studies at the University of Delhi was founded in 1955 in accordance with a proposal by the Ministry of External Affairs (Biswas 2007:308). During a speech to inaugurate the department, Nehru emphasized, "It is therefore necessary for people of India to study Africa not merely as an academic subject but in all its bearings – cultural, political, economic and historical" (*Hindustan Times* 1955, quoted in Biswas 2007:309).

In the 1950s, a small center for African studies was established at the School of International Studies in Delhi. Then the African Studies Division at Jawaharlal Nehru University became a part the Centre of West Asia and Sub-Saharan African Studies (Biswas 2007:310).

The Centre for African Studies at the University of Mumbai was set up in 1971–72 (Biswas 2007:308). The remarkable character of this center is that it is one of the few academic institutes in India to focus on policy matters (Biswas 2007:311). Moreover, the Universities of Delhi and Mumbai offer a one-year diploma course in the Swahili language (Biswas 2007:310, 311).

Indian Africanists had sought for decades to establish a nationwide African Studies Association to develop collectively these studies. In 2003, the African Studies Association of India (ASA-India)<sup>19</sup> was established by leading Indian Africanists. Since ASA-India was established, African studies in India have accelerated including the organization of many international academic meetings and the aggressive launch of many publications.

In India's African studies, social scientists, particularly political scientists, seem to have occupied an important position.

*Although area studies in India was established as an inter-disciplinary field of study, the disciplinary profiles of the area specialists betray the marked presence of political scientists. Thus, out of twenty Africanists associated with the Area Studies Programme, fifteen are from the field of political science, two from economics, and one each from history, geography and language, and none from anthropology and sociology... The discipline of anthropology has been neglected by African studies programmes in India (Biswas 2007:312).*

Similar to the case of China's progress, India's rapid economic development has improved the academic environment for African studies. There is a clear contrast between China–India and Japan. While African studies were principally led by anthropologists and natural scientists in the early years in Japan, the anthropologists have not been influential in China and India. It is historians who have led African studies in China. Furthermore, social science related majors have dominated in India, while the social scientists have not been a dominant force in African studies in Japan. Hence, this comparison reveals a stark contrast, despite the quite limited resources on the genealogy of African studies in China and India.



### **3. Networking trial for African studies in Asia**

The international exchange within African studies in Asia has been more modestly conducted in comparison to Europe. In general, the history of African studies in Asian countries is shorter than that in Western countries, particularly compared to the former colonial master countries. However, certain Asian countries have spent more than half a century conducting African studies. Asian scholars have gradually played an unignorable role in African studies in the world. In the twenty-first century, as the world economic and political order began to change, the relationship between Asia and Africa became much closer and increasingly diversified.

African studies have progressed with the transformation of world situation. The requirement for African studies has increased in Asian countries, and particularly in emerging countries, in terms of business interests, and diplomatic and security issues. In emerging countries, African studies have received more focus as part of their national interests.

In fact, until very recently, African studies had been separately conducted in each Asian country, although these countries were working with African and Western scholars and institutes. As the world situation changed, Africanists in Asian countries need to deepen and widen their knowledge and learn from the research experiences of African studies in other Asian countries, because Asian countries naturally share similar interests in and challenges with Africa in terms of economic, diplomatic, political, and cultural issues. Therefore, Asian Africanists smoothly began communicating to accelerate the academic exchange in African studies.

Each Asian country, institute, and individual scholar involved in networking activities for African studies has worked with different interests, resources, and approaches. However, they can keep sharing the minimal and common interest in order to work together to establish a network for African studies in Asia.

Alike European countries, African studies have progressed in Asian countries in terms of the country's unique approach, historical background, academic culture, and national strategy. For example, as this paper mentioned, Japanese Africanists launched the first full-scale fieldwork in Africa in primatology studies at the end of the 1950s. Then, natural and cultural anthropologists traveled to Africa to conduct their fieldwork. In general, the arrival in Africa of Japanese researchers in the natural sciences preceded that of the social and human science disciplines. In the 1960s, Africa was still very far for Japanese social scientists, who wanted to conduct fieldwork. Therefore, most of the studies were conducted on the basis of texts introduced from Western countries. However, in the 1970s, social and human science scholars gradually developed African studies through long and frequent fieldwork.

This is just a case in the Japanese context. It can neither be generalized nor considered to be the prototype process of African studies in Asia. The progress of African studies can be traced differently in other Asian countries. However, I think that Africanists in Asian countries can learn from the differences in each country's course and experiences to enrich African studies as a whole. This networking activity must differ from

international cooperation in terms of foreign aid, where the economically “powerful” side unilaterally supports the “powerless” with certain conditions. This academic network should be a horizontal partnership.

I sounded the need of networking for African studies in Asian countries in 2011. I visited important institutes of African studies in China (Zhejiang Normal University), India (University of Mumbai), South Korea (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies), and Japan (Kyoto University) to share the idea of establishing an “Asian Africanists Network” (AAN). For the most part, these Asian institutes welcomed my proposition. After almost one year of communication, the Institute of African Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (IAS-HUFS) organized the international conference, “Africa in Asia, Asia in Africa,” in 2012 in South Korea, with Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean Africanist scholars, as well as African and European scholars. Before this conference, we had already held many international meetings on African studies in Asian countries. However, this conference was the first international conference to receive Africanist participants from all four major Asian countries in the field of African studies (China, India, Japan, and South Korea), including the current and former presidents of the “National” Association of African Studies, and with the consciousness of “Asianness.” Moreover, this conference might be recognized as “the first ‘Asian’ conference on African Studies.” At the closure of this conference, IAS-HUFS, the host institute, organized a business meeting to discuss how to develop future projects of cooperation and to create new exchange opportunities for the younger generation of Asian Africanists (April 28, 2012).

After this historic conference, networking activities gradually but surely advanced. A Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between Korean institutes (IAS-HUFS) and Japanese institutes (Center for African studies, Ryukoku University) in December 2011. Shuttle exchanges and workshops have been repeatedly held between Korean and Japanese scholars. Furthermore, Indian institutes have organized international conferences<sup>20)</sup> and often invited other Asian scholars to attend. Chinese scholars are the most popular invitees to the conferences organized in other Asian countries.

While we are gradually broadening our horizons through such collaborations among Asian scholars, these stakeholders have been aware of the need to organize the second comprehensive Asian Africanist meeting to share their research results and assess the process of accelerating this cooperation project.

In May 2014, JAAS organized the commemorative international symposium celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. This meeting was entitled to as “Asian Africanists meets African Asianists,” with the subtitle, “the ‘second’ Asian conference on African studies.” Besides the networking process among Asian Africanists, other parallel networking processes seem to have been launched under the banner of the “African network of Asian Studies.” Next, the Japanese Association’s international meeting might provide the opportunity for two new networks to meet while considering the academic paradigm shift in the near future.

#### 4. Networking process for African Studies in Europe

I have learned from the networking process for African studies in Europe and wish to apply this example to AAN. This section focuses on the formation of the Africa–Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS)<sup>21)</sup>, one of the biggest networks of African studies in the world.

AEGIS organizes the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), one of the biggest international conferences<sup>22)</sup> on African studies in the world, receiving more than 2,000 participants not only from Europe, North America, and Africa, but also from Asia and Latin America. The last conference, held in Lisbon in 2013, comprised almost 200 panels over the span of three days. Today, the AEGIS network is recognized as the most successfully organized international network for African studies in the world.

However, this huge international network of African studies was born at a very modest meeting in Bordeaux, France, in 1991. Three Africanist scholars discussed the future of African studies in Europe at the end of the Cold War and European integration into the European Union (EU). They agreed to establish closer international communication framework among European Africanists<sup>23)</sup>.

Needless to say, Europe has been at the heart of African studies due to its historical connections with the African continent. During the colonial era, African studies were established and developed, particularly in the United Kingdom and France, which were the biggest colonial master states. Even after the African colonies gained independence, these two countries retained their influence on and superiority in African studies, which continue today. In addition to the United Kingdom and France, other European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden founded the center of African studies and developed African studies as an academic discipline. However, an international exchange for African studies in Europe had yet to be institutionalized. After the Cold War ended, the academic cooperation would be expected to include former Soviet Union member countries that had developed their own approaches to and histories with African studies. Thus, it was a common challenging objective for European Africanists to establish an internationally institutionalized network for African studies in Europe.

Despite the agreement to accelerate international collaborations, early on, the network activities modestly progressed. This was due to the insufficient financial, human, and logistic resources for carrying out such a groundbreaking project. As all of these scholars had their own routine jobs at their own organizations and domestic African studies exchanges, it was difficult for them to carry out such an extraordinary task. Hence, in the early years, the network activities slowly and modestly advanced.

AEGIS clearly states its objectives on its website as follows<sup>24)</sup>:

*AEGIS (Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies) was set up in 1991 in order to build upon the resources and the research potential available within Africanist institutions of the European Union. As the dynamics of contemporary change in Africa and the continent's response to globalisation are intimately linked, understanding the continent's evolution is the major academic and policy challenge AEGIS seeks to*

*address. AEGIS consequently aims to: Share intellectual resources for research and advisory purposes, Conceptualise new research themes, Improve and disseminate knowledge about Africa, Provide academic guidance and foster institutional exchanges of students, senior researchers and academic staff, Promote interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Africa.*

In 2011, I visited some leading European institutes in France (Bordeaux), Germany (Frankfurt), Sweden (Uppsala), Portugal (Lisbon), and the United Kingdom (Edinburgh) to conduct interviews on the researchers' interests and challenging agendas in this network<sup>25)</sup>. I learned that AEGIS is an academic cooperation platform composed of different actors. Each member institute keeps its different interests, approach, academic tradition, and strategy for African studies, while sharing the common idea that they need to work together in order to globalize their African studies. Even member institutes from the same country keep different objectives and engage in rivalries with each other.

AEGIS has drastically expanded its activities in the twenty-first century. By the end of 2013, AEGIS comprised 30 European full-member institutes from 12 countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden)<sup>26)</sup> and other affiliate memberships. With the support of the EU and other sponsors, AEGIS' meetings became bigger year by year. ECAS, AEGIS' biggest event, has been held every two years since 2005, in London, Leiden, Leipzig, Uppsala, and Lisbon, by different host organizer institutes<sup>27)</sup>. The upcoming sixth conference in 2015 is planned for Paris. With every conference, ECAS increases in size. In addition, AEGIS has organized thematic conferences<sup>28)</sup> and provided summer schools for students<sup>29)</sup>. Today, AEGIS continues to expand with new membership requests<sup>30)</sup>.

## **5. Beginning of Asian studies network formation in Africa**

In comparison to the networking process for African studies in Asian countries, Asian studies in African countries is still a new frontier in the academic world.

However, the academic trend is not static in Africa. As the relationship between Africa and Asia has strengthened, the need for Asian studies in African countries has emerged in recent years. Nevertheless, there are still few African universities that have a research or educational institute related to Asian studies<sup>31)</sup>, due to the limited research interest and limited human and financial resources. In spite of this, the interest in Asia has been increasing in African countries.

In recent years, Western institutes have shown an interest in bridging between African and Asian academics. With regard to this, I would like to introduce two remarkable initiatives by Dutch and German institutes. One initiative is that of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)<sup>32)</sup> at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. This initiative aims to establish the Association for Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA). This initiative will organize the inaugural international conference, "African Association for Asian Studies in Africa"<sup>33)</sup>, in January 2015, in Accra, Ghana. The A-Asia project has already held preparatory meetings in Lusaka (Zambia, in November 2012) and Macau

(China, in June 2013). The objective and approach of this international conference are mentioned as follows:

*The Accra conference will inventory the state of Asian studies in Africa by identifying its main gaps and exploring research and other scholarly opportunities for institutional and individual collaboration over the longue durée... In addressing these kinds of questions, the AASIA Conference will serve as a base-setting forum for deliberating research ideas, discussing findings, and exploring collaborative opportunities by scholars with interest in Asian Studies in Africa and orientations in the social sciences and humanities.*<sup>34)</sup>

*The conference... will seek to assess the prospects for Asian Studies in Africa in a global context by addressing a number of theoretical and empirical questions that such an enterprise will raise: How should Asian studies be framed in Africa? Is Asian studies relevant for Africa? ... Asian studies dovetail into the broader field of 'Area studies', as it has been developed mainly in Western institutions? Are new narratives required for understanding the very visible contemporary presence of Asia in Africa and Africa in Asia?*<sup>35)</sup>

Another initiative is that of the research project, "Africa's Asian Options" (AFRASO), of Goethe University, Frankfurt (Germany). Frankfurt University has collaborated with the University of Malaya (Malaysia). An international conference was organized by the Africa–Asia Development University Network (AADUN) of the University of Malaya and the research project (AFRASO) of Frankfurt University in Kuala Lumpur, in March 2014<sup>36)</sup>, to reflect the relationship between Africa and Asia.

This conference's aim was stated as follows:

*The aim of this international conference is to provide a more systematic overview of the empirical dimensions and analytical implications of these multifaceted and conflicting processes. What is new about Asian-African interactions? Do they follow specific patterns? How can they be characterised and analysed? Do they give rise to mutually beneficial modes of cooperation, or do they produce new asymmetries?*<sup>37)</sup>

Objectives of this conference were to explore and examine the new opportunities and risks that are brought through African–Asian encounters under four major themes: *Markets on the Move; Transnational Civic Networks between Africa and Asia; New Avenues for Civilizational Dialogue between Asia and Africa; and Improving the living habitats by Africa–Asia university cooperation*<sup>38)</sup>.

*The transregional arena constituted by the recent strong growth of African-Asian interactions may well have a decisive impact on the 21st century... At the same time, there has been growing concern (both outside and inside Africa) about new forms of dependency and exploitation – or even a "new colonialism" – generated by Asia's and*

*especially China's intensified engagement in Africa.*<sup>39)</sup> (Underlined by author)

The abovementioned two European initiatives might have been launched for different reasons. However, these initiatives seem to have similar motives. The changes in the global situation have radically affected the academic world. Today, we are used to referring to the century of Africa and Asia as the emerging world order in the twenty-first century. Now, universities all over the world are facing a competition to survive on the global stage. Western universities need to establish closer relationships and cooperation with non-Western universities, and especially with Asian universities, as part of their long-term strategy<sup>40)</sup>. These two European institutes seem to have tried to promote their global strategy while exploiting their advantages, because they have accumulated significant academic resources for African and Asian studies over a long period. These institutes obviously aim to establish a new academic hub while bridging the African–Asian academic network through their initiatives.

## 6. Conclusion

Primarily, this paper attempted to analyze the network formation process for African studies in Asian countries and compare it with the Asian studies networking process in African countries. In addition, this paper traced the genealogy of African studies in Asian countries. While it was possible to consider some trends and progress in African studies in Asian countries, this paper's reflection remains an introductory attempt to understand comprehensively African studies in Asian countries. I should continue to learn from African studies which have been conducted in each Asian country. We, Asian Africanists and institutes, need to know more and allow ourselves to know each other, to develop this academic network.

Asian scholars are increasingly conscious of international collaboration and networking with regard to African studies in Asia. In Asian countries, a comprehensive regional integration framework like the EU does not yet exist. However, African studies scholars and institutes in Asian countries share a common interest in exchanging and working together to achieve each stakeholder's interest and strategy. Networking for African studies has been gradually diffusing among Asian institutes and scholars. Asian institutes have recently organized more international conferences, symposiums, and workshops while reflecting the "Asianness" of their African studies.

Finally, this paper considered European networking approaches to African studies and bridging between the African and Asian academic communities. Through learning about the AEGIS formation process, I learned that European African studies scholars and institutes spent decades fostering such an international academic network while overcoming problems and challenges. Through the Asia–Africa networking trials, we could learn how Western academia changed its strategy to retain its influence in "the century of Africa and Asia."

To close this modest paper, I would like to highlight that I learned two important lessons through this reflection. First, it takes time to establish, drive, and consolidate a



regional academic network in area studies. Even in the same country, African studies are structured according to very different disciplines. This has made it more difficult to achieve a consensus among Africanists. Even within the field of African studies, the scholars and institutes in each country have different academic histories, cultures, backgrounds, and strategies. When we work together, we should pay attention to and respect other's situation. Further, we need to plan and act with the long term in mind—at least two or three decades—so as not to rush to seek the “result” within a few years, because Asian countries are less integrated politically and economically as compared to Western European countries. Sufficient time is also required to foster trust in each other.

Second, we, Asian scholars and institutes of African studies, need to develop networking in a more horizontal partnership, for long-term, sustainable progress, even though it will take additional time to make decisions. In other words, it is favorable to organize in a more decentralized and rhizomatous fashion. A unilateral approach in a vertical relationship, such as foreign aid, would not bring sustainable network development in academia in Asia.

The year 2015 will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference. The relationship between Africa and Asia has developed and changed during these six decades. Academic networking process between Africa and Asia no longer works in the framework based on the nostalgia of egalitarian Third World solidarity, but should shift to a more realistic framework of global competition.

## NOTES

- 1) This paper was prepared for the first International Conference of Africa-Asia Development University Network - Africa's Asian Option (March 11-13, 2014, in Kuala Lumpur) and then slightly modified to publish with *Ritsumeikan Kokusai Kenkyu (The Ritsumeikan Journal of International Relations)*.
- 2) This paper modestly outlines the networking process for African studies in Asian countries. Some of this is based on my personal experiences. This process is never going in unique fashion and members. On the contrary, for its sustainable development, it is favorable to advance such networking in a decentralized and rhizomatous manner.
- 3) The first International Conference of the Institute of African Studies and “Humanities Korea Project”, “Africa in Asia & Asia in Africa – Asian Experiences and Perspectives in African Studies,” was held on April 27-28, 2012, at the Institute of African Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (IAS-HUFS), Yongin, South Korea. This conference is recognized as the first Asian conference on African studies. I appreciate IAS-HUFS' initiative to develop an Asian network for African studies. I especially thank Prof. Chang, the director of IAS at the time, for his leadership and painstaking coordination to bring this historic event to fruition. I also thank Prof. Hwang, Prof. Yang, and other staffs for their great contributions to organizing this successful conference.
- 4) I can only show certain aspects of African studies in Japan, as this field comprises many academic disciplines, from natural science to human and social sciences. My knowledge is too limited to outline the trend of all disciplines. It remains a “trial” to outline the progress of African studies in Japan. It should be possible to trace this progress in different fashions.
- 5) Like the association itself, the main journal of JAAS, *Afurika Kenkyu (Journal of African*

- Studies*), was launched in 1964. It began by publishing one issue annually. Since 1982, it has published two issues per year. Back issues of *Afurika Kenkyu* are accessible on JAAS' website, [http://african-studies.com/bak\\_jaas/index-e.html](http://african-studies.com/bak_jaas/index-e.html) (accessed December 27, 2013).
- 6) Japan Monkey Center website, <http://www.j-monkey.jp/jmc-e/top-e.html> (accessed December 27, 2013).
  - 7) Tenrikyo website, <http://www.tenrikyo.or.jp/eng> (accessed December 27, 2013).
  - 8) National Museum of Ethnology website, <http://www.minpaku.ac.jp/english> (accessed December 27, 2013).
  - 9) About the life history of Noguchi, see the Japanese Cabinet Office website "Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize", <http://www.cao.go.jp/noguchisho/english/about/lifehistorydrnoguchi.html> (accessed December 28, 2013). Noguchi's legacy continues in the twenty-first century. The Japanese government established the Hideyo Noguchi prize to celebrate the outstanding contributions of researchers to medical studies related to Africa's problems at the Tokyo International Conference for Africa's Development (TICAD). About TICAD, see the Japanese Foreign Ministry website, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/index.html> (accessed December 28, 2013).
  - 10) University of Ghana website, <http://www.ug.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=357&sublinkid=279> (accessed December 28, 2013).
  - 11) The Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa website, <http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/en> (accessed December 28, 2013).
  - 12) The Center for African Area Studies website, <http://www.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/eng/enindex.html> (accessed December 28, 2013).
  - 13) Institute of Developing Economies - Japan External Trade Organization website, <http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Info/index.html> (accessed January 2014).
  - 14) J-Stage website (Journal of African Studies, JAAS), [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/africa/1984/25/\\_contents](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/africa/1984/25/_contents), [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/africa/2001/57/\\_contents](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/africa/2001/57/_contents), [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/africa/2001/58/\\_contents](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/africa/2001/58/_contents) (accessed December 29, 2013).
  - 15) It is something like a meta-study attempt to outline the genealogy of African studies in Asia. However, I immediately reached an impasse. "African studies" comprises many varied disciplines.
  - 16) My knowledge on African studies in other Asian countries are still limited, as is my access to resources available in English as compared to those in Japanese, even though I have three years of experience of communication to tackle the networking formation for African studies in Asia (which will be argued in the following part). I need to keep learning about African studies in Asian countries.
  - 17) I had to omit the history of African studies in South Korea because I could not access relevant resources written in English.
  - 18) The foremost language university in Korea, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, provides Swahili, Hausa, and Zulu language courses. In Japan, Osaka University (former Osaka University of Foreign Language) provides a Swahili course.
  - 19) African Studies Association of India website, <http://www.africanstudies.in> (accessed January 10, 2014).
  - 20) African Studies Association of India website, <http://www.africanstudies.in/activities> (accessed December 26, 2013).
  - 21) About the management of AEGIS, see AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org> (accessed December 23, 2013). See also its flier, [http://www.aegis-eu.org/images/AEGIS\\_flyer\\_english\\_](http://www.aegis-eu.org/images/AEGIS_flyer_english_)

- march\_2011.pdf (accessed December 24, 2013).
- 22) European Conference on African Studies website, <http://cea.iscte.pt/ecas2013/> (accessed June 1, 2013).
  - 23) Fortunately, I was able to learn about the birth of AEGIS from eyewitness. Three European Africanist researchers held this small meeting in Bordeaux by Donal Cruise O'Brien (the United Kingdom), Christian Coulon (France), and Ferran Iniesta (Spain). I interviewed Prof. Christian Coulon in Bordeaux, April 26, 2011, and Prof. Ferran Iniesta in Bordeaux, June 1, 2011.
  - 24) AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org/index.php/why-aegis.html> (accessed December 24, 2013).
  - 25) In 2011, I stayed in Bordeaux during my sabbatical year. It was a great opportunity to learn about two decades of European experience in networking for African studies. AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org> (accessed December 24, 2013).
  - 26) Membership institutes are located in Barcelona, Basel, Bayreuth, Bologna, Birmingham, Bordeaux, Cambridge, Cologne, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Gent, Goteborg, Hamburg, Leiden, Leipzig, Leuven, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Mainz, Naples, Oxford, Paris (ceaf), Paris (cemaf), Porto, Roskilde, Trondheim, Uppsala, and Vienna. AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org> (accessed December 24, 2013).
  - 27) AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org/index.php/ecas-conferences.html> (accessed December 24, 2013).
  - 28) AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org/index.php/thematic-conferences.html> (accessed December 24, 2013).
  - 29) AEGIS website, <http://www.aegis-eu.org/index.php/summer-schools.html> (accessed December 24, 2013).
  - 30) I attended a plenary meeting of AEGIS in Lisbon on June 26, 2013.
  - 31) Stellenbosch University (South Africa) manages the Center for Chinese Studies; and University of Witwatersrand (South Africa) founded the Centre for Indian Studies. The Centre for Japanese Studies was established at Gordon Institute of Business Science, Pretoria University in 2011. The Center for Chinese Studies (Stellenbosch University) website, <http://www.ccs.org.za> (accessed January 2, 2014). The Centre for Indian Studies (University of Witwatersrand) website, <http://www.cisa-wits.org.za> (accessed January 3, 2014). Gordon Institute of Business Science website, <http://www.gibs.co.za/programmes/centres/centre-for-japanese-studies.aspx> (accessed May 7, 2014)
  - 32) The International Institute for Asian Studies website, <http://www.iias.nl> (accessed December 22, 2013).
  - 33) A-Asia's steering committee is coordinated by the members, Lloyd Amoah (Ashesi University College, Ghana), Thomas Asher (Social Science Research Council, the USA), Scarlett Cornelissen (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa), Webby Kalikiti (Secretary A-Asia / University of Zambia), Liu Haifang (Peking University, China), Yoichi Mine (Doshisha University, Japan), Oka Obono (University of Ibadan, Nigeria), Philippe Peycam (International Institute for Asian Studies, the Netherlands). IIAS website, <http://www.iias.nl/aasia-cfp> (accessed December 22, 2013).
  - 34) The Association of Asian Studies in Africa website, [http://www.a-asia.org/?page\\_id=63](http://www.a-asia.org/?page_id=63) (accessed December 22, 2013).
  - 35) IIAS website, <http://www.iias.nl/aasia-cfp> (accessed December 22, 2013).
  - 36) AADUN-AFRASO conference website, <http://umconference.um.edu.my/AA2014=7895fc13088>

- ee37f511913bac71fa66f (accessed January 2, 2014).
- 37) AADUN-AFRASO conference website, <http://umconference.um.edu.my/AA2014=1f3202d820180a39f736f20fce790de8> (accessed January 2, 2014).
- 38) AADUN-AFRASO conference website, <http://umconference.um.edu.my/AA2014=eaa32c96f620053cf442ad32258076b9> (accessed January 2, 2014).
- 39) AADUN-AFRASO conference website, <http://umconference.um.edu.my/AA2014=1f3202d820180a39f736f20fce790de8> (accessed January 2, 2014).
- 40) During my sabbatical research year in Bordeaux, France, I repeatedly heard similar comments from French scholars.

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## 「アジア諸国におけるアフリカ研究 ネットワーク形成に関する課題と挑戦」

本稿では、アジア諸国におけるアフリカ研究の国際ネットワーク形成プロセスに関する考察を通して、アフリカとアジアの間の学術協力の課題を明らかにし、中長期的な研究交流の可能性を見出していくことを目的としている。

はじめに、日本、中国、インドにおけるアフリカ研究のあゆみの比較を通して、アジア各国におけるアフリカ研究の特徴と違いを明らかにした上で、アジアにおけるアフリカ研究の国際ネットワーク形成プロセスの展開について考察する。近年、アジア諸国のアフリカ研究者の間では、国際的な研究協力の必要性がより強く認識されるようになってきている。

次に、アジアにおける状況との比較の観点から、ヨーロッパ諸国におけるアフリカ研究の国際ネットワーク活動の経緯をたどっていく。本稿では、今日、ヨーロッパのみならず世界における最も代表的なアフリカ研究における国際ネットワークとなった「学際研究のためのアフリカとヨーロッパのグループ」(Africa–Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies : AEGIS) に焦点を当てる。最後に、ヨーロッパの研究機関の橋渡しによって近年萌芽的な動きを見せようとしている、アフリカとアジアの研究機関・研究者の間のネットワーク形成の動きについて検討する。

以上の考察を通して、アジア諸国におけるアフリカ研究ネットワークと、アフリカ諸国におけるアジア研究ネットワークの形成という新たな挑戦が交錯する現代の地域研究の大陸間ネットワーク形成の課題を明らかにしつつ、その可能性を展望する。

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