

Dear scholars, alumni, partners and friends of KAAD,

On April 1st, 2020, there will be important personnel changes in our office due to the retirement of two very long-standing employees.

To begin with, Dr. Heinrich Geiger will enter well-deserved retirement. The sinologist and philosopher (aesthetics) descending from the Danube Swabians began his career at KAAD as Head of the Asia Department on July 1st, 1990, at a time when the country programs were still in the early stages of being established. Shortly afterwards, he was also appointed Deputy Secretary General, a position which Dr. Nora Kalbarczyk (Head of the Middle East Department) has now assumed since September 2019. In the early 1990s, our Asia program was still heavily dominated by Korea and Indonesia. We soon had to put our cooperation with South

Korea on a new, „non-financial“ level of partnership, as the economically successful country was removed from the list of developing countries.

Nevertheless, Dr. Geiger was able to celebrate the

foundation of the very first alumni association of KAAD there, which even supports us financially until today (e.g. through scholarships for Myanmar). Indonesia remains a focus country and has established an extensive KAAD alumni network with the help of the Catholic student association KMKI.

For Heinrich Geiger, the 1990s were the most important period for the development of the China Program, which was initially targeted at Catholics (with a focus on Xi'an), but gradually expanded to cooperation with important Chinese universities, especially in Beijing and Shanghai. Geiger has organized a series of conferences together with the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, the highlight of which was an event at the Erbacher Hof in Mainz together with Cardinal Lehmann in 2006. This resulted in one of the four publications he edited on Southeast Asia, Myanmar and China, which were published by KAAD. On the occasion of his 60th birthday, the KAAD alumni dedicated a commemorative publication to him: „Between Rhine and Elbe. Life and Studies of Chinese Students in Germany“ (2015, Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing;

unfortunately only available in Chinese). A fine conclusion to this commitment to China was a conference on nature and environmental concepts in China and Germany together with the Görres Society at Tongji University in 2019. Geiger remains a member of the advisory board of the China Centre, St. Augustin.

The strategic focus of Dr. Geiger's almost 30 years of work for KAAD, however, was on Southeast Asia. He established a cooperation with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar, which then led to a Third-Country Scholarship Program for Myanmar at the Catholic ABAC University in Bangkok which has been financed by the Diocese of Regensburg since 2001 until today. As a third-party funded and synergetic project, this successful program was also innovative for KAAD. In 2019, the alumni association MyanKAAD, fruit of this work, was awarded the prize of the „KAAD-Foundation Peter Hünemann“ for its church and civil society work (see photo; Geiger 4th from left). Another focus in Southeast Asia was Vietnam, where in addition to church contacts also cooperation with programs from public funds enriched the KAAD presence (Asia-Link of the EU; joint projects of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) through KIT Karlsruhe, arranged by Prof. Nestmann). The „Conference on Future Issues“ of KAAD in its anniversary year 2018 near Manila, prepared by our Philippine partners, the alumni association AKAP, finally led to a further deepening of the Asian network and was a crowning achievement of Dr. Geiger's decades of commitment to KAAD. At the end of his term of office, in autumn 2019, he made two more trips to the region, which are summarized below.

On April 1st, 2020, he will be succeeded by Dr. Esther-Maria Guggenmos. She is a professor in religious studies with focus on Buddhism as well as a sinologist and Catholic theologian. From 2014 to 2017, she filled in for professors in Erlangen-Nuremberg, Münster and Fribourg. From 2009-2014, she coordinated the international and interdisciplinary „Käte Hamburger Kolleg“ at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (on concepts of fate, freedom and prognostication) and thus, was also responsible for the supervision of guest researchers. She contributes versatile language skills to our work and has done research in Asia, especially in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Japan.





Already on March 1st, 2020, our long-standing accountant Edith Kalus will also be going into her well-deserved retirement. She is originally from Oderwiese (Silesia) and worked in our small administration department since May 2007. Since then, she has been keeping our bookkeeping in order with the utmost reliability. At her own request, Ute Baumgart, our long-standing and highly regarded colleague and (most recently) head of administration, will take over the vacant job (previously she also worked as desk officer in various departments). The vacant administrative management position will be taken over by Bonn-born Martina May-Topalidis on April 1st. After completing a commercial apprenticeship, she earned a bachelor's degree in health and social management and a master's degree in business law (Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences) while being employed at the same time. Since 2010, she has been working as project manager and temporarily as deputy head of department, first at the University Hospital and then in the National Funding Department at the University of Cologne, i.e. in the field of university exchanges and the funding of scientists from public (also EU) and private funds.

In the office, we are looking forward to the final church service and the farewell ceremony of Dr. Geiger and Mrs. Kalus on February 27th.

Summer School in Vietnam and International Seminar in Indonesia

The Summer School „Water Resources Management in Karst Regions“ on 24th October was the focus of last year's visit to Vietnam by Dr. Heinrich Geiger, Head of the Asia Department. It is an integral part of the CLIENT Vietnam joint project “KaWaTech: Vietnamese-German Cooperation for the Development of Sustainable Technologies for Karst Water Management” in the context of which KAAD is responsible for its sub-project No. 8 “Capacity Development” (financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research). The project's aim is to strengthen the locals' personnel skills. Furthermore, it aims at strengthening the capacities of local institutions

and thus, the possibilities for cooperation of the institutions involved in Vietnam and Germany.

In close cooperation with the Institute for Water and River Basin Management (IWG) of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

(KIT, Prof. Nestmann), the Vietnam Institute of Geosciences

and Mineral Resources (VIGMR) and various other European and Vietnamese partners, KAAD already hold its second Summer School on the premises of VIGMR. Based on the results of the joint interdisciplinary project, which has been running since 2014, innovative technologies tailored to the conditions of the Karst regions of Northern Vietnam were presented to the 48 participants of the event.

As can be concluded, the Summer School “Water Resources Management in Karst Regions” has promoted the confidence-building between the German and Vietnamese partners and the development of competence among the Vietnamese partner institutions involved in this project. What is more, it made an important contribution to a project which can only be carried out on an interdisciplinary basis. On the second and third day of the Summer School, an excursion to the project area took place.



One month later, Heinrich Geiger continued his travel activities in Asia with a visit to Indonesia on the occasion of the seminar KAAD-Kontak-KMKI on “Religious Radicalism as a Challenge for Indonesia and Christianity”. 72 participants attended the seminar which took place on the island of Java in the small mountain resort The Village not far from Jakarta from 22nd to 25th November 2019.

For a long time, the Southeast Asian island state, which with a population of 87 per cent Muslims is the country with the largest Muslim population worldwide, was regarded as a role model for compatibility of Islam and democracy. Yet, the lived pluralism has been under great pressure for years. Liberalism, secularism and also pluralism were already declared “haram”, which means prohibited, by a fatwa of the country's highest Islamic council in 2005. In light of these developments, the participants of the seminar became aware that they have to speak up and put an end to the silence of a critical public – despite their tolerant attitude and their great concern about balance in religious questions. This has been practically demonstrated by the fact that the seminar's contents were summarized in a published plea for adherence to the five principles of *Pancasila* (“Tolerance”). Already the day after the end of the seminar, on 25th November 2019, a report about the seminar of KAAD-Kontak-KMKI was broadcasted through which a large public could learn about the strategies for encountering religious radicalism, as exactly these strategies are often lacking.



International Meetings of Expert Groups

For several years now, KAAD has been working on a more intensive scientific networking of its scholars and alumni. Expert groups have been formed which should be organized and managed by the scholars and alumni themselves. Last year, the expert groups organized 7 events. The aim of this work is also to organize such events in the alumni's home regions as part of our educational work abroad, which was the case in 2019, for example through conferences in Brazil and North Macedonia.

Under the topic „Hospitality as a Basic Requirement of Interreligious Dialogue“ an alumni conference took place in Ohrid/North Macedonia from 26th to 29th November 2019. The also controversial discussions revolved (all in all) around a religiously justified (“absolute”) hospitality in tension with (ethically responsible) regulations and limitations, e.g. of migration flows. The rootedness in God turned out to be the deepest reason for overcoming delimitative identity building. Unlike a “colourful” coexistence (“diversity”), this leads to the attempt of a radical dialogue-based understanding of the other which also acknowledges the claim for truth of the other and which is preceded by



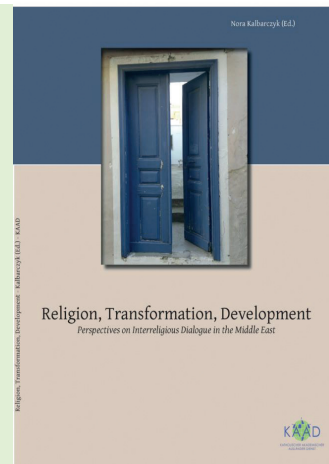
the hospitable reception and welcoming based on the traditions of the religions involved. All in all, the meeting of the expert group, which consisted not only of international members of the expert

group „Religion in Dialogue“, but also of Eastern European KAAD alumni, showed that hospitality plays an important role for social relations in all religions and cultures. Just like the papers of previous conferences, the presentations will be published in our Eastern Europe series.

In the course of an international alumni seminar („Health and Inclusion in the Digital Age“) at the University of São Paulo in Ribeirão Preto (Brazil), which was attended by 12 KAAD alumni from five countries as well as some of the university's undergraduate and Ph.D. students in November 2019, a second Latin American expert group was founded with the title „Salud Global“. The members particularly want to intensify the cooperation between medical doctors and experts in the field of health sciences.

Briefly Noted: Publications

The dialogue between cultures and religions is one of the structural principles of KAAD and is not least for the fragile Middle East of essential importance. At KAAD events in recent years, scholars, alumni and partners of KAAD have come together to analyze, highlight and make visible the contribution that religions can make to successful de-escalation, conflict resolution and, finally, reconciliation. The volume *Nora Kalbarczyk (Ed.): Religion, Transformation, Development: Perspectives on Interreligious Dialogue in the Middle East* (Bonn, 2019; 115 p.), published by KAAD, brings together the results of two KAAD conferences in Beirut and Cairo on this range of topics and presents perspectives on interreligious dialogue in the Middle East in nine articles of authors from Egypt, Lebanon and Germany.



Advance Notice: International Conventions abroad in Lima and Harare

On the occasion of an International Convention abroad, members of the alumni group „Peace and Justice“ from different countries of Latin America as well as Peruvian alumni will meet with KAAD President Prof. Dr. Eberhard Schockenhoff at our partner university in Lima, the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru, from 5th to 8th March 2020. At the Convention with the title „The Catholic Concept of Development in the Context of Latin America: Positions and Perspectives“, it will be given priority to the question of how the Catholic Church with its substantial positions on regional crises can effectively contribute to political and public discussions.

From 6th to 9th August 2020, another KAAD Convention will take place in Harare, Zimbabwe, under the title „Things have a Price, People have a Dignity (Pope Francis) - The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes in Africa“. The Convention is organized jointly with the relief organization MISEREOR and the Arrupe Jesuit University in Harare and will be held at the University of Harare. In addition to project partners and staff from the region of Misereor as well as scholars and alumni from various African countries the Jesuits will also send participants to the conference. Furthermore, alumni representatives from other KAAD focus regions of the world will be present. In the context of Zimbabwe's special situation, the role of Christian social teaching and the Church in the social and ethical transformation of African societies will be discussed.