

## Not in the Year 2525 ...

...but rather already in the year 2025 *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* might well be the number one journal in chemistry in the world in terms of size and general importance. It is not too bold to make such a statement if one looks back at the first four years of the journal and a decade of rise of chemical research in East Asia. As a scientist, I like to be quantitative to demonstrate a point, and I take some numbers from *Angewandte Chemie* to look at the first decade of the third millennium (see Table 1). The growth of

Table 1. Number of Communications submitted to *Angewandte Chemie* from some Asian countries as well as from the USA and Germany.

Country	2001	2009 <sup>[a]</sup>	Growth
China	225	1507	+570%
India	68	164	+141%
Japan	296	742	+151%
Singapore	14	118	+743%
South Korea	74	391	+428%
Tawain	27	119	+349%
USA	401	1064	+165%
Germany	359	690	+92%

[a] Extrapolated.

submissions from Germany and the USA is dwarfed by the growth of submissions from China, South Korea, and Singapore; Japan has had a similar development as Europe and North America.

But numbers are only an indicator of a development that led in this case to the founding of *Chemistry—An Asian Journal*. It is always people – with emotions and rational

thoughts – who in the end have to act. The Chemical Society of Japan celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2001, and in an article in *Chemical & Engineering News* that year it was proudly stated that an enormous number of manuscripts from Japanese chemists are published every year in the many journals of the American Chemical Society. “But what about the other way round?” was a natural question from me, “How many articles by American chemists are published in journals of the Chemical Society of Japan?”. In 2003 both Dr. Eva-E. Wille, then responsible for the chemistry program at Wiley-VCH, and I were invited by Professor Zen-ichi Yoshida (Kyoto University) to the International Kyoto Conference on Organic Chemistry and by Professor Eiichi Nakamura (The University of Tokyo) to the 3rd Tate-shina Conference on Organic Chemistry. It was particularly this latter conference that was further eye-opening as it brought together (organic) chemists from all over East Asia. The discussions with Professor Nakamura and many eminent chemists of the younger generation in Asia reminded Eva Wille and me of discussions in Europe we had participated in more than a decade earlier. These discussions, spear-headed by Professor Jean-Marie Lehn, had led to the start of *Chemistry—A European Journal*. When we raised the idea of starting an Asian counterpart to *Chemistry—A European Journal*, Professor Nakamura was immediately thrilled by this idea—and strongly recommended to talk to Professor Ryoji Noyori about it. Should such an ambitious and visionary project move forward, the support of a towering figure like Professor Noyori, Nobel Laureate and past President of the Chemical Society of Japan (CSJ), would be very important. I wrote to him, he thought about it – and agreed that the time is ready to start *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* that should contribute



Figure 1. The group of chemical society representatives that discussed the idea of starting *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* at the 40th IUPAC Chemical Congress in Beijing on August 19, 2005. Back row from left: Prof. S. Shin (Korea), Dr. P. Göllitz, Prof. Z. F. Liu (China), Prof. V. Krishnan (India), Prof. H. Kang (Korea), Prof. C. Ye (China), A. Lau (Wiley Asia); front row from left: Prof. W. Koch (Germany), Dr. T. Ohta (Japan), Prof. S. Chandrasekaran (India), Dr. E.-E. Wille, Prof. K. J. Shin (Korea), Prof. J. N. Yao (China).



Figure 2. Representatives of the Chemical Society of Japan—Prof. K. Tatsumi, Prof. S. Murai, Prof. E. Nakamura (back row from left), and Prof. R. Noyori (front middle)—discussing the idea of *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* with Dr. Eva-E. Wille and Dr. Peter Göllitz in Tokyo on August 21, 2005.

to bring chemists from Asia closer together and to provide them with a forum to show their chemistry—with a special Asian flavor—to the world. He indicated then that he would be supportive to the point of becoming the founding Chairman of the Editorial Board of the new journal. Professor Noyori encouraged us to involve early on the CSJ, and the Executive Director, Dr. Teruto Ohta, was most helpful in the discussions that followed.

It was also at a German Chemical Society meeting back in 2003 that a Chinese–German organic chemistry symposium was organized at which Dr. Haymo Ross, Editor-in-chief of the *European Journal of Organic Chemistry*, and I discussed with Professor Sheng-Ming Ma (Chinese Academy of Science, Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry/SIOC) the possibility of a cooperation regarding the *Chinese Journal of Chemistry*. This journal (published on behalf of SIOC and the Chinese Chemical Society/CCS) became then soon—after the appropriate negotiations in which Dr. Carina Kniep, publisher at Wiley-VCH, was instrumental—a member of Wiley-VCH's family of chemistry journals.

Late in 2004 Eva Wille and I were invited to visit SIOC in Shanghai and a Chinese Congress of organic and inorganic chemists in Hong Kong. The idea of starting an Asian counterpart to *Chemistry—A European Journal* was shared with a few eminent scientists on these occasions and was met with great enthusiasm. When I then contacted the President of the CCS, Professor Chunli Bai (Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Science/ICCAS), he welcomed this idea instantaneously and paved the way for the participation of the CCS.

In the first months of 2005 a lot of discussions by e-mail and over the telephone led to a refinement of the general idea, and it was again Eva Wille and Carina Kniep at Wiley-

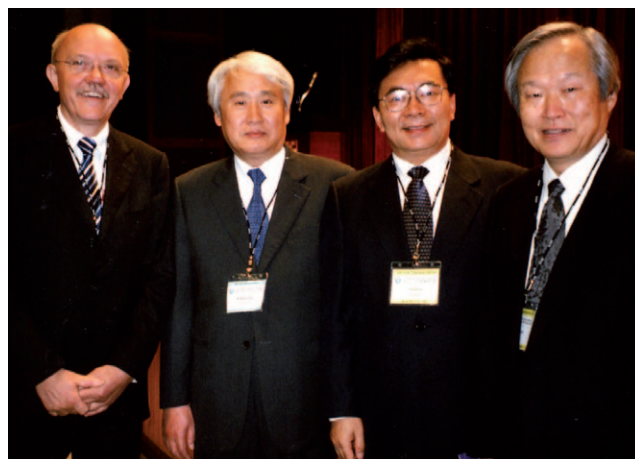


Figure 3. At the 11th Asian Chemical Congress in Seoul on August 24, 2005 (from left): Dr. P. Göllitz, Prof. K. J. Shin (President of the KCS), Prof. C. L. Bai (President of the CCS), Prof. S. Murai (President of the CSJ).

VCH who helped immensely to tie the strings together. This was also the time when chemical societies in India and Korea were contacted. It was Professor C.N.R. Rao (JNCASR, Bangalore) in India—who else?!—who was immediately supportive and directed us to the Chemical Research Society of India (CRSI) to become a partner in the project. At the Korean Chemical Society (KCS) it was Professor Kook Joe Shin who was the President at that time, and as open-minded as he is, it did not take much time to convince him, and he could win colleagues to embark on this pan-Asian project.



Prof. C. N. R. Rao

Early in the discussions we had asked the German Chemical Society (GDCh) to provide *Angewandte Chemie* as a “carrier” for *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* for the first 18 months, as was similarly the case for the start of *Chemistry—A European Journal* and other sister journals. Representatives of the four societies from China, India, Japan, and Korea as well as Professor Wolfram Koch, Executive Director of the GDCh, met then with Eva Wille and myself at the 40th IUPAC Congress in Beijing. The four chemical societies from Asia founded the Asian Chemical Editorial Society (ACES) and elected Professor Fu Xi from the Institute of Chemistry at the Chinese Academy of Science (ICCAS) as its President and Professor Ryoji Noyori as the Chairman of the new journal's Editorial Board. Immediately after the Beijing meeting Eva Wille and I flew to Tokyo to meet with Professor Noyori who was accompanied by Professor Shinji Murai (then the CSJ President), Professor Eiichi Nakamura and Professor Kazuyuki Tatsumi. Many valuable suggestions were made at this meeting, the most important one being that the journal should by all means avoid politics when it





Figure 4. Prof. Fu Xi (President of the Asian Chemical Editorial Society, ACES) and Dr. Eva-E. Wille at the 5th ACES meeting in Shanghai, September 2009.

comes to making decisions over all aspects of the journal, i.e., on Editorial and International Advisory Board members and particularly on the fate of manuscripts. The “tour” then led us to the 11th Asian Chemical Congress in Seoul that followed immediately, and there we could start discussing the project more openly.



Dr. Brian Johnson



Dr. Neville Compton

What followed after the late summer of 2005 Beijing–Tokyo–Seoul trip was a lot of hard work to bring an Editorial Board and an International Advisory Board together, to prepare the Call for

Papers, etc. etc. I was fortunate to work together first with Dr. José Oliveira and then from March 2008 onwards with Dr. Brian Johnson who were both, as Deputy Editors, instrumental in placing *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* in the same league as *Chemistry—A European Journal* and the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* when it comes to the publication of full papers. The Deputy Editors were and are supported by a talented small team, and in addition there was production and marketing staff who helped to

launch *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* and make it “look good” and known to the world, respectively, and I thank particularly Margitta Schmitt and Claudia Barzen.

But a journal is nothing without authors and critical referees, and without their trust in this new journal (which, as every new journal, didn’t have an impact factor in the first two years) it could not have been brought to such an impressive standing in such a short period. My sincere thanks go to these two groups, and it should not go without notice that due to the strong encouragement from Professor Noyori Japanese chemists were particularly supportive.

Why this long story and all these thanks just at this moment? Because this is the time I pass on the main responsibility for the editorial handling of *Chemistry—An Asian Journal*. Both Professor Noyori as the Chairman of the Editorial Board and the representatives of the Asian chemical societies in ACES accepted that I step down at the end of 2009 as the Editor-in-chief, and they all agreed that from January 1, 2010 onwards, Dr. Brian Johnson will take over this position. I am convinced that he will lead *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* from strength to strength – and he will perhaps not even need until 2025 to make *Chemistry—An Asian Journal* a true leader in chemistry publishing. The enormous success of *Chemistry—A European Journal* that has grown under the leadership of Dr. Neville Compton to become a weekly publication of high impact bodes well for at least a similar development of *Chemistry—An Asian Journal*. When I passed on the editorship of *Chemistry—A European Journal* to Neville Compton I closed my Editorial in the last issue of 2001 with the sentence: “I am sure that exciting times lie ahead of us, not least because chemistry is broader and more lively than ever.” That continues to be the case—perhaps even in the year 2525.<sup>[1]</sup>

Dr. Peter Göllitz

[1] As not everybody can know the pop groups of the late 60s: “In the year 2525” was a very popular song by D. Zager and R. Evans and a number one hit in the charts for many weeks in 1969 in the USA, Canada, and major Western European countries.