

Ørnast – Øresund Network of Asian Studies

On 28 April 2003, 09.15 – 11.15hrs, the following persons met at the Department of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen, to discuss matters relating to cooperation:

Dr. Peter Andersen, Department of History of Religions, University of Copenhagen

Dr. Cynthia Chou, Department of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen

Prof. Staffan Lindberg, Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) and Department of Sociology, Lund University

Dr. Kenneth Zysk, Department of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen

1. **Rapporteur:** Cynthia Chou was appointed to record the minutes for this meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

All participants at the meeting unanimously approved the day's agenda for discussion as outlined by Kenneth Zysk.

3. Approval of Minutes from Meeting of 19 March 2003.

The minutes from the meeting of 19 March 2003, which were recorded by Staffan Lindberg, was unanimously approved by all participants at the meeting.

4. Reports

4.1 AI's BA students enrolment in Lund's MA in Modern South Asian Studies

Staffan Lindberg reported that the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University has received between 80 to 90 applications from students from all over the world for the Masters Programme in Asian Studies, 2003-2004. The language of instruction is English. There has been a particularly strong increase in applications from Asia. The programme will comprise 2 study tracks, namely (i) the East Asia and South-East Asian Studies track, and (ii) the South Asian Studies track. 30 students will be admitted to each track by 1 September.

Permission has been sought from the Board of Admissions at Lund University to allow B.A. candidate students at the Department of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen to attend individual courses in the new Masters course in Modern South Asian Studies at Lund. The Board will hold a meeting soon. If approval is granted, Lund will allocate 5 places to students of Copenhagen after the students take appropriate registration procedures. Students can register for a course either by (i) attending the introductory meeting for a given course, and if there are still vacancies, they can register for the course by 15 April at the latest or (ii) students can write directly to the Study Directors at Lund and Copenhagen to express their interest in participating in a course and to obtain approval from their home institute to transfer their study credits.

4.2 Positions: Thai and Hindi

Representatives from the Southeast Asia Studies section at Lund were not present at this meeting. However, Dr. Inga-Lill Hansson, Department of East Asian Languages, Lund University had in an e-mail message prior to the meeting informed us that she would be meeting her colleagues in the Thai and Indonesian programme in Lund to discuss ways of co-operating with Copenhagen. She has expressed her interest in developing co-operation with Copenhagen.

Further discussion is required for developing co-operation in the planning of Asia related teacher/researcher positions within the Øresund University e.g., lecturers and professorships could be shared in such a way that if Copenhagen employs a lecturer in Thai-Southeast Asia studies, Lund could employ a teacher in Hindi. As

this matter will be a slower process in realisation, it will be taken up for discussion at a later date.

Copenhagen has just appointed a new amanuensis for the Thai-Southeast Asia Studies programme for the coming year, with a view of possible extension. The Institute of Asian Studies is still awaiting the selected candidate's confirmation of acceptance of the position offered.

Currently, no South Asia language courses are available at Lund. Kenneth Zysk announced that he would be introducing language courses in Pali and Advanced Sanskrit at Copenhagen.

5. Partnership with the Institute of Religion.

The Institute of Religion offers courses in the history, theology, and socio-political developments in several religions. As an example, the South-Asia division of the Institute offers a course focussing on politics and religion in India. A one-semester course of such a kind will amount to – årsværk in the Danish study system or 10 points in the Swedish system. Such a course is usually taught in the Fall semester. Each year, a course in either classical or modern South Asia religion will be offered. The Institute of Religion is particularly interested in co-operating with other Institutes in order to (i) widen its language elective module, (ii) advance its study of comparative religions, and (iii) expand its study on the sociology of religions.

A course on “Southeast Asia: Religions and Rituals” is taught at the Institute of Asian Studies.

No concrete plans for co-operation could be established immediately, but all participants at the meeting were keen to explore ways for co-operation. A meeting between Peter Andersen and Michael Rothstein of the Institute of Religion, and Cynthia Chou and Kenneth Zysk of the Institute of Asian Studies for further discussions has been scheduled for 13 May. Respective course syllabi will be exchanged. Results of the meeting will be discussed at the next Ørnast meeting.

6. Timetable for planning and implementation

Fall 2004 is the target date for the formalisation of course exchanges between Lund and Copenhagen. Course exchanges will be put into operation only after each University's respective faculty has given its approval. Simultaneous to these course exchanges, joint student-faculty seminars will also be organised. Information on and a call for participation in all proposed activities will be posted on the web-site in order to reach as many teachers and Ph.D. candidates as possible.

7. Course offerings to be exchanged

7.1 European Credit Transfer System

In order to avoid confusion, Cynthia Chou suggested that the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) be used from now on when referring to the number of study credits accredited to respective courses. Everyone accepted the proposal. 10 Swedish credit points are equivalent to 15 ECTS, and – Danish årsværk is equivalent to 15 ECTS.

Students can take several courses at either Lund or Copenhagen in order to achieve the necessary number of credits required to complete their degree programme. A list of these courses with their respective ECTS will be made available to students in Lund and Copenhagen. Approval will first have to be sought from respective Study Directors and the Faculty in Lund and Copenhagen before these exchange courses are advertised. The aim of these exchange courses is to build a comprehensive study programme for students on both sides of the Sound.

7.2 Co-operation at Ph.D. level

Kenneth Zysk suggested combining teachers from Lund and Copenhagen to organise Ph.D. courses in theory and method. Ph.D. students who avail themselves to this course can come from different backgrounds. Other joint activities and platforms for discussion could include joint seminars, workshops, and guest lectures. The institutes could also share expenses incurred. All present were in agreement. Staffan Lindberg stressed the importance of announcing these activities on the web-site, and to make it possible for students and all other interested parties to register for these activities via the web.

8. Other business

Kenneth Tysk pointed out that currently information documents are disseminated in Swedish, Danish, and English. It was not uncommon for some documents to be written in a jumble of two or more languages. He suggested that the information documents be presented in either one of the following languages – Swedish, Danish, or English. Peter Andersen proposed English as the language of dissemination. Everyone agreed to this proposal as it would increase accessibility for the following reasons (i) the students come from all over the world, (ii) to facilitate exchange and co-operation with specialists from beyond Scandinavia, and (iii) to increase our visibility globally.

*Prepared by Cynthia Chou
6 May 2003, Copenhagen.*