Nordic South Asia Network

Nordic Newsletter 14 - 5 December 2017

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NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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Research Community News

- **Linnaeus Palme grant for Sweden-Bhutan exchange programme on Ethno-Mathematics**

Internationella PROGRAMKONTORET

On 4 December 2017, the Swedish International Programme Office for Education and Training decided to award a Linnaeus Palme Exchange Programme planning grant to the Department of Science, Environment and Society (NMS) at the University of Malmö for a collaboration programme with Samtse College of Education (SCE) at the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). The aim is to develop and support a more culturally responsive teaching and learning in mathematics and mathematics teacher education in the Swedish and Bhutan school contexts. The new collaboration was facilitated by the NSAN editor Lars Eklund during a May 2017 visit to Samtse, when he discussed with Senior SCE Lecturer Purna Badadur Subba and Dr. Johan Westman, Swedish ethnomusicologist working at SCE since 2016, the possibility to find collaborating partners in Sweden on the isue of Ethnomathematics.



The Malmö University team: Annica Andersson, Lena Andersson and David Wagner.

At Malmö University, Associate professor Annica Andersson happens to be working on Etnomathematics with a strong international network with scholars at teacher education institutions and universities in different parts of the world. Her thesis and research has been based on critical mathematical and ethnomathematical research. Together with Lena Andersson, senior lecturer and the international coordinator at the department, and with a background from the ITP/Sida programme *"Child Rights, Classroom and School Management"*, form the Swedish coordination team. Besides, duirng the current academic year, Malmö University has

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a visiting guest professor, David Wagner from the University of New Brunswick (UNB) in Canada. From 2007-10 he was the director of UNB's projects in Bhutan, which focused on education issues. David has worked in Bhutan on multiple occasions, including in Samtse. Read Lars Eklund's report from Samtse College of Education.



The Samtse team: Johan Westman and Purna Subba.

• Linnaeus University presents its India related research

Linnaeus University with the two campuses at Växjö and Kalmar continues to be a strong hub for South Asian studies in Sweden. NSAN editor Lars Eklund therefore visited the Växjö campus on Tuesday 21 November 2017, and met Dr. Soniya Billore, Senior researcher at the Dept.of Marketing, School of Business and Economics. He was able to receive a copy of a book just being published, namely *"India: Research on Cultural Encounters and Representations at Linnaeus University"*. It is an edited volume by Dr. Billore, and Dr. Kristina Myrvold at the Department of Cultural Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In the book, ongoing research projects at the university are presented.



They include articles by Dr. Henrik Chetan Aspegren on *"Statistical Counter-representations of India 1860s-1880s"*; by Prof. Margareta Petersson on *"A Danish Family in India: Gendered Colonial Upbringing, Everyday Life, and Cultural Encounters"*; by Dr. Radhika Krishnan on *"The Dynamics of Railway Building; Through Joseph Stephens"*; by Kristina Myrvold on *"Christian Missionaries and Book Printing in Nineteenth-Century India"*; by Prof. Hans Hägerdal on *"South Asian Migrants and Early Modern Colonialism"*; by Dr. Stefan Lagrosen on *"India's Ayurveda Health System, Implications for Western Workplace Health"*; and a few other contributions. The book is published by Makadam Förlag in Gothenburg. More information.

Sonia Billore and Kristina Myrvold have long experience of research and studies in India and in 2013 they initiated a working group at Linnaeus University to develop a strategy for academic cooperation with India. They submitted a project proposal to the Network for Internationalization with representatives from all departments at Linnaeus University, and on April 12, 2013, the Network and the Vice Rector, Professor Nils Nilsson, decided to approve the project. Read more...

Among other well-known South Asia researchers at the university should be mentioned Prof. Gunnel Cederlöf at the Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies; Prof. William Hogland at the School of Pure and Applied Natural Sciences; and Prof. Katarina Swahnberg at the Department of Health and Caring Sciences

• Uppsala professor keynote speaker at Urdu conference in Khairpur



Professor Heinz Werner Wessler from the Institute for Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University gave a keynote speach on *"Ecocritical readings in Urdu literature"* (in Urdu) at a two-day International Conference on Literature & Ecological Challenges (Pakistani & International Perspective) organized by the Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) in Khairpur, Pakistan on 13-14 November 2017. The conerence was held in collaboration with the Pakistani Higher Education Commission (HEC). Prof. Wessler also read a paper on "The Garden, the Wilderness and the Self". SALU, located in Sindh province, was established after the name of world renowned poet and Sufi saint Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Read more.

• Formas grant to Swedish project on Air Pollution Mitigation in India



On Thursday 9 November 2017, Dr. Patrik Oskarsson from the Division of Rural Development at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Uppsala was awarded SEK 3.0 m as a three-year grant from the Formas' Scientific Council in Stockholm. He is one of 53 Swedish researchers with successful applications for the Formas 2017 programme on "Research and Development Projects to Future Research Leaders" (more information).

Formas funds research for an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development. The mission of Formas is to promote and support basic and needs-driven research in the areas of the Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning. The research funded should be of highest scientific quality and relevance for Formas' areas of responsibility.

Patrik's project is entitled *"Participatory Environmentalism: Mobilising Citizens for Air Pollution Mitigation and Improved Environmental*



Health in India" and will be carried out in collaboration with Dr Devanshi Chanchani, previously at East Anglia University, UK, but currently without institutional affiliation. Additionally, Professor T. Sundararaman at TISS in Mumbai is assisting the project on a concultancy basis.



Abstract: This proposal examines the conditions which enable citizens to become actively engaged in pollution control for improved environmental health. It does this by enabling research participants to monitor household air pollution levels for a better understanding of local sources of pollution and personal exposure. Low cost pollution monitors offer new possibilities for people to link personal health effects directly to pollution. The resulting improved knowledge of what pollution is and where it comes from is expected to support community mobilisation to mitigate pollution. This project draws on citizen science approaches to environmental governance to open up for participatory environmental management. Three empirical settings are selected as case studies across India with a combination of urban, industrial and rural forms of pollution and socio-political settings. Data collection methods are air pollution measurements, an environmental health survey and ethnographic methods. The project is expected to add to our understanding of the factors which support citizens becoming active in pollution control and management activities. Active citizens are expected to be able to press for wide-ranging public health improvements, and open up for participatory decision-making processes on environmental matters at the moment dealt with in closed, expert-controlled settings with significant political interventions.

It should also be noted that Patrik Oskarsson recently was involved in editing a special section of the peer-reviewed magazine *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* along with Dr. Siddharth Sareen from the University of Bergen, Norway. The specila section is entitled *"Discourse and Resource Conflict in Extractive Zones of India"*, and includes interesting articles not only by the two editors themselves, but also other eminent researchers such as Kenneth Bo Nielsen, University of Oslo.

- **Archaeological murder finds in the Maldives verifies lack of sea rise**



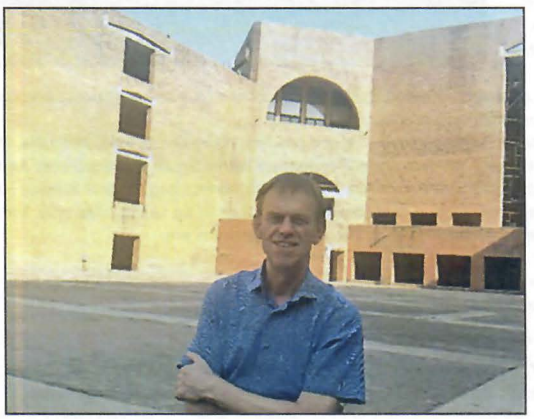


Professor Emeritus Nils-Axel Mörner, heading an independent research institution on Palegeophysics and Geodynamics in Torekov, South Sweden, claims to have solved a 864-year old murder case in the Maldives. In the peer-reviewed magazine Archaeological Discovery, No 5/2017, he publishes an article entitled *"The Reef Woman of the Maldives"*, in which he proves that the remains of a woman found on a Maldives beach, was a victim of a murder. She died, was killed or washed ashore at a former Maldives shore at about AD 1150. It has come to be known as "the Reef Woman" of the Maldives or of Lhosfushi. The skeleton lacks its feet, suggesting that the woman was killed on the beach and the feet cut-off. The age of the bones is ca AD 1135 ± 70. Therefore, it seems highly likely that the killing took place at the invasion and takeover of the Maldives by the Muslims in AD 1153. Read the article.

Prof. Mörner, with a background from the Palegeophysics and Geodynamics unit at Stockholm University, and 1999-2003 being president for the INQUA (The International Association of Quaternary Research) Commission on Sea Level Changes and Coastal Evolution, has done extensive research on the Maldives coastlines, proving that the island republic far from being flooded today has a shore higher up than some hundred years ago and with no significant sea rise in recent years. The skeleton find shows that the shore was at the same elevation in the 1100s as today. Sea then rose to about +60 cm, covering the skeleton with coral rubble. Sea fell again to its present position, cementing the shore deposits into beachrock including the skeleton. In sub-recent time, the beachrock was trimmed into a rock-cut platform at sea level of about +20 cm. In the 1970s, sea level fell to its present position, starting to erode a new rock-cut platform at about present high-tide level, by that exposing the old skeleton.

- **Eminent Scandinavian economist full professor at IIM Ahmedabad**

In June 2017, Norwegian researcher Vegard Iversen joined the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad as a Professor in the Economics Area. To the best of our knowledge, Iversen is the first Scandinavian economist or social scientist to be appointed a Full Professor in one of India's topmost and publicly funded higher education institutions. Since 2008 he has been a Senior Research Fellow (Hon) at Global Development Institute (GDI), University of Manchester. Prof. Iversen is married to another well-known scholar, namely Dr. Shalini Grover, Associate professor at at the Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi.



Vegard Iversen with IIMA's heritage Louis Kahn Plaza in the background.

After receiving his PhD in (development) economics from University of Cambridge in 2000, Prof. Iversen spent six years as Faculty at School of Development Studies (now International Development), University of East Anglia. He has been a Research Fellow at International Food Policy Research Institute's India office, a visiting Faculty at Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi Centre, and a Professor and Vice Dean at Jindal School of Government and Public Policy. From 2015 to 2017, he was an (India-

based) Adjunct Professor at Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke. His research is mainly applied microeconomics of development but includes the occasional ethnographic/sociological detour. Recent or ongoing research covers women in politics (using a novel, dynamic entry point); persistence and change in caste-based and other inequality in rural India; agricultural history and the long-term effects of colonial policies on contemporary development; business history; networks and labour markets; social mobility in the Global South.
He received the annual Dudley Seers Prize for the best paper published in Journal of Development Studies in 2008. He has been the Editor in-Chief for the Journal of South Asian Development since 2012 and is on the Editorial Board of Journal of Development Studies. More details about Prof. Iversen.

- **More information about South Asia related research at Swedish and Nordic universities**

See our page, http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/research-community-news

Educational News

- **Educational news connected to South Asian studies all over the World**

See http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/education-news

Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

- **Uppsala seminar on 18th century Portugese missionary to India**

PhD candidate Pär Eliasson at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, holds a ventilation seminar presenting his forthcoming dissertation on "Simão Gomes, Sarueshuaracha Gnanopadesh (1709)" on Wednesday 6 December 2017, 14.15 – 15.45. At the seminar, he will focus on the semantic analysis of Christian terminology ina text entitled Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa, an early argumentative text in Marathi language. The more than one hundred pages long text was written in the early 18th century by the Portuguese missionary to India, Simão Gomes. He was the first missionary in the Marathi-speaking inland outside of Portugese Goa. Eliason tries to track linguistic and creative influences from both European/Christian and Indian indigenous traditions.
Venue: Engelska parken, room 2-0026, Uppsala.

- **Information about South Asia related lectures and seminars**

See http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/lectures-in-scandinavia

Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

- **87th Annual Session of the Indian National Academy of Sciences in Pune**

The 87th Annual Session of the Indian National Academy of Sciences (NASI) will be held 8-10 December 2017 at, Savitribai Phule Pune University. In connection with the annual sesssion, a Symposium on "*Basic Research - its role in national development*" will be organised. The Scientific Sessions will be held in two sections: Section of Physical Sciences and Section of Biological Sciences. The scientific papers are presented by selected researchers/scientists in scientific sessions, for which prior submission of the abstract(s)/paper(s) is necessary. Full details.

- **Triple conferences on Comparative Peacebuilding in Asia**



Three conferences with the theme *"Comparative Peacebuilding in Asia - Liberal and Illiberal Transitions from Ethnic Conflict and Authoritarianism"* will be held in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the United Kingdom in 2017 and 2018, supported by the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF). This series of three conferences seeks to promote research and facilitate interdisciplinary discussions on the illiberal, nationally driven peacebuilding processes in conflict-affected South and Southeast Asia. There has been an extraordinary expansion of academic interest in this field, and a new generation of scholars is producing exciting research drawing on theoretical innovations and empirical advances, including interesting comparative work. More information about the project.
The aim is to bridge academic nodes and peacebuilding knowledge and practice in the UK, Europe, Australia, North America and Africa, with Asia, and also to connect scholars and policy-makers within South and Southeast Asia. In particular, the organisers - including Dr Rajesh Venugopal, London School of Economics and Political Science - are looking for contributions that deal with liberal and illiberal peacebuilding conditions in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, India, Timor-Leste, Philippines, and Thailand. The conference dates are:
Colombo, Sri Lanka: 30 June - 2 July 2017
Yogyakarta, Indonesia: December 2017 (precise dates to be confirmed)
London, UK: June 2018 (precise dates to be confirmed). Full information.

- **Kolkata workshop on Flood Disaster and Management**



On Friday 29 December 2017, an International Workshop on "*Flood Disaster & Management*" will be held at Jadavpur University in Kolkata, India. It is organised by the university's Centre for Disaster Preparedness & Management, established in 2017 with an objective aware and strengthen the mass for Disaster Management. It is approaching towards the collaboration with national and international organization. The workshop is convened by Associate Professor Gupinath Bhandari (*photo*), who previously has been afiliated to the Division of Risk Management and Societal Safety at Lund University. Internationally renowned speakers will cover the issue of flood disaster and its structural and non structural preparedness in general, including prediction. Due to limited seats, the interested participants are requested to register themselves before December 15, 2017, with filled up form and registration fee. Full information.

• Noria South Asia Program Research Workshop in Paris

The Paris based Noria South Asia Program (SAPROG)invites to its third South Asia Research Workshop, organized in collaboration with the National Institute of Eastern Languages and Civilizations (INALCO) to be held on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at INALCO, 2 rue de Lille, Paris, France. The Workshop is intended for PhD and advanced MA students in the social sciences working on South Asia-related projects, preferably in the fields of political science, sociology and international relations. The workshop aims at discussing research projects in the making through engaging with innovative methodological and theoretical approaches. The broad objectives of the workshop are to foster collaboration and to create trans-disciplinary research projects on South Asia, while discussing commonalities between various areas of enquiry grappling with the problem of the applicability of Western analytical frameworks in Non-Western contexts. The workshop will be hosted by the INALCO. It will include two to three thematic panels, each comprising two to three MA or PhD students. Each participant will have her paper discussed by senior researchers and the floor will be open for contribution from all participants. One hour will be devoted to each paper to allow in-depth discussions. PhD students as well as senior Master students working on South Asia-related topics (i.e. India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Afghanistan and the Maldives) are invited to submit an abstract. Presentations drawing from disciplines such as political science, political sociology, political anthropology, conflict studies and international relations are welcome. Deadline for submitting abstracts is 15 December 2017. Full information.
Noria is a network of researchers in international affairs that periodically organizes thematical workshops in Paris for Ph.D. candidates and researchers. The Noria South Asia Programme analyses on-going and emerging socio-political dynamics in South Asia to increase the academic understanding of the region and provide policy-makers expert analysis, cutting-edge research and policy ideas. The first international Graduate Conference on South Asia, "Discussing India and Pakistan: New Dynamics and Perspectives" took place in Paris 17-18 June 2015. It was organized by Noria Research's South Asia program in partnership with the Doctoral School at Sciences Po Paris, the Centre for International Research (Ceri, Paris) and the Centre for Human Sciences (UMIFRE) in New Delhi.

• Other conferences connected to South Asian studies all over the World

See http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/conferences/conferences

Business and Politics

• Pakistani BLLF representatives visited Lund

On Tuesday 14 November 2017, representatives for the Pakistani non-governmental organisation Bonded Labour Bonded Liberation Front Society (BLLFS) visited Lund where they met with the NSAN editor Lars Eklund. The two guests were Mr. Mir Safdar Ali Talpur, currrent BLLFS national coordinator, and Ms. Najma Shaikh, who will take over the chairpersonship from January 2018 (*photo*).



Najma Shaikl, Lars Eklund and Mir Safdar Ali Talpur.

They were accompanied by Lisa Nymark and Märta Råberg, representatives for BLLF Sweden, a Lidköping based organisation supporting the BLLFS' long-standing work in Pakistan. Since 1988, BLLFS has been able to achieve the release of over 80,000 bonded labourers in Pakistan from the shackles of slavery, in different sectors like agriculture, brick kiln, and carpet industries. It has also set up a release and rehabilitation center, and provided legal aid to the bonded labourers. Mr. Talpur and Ms. Shaikh informed about the impressive work being carried out, and their future plans, including awareness programmes for women.
BLLF Sweden has long been working closely with BLLFS in Pakistan's four provinces, supporting its struggle to free people from slavery. BLLF Sweden focuses mainly on human rights issues, women's rights, and education projects for children and adults.The cooperation between BLLFS in Pakistan and BLLF Sweden takes place in projects supported by Sida through Forum Syd.
During their stay in Sweden, the BLLLBS representatives also visited Lidköping, Ystad and Stockholm besides attending the Swedish Forum for Human Rights (MR-dagarna), the Nordic region's largest human rights forum, held in Jönköping 9-11 November. From Sweden they also visited Turku and Ekenäs in Finland, to meet representatives of the organisation Solrosen, and Emmaus Finland.

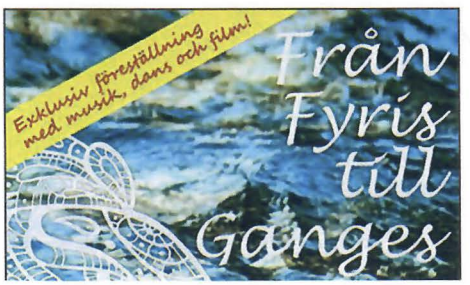
• Information about South Asia related business and politics in Sweden

See http://nordicsoutasianet.eu/news-sources/swedish-politics-and-business-related-south-asia

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

• Impressive Indian cultural programme in Uppsala

On Saturday 25 November 2017, a great India related cultural event was organised in Uppsala. The programme is entitled "*Från Fyris till Ganges*" and was held at Slottsbiografen, Nedre Slottsgatan 6 from 14.00 till 21.00. it was supported by the Indian Embassy, Uppsala Kommun and Sensus. Follow the journey of the senses between Fyris and Ganges and get a glimpse of the nuances of the diverse Indian culture - in the middle of Uppsala!



Concert & Dance 14.00-17.00. (Konferencier: Maria Af Malmborg Linnman)

*Tagore melody: Axel Landahl (guitar), Johan Gråsjö (Tuba), Jonas Landahl (accordion), Leo Edberg (percussion) and Stian Grimstad (North Indian classical sitar)
*Speech by Indian ambassador Honourable Ms. Monika Kapil Mohta
*Tabladuo: Atharva Pandit and Shamik Sinha
*Jugalbandi: Arun Venkitaraman (South Indian classical violin), Stian Grimstad (North Indian classical sitar) and Suranjana Ghosh (Tabla)
* Indian classical Odissidance with Stina Bothén
* Pause (fika and snacks)
*World music group Teental: Bengt Jonasson (Bass), Jonas Landahl (Drums), Kalle L Mossige-Norheim(Keyboard/Harmonium), Magnus Kjellstrand (Saxophone), Soumen Roy Choudhry (Sarod) and Suranjana Ghosh (Tabla)



Film 18.30-21.00.

*"*The inner circle*" - winning short film by Biplab Sanyal
*"*Taare Zameen Par*" (2007) directed by Aamir Khan and Amole Gupte (Hindi, subtitles in english)

• Information about South Asia related culture in Sweden/ Scandinavia
See SASNET's page, http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/cultural-events

Best regards

Lars Eklund

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Nordic South Asia Network (NSAN) newsletters are produced by Lars Eklund.
Till 31 December 2016 he worked as deputy director for the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), based at Lund University.
After retiring from SASNET, Lars is working part-time as Executive Director, Communications, for the Centre for the Study of Indian Langages and Society (INLANSO) in Varanasi, India. Besides, he runs the NSAN web site and produces monthly newsletters as a follow-up venture to the old SASNET Newsletter service that was closed down in April 2016.

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