Nordic South Asia Network

Nordic Newsletter 16 – 20 February 2018

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NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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Research Community News

• Swedish Research Links grants for nine South Asia related projects

Vetenskapsrådet

On 7 December 2017, the Swedish Research Council decided upon the 2017 Swedish Research Links grants. Introduced by Sida and the Swedish Research Council in 2002, Swedish Research Links aim to stimulate cooperation between researchers in Sweden and those in selected developing countries. The long-term aim of the programme is to contribute to mutual scientific and socioeconomic development of the countries involved through funding for support to collaborative research projects of high scientific quality and mutual relevance. The programme is open to researchers in basic and applied research within all academic disciplines.

Nine of the applications given grants for the three-years period 2018–20 are fully or partly related to South Asia. They include projects dealing with e g "Migration as a social determination of health"; "Sustainable Water Supply through the Development of Artificial Glaciers"; and "Viral Infections in Indian Silkmoths".

Three projects are with Uppsala University: Projects led by Biplab Sanyal at Department of Physics and Astronomy, Materials Theory; Sunithi Gunesekera, Department of Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmacognosy; and Olle Terenius, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Microbiology.

Two projects at University of Gothenburg: led by Kristina Jakobsson, Department of Public Health and Community Medicine; and Per Knutsson, School of Global Studies.

One each with Karolinska Institutet - led by Salla Atkins, Global health (IHCAR)/Department of Public Health Sciences; Luleå University of Technology - led by Anshyuman Bhardwai, Department of Computer Science, Electrical and Space Engineering (SRT): Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala - led by Adam Pain, Department or Urban and Rural Development; and Umeå University - led by Isabel Golcolea:, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine. More information about the funded projects with abstracts.

• Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund finalising new edited volume on India

Professor emeritus Staffan Lindberg and NSAN editor Lars Eklund are currently busy finalising a new book, an edited volume on Indian Society, History, Economics, Religion and Culture. It is written in a popular scientific mode in Swedish language. Besides the two co-editors, articles are written by eminent Scandinavian South Asia scholars including Dr. Kenneth Nielsen and Dr. Anne Waldrop at University of Oslo, Prof. Knut Jacobsen at University of Bergen, Prof. Jørgen Dige Pedersen at Aarhus University, Dr. Henrik Chetan Aspengren, Linnaeus University, Växjö and also the Institute of Foreign Affairs (UI) in Stockholm. The book will be published by Palmkrons förlag in Lund and be introduced with book launch events sometime in early spring 2018 most probably both at Lund University and University of Oslo. More information will folllow.

• Linnaeus Palme Sweden-Bhutan exchange programme on Mathematics now running

Swedish Council for Higher Education

On 4 December 2017, the Swedish Council for Higher Education 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. Read Lars Eklund's report from Samtse College of Education.

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*", they form the Swedish coordination team.

In early February 2018, Prof. Subba and Dr. Westman from Samtse College of Education visited Malmö University and their counterparts at Malmö University to plan for the coming exchange programme. In Malmö, they also had a seminar on Bhutanese folk music at Lund University's Faculty of Fine and Performing Art - located in Malmö. Besides they spent a few days in Gothenburg and Borås. *Photo to the right from Gothenburg.*



Wangchu La och Duba Dukpa from Samtse Lower Secondary School.

By chance, another group of four Bhutanese school teachers also visited Sweden and Gothenburg during the same period. It so happened that Båtsmansskolan in Härryda, outside Gothenburg, had successfully applied for another Swedish government funded exchange programme, the Atlas programme, for a collaboration with Samtse Lower Secondary School - located in the same small Bhutanese town as the College of Education. Atlas is a programme for schools and other educational institutions interested in global networking and practical training exchanges. This programme is also administered by the Swedish Council for Higher Education. More information. It should be mentioned that the NSAN editor played a certain role in connecting the two schools in Samtse and Härryda, and Lars was therefore invited to meet the entire Bhutanese group in Gothenburg on Sunday 11 February, for a social event including cooking spicy delicious Bhutanese food, and interacting with Mr. Alf Persson, chairman of the Swedish-Bhutan Society.

See the NSAN page on the South Asia related Linnaeus Palme exchange programmes that were given funding in 2017.

• Churchill's role in the 1943 Famine highlighted in new film

In mid-January 2018, *Bengal Shadows* - a new documentary film on The 1943 Famine was screened at Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan and its Indira Gandhi Center. NSAN editor Lars Eklund was present at the occasion, as well as the two Bengali-French film makers **Joy Bannerjee** and **Partho Bhattacharya**.



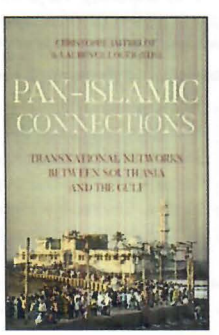
The film highlights how the British colonial regime acted in a critical military position in 1943. Japanese troops together with the 40,000 man strong Indian National Army (INA), led by freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose, had conquered Burma and was about to ockupy/liberate (what perspective one now has) also India. In front of that threat, the British applied the scorched earth policy to Bengal. The infrastructure was systematically destroyed, bridges were exploded, grain stores burned, and at the same time the army took by force all available resources without a moment to think about the consequences for the civilian population. Which became catastrophic, not least because the harvest was nil last year due to a cyclone so reserves were lacking. And when the disaster was a fact, the British govenment led by Winston Churchill did not make any effort to provide emergency aid. Australian ships with grains that could have been delivered to Bengal were ordered to go to Europe instead.



Winston Churchill - this in the West, so beloved iconic figure for freedom and against dictatorship in Europe, played a major role in these events. As being a full-bred racist he was in charge of these events creating a famine disaster in present India and Bangladesh that killed between three and five million people. The 1943 Famine, has been known for decades, but few outside South Asia have discussed it, but the film clearly shows Churchill's role, becoming a war criminal of rank. The film was first screened at SOAS, University of London in November 2017.

Satyajit Ray masterfully portrayed the disaster in his 1973 movie *Distant Thunder (Ashani Sanket)*, and excerpts from it are featured in Bengal Shadows, which, moreover, relies heavily on the story of Madhusree Mukerjees book *Churchill, the Secret War*. Read more about the movie in an article in The Wire.

• Jaffrelot edited volume on South Asia/Gulf pan-islamic connections



Pan-Islamic Connections. Transnational Networks Between South Asia and the Gulf, edited by Christophe Jaffrelot and Laurence Louër. An absorbing comparison of 'the Islams' of Arabia and South Asia and how they interact through the vectors of trade, politics and migration. South Asia is today the region inhabited by the largest number of Muslims—roughly 500 million. In the course of its Islamisation process, which began in the eighth century, it developed a distinct Indo-Islamic civilisation that culminated in the Mughal Empire. While paying lip service to the power centres of Islam in the Gulf, including Mecca and Medina, this civilisation has cultivated its own variety of Islam, based on Sufism. Over the last fifty years, pan-Islamic ties have intensified between these two regions. Gathering together some of the best specialists on the subject, this volume explores these ideological, educational and spiritual networks, which have gained momentum due to political strategies, migration flows and increased communications. At stake are both the resilience of the civilisation that imbued

South Asia with a specific identity, and the relations between Sunnis and Shias in a region where Saudi Arabia and Iran are fighting a cultural proxy war, as evident in the foreign ramifications of sectarianism in Pakistan. Includes chapter by Ayesha Siddiqa and Radhika Gupta. Hurst publishers 2018. More information.

• Lars Gerdmar studies Hindu and Buddhist religious art in India





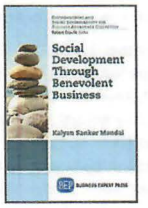
Lars Gerdmar, a professional Swedish scholar of Art from Lund is currently visiting India in order to study Hindu, Buddhist and Christian religious art in the country. Lars is also a professional artist specialised in making icons for the Catholic church (like the one to above), and a good friend of the NSAN editor Lars Eklund. After staying for more than a month in Kolkata at Eklund's Sardar Sankar Rd residence, he is now touring several other places in India for a period of 4-5 months.

In Kolkata he held a much appreciated seminar on Iconic Christian Art at Rabindra Bharati University and its Faculty of Art (*photo of Lars along with Vice Chancellor Sabyasachi Ray Chaudhury - second from right - and other professors*). He also visited Shantiniketan where he held a similar seminar at Viswa Bharati University and its *Kala Bhavan* (Department of Art), a seminar organised by Prof. Asha Mukherjee.

After Kolkata, he has visited Delhi, Amritsar and Dharamsala, and he will continue to south India including Bangalore and Madurai, and he also plans to visit Varanasi, in a programme being planned for him by Christabel Royan at the Nordic Cente in India consortium. His focus is mainly devoted to Hindu and Buddhist art in all its forms and the question of how Hindus and Buddhists relate to their holy images in comparison with how Christians make it to the holy icons. He is also interested in the issue of religious dialogue.

• Kalyan Mandal writes about Benevolent Business for Development





Professor Kalyan Mandal from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Kolkata has published a new book entitled *"Social Development through Benevolent Business"* (Business Expert Press, New York, 2018). He is currently affiliated as a ICSSR Senior Fellow at the Center of Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta (CSSSC) for a period of two years. During the academic yaer 2013/14, Prof. Mandal was a guest professor at Lund University, being the fourth and final in a scheme of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Professors there.

His research is focused on Business Solutions for Poverty. He is shaping up of the idea of „social business" - unlike profit maximizing business, social business aims at achieving a social objective in a financial sustainable way. More information about the book.

• Kharagpur seminar on Memories and Histories of 1947



On 3-4 January 2018, the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur organized an International Interdisciplinary seminar entitled "India @70: Revisiting Memories and Histories of 1947". It was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the Indian Council of Historical Research and marked the 70th year of India's independence. The seminar was jointly convened by Professor Anjali Gera Roy, IIT Kharagpur and Professor Nandi Bhatia, University of Western Ontario, Canada.

Thirty renowned and emerging scholars from universities in India, Canada, USA and Singapore revisited the events of 1947 in the two day seminar juxtaposing histories and memories of Independence. It began with a round table discussion on "History and Memories" featuring noted partition scholars Professor Gyanesh Kudaisya, National University of Singapore; Professor Sucheta Mahajan, Jawaharlal Nehru University; and Professor Bodh Prakash of Ambedkar University Delhi. The discussion was moderated by Professor Gopa Sabharwal, founding Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University.

Other well-known scholars included Professor Himadri Banerjee, former Guru Nanak Chair Professor in Indian History, Jadavpur University; Professor Bhaskar Chakraborty, Calcutta University; and Professor Sukeshi Kamra, Carleton University, Canada. Professor Padmini Mongia of Franklin and Marshall College, USA presented a personal visual narrative of memories of Multan. Along with deliberating on political histories of Independence and partition, historians, sociologists and scholars in literary and cultural studies explored literary, cinematic and testimonial documents to trace the repercussions of the violence of partition across Punjab, Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. The seminar also covered the effects of partition beyond the subcontinent in the diaspora to situate it in a global context. The evening saw the screening of two documentary films *Dere tun Dilli by Shilpi Gulati* and *A Thin Wall* directed by Mara Ahmed and co-produced by Surbhi Dewan that was attended by the larger community in Kharagpur. The seminar concluded with a workshop of Graduate students from various disciplines.

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

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

Educational News

• Linnaeus Palme grants to 13 South Asia exchange programmes

In late 2017, the Swedish Council for Higher Education decided upon the seventeenth round of Linnaeus Palme Exchange Programme grants, for the period 2017 – 2018. A total amount of SEK 37,8 Million was distributed to 85 projects at Swedish universities. Nine renewed exchange projects, plus one new project, are with India. Besides one renewed project is with Bangladesh, another one with Nepal, and finally a new project with Bhutan is being funded.

Swedish Council for Higher Education

Two projects each were given to Karolinska Institutet, Linköping University, Linnaeus University, and Mälardalen University; one each to Ersta Sköndal, Gävle, Malmö, Umeå, and Uppsala.
The following Swedish institutions are involved:
- Department of Social Work, Ersta Sköndal högskola
- Department of Business and Economic Studies, Gävle University
- Läkarprogrammet, Karolinska Institutet
- Division of Physiotherapy, Department of Neurobiology, Caring Sciences and Society (NVS), Karolinska Institutet
- Division of Nursing Science, Department of Medical and Health Sciences, Linköping University
- Kansliet för utbildningsvetenskap, Linköping University
- School of Business and Economics, Linnaeus University, Växjö/Kalmar
- Department of Social Work, Linnaeus University, Växjö/Kalmar
- Faculty of Education, Malmö University
- School of Health, Care and Social Welfare (HVV), Mälardalens Högskola
- School of Business, Society and Engineering (EST), Mälardalens Högskola
- Institutionen för omvårdnad, Umeå University
- Department of History, Uppsala University

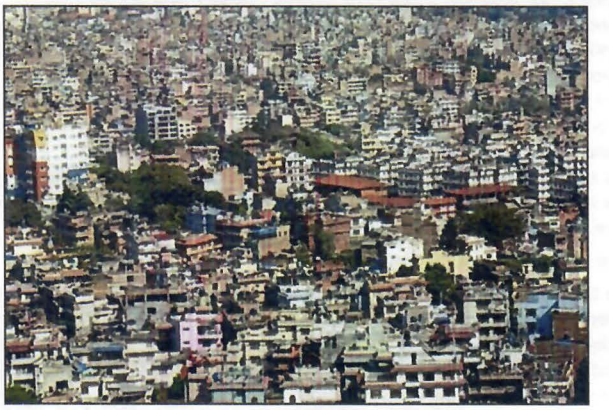
More information.

• Other educational news connected to South Asian studies all over the World

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

Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

• Nordic South Asia scholars meet in Oslo in June 2018



The second South Asia across the Nordic Region (SANR) annual meeting will be held in Oslo on 5 - 6 June 2018. In late June 2017, the recently established network held its first annual meeting in Copenhagen. SANR was established to present cutting edge research undertaken by Nordic scholars, and to facilitate greater collaboration across Nordic research institutions and universities. The need for such a meeting forum has been acutely felt by scholars, especially young scholars in need of mentorship and support in the early career stage. The annual meetings are therefore seen as an important step towards building up future frameworks of cooperation.
The two-day programme in Oslo will consist of keynote talks, panel sessions, roundtables, a special session for younger scholars, and ample time for mingling and informal discussions. If you wish to actively contribute to the programme, please email Associate Professor Kenneth Bo Nielsen for further information. The event is funded by the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo, and supported by Asianettverket/The Norwegian Network for Asian Studies. Travel and accommodation costs are borne by participants while the host provides local hospitality. There is no conference fee. Full information.

• SASNET seminars at Lund University

The Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) at Lund University organises seminars frequently. More information on their web site.

• Information about South Asia related lectures and seminars

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

Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

• BASAS 2018 conference at Exeter University

BASAS British Association for South Asian Studies

On 18-20 April 2018, the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) holds its annual conference at Exeter University. Registration will close in March 2018. More information.
Papers will be delivered from scholars and practitioners involved with the cultures, countries, economies, environments, histories, languages, literatures and peoples of South Asia. This year there will be an emphasis on debating and discussing South Asia's global engagement, but as usual the conference will also have much academic analysis on all topics relating to South Asia.
BASAS is one of the world's leading learned societies for the study of South Asia. It is committed to supporting advanced research in the humanities and social sciences of South Asia through international collaborations, conferences and workshops, lectures, research groups, publications and online discussions.

• Time to register for the 2018 ECSAS conference in Paris

ECSAS

The 25th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS) is scheduled for 24-27 July 2018 in Paris,



France. It will be held at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, (54 and 105, Blvd. Raspail). It is organized by the Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CNRS-EHESS). It is now time to register. Paper presenters at the 24th ECSAS must be members of EASAS through 2017 & 2018 or 2018 & 2019. Non-members cannot attend the conference. More information at the conference web page.

ECSAS requires all accepted panels to be open to paper proposals through the website: proposed panels should not be 'closed' to further papers ab initio. Young researchers are advised to contact panel convenors to be considered for inclusion in their panel; young researchers are also encouraged to propose panels themselves. No panel may run for more than 4 sessions of 90 minutes.

The ECSAS has met regularly since 1968, and has provided an important opportunity to discuss current research and scholarship on topics relating to South Asia within the humanities and social sciences. The 2004 conference was organised by SASNET in Lund, see the 2004 conference page.

The most recent ECSAS conference was held in Warsaw, Poland, in July 2016. Lars Eklund attended the conference, at that time representing SASNET, Lund University (but also as a member of the EASAS board - re-elected for the position as treasurer). Go for his Warsaw report.

- **Other conferences connected to South Asian studies all over the World**

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

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

- **Polar Prize to Afghanistan's National Institute of Music**



Afghanistan's National Institute of Music (ANIM) and Ahmad Sarmast, its visionary founder and director, along with American heavy metal band Metallica have won the prestigious 2018 Polar Music Prize. The award will be presented by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden on June 14, 2018.

The award panel said the Afghan ensemble "revives Afghan music and shows you can transform lives through music."

The 2018 Polar Music Prize was awarded to ANIM and Sarmast "in recognition of how this inspirational organization has used the power of music to transform young people's lives." The prize is traditionally given to one person from the pop world and one from the classical or jazz genre. The winners have been invited to receive their awards, including a cash prize of 1 million kronor ($124,000 USD) each, on June 14 from members of the Swedish royal family in Stockholm.

In the 1990's, Afghanistan's rich musical heritage, which thrived for centuries, was abruptly halted by the civil war and from 1996 until 2001, music was forbidden and silenced throughout the country. In 2008, Sarmast, the son of a famous conductor, returned to Kabul to establish ANIM. He founded ANIM in Kabul in 2010 in response to that country's civil war destruction of centuries of rich musical tradition. In the 1980s the pop music and film industries were thriving in Afghanistan, with hundreds of ensembles and a national radio orchestra playing Western and Afghan musical instruments. Between 1996 and 2001, music was completely banned. Over the last eight years, ANIM has been providing a challenging and safe learning environment for all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious sect or socio-economic status. The institute has a special focus on the most disadvantaged children in Afghanistan, including orphans, street vendors and girls.

- **Lars impressions from Kolkata and Shantiniketan January-February 2018**



The NSAN Editor Lars Eklund stayed for a month in Kolkata, returning to Sweden on 8 February 2018. During this period he wrote a blog in Swedish language instead of updating the news site.

Among the activities were also a number of academic meetings and seminars, at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata and Calcutta University, Kolkata.

Go for the blog. http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/other/lars-blog-kolkata-and-shantiniketan-january-february-2018

Photo: Daniel Rycroft från India Dialogue, East Anglia University, UK, och Rajsekhar Basu, Head, Dept. of History, University of Calcutta, at a seminar in Kolkata, February 2018.

- **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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