Nordic Newsletter 19 – 2 June 2018

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NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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Research Community News

• NSAN newsletters to be closed down

Due to a number of reasons, I am winding up the monthly Nordic South Asia Network (NSAN) newsletters, at least temporarily. An immediate reason is the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) decided upon by the European Union, enforced from 25 May 2018. This regulation represents a significant shift in privacy requirements governing how organizations manage and protect personal data, and this affects our network with much work to be executed.

However, more important is the fact that NSAN has been and still is solely financed by my private means, which is not a sustainable solution in the long run. Efforts to connect NSAN to SASNET/Lund University or other Nordic and European South Asian studies institutions/organizations have unfortunately failed to materialize. And thirdly, though the interest for the NSAN newsletters is strong among many European and South Asian scholars, the interest from Swedish universities and individual Swedish researchers (with a few exceptions) to provide news material for NSAN has diminished vastly. Therefore I have decided to close down the newsletter service.

The NSAN web site (http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/) will however remain and will be updated, and news will be provided via Facebook.

• Uppsala University thesis on modern Indian Philosophy



On Thursday 24 May 2018, PhD candidate Pawel Odyniec, Department of Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University, held his final seminar for a PhD project entitled presented *"Engaging Advaita. Conceptualising liberating knowledge in the face of Western modernity"*. Assistant Professor Michael Allan from the Department of Religious Studies at University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA, was the seminar opponent. The thesis is essentially an essay on modern Indian philosophy. Broadly speaking, it engages with the theme of the relation between Self and Other, particularly as it is enacted in cross-cultural encounters, and examines three engaging articulations of the Advaitic notion of liberating knowledge or brahmajñāna that have been offered by three eminent Indian academic philosophers in twentieth century India; namely: Badrīnāth Śukla (19??-1987), Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). In doing so, it pays particular attention to the existing relation between their distinctive conceptualisations of liberating knowledge and the doxastic attitudes that these authors assumed toward the Sanskrit intellectual past on the one hand and the Western alterity on the other. Read the thesis.

• Bergen thesis on Climate Change Resonance in the Shivalik Hills

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On Tuesday 15 May 2018, Aase Jeanette Kvanneid from the Institute for Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, defended her doctoral thesis with the thesis *"Waterworn. Climate Change Resonance in the Shivalik Hills of North India"*. The evaluation committee forst opponent was Professor Ann Grodzins Gold, Syracuse University, USA. The thesis deals with how a so-called global "climate awareness" falls into a small



community in northern India. The analysis draws on long-term fieldwork among farmers and landowners, local politicians and volunteers. Ethnography thus illustrates the focal points between local, social life, and developmental work.

The Shivalik Mountains of North India are a region where it has been driving predators on natural resources for a long time, and where climate change is believed to make the situation more stressful for humans and ecosystems. Climate change and the transfer of knowledge around it are thus central. The water cycle, and water as a scarce resource, plays a central role in the analysis. When the water supply to the community was changed - both through the actions of an internationally supported irrigation project and through changes in climate and environment - local power relations were put into play. In addition, local reactions to a regional flood disaster and a landslide, both triggered by abnormally heavy precipitation, showed how global changes in climate and environment relate to local social life. Climate change was thus interpreted as a moral corrective of how people should relate to each other, to their gods, and to the environment. The main finding is that climate and environmental awareness in northern India is coincided with a national discourse about progress and modernization. Read more.

• Uppsala workshop on Self-narratives in Southasian Literatures

The Department of Linguistics and Philology, and the Forum for South Asian Studies at Uppsala University organise an International Workshop on *"Self-narratives in Southasian Literatures"* on 7-8 June 2018. Venue: Engelska parken 9-3042, Uppsala. The workship is convened by Professor Heinz Werner Wessler and deals with autobiographies and other forms of self-narratives in Southasian literatures.

Participants include Ram Prasad Bhatt, Hamburg University, Germany, presenting a paper on *"Life and times of Śaileś Maṭiyānī : Writer and Rebel"*; Monika Browarczyk, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland, presenting a paper on Hindi poet *Kunwar Narain's Reminiscences and Retellings of the Past*; Alaka Chudal, Vienna University, Austria; presenting a paper on *"Nepalese women in their sociocultural surroundings"*; Alessandra Consolaro, Torino University, Italy, presenting a paper on *"(Impossible?) Adivasi autobiography: the expression of the self in Nirmala Putul and Jacinta Kerketta's poems and in Rejina Marandi's novel Becoming me"*; Pär Eliasson, Uppsala University, presenting a paper on *"Bahina Bai: God, Guru and the Self"*; Barbara Lotz, Würzburg University, Germany, presenting a paper on *"Reading Indian Trans* Autobiographies: A Narratological Approach"*; Nabila Rehman, University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, presenting a paper on *"Female self-narratives in modern Panjabi literature"*; Marina Rimscha, Hebrew University, Jerusalem Israel, presenting a paper on *"Men without women or women without men? A literary analysis of Dalit autobiographies"*; Rosine Vuille, Zürich University, Switzerland; presenting a paper on *"Sobti-Hashmat: the plural identity of the writer"*; and Heinz Werner Wessler himself, presenting a paper on *"Vinod Kumar's ādivāsī jīvan-jagat, the author's self, and the epistemology of empathy"*. Full information.

• INLANSO Hindi Summer courses 2018 in Mussoorie, Delhi and Varanasi

INLANSO - the Varanasi based Centre for the Study of Indian Languages and Society offers various Hindi programmes for Nordic students during the summer 2018. They can join one programme or combine two or three such. The alternatives are:

- Mussoorie programmme: 18-29 June (two weeks)
- Delhi programme: 2-6 July (one week)
- Varanasi programme: 9-27 July (three weeks)

INLANSO conducts the summer programmes in cooperation with the Nordic Centre in India University consortium (NCI). The teaching is conducted by Dr. Vivek Jaiswal, Dr. Roquiya Khatoon and Ms Rani, and being supervised by the Academic Director of INLANSO, Dr. Miriya Juntunen Malik.



INLANSO Hindi teachers Dr Roquiya Khatoon and Dr Vivek Kumar Jaiswal with Prof. Dipak Malik. In Mussoorie.

Anyone who can read and write Devanagari script as well as has knowledge of basic Hindi grammar is eligible to attend. The programmes contain topic based instruction with useful vocabulary, intermediate level grammar, drills and a lot of speaking and listening opportunities in authentic native environment and situations. The cost is 17.700 INR per week for 20 hrs of activities. For registration contact inlansoservices@gmail.com latest on 10 June 2018.

NSAN editor Lars Eklund visited INLANSO in April-May 2017. Read his report from Varanasi and Mussoorie.

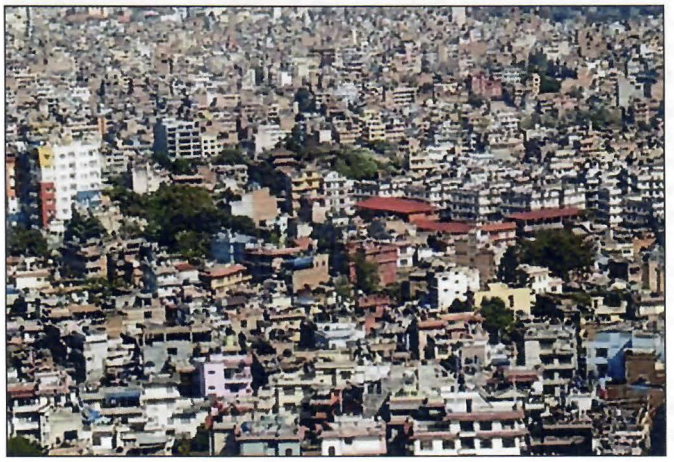
The two weeks in the pictoresque hill station Mussoorie and its suburb Landour will give you excellent opportunies to interact in a relaxed manner with the local community and the traders, shopkeepers etc. The week in Delhi will focus on metropolitan youth and familiriaze you with the vocabulary and language that has emerged in the indian capital city due to the long tradition of migration from outside and inside India. It is a language influenced by expressions and grammar from Urdu, Punjabi, English, Rajasthani, Bhojpuri, and other languages that have and are contributing to the 'Dilliwali' Hindi. The three weeks in Varanasi will take you to the realm of a place that has the most of the pros and the cons of a provincial city while being the oldest one in India besides serving as the gateway to moksha. INLANSO with its programme house, experienced staff and good infrastructure will ensure that your Hindi will reach new levels and you will gain the confidence that is needed in the communication with the native speakers. Full information.

• Thanks for KI-AKU long-standing collaboration

Karolinska Institutet Medical University has been involved in collaboration projects wih Pakistan, and especially with Aga Khan University (AKU) in Karachi, since the 1950's. Professor Emeritus **Bo Lindblad** at IHCAR has been instrumental in much of these projects. Read his report on half a century of KI–AKU collaboration.

In March 2018, Aga Khan University sent an official letter thanking the President, Members of the Faculty and Members of the Administration of KI for their interest in, support of and contribution to the old and still ongoing collaboration with Karolinska Institutet). In the document, it is mentioned that the collaboration has created research leaders, research groups, besides good will for Sweden and KI and increased the research capacity within low-income areas of South Asia and East Africa. The PhD theses have been defended at KI and the papers in them published. A list of total publications from the teams involved is available at AKU and a summary of the projects with results is being prepared at AKU. Read the inspiring document.

- **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. The keynote lecture will be given by Prof. Knut Jacobsen, Univerity of Bergen. He will speak about *"Ancient Yoga in the Modern World"*.

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.

- **Time to register for the 2018 ECSAS conference in Paris**



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.

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.

Lars will also be present in Paris.

- **Linnaeus Palme grant for Sweden-Bhutan exchange programme now running**

On 22 May 2018, the Swedish Council for Higher Education decided to award SEK 523 000 as a Linnaeus Palme Exchange Programme grant to the Department of Science, Environment and Society (NMS) at the University of Malmö for its new collaboration programme with Samtse College of Education (SCE) at the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) during 2018. The authority is pleased to see that the application maintains a high quality, due to the work and dedication of the collaborating partners leading to the achievement of our common goal of a higher quality of education. The project includes

12 approved numer of teacher and student mobilities.
The aim of the Sweden-Bhutan project 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.*

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.



Wangchu La och Duba Dukpa from Samtse Lower Secondary School.

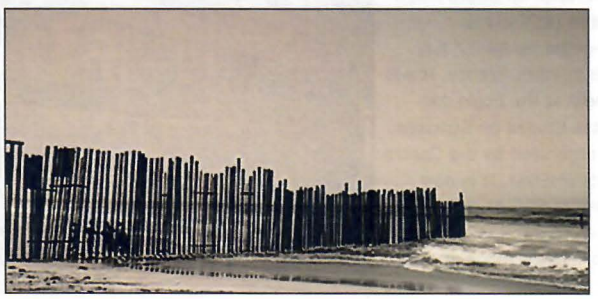
The NSAN editor also played a certain role in creating the initial contact between the two schools in Samtse and Härryda, and Lars was therefore invited to meet the entire Bhutanese group in Gothenburg on Sunday 11 February.

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

• More information about South Asia related research at Swedish and Nordic universities
See our page, http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/research-community-news

Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

• Växjö conference on critical theory, postcoloniality, migration and populism



On 14-16 June 2018, the Linnaeus University Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies at Linnaeus University in Växjö organises an international conference on critical theory, postcoloniality, migration and populism. The conference is entitled "*Global Challenges: Borders, Populism and the Postcolonial Condition*", and addresses current global challenges with a focus on the present resurrection of geographical and intellectual borders, the rise of populism in the West and beyond, and the realisation that current geopolitical relations are still deeply informed by the long history of colonialism. Confirmed keynote speakers include Gurminder K Bhambra, Professor of Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies at University of Sussex, UK. To facilitate a productive and interdisciplinary meeting, the conference will include scholars from a wide interdisciplinary spectrum, including postcolonial studies, migration studies, animal studies, trauma studies, and ecocriticism.
The conference will be comprised of a number of thematic sessions that include issues such as Contemporary cultural discourses on torture, dignity, and victimization; Sovereignty, violence, and citizenship; Migration, mobility, and borders; and Postcoloniality, nationalism and human rights. Venue for the conference: Teleborg Castle situated on the Växjö campus of Linnaeus University. More information.

• India and China in focus for 10th ADI conference in Copenhagen



On 18-20 June 2018, the 10th Annual Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI) Conference is being held by the Universtity of Copenhagen. The theme for the 2018 conference is "*Transition and Disruption in Asia*", focusing on the spectacular rise of China and India. Therefore the organisers claim that it is only natural that these populous new superpowers dominate scholarly and media

attention, while other regions in Asia are foregrounded only in exceptional moments of environmental, political or economic crisis. Yet the latter, too, confirm the need to conceive of Asia as a site of accelerated change. This principle also applies to the pre-modern period, in spite of the fact that Eurocentric observers preferred to conceptualize this vast space as a permanently stagnant region. Among the organisers appear Prof. Jørgen Delman and Ravider Kaur, both from the Dept. of of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies. Read more...

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

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

Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

- **2018 Y-SASM Workshop to be held in Zurich**

The 8th annual Young South Asia Scholars Meet (Y-SASM) Workshop will be held 15-17 June 2018 in Zurich, Switzerland. The theme of the workshop is *"Claims-making"*. It is organised by the History of the Modern World department at Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH), and the Dept. of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies at University of Zurich, in cooperation with the South Asia Forum (SAF). Since 2010, Y-SASM has aimed to provide a platform for interdisciplinary exchange among junior scholars in the field of South Asian Studies, including PhD students, advanced MA/MPhil students, early career Post-Docs and non-tenured faculty staff. While contributions from other places are welcome the main idea is to strengthen the South Asia network within Europe.

While claims-making has implicitly been a major theme in research on South Asia, theoretical understanding of the concept remains rather vague. In general, claims-making is related to certain perceptions and framings of social realities. Claims are linked to assumptions about rights or entitlements, on which demands can legitimately be based. Therefore, analysing processes of claims-making can provide complex insight into social, political and economic structures and the complex ways in which they are negotiated and consolidated. It is, however, not at all clear how the relationship between claims-making and ideological formations or moral paradigms should in fact be conceptualised. When taking a closer look at the process of claims-making, various other questions emerge, such as those about the conditions under which new claims arise or how various claims-making strategies change as a result of new spatial arrangements, technologies and different socio-political structures. Against this backdrop, the Y-SASM conference 2018 seeks to provide an interdisciplinary forum for exploring these issues. Therefore, we invite early career scholars to present their research linked to claims-making in a wide range of contexts. The conference aims at facilitating conversation between researchers from different backgrounds such as anthropology, history, geography, political science or media studies. Full information about the Zurich Y-SASM 2018.

- **Bishkek Conference by the Asian Borderlands Research Network**

The 6th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network will be held 23-25 August 2018 at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The conference theme will be "Ruins, Revival(s) and Resources", focusing on the generative and productive capacity of border spaces, which is urgently in need of being addressed. Remnants of the past, both material as well as immaterial ruins , constitute heritages that continue to affect livelihoods across Asian borderlands. Increasingly, borderlands witness a surge in religious, cultural, linguistic, and ideological revival(s) , where the past is perceived as a resource for securing community futures. Whether through the bottom-up claims of marginalized communities or top-down state processes of recognition, designations of cultural heritage have become arenas of contestation where varied actors seek to reframe histories. For this upcoming 6th Asian Borderlands conference in Bishkek, the organisers invite panels and papers that address the following questions: How are borderlands in Asia creating alternative spaces for heritages, self-definition and the extraction of resources? How can these cases serve to rethink social theories of various kind?

Since one of the main goals of this conference is to spur collaboration and conversations across diverse fields in the hope of building up a more nuanced picture of the intersections and relationships across Asian borderlands, the organisers would like to include scholars, writers, policy studies researchers, artists, filmmakers, activists, the media, and others from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. This might help to develop new perspectives in the study of Asian Borderlands. Applicants are encouraged to submit a full panel proposal, as only a small number of individual papers will be selected. The deadline to send in panel, roundtable and paper proposals is Monday 2 October 2017. Participants will be notified around January 2018. Full information.

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

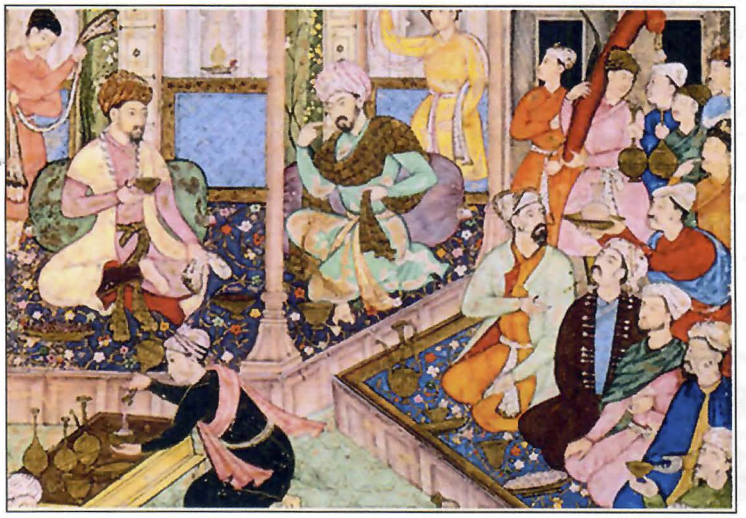
See http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/conferences/conferences

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

- **Afghanistan art in return - two unique exhibitions in Herat and Kabul**

For the first time in several hundred years, part of Afghanistan's invaluable cultural heritage is again on display in its country of origin. Two large, unique exhibitions in Kabul and Herat highlight miniature paintings are from the 1400s to the 1600s that have been created or roamed in the famous 14th-century Herat School, and appear as enlarged photographs. The

paintings were created in the cities of Herat and Kabul in Afghanistan and in Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Istanbul, Baghdad and Tabriz.



Portrait of King Babur of Kabul Visiting His Cousin Prince Badi'-uz-Zaman in Herat in 1506.

The Herat exhibition was opened at the end of 2017 in the city's historic citadel, originally believed to have been built by Alexander the Great in 330 before our timetable. The second exhibition opened in March in the Queen's pavilion in Babur's Garden (Bagh-e Babur) in Kabul. The exhibition has come through thanks to Professor Michael Berry, a leading authority in medieval Islamic art. He tracked reproductions of the miniatures at museums and private collections in Europe, Canada, USA, Turkey, Egypt and India, and then produced the high-resolution enlarged reproductions that are now displayed. The exhibitions were developed in collaboration with Boston University's American Institute of Afghanistan Studies (AIAS) supported by the US embassy in Kabul. The exhibition at the Herat Citadel became such a success that the US Embassy asked the authorities to let the exhibition remain as a permanent loan from the US state, which owns the exhibition. The French Embassy contributed financially to the exhibition in Kabul through the Institute de France and Afghanistan.

Royal courts in fifteenth century Herat and sixteenth century Kabul once sponsored some of the most magnificent pictorial creations in Islamic art. Despite wars and destruction in Afghanistan, many of these miniatures survived, albeit outside the country in public and private collections around the world. After the paintings were taken out of what is now Afghanistan in the second half of the sixteenth century and entered royal collections in Mughal India, Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey, many were sold on to European and North American private and public collections in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their enlarged reproductions were only brought together for the first time and put on public display in Afghanistan in 2017."King Babur's Kabul: Cradle of the Mughal Empire" displays a selection of high quality reproductions of some of the masterpieces of the Timurid and Mughal periods from the mid-16th century, one of Central Asia's richest cultural eras.

Read more in a Swedish language blog by Börje Almqvist.

• **Information about South Asia related culture in Sweden/ Scandinavia**

See SASNET's page, http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/cultural-events

Best regards

Lars Eklund

Subscribe to the newsletter by sending an email to sydasien@sydasien.se!

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 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.

Miraklet Indien och dess baksida
NYA INDIENBOKEN av EKLUND/LINDBERG

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