

Nordic Newsletter 15 – 23 December 2017

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NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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Research Community News

• STINT Initiation Grant to Stockholm University collaboration with Delhi institute



In November 2017, Dr. Liz Adams Lyngbäck and Dr. Khaleda Gani Dutt at the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University (*photos*) were conferred an Initiation Grant from the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education – STINT. The Initiation Grant aspires to develop a long term strategic partnerships between their Stockholm University department and the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education in New Delhi, India. The overall aim in relation to research and higher and education is to critically examine the concept, policy and practice of concept, policy and practice of inclusive and quality education in India and Sweden from a comparative perspective using both quantitative and qualitative research

methods. This study is invaluable and much needed to understand the need for inclusive education to enhance the capacity for students with disabilities and to counter-effect the impact of a disabling environment. An environment becomes disabling when cultural and social norms affect the well-being of an individual by restricting access to inclusive and quality education and existing gendered norms that often discriminates the girl child.

The project has a close relation to Khaleda Gani Dutt's successful April 4th, 2017, defense of her doctoral dissertation entitled "The Role of Adult Literacy in Transforming the Lives of Women in Rural India: Overcoming Gender Inequalities. Comparative case studies in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan & Howrah District, West Bengal, India" ([more information](#)). The NSAN editor Lars Eklund attended the dissertation, and was actually the person who put Khaleda in touch with the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education in New Delhi. This contact led to a joint proposal for a new research project including the two institutions in Stockholm and Delhi, plus a third parter, namely the School of Education at Kathmandu University in Nepal, and in June 2017 the [Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University](#) decided to support the project with a planning grant. Professor S.Y. Shah, Director of the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education; and Professor Mahesh Nath Parajuli, Dean at the School of Education in Kathmandu were the key contact persons in initiating the collaborative partnership that aims to underpin the need for quality inclusive education to end exclusion both within rural and marginalized communities in India and quality inclusive education in regions affected by natural disasters such as Nepal. The Planning Grant has



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facilitated Khaleda Gani Dutt and Liz Adams Lyngbäck towards capacity building and networking within Scandinavia. Sweden will benefit from the networks in a special regard pertaining to the demographic changes in the population of refugees, migrants and members of displaced national communities, trends in globalization which can be expected to continue. In light of the education needs of families in migration especially when disability presents further hardship, the social structures in the Scandinavian countries require new scholarship and awareness to these intersecting issues as they are lived and present challenges to the organization of education.

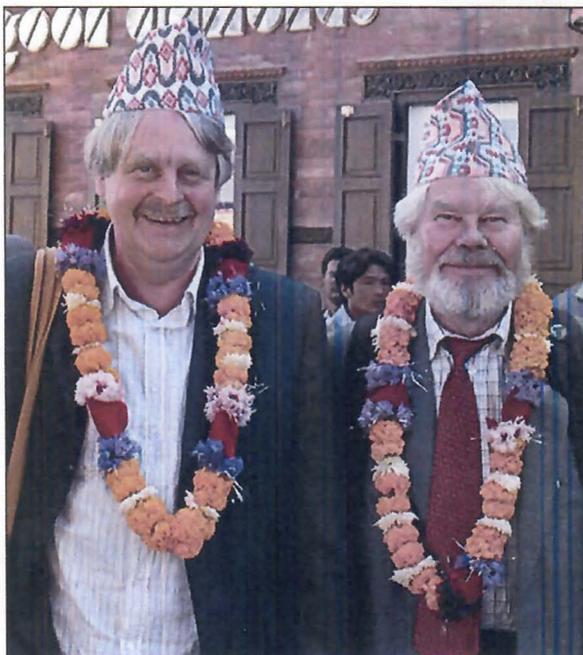
● **Call for host university to organise EASAS PhD workshop 2018**

The European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS) invites European universities and higher educational institutions to organize the 2018 EASAS Doctoral Workshop. The call is open till 31 January 2018. The workshop will give PhD students an opportunity to receive feedback on their theses from senior scholars and fellow PhD candidates who are also working on South Asian topics. In addition, it will create networks between young students of South Asia and help them develop contacts with others. The doctoral workshop is envisaged as a two-day event for PhD candidates and faculty members from European universities, to be held at a host European university. The host university will organize the workshop and arrange board and lodging for students and guest faculty. Selection of the host university will be made by the EASAS board. [More information.](#)



● **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 follow. Staffan and Lars have worked together on South Asia since the late 1970s, first with the SYDASIEN magazine - launched by Staffan and colleagues in 1976 and edited by Lars for 25 years (1982-2007); and then successfully launching the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) on a Swedish government initiative in 2001. As a close-knit professional team combining academic and journalistic know-how they travelled extensively in the whole South Asia region, establishing an extremely wide network of affiliated researchers in Scandinavia, Europe and South Asia, till Staffan retired from service in 2007 and Lars quit in late 2016. *(Photo from Nepal in 2005).*



● **Lars Gerdmar studies Hindu and Buddhist religious art in India**



Lars Gerdmar, a professional artist living in Lund specialised in making icons for the Catholic church, and a good friend of the NSAN editor Lars Eklund, is currently visiting India in order to study Hindu, Buddhist and Christian religious art in the country. He will stay 4-5 months in India, beginning in Kolkata, staying for a month at Lars and Babu Eklund's Sardar Sankar Rd flat. In Kolkata he will hold a seminar at Rabindra Bharati University, and meet Indian artists through the Government Art College. He will also visit Shantiniketan and its Viswa Bharati University. However, most of the time,



he will spend painting a few smaller icons like the one on photo. He will from mid-January 2018 and until end of April visit other parts of India, including Delhi, Bangalore and Madurai, a programme is being planned for him by Christabel Royan at the Nordic Centre in India consortium. His focus will mainly be 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.

● **SASNET Fermented Foods workshop held in Cairo**



The Swedish South Asian Network on Fermented Foods (SASNET-Fermented Foods) held an International Seminar and Workshop on "Fermented Foods:

Nutrition, Health Status and Social well-being" at the National Research Centre in Cairo, Egypt on 13-15 November 2017. The seminar was organised in collaboration with the the Society for Women in Science in Developing Countries (OWSD - Egypt) as a part of the First International conference of the Society for Women in Science in Developing Countries (OWSD - Egypt) on the theme "Sciences for Women:



Development and Innovation”.

SASNET Fermented Foods is a forum for scientists of the South Asian countries, Sweden and other countries for exchanging information in the field of food fermentation and its practical application. It was launched in 2003 by Professor Baboo Nair, Division of Applied Nutrition and Food Chemistry, Lund University, and has helped to strengthen relation among academicians, researchers and food industry professionals. The network is coordinated by Professor J. B. Prajapati, Head of Department of Dairy Microbiology, SMC College of Dairy Science at Anand Agricultural University, India.

Prof. Prajapati participated in the conference as one of the keynote speakers, and has written a lengthy report on the Cairo workshop. [Read his report](#) (as a pdf-file).

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

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

Educational News

• NCI organises two summer programmes in 2018

The Nordic Centre in India university consortium will be running two summer programmes in 2018. The first programme is entitled “*Contemporary India: An Interdisciplinary Introduction Course*”, and will be held in collaboration with the Study in India Programme at University of Hyderabad, 24 June-



21 July 2018. It is an undergraduate level introductory course that serves as a primer to the changing dynamics in India by focusing on a wide range of topics that have immediate relevance, including politics, economy, society, religion, and development.

The second programme is entitled “*Approaching the Environment in India: Issues and Methods in the Study of the Nature-Economy-Society Interface*” and will be held in collaboration with the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) in Bangalore, 1-28 July 2018. This is a post graduate level course that introduces students to the context and challenges related to India’s urban and rural environment. Students will be taught how to conceptualize the interface between society, economy, ecology and environment in the Indian context by being introduced to various themes that highlight the narratives, ground realities, policy dilemmas, civil society movements, gender perspectives, etc.

The courses are available in the 7.5 ECTS variant and the 10 ECTS variant. [More information](#).

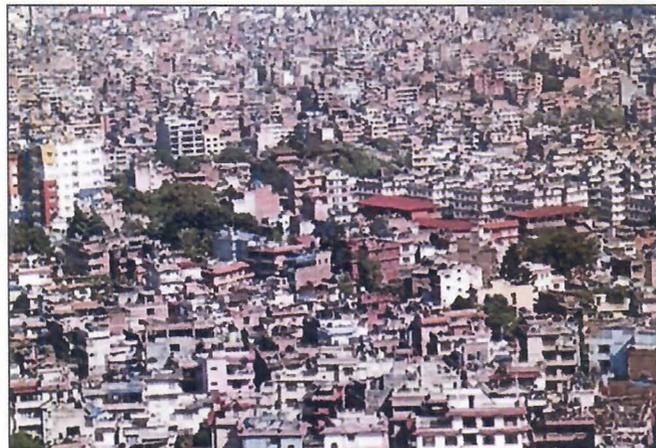
• Other educational news connected to South Asian studies all over the World

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

Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

• Nordic South Asia scholars meet in Oslo in June 2018

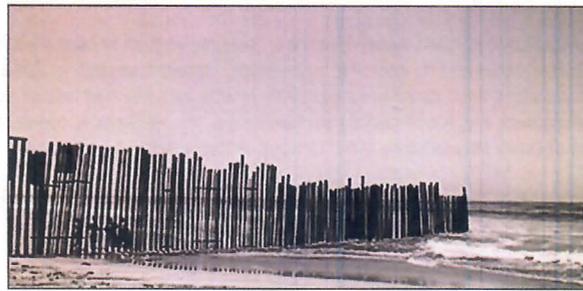
The second South Asia across the Nordic Region (SANR) annual meeting will be held in Oslo on 5 - 6 June 2018. In late June 2017, the recently established network held its first annual meeting in Copenhagen. SANR was established to present cutting edge research undertaken by Nordic scholars, and to facilitate 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](#).

• 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: Teborg Castle situated on the Växjö campus of Linnaeus University. Deadline for sending abstracts is 15 January 2018. [More information.](#)

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

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

Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

• **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 affiliated 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.](#)

• **18th South Asian Literary Association Conference to be held in New York**



The 18th Annual South Asian Literary Association (SALA) Conference will be held in New York City, US, on 8-9 January 2018. The theme for the conference will be "*Precarity, Resistance, and Care Communities in South Asia*". The conference is co-chaired by Dr. Sukanya Gupta and Dr. Afrin Zeenat. The organisers are interested in insecurities and care communities that may exist within states and within bodies. Papers could answer the following questions, among others: What forms do these insecurities and care communities take in literature and culture? How do authors depict states of insecurity or care communities? What literary devices do they use? How do bodies and states clash? What insecurities do diasporas pose to the host nation-state? What precarities do foreign nationals face in South Asia? [Full information about the conference.](#)

• **BASAS 2018 conference at Exeter University**



On 18-20 April 2018, the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) holds its annual conference at Exeter University. Registration will open in January 2018 and 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 propose papers 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). The call for papers is now open and will close on 30 November 2017. 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.

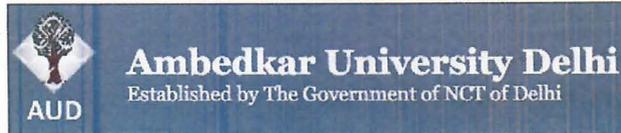
The ECSAS has met regularly since 1968, and has provided an important opportunity to discuss current research and scholarship on topics relating to South Asia within the humanities and social sciences. The 2004 conference was organised by SASNET in Lund, [see the 2004 conference page](#).

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](#).

• Delhi conference on Northeast India and Southeast Asia

Ambedkar University in Delhi organises a conference on "*Northeast India and Southeast Asia: Exploring Continuities*" on 25-26 October 2018 in New Delhi, India. The

conference seeks to question this entrenched way of understanding Northeast India by way of situating it contiguously with Southeast and East Asia. In doing so, it will take a multi disciplinary look at lived reality, insider perspectives and experiences of transformation to identify the threads of interconnectedness between these regions. The conference will thus highlight the inter-regionality of Northeast India while culturally positioning it in a larger Southeast/East Asian tradition. Deadline for submitting abstracts is 30 January 2018. [Full information](#).



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

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

Business and Politics

• Information about South Asia related business and politics in Sweden

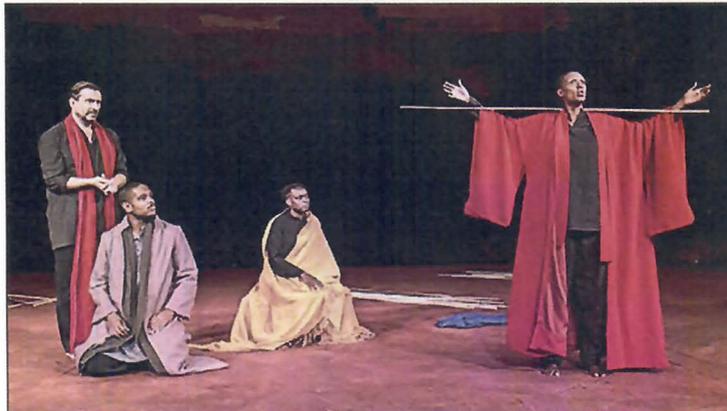
See <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/news-sources/swedish-politics-and-business-related-south-asia>

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

• Unique Peter Brook Mahabharata follow-up theatre performance at Sagohuset

30 years after the performance of Mahabharata, who took the theater world by storm, theatre director Peter Brook has returned to the magnificent ancient Indian epics, with a performance entitled *Battlefield*. It has already been staged at a number of theatres around the world, including London, New York, Tokyo and a host of other metropolises. Now, it is time for Sweden and Lund!

On Wednesday 31 January and Thursday 1 February, *Battlefield* will be staged at Lund City Theatre but invited to Lund by



Theatre Sagohuset. It is a unique and magnificent performance by Peter Brooks Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord (Paris). The critics and the audience around the world have praised the performance. Venue: Lund City Theatre, Kiliansgatan, Lund. [More information](#).

Battlefield is a return to "The Mahabharata" on a nearly bare stage, with four actors and a single musician playing a single instrument, a drum. It lasts just over an hour. It is as pure theater as you may ever encounter. Every syllable is given the resonance of a note of music. Each word is pronounced as though it encompasses measureless meaning. The performance is the endgame, a timeless, poetic and conspicuous idea of human existence in a at the same time violent and loving world. It takes place where Mahabharata stopped: after the great war, which was performed between rival fathers in the same family, the surviving son Yudhishtira is placed in front of a million deaths on the battlefield and an destroyed dynasty. He sees the victory turning into a defeat. How will he find peace when everything is ruined? What happens after a war in the world tattered is conflicts.

• Philip Glass' opera on Mahatma Gandhi again to be staged in Stockholm

The opera *Satyagraha* by American composer Philip Glass, will again be staged in Stockholm in May 2018. It was staged in Sweden for the first time in 2016 at Folkoperan in a co-production with Cirkus Cirkör. Now, the huge success will be performed for the third time. Premiere on 18th May.

The opera, composed in 1979, includes scenes from the young Mahatma Gandhi's life in South Africa. It was then he discovered *Satyagraha*, insistence on truth, which was to become the start of what we call civil disobedience. Gandhi went on to become one of the most famous people in the world within the non-violence movement. US composer Philip Glass has been one of the most influential music makers of the late 20th century. Although his music is sometimes labelled minimalist, it is powerful



and suggestive, often with an almost hypnotic power. Tilde Björfors, artistic director of Cirkus Cirkör, says: "Philip Glass' opera is an experience of Gandhi. As such, I want to physically express this by leveraging the strength of circus and music together". [Read more...](#)

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

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

Best regards

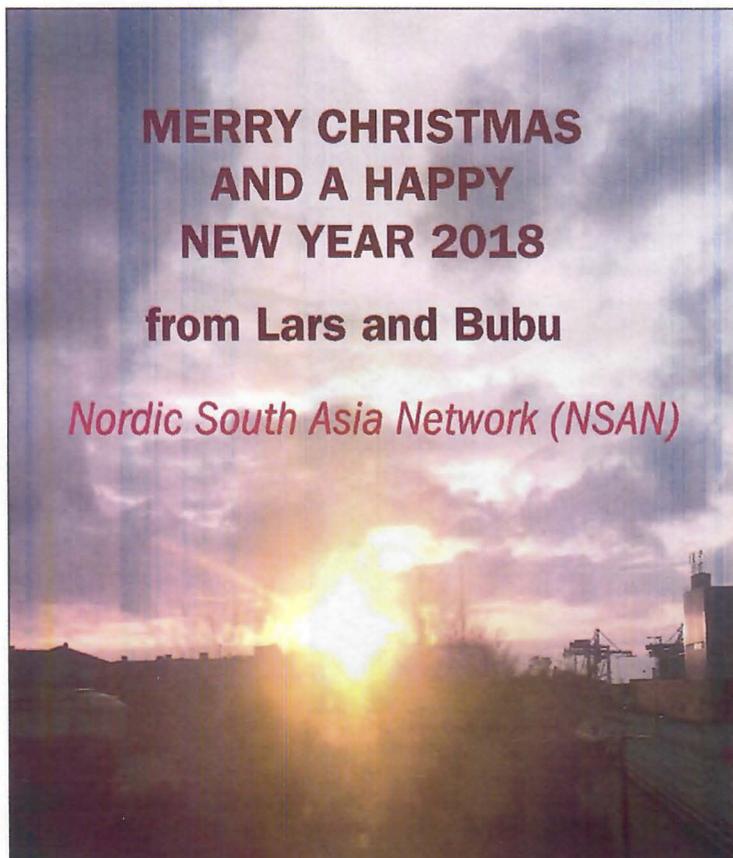
Lars Eklund

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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 Languages 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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