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The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies Work Report 2020

LUND UNIVERSITY | CENTRE FOR EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIAN STUDIES



Work Report 2020 for the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies

OVERVIEW

The pandemic has affected the Centre in different ways, most visibly perhaps in having to teach online, the lack of visitors, fewer public lectures and other events, and in the cutback on conference participation and fieldwork. Work to convert teaching to online platforms took place during the second half of the spring semester and during the second half of the fall semester. Considerable work was also put into ensuring a safe study and work environment while teaching/working on campus in the beginning of the fall semester. This included buying new furniture that enabled us to make use of the Asia library for teaching. In addition, administrative work and meetings, including staff meetings, have been conducted mostly online throughout the year. Many have been working from home or partly from home during the year. This has quite naturally meant a significant change to the work environment and the ability to discuss work and research in more informal ways. On the more positive side, staff members have significantly improved their digital skills and ability to use different online platforms, and this experience will be valuable for the future.

STAFF CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS

During the year the Centre has expanded with the recruitment of three Ph.D. students and one postdoctoral fellow. The Centre got two faculty funded Ph.D. positions and used parts of its capital for a third position. There were more than one hundred applicants to the positions, and after careful deliberation three candidates were chosen, Chontida Auikool, Tabita Rosendal Ebbesen, and Gina Song Lopez. In September, the faculty funded postdoctoral fellow, shared with the Human Rights Division, Elizabeth Rhoads, also began her position. Two more postdoctoral positions were announced during the year and 72 persons applied. Two candidates were selected during the fall, Jinyan Zeng and Paulina Kolata, who will begin working in late spring 2021.

EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES

In 2020, the Centre organized far less public lectures and events than during previous years. In total six public lectures, five research seminars, one book talk, and one film screening were held. In January, the Centre co-organised a workshop on academic freedom in authoritarian countries with the Department of Sociology that was funded by the Swedish Institute.

NETWORKING AND PARTICIPATION AT OTHER EVENTS IN LUND

The Centre co-organized two events with the Foreign Policy Association, one focused on Covid-19 in Korea and was held in June, and the other focused on the protests in Thailand and took place in December.

The Centre has paid for the development of the Lund University Human Rights hub website during the fall, a work that will continue during spring 2021.

SWEDISH, NORDIC, AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

During the year the Centre was invited to participate in two events discussing Asia related research and the impact of the pandemic. One event was organized by the Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre at the London School of Economics, and the other was organized by Asianet, the Finnish University Network for Asian Studies. Marina Svensson served as Swedish representative of the NIAS NNC Council.

VISITING FELLOWS AT THE CENTRE

The Centre announced five visiting Ph.D. fellowships for the spring of 2020 but unfortunately none of them were able to come due to the pandemic. The Centre also announced short-term funded visiting fellowships for the fall and in the end four of those selected, Ernil Larsson, Jiang Jue, Karin Zackari, and Zhao Hui, spent between two and four months at the Centre. In addition, Erik Moberg from Seoul National University spent his sabbatical at the Centre.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OUTPUT

During the year individual researchers were active in different research projects. They published a total of seven journal articles, three book chapters, three reports/contributions to reports, and four blogs, articles in the media and other popular science publications.

The final report of the university wide research evaluation, RQ20, was published. Unfortunately it did not contain useful input for the Centre as such. Nonetheless, the Centre has held a couple of meetings related to research strategy and will work to strengthen and further develop its research during 2021.

During the year research seminars have been held where staff and visiting scholars have presented their current research and new project ideas.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION AND PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

The pandemic cut short all participation in international conferences. Some conferences were cancelled and others were moved to 2021. Marina Svensson served in two Ph.D. committees in Lund.

EDUCATION

Despite concerns that due to the pandemic there would be a decrease in the number of international master students, the fall semester saw 28 new students beginning the master programme in Asian studies. During the year two new BA level courses were given focusing on the Chinese respectively Japanese society and politics. Due to the pandemic teaching has been partly online during the year that has impacted the natural interaction among staff and students and prevented the normal social activities organised at the Centre. The graduation ceremony was however held, outdoors, with only the graduating students present but broadcast live to enable friends and family to watch it.

In October, the Centre organised its fourth alumni event that this time had to be held online. Three alumnae discussed their experience as students and their careers after graduation.

The Centre applied for and got funding for pedagogical development of the methods course. It also applied for and got extra funding (hås) for two new master level courses on religion respectively documentary film.

In September the Centre started its Ph.D. programme with three Ph.D. students. It organised two courses and held several joint seminars for the students.

VISIBILITY

During the year, the Centre published five newsletters and also maintained its social media presence on mainly Facebook and Instagram. The Centre was also visible through Nicholas Loubere's co-editorship of the online journal Made in China.

Several of the staff wrote about and/or gave interviews related to Covid-19 and its impact on the region. Paul O'Shea for example wrote an article in The Conversation in December, and Marina Svensson was interviewed in the series of video interviews organized by Lund University in the spring.

Staff from the Centre also held public talks outside of the university. Gina Song-Lopez for example gave a talk about her research at the Sci-Tech Asia Research Network. Marina Svensson gave talks for high school teachers in Lund, at the Senioruniversitet in Stockholm, and at FN-förbundet in Kristianstad.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial result for 2020 was 1,550 million SEK in surplus, mainly due to postponement of the postdoctoral positions and less travel and events during the year, and the total surplus capital for the Centre is now 7,361 million SEK. The budget for 2021 is estimated to a planned minus of 1,452 million SEK as part of the surplus capital will be used to finance one Ph.D. student and two postdoctoral fellows.



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