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The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies Strategic Plan 2017-2019

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



2017-2019 Strategic Plan for the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies

Since the mid-1980s, Lund University has promoted Asian studies through different programmes and strategies. The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies was established in late 1996 on the basis of this work and with funding through a parliamentary decree. Its mission is to promote knowledge and research about East and Southeast Asia at Lund University and nationally; undertake education on the region; and maintain a library on contemporary issues in the region. The Centre is multidisciplinary in the composition of its staff, and aims to engage in interdisciplinary research on timely topics and challenges in East and Southeast Asia. The four pillars of the Centre are: education, research, outreach and library services. It has – after twenty years, with recruitment of new staff and the move to a new building – entered a new stage, and will in the coming years work to strengthen and consolidate its profile. The staff of the Centre currently includes one professor emeritus, one professor, one lecturer, three associate senior lecturers (recently recruited) and two researchers, as well as three administrative staff and two librarians. The Centre has Sweden's only library specialising on contemporary East and South-East Asia. The Centre's move to a new building in early 2017 will help strengthen its identity and central role at Lund University. The new premises has the potential to become an attractive meeting-place for scholars and students at Lund University working on the region as well as is a place for hosting visiting researchers. The Centre is committed to promote a strong research environment with the aim to become a leading institution in Europe that will help further strengthen Lund University's international profile.

The Centre's strategic plan is in line with Lund University's strategic plan for 2017- 2026 and also builds on Lund University's research strategy 2017-2021 – both of which stress the importance of international perspectives and global engagements, research on global challenges, and boundary-crossing and interdisciplinary research. These two strategy documents also underline the importance of linking teaching and research, as well as the importance of outreach and public engagement. Furthermore, the Centre's strategy is in line with the Lund University's Special Units (USV) research strategy adopted in 2015, which emphasises the need for high-quality interdisciplinary research and collaboration across faculties. The forthcoming Asia strategy (to be adopted in the autumn of 2017), among other things, outlines a commitment to promote collaboration with Asian universities, and highlights the importance of research on contemporary East and South-East Asia, both of which are key elements of the Centre's strategic plan. The Centre's strategy also pays close attention to national research developments and higher education policy directives, including the recent Swedish research proposal (forskningspropositionen 2016).

THE CENTRE'S ROLE AND ORGANISATIONAL PLACE AT LUND UNIVERSITY

The Centre is currently part of the USV but in 2019 it will move to a faculty. The choice of faculty, currently underway, will be based on a careful consideration of respective faculties' strengths and interests in developing and strengthening interdisciplinary research and education on East and South-East Asia. However, regardless of which faculty is chosen, the Centre is committed to continue to work to facilitate and strengthen its cross-faculty collaboration when it comes to both education and research. As part of the organisational re-structuring, the Centre is doing a review of its current structure and financial situation, including a selfevaluation of its performance, strengths and weaknesses, with an aim to be able to meet new challenges and expectations in the coming years.

The Centre strives to strengthen its role as a meeting-place for scholars and students at Lund University with an interest in East and South-East Asia. The Centre organises lectures, seminars, workshops and film screenings, which are open to all staff and students at Lund University, as well as to the wider interested general public. In order to strengthen ties with other institutions the Centre has nominated affiliated scholars, some of who also teach at the Centre. Additionally, the Centre manages an expert list and an e-mail list, and collaborates with other scholars and institutions within the University when organising events and developing joint research projects. The Centre is member of the recently established Human Rights Research Hub at Lund University, which provides a new and important platform for interdisciplinary approaches to human rights studies in comparative perspective.

The Centre may, given availability, provide office space for researchers in Lund who are working on research projects together with researchers at the Centre. It will also seek to host visiting scholars from East and South-East Asia.

NATIONAL AND NORDIC COLLABORATION

The Centre is the largest institution in Sweden with a focus on contemporary East and South-East Asia, and also houses the largest library on the region. The Centre strives to further its contacts and collaboration with scholars at other universities in Sweden through, for example, joint research projects, events, co-hosting visiting scholars from East and South-East Asia, and providing possibilities for short-term visits for Ph.D. students and other scholars working on topics within the expertise of the Centre's researchers. Whenever possible, scholars are encouraged to apply for national and international grants and fellowships that would place them at the Centre. The Centre, thus, aims to play a leading role in the advancement of Asian studies in Sweden.

The Centre strives to further strengthen its contacts and collaborations with scholars at universities in the Nordic region, such as Copenhagen University and Oslo University, as well as with the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen. The Centre is a paying member of the Nordic NIAS Council (NNC), which means that all student and staff at Lund University have access to the Asiaportal's online databases and other resources (such as newspapers), as well as prioritised access to the NIAS support programme (for example SUPRA scholarships and workplaces for Masters students at NIAS in Copenhagen). In this way, the Centre plays a central role in Nordic cooperation and will strengthen its work, for example, through hosting the NIAS NNC conference in 2019.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKS AND COLLABORATION

The Centre benefits from Lund University's general agreements with a number of leading universities and institutions in East and South-East Asia. It currently has MoUs with Beijing University, Waseda University, Kebangsaan University and the Tata Institute, which provide courses for the Centre's master students during their fourth semester. Individual scholars at the Centre have close contact and collaborate with scholars at Beijing University, Fudan University, Zhejiang University, Zhongshan University, China Agricultural University, Xiamen University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Thammasat University, the National University of Singapore, and Tohoku University in Japan. Over the coming years the Centre will focus on establishing and strengthening its contacts with universities in Japan and Korea. To this end, the Centre will explore possibilities for applying for grants from different funding agencies, such as the Korea Foundation. The Centre also strives to develop closer contacts with leading Asia research institutes across the world such as the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden and the Australian Centre on China in the World at the Australian National University. The Centre is currently setting up an advisory board of international scholars representing different fields and institutions, and will organise a range of network meetings on some prioritised research topics. The Centre also seeks to further expand and strengthen its academic reach through different kinds of research networks and memberships, including through the establishment of a network of affiliated researchers. Individual scholars at the Centre are, in addition, involved in a variety of academic associations focusing on China, Japan, and South-East Asia.

RESEARCH PRIORITY AREAS

Individual research projects currently cover topics such as domestic politics in Cambodia, religion and disasters in South-East Asia, gender, Buddhism and communal jurisdiction in Thailand and Myanmar, microcredit programmes in China, economic development in China, children's issues in China, China's digital society, cultural heritage issues in China, Japan's foreign policy, and international relations in East Asia. In order to further these existing research projects, individual researchers will be submitting smaller funding applications over the next few years. Additionally, the Centre is working to consolidate its research profile, and aims to develop a couple of larger research projects over the coming two years. The new research agenda builds on previous research strengths of the scholars at the Centre, but also aims to identify new promising fields and research frontiers. This research agenda is underpinned by a transregional focus on flows of people, ideas, and goods – and the impact of these flows on individuals, communities, the environment, human security, etc. This transregional perspective is currently being applied to existing projects on labour issues, migration, communication and film, disasters and environmental issues, and will be further developed over the next few years. This focus on transregional issues opens up for new ways of studying the region, and links domestic, regional and global developments.

Infused with this broad transregional agenda, the Centre aims to consolidate and develop three interlinked interdisciplinary themes:

1) Digital Asia

Asia has the largest Internet population in the world in absolute numbers. It is also at the forefront of digital developments in many fields, including governance, entertainment and e-commerce. However, the region represents a diverse digital landscape reflecting heterogeneous political and socio-economic realities. Building on the Digital China project (funded by the Swedish Research Council and hosted at the Centre from 2013 to 2018) the Centre aims to consolidate its position as a leading research institution in the field through the recruitment of external researchers and visiting scholars, new funding applications, and an

expansion to cover developments in selected countries such as Cambodia and Japan. This research also relates to, and links with, the two other research themes.

2) Human rights and social justice

The Centre has several scholars working on different human rights issues (including freedom of speech, labour rights and gender), civil society, and social justice in the region. The Centre's membership in the recently established Human Rights Research Hub at Lund University provides a new platform to develop and strengthen our work in this field. Researchers at the Centre are also actively engaged in research on labour and civil society in China through their involvement in the Made in China project, consisting of the publication of an open access quarterly journal and yearbook, and the organisation of an annual summer school.

3) Global challenges and international relations

The region's importance for global economic development and geopolitics, as well as underlying tensions and conflicts within the region, are important topics for research that will be further developed at the Centre. For example, through the One Belt, One Road initiative, China is playing a growing role not only in East and Southeast Asia, but also in Africa and Europe. Tensions on the Korean peninsula continue and involve several countries in East Asia, but have implications far beyond the region. Other non-traditional security issues, including food security, sustainability and environmental issues, are also topics that researchers at the Centre address and aim to develop.

EDUCATION

The Centre currently has a two-year master programme that recruits around 30 students annually. The programme is interdisciplinary in character and builds on, and is related to, the research undertaken by the Centre's researchers. The Centre strives to ensure that new and innovative research will be integrated into education and will form the basis for the development of new courses. In order to ensure a high quality in teaching, particular emphasis is placed on developing teachers' pedagogical skills. Teachers from other faculties also teach on the Centre's programme and serve as supervisors, while teachers from the Centre are involved in teaching and other tasks at other faculties. The Centre aims to strengthen knowledge on East and South-East Asia in other courses and programmes at the university, and to this end will discuss further collaboration regarding teaching and developing new courses at the undergraduate level, and also so-called SAS courses.

Many of the Centre's graduates have been accepted to Ph.D. programmes at universities around the world. The Centre also aims to develop its own Ph.D. programme, or to collaborate with existing Ph.D. programmes at Lund University. Researchers at the Centre are also interested in co-supervising Ph.D. candidates at other faculties and universities working on the region within the scope of our expertise, as well as serve on Ph.D. committees, examination boards, etc.

The Centre aims to further develop and connect with alumni, and plans to regularly invite former students and previous postdoctoral fellows to contribute to its future development.

LIBRARY

The Asia Library is the foremost library of its kind in Sweden, with the largest collection of books on contemporary East and South-East Asia. It serves scholars and students interested in contemporary East and South-East Asia at Lund University, as well as nationally. The library is open to the general public and also handles interlibrary loans to other libraries around the world. The library's holdings are centred on contemporary issues within the social sciences – including social issues, human rights, politics, economics, development issues, information and communication technologies (ICTs), gender, environmental issues and international relations. The librarians also focus on strengthening and developing the digital library. They aim to stay updated on research frontiers and new work in the field of interdisciplinary Asian studies, and to support current research projects at the Centre – e.g. digital developments in East and South-East Asia. Since the move to new premises the library also serves as an important space for different educational and cultural activities, and is used for book launches, public lectures and film screenings.

OUTREACH AND OPEN ACCESS

The Centre will continue to develop and improve its research communication and outreach work. This includes the launching of a newsletter in early 2017, the further development of the Centre's website, as well as actively making use of other communication channels at Lund University – including Lund University Magazine, Lund University Research Magazine, etc. The Centre also maintains an active social media presence (particularly on Facebook and LinkedIn). Researchers at the Centre make use of blogs and other open access channels, as well as traditional media, to spread their research and provide information to the general public. The Centre's policy is to encourage and prioritise open access publication. Researchers are also requested to publish their research outputs and other activities in Lund University's Research Information Systems (LUCRIS).

The Centre has started a partnership with the Lund University Foreign Affairs Association (UPF), which includes publishing information about activities in their newsletters and magazines, as well as collaborating in the organisation of regular events and seminars.

The Centre organises regular public lectures and film screenings each semester, and at least three to four thematic workshops and international conferences each year. It also organises other events, including network meetings with scholars across faculties in order to strengthen knowledge about East and South-East Asia at Lund University.

ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The Centre follows and respects the core values laid down in the Magna Charta Universitatum and the Lund University Strategic Plan. This means that it upholds values such as academic freedom, freedom of opinion, respect for everyone's equal value, and other general human rights in teaching and research. Respect, nondiscrimination and gender equality form the basis for the work environment at the Centre. The Centre strives to create an environmentally-friendly workplace, and this is reflected in its purchasing and travel policy. To this end the Centre is currently working towards fulfilling the criteria for receiving the Lund University environmental certificate.

THE CENTRE'S GOALS

- The Centre aims to develop cutting-edge research and consolidate its research profile through strategic grant applications.
- The Centre will work to strengthen quality evaluation processes in education and research.
- The Centre will work to further develop the library's position as a leading national institution.
- The Centre aims to further strengthen the professional development of all staff.
- The Centre will work to facilitate and strengthen cross-faculty collaboration when it comes to education and research at Lund University.
- The Centre will further raise the profile of its research through active research communication and outreach.
- The Centre aims to serve as a resource and knowledge bank on East and South-East Asia at Lund University, and for the general public and other societal actors (such as government, civil society and the business community).
- The Centre will work to maintain contacts with its growing international alumni network of students and former post-doctoral fellows.
- The Centre will work to strengthen its national and international contacts and network through visiting research fellowships, partnerships, conferences and research collaborations.



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