

 niAS review 2008/2009



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The NIAS mission

NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies is an academically independent Nordic research and service institute.

- NIAS focuses on societal transformations in modern Asia within their historical contexts.
- NIAS' activities and services comprise: basic and applied research; teaching and support for research and education; provision of expert information resources and services; scientific publishing; dissemination of research; intellectual exchange and networks.
- NIAS contributes to the coordination, consolidation and expansion of Asian studies in the Nordic region through collaboration with the Nordic universities and research institutions that are members of the Nordic NIAS Council.
- NIAS works in close collaboration with Copenhagen University as core partner to develop their programmes in Asian studies.

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'There is nothing merely academic about purely academic work.' This sentence ends Timo Kivimäki's article in this review under the headline 'University class turned peace process'. The sentence is also brilliantly characteristic of much of the work that NIAS carried out or was a part of during through 2008 and into 2009. Some of it is highlighted on the following pages.

Trine Brox shares her experience as a specialist on Tibetan society and politics. In her doctoral dissertation she gives different individuals and groups from Tibet a voice, and based on a deep knowledge of their perspectives, she interprets their intentions and goals and communicates this to a wider audience. Academic, yes, absolutely, but not merely that.

Nils Finn Munch-Petersen gives us a snapshot view of the Maldives, a place he has been familiar with for more than 30 years. During this period he has acquired knowledge that is now in demand from a series of international organizations.

For years NIAS has been engaged in Korean affairs, and in November 2008 we hosted the Second Nordic-DPRK Workshop at the premises of the Danish Foreign Ministry. This time the focus was on sustainable energy for a new beginning in North Korea. Birte Holst Jørgensen, who participated in that workshop representing Nordic Energy Research (NER), mentions in her contribution to this review an important project where NER commissioned NIAS to draft a report on Nordic collaboration with China on energy research and innovation. NIAS was the natural choice, she says, due to its reputation within Asian studies and its large network. We do appreciate this.

We make strong efforts to maintain our good reputation, our visibility and usefulness. The NIAS Library and Information Centre has developed a portal, a great meeting place for information on Asian affairs, which is visited by 5,000 people each week. It is certainly a precious place for researchers and students of Asia, but more than that, it is also a gold mine for journalists and people engaged in foreign affairs. It is academic but certainly not merely academic.

The same is true of our Press, which publishes academic material on Asian topics, but disseminates it far beyond the university environment. With the newly introduced digital publishing, this current outreach will expand considerably.

And finally, based on our Asia expertise and our solid relations with the Nordic Center Fudan in China and the Nordic Center India, NIAS hopes to become a useful contributor towards the Globalization strategy of the Nordic Council of Ministers. This will be another example of important research-based advisory work with a host of political implications.

As underlined in Timo Kivimäki's contribution to this review, what he has experienced in his work is that theories can be practical tools, that academic work can be a creative force in a conflict resolution process, and that university collaboration thus serves societies. I have mentioned some of the more spectacular aspects of our work which are reflected in this review. To be able to serve the community locally as well as globally there is two basic preconditions that need to be in place: solid research and high quality publications. Most of our time is dedicated to that kind of work – doing studies in Asian affairs, analysing the results and writing articles and books – but we are happy with and proud of the above-mentioned practical 'side effects'.



*Geir Helgesen
Director*

University class turned peace process

Timo Kivimäki, Senior Researcher, NIAS

Indonesia's West Kalimantan province has suffered from communal conflict, and at the turn of the millennium the Indonesian province became infamous for two massive cannibalistic riots. While the massive violence has not continued, there have been smaller violent incidents with several people killed every year. None of the conflict disputes have been solved either. A NIAS-led peace studies network on the ASEM Education Hub platform has been working in the areas offering teaching on conflict resolution and peace studies in several M.A. classes at the local Tanjungpura University. One of the classes has been targeted toward the very same ethnic leaders who mobilized the mass riots and later tried to make peace with each other. On December 15th, this class stepped off its educational platform and transferred itself into a peace process under the auspices of the vice president of Indonesia. This transition could offer a model on how purely academic work can serve the purpose of capacity building for peace and actual pre-negotiation for a peace process.

ASEM Peace Studies Network teaching in Kalimantan has been based on an assumption that while recognizing the expertise of local intellectuals in understanding the local conflict conditions, comparative research can still offer something to deepen this understanding. Every lecture starts with a general lecture based on comparative conflict studies, focused on a theme that is crucial for the understanding of the conflict in West Kalimantan. In a way, the introduction of each lecture attempts to carry lessons from conflicts all over the world for scrutiny in West Kalimantan. This introductory lecture has been the task of NIAS Senior Researcher, Timo Kivimäki. Next, the local professor, Dr. Syarif I, Alqadrie has applied the global lessons to the Kalimantan context. In the third phase, the "students" discuss the Kalimantan experience trying to think what went wrong in the run-up to the conflict, and what should be done to prevent the conflict from escalating again. These "students" are of course the main actors in the West Kalimantan conflict: elected leaders of ethnic associations of each major ethnic group from the five conflict-affected districts. It is natural that in this process, a lot of practical negotiation takes place between the leaders of the main conflicting community leaders. However, a university class cannot

pretend to be a negotiation venue. Yet, it would have been such a waste to keep the cooperation purely academic, and not to utilize the confidence built in the class. It would likewise have been a waste not to utilize the explicit consensus "pre-negotiated" around such crucial issues as how to prevent violent inter-ethnic crime from turning into communal conflict, how to help the police react quickly in the case of conflict triggering events by offering them community-based conflict early warning, and how to foster communication and confidence-building between communities. During 2008 NIAS worked on a solution that could help the situation.

Indonesia's vice president is known for his expertise in conflict resolution. This is why it was natural that the leader of the ASEM Conflict Studies Network, NIAS' Timo Kivimäki approached vice president's able deputy for political affairs, Prof. Djohermansyah, who quickly saw the potential for progress in West Kalimantan. Preparations for the conversion of the ethnic leaders' class into a permanent communication forum started in spring 2008. Finally, on December 15, Professor Djohermansyah joined the ASEM programme, and took over the ethnic class, and inaugurated the West Kalimantan Ethnic Communication Forum. The inauguration ceremony was attended by public

Bengkayang Dayak leader Suherman Acap signs the Pasir Panjang Declaration that establishes Ethnic Communication Forum →

officials from the province on all levels of regional administration, as well as by the provincial police chief, and all chiefs of the police districts. As expected, the inaugural meeting of the West Kalimantan Ethnic Communication Forum reached agreements on many issues crucial for conflict prevention. The Pasir Panjang Declaration establishing the forum was signed by the ethnic leaders, the two initiators of the forum (Alqadrie and Kivimäki) and the facilitator of the work of the forum, Prof. Djohermansyah. Furthermore, the forum decided on the principles of operation, conflict early warning cooperation with the provincial police, crisis management action (to be taken after a "triggering event" has taken place), work for the removal of root causes of conflict, and on the practical working forms and schedules of the forum. Many issues will be left for further meetings, but the fact that all the leaders of each of the conflict districts value the permanence of dialogue and problem solving between communities, is already a big step in the right direction. Ethnic leaders are not almighty – conflict could of course happen even if these leaders opposed it. But with this cooperation it is unlikely that these leaders would mobilize the mobs and militias. It is also less likely that ordinary people could mobilize ethnic sentiments for violent purposes if the respected ethnic leaders explicitly go



Timo becomes an honorary member of the Madurese community.

against such mobilization. The fact that a university class could spill over this kind of a peace process, proves that theory is practical and university collaboration can serve the societies. There is nothing merely academic about purely academic work.



The enchanted gift of democracy

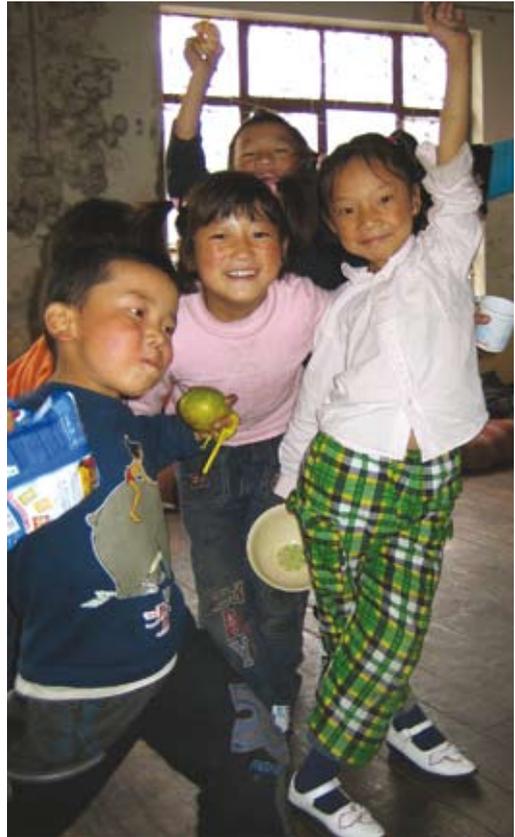
Trine Brox, PhD, University of Copenhagen

NIAS provided me with shelter during the concluding months of writing my PhD thesis 'The Enchanted Gift of Democracy: Imagining and Negotiating Democracy in the Tibetan Diaspora'. Coming to NIAS' inclusive and enriching interdisciplinary scholarly environment invigorated my efforts during a critical phase of writing and helped me bring my project to a close in a satisfactory way.

My PhD project enquired into Tibetan exiles' imaginations and negotiations of what a Tibetan way of democracy is and can be. I carried out field research over 41 weeks in four different exile-Tibetan settlements in North and South India: Dharamsala, Dekyiling, Lugsam and Dickey Larsoe. The Tibetans whom I met – the freedom fighters, politicians, village leaders, civil servants, intellectuals, soldiers, farmers, students, monks and nuns – were generous in opening their homes to me, in telling me their stories and in sharing their viewpoints with me. In the end, I completed 173 in-depth interviews, out of which fifty-five were conducted in Tibetan language.

The field of research was a politically charged and conflict-ridden setting, and the atmosphere during my stay in communities of Tibetan exiles in India was heated up by several rallies, such as the protests against the Chinese border patrol shooting at fleeing Tibetans in September 2006, and in November, protests against Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to India, during which a young Tibetan activist attempted self-immolation. Also when analysing the collected material and writing the thesis in Copenhagen, several incidents alerted me to the political nature of my study: The tidal wave of Tibetan protests from Central to Eastern Tibet beginning in March 2008, coinciding with the heightened political activism outside of Tibet during the year leading up to the Beijing Olympics in August 2008 and the 50 year anniversary of the Tibetan exile exodus in April 2009.

The goal of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in India is to fight for a free and democratic



Tibetan children at the refugee reception centre in Dharamsala. *Photo: T. Brox*

Tibet, and to prepare the Tibetans for a return to such a new Tibet in the future. Tibetans view the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as the architect of their democracy, since it was he who initiated and legitimised the launching of several democratic reforms in exile. Crucial, therefore, to our understanding of democratisation in the

Monks and lay persons demonstrating for a free Tibet. →
Photo: T. Brox

Tibetan context is the fact that it is perceived by the exiles as a gift handed to them by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Since this gift was given by a person of highest spiritual and temporal authority, namely the Dalai Lama, and since it is therefore strongly associated with his splendour, it is an enchanted gift. The impact of this 'being a gift' and 'being enchanted' is so considerable that one finds its imprint in institutions and procedures, and one finds it again and again reflected in the ways Tibetans talk about their democracy. In my thesis, these Tibetan voices are debating the form and content of democracy 'the Tibetan way' by remembering the past, negotiating the present, and imagining the future.

In March 2009, while Tibetans in India commemorated 50 years in exile with protests, hunger strikes and countless rallies, I celebrated the completion of a PhD degree. The final product of more than three years' work as a PhD student, the thesis *The Enchanted Gift of Democracy*, was a 362-page monograph on democracy and democratisation among Tibetan exiles living in India. At the time of writing, there are no indications that these Tibetans can



A Tibetan farmer resting after maize harvest, Dickey Larsoe. Photo: T. Brox.

return to their homeland and prove their democratic intent by putting their experiences with democracy into practice in Tibet.



The Maldives – victim of uncontrolled growth

Nils Finn Munch-Petersen, NIAS Associate, Senior Expert

*The Maldives form a string of low lying coral atolls and islands in the Indian Ocean to the west of Sri Lanka stretching from 7° north to just 45' south of the Equator. No natural elevation on the islands is more than 3 metres above high tide level. While there are other atolls and coral islands in Asian seas, only the Maldives comprise a nation state. Other atolls and coral islands in Asia are part of larger agglomerated states, a base for western powers or uninhabited islands claimed by a number of contesting governments. Three atoll states are found in the Pacific: Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. The term atoll is of Maldivian origin, coined by Charles Darwin as the geographical term for a coral ring reef with islands. The Maldivian word **atholu** denotes an administrative entirety.*

It is not known when the islands were first settled but linguistic evidence would place the time around the settlement of Sri Lanka or a few centuries later. In 362, the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus mentions the *Divi*, the Maldivians, as clearly different from the Sinhalese *Serendivi*. The first mention of a centralised Maldivian state is given by the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi in 1150, while the Maldivian history, *Tariq* – the state chronicle of Maldivian rulers from 1141 to 1821 – describes the islanders' conversion to Islam in 1153 and the founding of a Muslim Sultanate. The Maldivian sultanate continued with an almost unbroken series of sultans and sultanas up to 1968. Still all Maldivians are Muslims by law, the vast majority belonging to the Sunni Shafi'i school of Islam also adhered to by coastal Muslims in South India, Sri Lanka and on the Yemen coasts.

Until the advent of steamships the Maldives functioned as a way station, a *port-of-trade*, on shipping routes crossing the Indian Ocean, with the island capital Male' as the commercial centre monopolising trade and being the absolute centre of power. As part of the ocean trade routes the Maldives received impulses and migrants first from Hadramaut and Oman, and later from Persia, South India, Gujarat, Bengal and Aceh forging a com-

mon identity through the adaptation of elements from a broad spectrum of cultures. Maldivians see themselves as quite distinct from their South Asian neighbours both culturally and linguistically as well as defined by their special physical environment. Maldivian society is characterised by the absence of caste, by being monolingual and mono-religious, by a very high literacy rate, by an open marriage system, a high divorce rate, bilateral kinship and by a large degree of sexual independence. The Maldivian language Dhivehi and the Maldivian script Taana, written from right to left, further cement the national identity.

When the wealth from the sailing ships vanished during the late 1800s the Maldives withdraw from the outside world: foreign visits became rare and the Maldivian economy solely dependent on the export of dried tuna and the import of rice. The Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887 and gained independence in 1965. During the time of the Protectorate, however, the British had little interest in the islands and did not influence government or administration significantly. Maldivian exclusivity continued through the 1960s and 1970s.

The Maldivian sultanate was dissolved in 1968 through a bloodless coup carried out by the former grand vizier Ibrahim

Naseer who ruled as a dictator until 1978. Ibrahim Naseer was followed by 30 years of autocratic, nepotistic and erratic rule by Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the former minister of transport. During this period the economy of the Maldives changed significantly, as tourism, based on foreign investments, became the mainstay of the islands. The early start was the establishment of a small 20-room resort in 1973 on the island of Vihamanaafushi close to the capital Malé. Growth in tourism was initially slow, but became exponential during the 1990s. There are now 92 tourist resorts within the islands, with a yearly occupancy of 5 million bed-nights. Most resorts are located on formerly uninhabited islands and located in the central atolls near to the capital. With the advent of sea-plane transport further 49 resorts have been planned, spread over the full archipelago. The main tourist flows come from Italy, Germany, Switzerland and France, with only minimal numbers of Nordic visitors.

By law 50% of resort employees have to be Maldivian nationals. However only 2% of Maldivians employed in the resort tourism sector are women. Life in the majority of islands has come to a near standstill with able men away on the tourist islands and the old, the infirm, women and children depending on money transfers from the tourist resorts. While the Maldives have by far the highest literacy rate in South Asia, there are no institutions for higher education in the islands, and accordingly Maldivian youth have to go abroad for tertiary education.

From being a nation with mainly equal partnerships, and full respect for all Maldivian nationals, the differences between rich and poor have grown to dangerous proportions. The Maldives have followed the Arabian Gulf States and Saudi Arabia in importing inexpensive foreign labour, mainly from Bangladesh, thereby limiting employment opportunities for young Maldivians. There are now more than 70,000 legal and illegal foreign workers on the islands, while Maldivian traditional skills are vanishing. Skilled

and unskilled manual labour has now, almost exclusively, become an activity for foreigners.

The transformation of the Maldives from a production to a service economy has left the young generation with little cognizance of history. Due to the influx of foreign workers, manual work, except for fishing and services on tourist resorts, is now considered below the dignity of Maldivians. With the present world recession and contraction of the tourism industry this perception, paired with the lack of tertiary education, has left a majority of young people – notably young males – without work, and without employment opportunities, and as a consequence there is a significant growth in crime and Islamic fundamentalism.

On a visit to Malé in 1922 the archaeological commissioner of Ceylon H.C.P. Bell mentions the 'over-dense population' of the capital island. At the time of his visit the total population of Male' was 6,127. Due to the tourism industry the capital Malé, 2 square kilometers in area, has now grown out of all proportions, presently holding a population exceeding 130,000 – more than one third of the population of the archipelago. A strange ultra-dense town with 8-, 9- and 10-storey buildings, congested by motorized traffic. Near-by islands have been depopulated or converted into tourist resorts.

The government of the Maldives changed on 11 November 2008 after the first open and democratic elections in the country. Mohamed Nasheed, a political prisoner under the former government, was elected president. Autocratic tendencies are already reemerging, and it is an open question if the incipient democracy will persist. The last 30 years of unplanned, uncontrolled growth has created a nation of privileged and underprivileged, dependent on foreign workers and the vagrancies of the tourism industry.

Nils Finn Munch-Petersen has done extensive research on atoll cultures. He first carried out fieldwork in the Maldives during 1974 and 1977-79 and has since made numerous visits to the islands. During 1986-87 and 1990 he worked in the Pacific atoll nations Kiribati and Tuvalu.

One world, one dream

Prospects for cooperation in energy research between the Nordic region and Asia

Birte Holst Jørgensen, Director, Nordic Energy Research, Oslo

The concept of one world, one dream guided the Olympic Games held in China in 2008, and may similarly guide global efforts to develop a sustainable energy future that effectively combats climate change, secures energy supply and creates economic growth.

When Nordic Energy Research launched a small programme in 2007 focusing on research and innovation in energy technologies, we wanted to explore the future framework conditions for energy research and innovation in an international perspective. Since 1985 Nordic Energy Research has supported energy research projects within the Nordic region of common Nordic interest. In 2000, cooperation was opened to the three Baltic countries and Northwest Russia, and later - with the development of the European Research Area - collaboration with other European countries was strengthened.

With the Nordic region's recent focus on globalisation, we are exploring cooperation with other countries with which we share common interests. Nordic exports of energy technologies are increasing, not only to traditional markets in the OECD but also to emerging economies such as China and Russia. Market opportunities in China for cleaner and more efficient energy technologies are indeed huge – China is one of the largest economies in the world, the world's second largest energy consumer and after recently surpassing the US, it has become the largest emitter of CO₂.

With its reputation within Asian studies and its large network, NIAS was the natural choice to produce a report on Nordic collaboration with China on energy research and innovation. The report offers an up-to-date description of Chinese energy challenges, strategies, policies and research programmes, while providing examples of how Nordic governments and companies are involved in research

collaboration and the promotion of energy technologies and competencies. Finally, the analysis also provides recommendations for small countries like those in the Nordic region as to how best to approach the giant in a feasible way.

In the study, NIAS points to a lack of coherence and focus in Nordic cooperation with China with regard to low-carbon and renewable energy. As a response to this, NIAS advocates a staged process beginning with a Norden*-China expert committee analysing key aspects of transnational energy research cooperation. We started this process in 2009 with support from the Nordic Council of Ministers and look forward to continuing our cooperation with NIAS. Combining NIAS' expertise on China with our competence in energy research and innovation will surely bring added value to this work.

We foresee the expert committee serving as an ideas lab for concretising energy research and innovation cooperation between Norden and China. The committee will organise a discussion session on Norden-China technology collaboration at the Nordic Climate Solutions conference in September 2009, and later present their findings during the Nordic Day at the Shanghai Expo in 2010. This day will promote Nordic energy solutions and at the same time bring together Nordic and Chinese stakeholders to discuss how to jointly develop new energy solutions.

*Norden (the Nordic area) is commonly understood to comprise Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

New energy solutions were also presented to a high level expert delegation from North Korea in December 2008 in Copenhagen. The visit was organised by NIAS, who together with Dong Energy, the Danish Energy Authority, Nordic Energy Research and others, had the opportunity to present how energy research and development can provide cleaner and more sustainable solutions to the energy sector.

The work we have done in cooperation with NIAS over the last year shows that irrespective of differences in culture, size, systems and economies, we are one world and share one dream. Hopefully, this dream will be closer to coming true after the world meets in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 to decide how best to combat climate change.

Which country? (And why should we care?)

Geir Helgesen, Director, NIAS

A closed and isolated country, a nuclear headache, a producer and tester of missiles, a standing army of 1.2 million men and many more in the reserves, a country divided across antagonistic ideological lines, a security hazard and an enigmatic entity with whom neighbours are cautious and strangers flabbergasted. Add to this a serious economic downturn plus natural catastrophes causing famine in the 1990s, a political system unmatched by any in the present world and comprehended by few, a place on earth about which any story goes, because who really knows? Despite its size and relatively tiny international importance, this place preoccupies worldwide media, often on a daily basis, and the stories told are easily reminiscent of those ascribed to Baron von Münchhausen.

So, which country is this? We are dealing with North Korea, or, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is easy to pile up strange and some time horrific stories ascribed to that country and its political authorities. Whether they are true or not is often beside the point. Most people have an opinion about North Korea, and this opinion is seldom positive. This was clearly felt when, as the initiator and organizer of the second Nordic-DPRK workshop, I contacted potential Nordic partners for the project. The first reaction was seldom enthusiastic: North Korea, well, it's not a market, is it? Do they trade at all? Who is in the group you are inviting? All questions with an assumed negative answer.

In the end we succeeded in establishing good contacts with a handful of companies, both public and private. The delegation came all the way from Pyongyang,

over Beijing to Copenhagen. They stayed for 10 days in this region, and together we traveled within Denmark, and to Norway and Sweden, to different institutions dealing with sustainable energy – something that has reached top priority in North Korea these days. The delegation consisted of energy experts on different levels, from practitioners, and leading personnel in power stations, to scientists in the field of electro-physics and members of their country's prestigious Academy of Science. Across language barriers, cultural barriers, political barriers, and despite all kinds of practical difficulties, the delegates and their different Nordic hosts met at a point where they had something to talk about, something of shared interest. It was as clear as Norwegian mountain springs that the North Korean delegation had come here to learn, and that they were eager

to meet people within their own field with whom they could discuss ways of improving the energy situation in their own country.

And, so? Is there a lesson to be learned from this? Before North Koreans can be assisted in rebuilding their economy, the preconditions for cooperation have to be established. With this project, we have started a dialogue, which means that we have started the process of building trust. Nothing will change in the relations between North Korea and the world without a basic level of trust in place. The Nordic countries have had diplomatic relations with North Korea for 35 years, we have never been at war with each other, and although the geographical distance is huge, this era of globalization enables us to take up our part of the challenge of building friendship and peace as we should. Seen from Pyongyang (as well as from Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing), the Nordic world is very often perceived as ideal, as a region of fairy tales and welfare societies. We may not always practice exactly what we preach, but, it would be a pity to neglect this basically positive East Asian attitude towards the Nordic region. And it would also be a pity if we did not utilize this position in order to contribute to making the world a safer and better place to live,



Visiting Dong Energy, Avedøreværket, Denmark. *Photo: G. Helgesen*

through dialogue, trust and cooperation.

The Nordic–DPRK energy workshop was sponsored by the foreign ministries in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.



Presentation of Lund Energy windmill park, Sweden. *Photo: G. Helgesen*

Nothing and everything has changed

Gerald Jackson, Editor in Chief, NIAS Press

One evening in September 2008, while attending festivities related to the Institute's fortieth anniversary, I chatted to an American political insider about the flagging fortunes of Barrack Obama in the US presidential race. He predicted that, unless the economy became an issue within the next fortnight, Obama would lose the election. Within a fortnight, the credit crunch saw the US economy reeling. The rest, as they say, is history.

Unfortunately, in the months that followed, the whole world economy crashed and burned. Initially, we saw companies hurt by huge drops in consumer spending. But in many places what we are seeing now is consequential cuts in public spending, also in university budgets. Obviously, such cuts threaten the financial position of all academic publishers, NIAS Press included.

At the time of our fortieth anniversary, the Press enunciated a 40:40 vision; it was determined not to squander its 40-year heritage but at the same time was aware that it had to survive the next 40 years by adapting to quite different circumstances. What was uppermost in our minds then was the challenge of e-publishing, not economic survival. The talk was of e-books, byte-sized scholarship, open access, the 'Web 2' revolution, etc., and of the need to preserve traditional standards of academic quality in such a new environment.

Nothing and everything has changed.

Financial prudence is vital in the economic circumstances; more than ever, we are questioning the value of what we do so that what eventually is published has value. But we cannot avoid the future, either. Yes, the whole arena is fraught with instability and incompatible standards while, in the current economic situation, consumer demand will likely fall for e-book readers, iPhones and other devices on which books have begun to migrate. As a result, perhaps there will be less innovation in this area – in the short term.

However, we believe it would be fool-

hardy to put innovation on the backburner. The academic publishing landscape may seem to be changing slowly but beneath the surface we sense that seismic shifts are happening that will have a major effect on how we communicate in the scholarly world – perhaps in as little as five years time. A major drive to communicate with each other through author web pages, Press and author blogs, news feeds, wikis and other Web 2.0 tools. The goal here is to provide the *means* for vigorous interaction on Asia between scholars, institutions, businesses and other external actors but leave the interaction itself fully in the hands of the different participants.

Parallel to this project has been another to digitize as much as possible of the 300+ publications originating from NIAS in the past 40 years. With the vast bulk of these publications out of print, the project will be a key means for a lost seam of Asian Studies scholarship to be rediscovered and disseminated to a global readership. At the same time, in 2009 the Press is moving to publish all of its books in both printed *and electronic* formats.

However, innovation is not enough. We cannot reach for the stars by flinging ourselves at the sky; a steady hand on the ladder is also required. If we are to survive and thrive in a period of major changes and economic challenges, then two things are obvious: we must guard our reputation for publishing high-quality academic research *and* we must understand (and publish) what our authors, readers and libraries actually want.

Some things never change.

Open Access: AsiaPortal as a 'repository' for Nordic Asia Research

Anja Møller Rasmussen, Chief Librarian, NIAS LINC

In 2008 NIAS LINC received a NORDBIB grant for the project Open Access: Networks and Knowledge Dissemination in Nordic Asian Study Institutions. One of our important findings during the project was that researchers from small disciplines seem to be persisting with well-established practices; Though they support Open Access in principle, many still harbour doubts. The powerful influence of research community opinion necessitates a thorough debate based on the community's research traditions and social practices. Moreover, researchers also seem reluctant to store their research outcomes in institutional repositories; they simply fear to "drown" in the huge amount of publications, and worry that their research will not get the needed attention and academic credibility. They prefer to be visible in what they see as an understandable and quality assuring context.

However, local repositories are important tools for the universities and research institutions and cannot be ignored! Based on our findings, we have developed a model where Nordic Asia scholars are informed about the different forms and advantages of Open Access and are encouraged to store their research in their local repository, tagged with an identifier that allows NIAS LINC to harvest their material and re-publish it in AsiaPortal.info.

Put very simply: by creating awareness about the advantages of Open Access models and by encouraging researchers to use these models to store their publications and data, we create support for the local repository as well as secure the wished-for visibility and exposure for scholars. This is done by using a well-known resource such as the AsiaPortal.info aimed at students, colleagues, journalists and others.

Researchers find it useful to store publications if they are assured that they will be exposed to the right users, and users find it useful to look for quality material on Asia in one place. As one of our users puts it:

"I find the documents in the portal of utmost value; finally, I can find new high quality publications from several scholars

and different institutions in one place. I find publications and researchers I did not know existed because I would never find the time to look for information in 26 different databases that I can't even find the URLs for. And I can even find information about researchers. It not only saves time, it also creates exposure and puts research to use in a whole new way. I had no idea that there was so much research out there"

The Collection

Our acquisition policy is to collect all major works and periodicals on modern Asia studies in Western languages within politics, economics, modern history, anthropology, culture, sociology, gender studies, security and terrorism, and development studies.

The library holds 35,768 volumes – 1,006 monographs and 247 electronic documents were added in 2008.

We have 449 current journals, 60 databases and 64 Asian online newspapers available through AsiaPortal.info

NIAS LINC would like to thank all sponsors who contributed to our collection and services in 2005. We look forward to continuing cooperation in the future.

NIAS LINC resource use in percentage

books 18%;
printed journals 12%;
digital media (databases,
electronic journals, etc.) 80%.

NIAS LINC users

External physical users: 7,149
Virtual users at www.niaslinc.dk 15,116
Users on AsiaPortal: 5,000 unique users
per week

Opening hours

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10:00
a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Tuesday: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Friday: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

www.AsiaPortal.info
www.niaslinc.dk

Upcoming sabbatical? Take a look at this:

A creative working environment for Nordic scholars in Asian Studies

What we offer is:

- A place to concentrate, a place where relevant information is available and accessible, and a place where Asian affairs make up a normal topic around the lunch table as well as in seminars and workshops. In other words: the perfect place to stay when you need to focus on your research, whether it is to finish a report or writing a scholarly article.
- The offer includes office space and equipment.

What you need to take care of yourself:

- Funding for travel, board and lodging, local transportation, etc.

What we shall try to assist you with:

- Finding a room or an apartment in the vicinity of NIAS.
- Applying for funds in your home country or elsewhere.

How to proceed, if you want to join the NIAS environment for a while:

- Send us a mail describing your project(s) and a relevant, updated CV.
- Suggested ways of financing the stay.

For more information please contact Project Coordinator Katrine Herold at:
katrine.herold@nias.ku.dk

NNC chairperson's report for 2008

Thommy Svensson, Swedish School of Advance Asia Pacific Studies (SSAAPS), and NNC Chairperson in 2008

NIAS celebrated its 40th anniversary in September 2008. Set up under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) in 1968, with the governments of the five Nordic countries jointly providing the funding, the Nordic anchorage has given NIAS a special service and umbrella function above the universities.

The institute has been thoroughly reorganised in recent years. The new NIAS is no longer an independent Nordic institution but a part of the University of Copenhagen. Since 2005, the funding from the NCM has been reduced and partly replaced by financing from the University of Copenhagen and, up to 2008, by contributions from the Copenhagen Business School and the Lund University. The Nordic mandate is maintained through a Nordic NIAS Council, which is a consortium of 25 universities and research institutions paying a yearly fee for NIAS's services.

Following a period of uncertainty, 2008 has been a year of consolidation. A new contract with the NCM secures continued funding for five years, albeit on a lower level than originally. The Lund University and the Copenhagen Business School have withdrawn as core stakeholders in the institute and their contributions replaced by an extra grant from the NCM and additional resources from the University of Copenhagen. This makes the organisational set-up less complicated and provides better possibilities for long-term planning. At the same time, NIAS remains underfunded and suffers from a structural budget deficit, which has strong impact on the institute's research capacity. NIAS needs additional research posts to attract scholars on a non-tenured basis from other universities for shorter and longer periods.

NIAS gives the NNC members important support. The institute has made investments placing it at the forefront of the electronic revolution, which creates a platform for developing quite unique services to the Nordic community. NIAS world-leading Asia Portal makes vast library and database resources available on-line and offers a range of communication facilities together with more visibility and outreach. The NIAS Press, which is one of the world's foremost publishers on Asia, is building a new platform for electronic publishing and is digitalising its backlist.

The consortium members have also benefitted from the SUPRA-programme, which during 2008 brought 50 students at various levels for short periods to NIAS in Copenhagen. NNC also profits from the institute's research training activities and welcomes the decision to integrate PhD-student components in all major conferences and workshops.

Taken together, NIAS gives important support to the Nordic community with small resources. There is potential to further expand the services if and when fresh funding can be mobilised.

Jörgen Delman took office as Director in 2002. He has left NIAS for the chair of China Studies at the University of Copenhagen. On behalf of the NNC, I sincerely thank him for having led the institute during a difficult period in a strategic way together with NIAS's unusually committed and professional staff, which is the institute's backbone and which provides the continuity that the 40-year-old and at the same time young institute needs.



Nordic NIAS Council member institutions

- o University of Aalborg
- o University of Aarhus
- o Copenhagen Business School
- o University of Copenhagen
(NIAS Core Partner – NNC Observer)
- o University of Helsinki
- o University of Jyväskylä
- o University of Tampere
- o University of Turku
- o Helsinki School of Economics
- o Hanken – Svenska Handelshögskolan
- o University of Akureyri
- o University of Iceland
- o University of Bergen
- o University of Oslo
- o Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration
- o Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- o Chr. Michelsen Institute
- o Fridtjof Nansen Institute
- o International Peace Research Institute (PRIO)
- o Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)
- o Göteborg University
- o Lund University
- o Stockholm University
- o Uppsala University
- o Royal Institute of Technology
- o Swedish School of Advanced Asia Pacific Studies (SSAAPS)

NIAS' board 2008

Chairman

- o *Lars Bille*, Head of Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Copenhagen

Deputy Chairman

- o *Thommy Svensson*, Director, Prof., Swedish School of Advance Asia Pacific Studies (SSAAPS), Nordic NIAS Council Chairman

Members

- o *Geir Helgesen*, Senior Researcher, NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
- o *Thorkil Kastberg Christensen*, Senior Vice President, NOVO A/S
- o *Kirsten Refsing*, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen
- o *Geir Sigurðsson*, Director, ASÍS – Icelandic Centre of Asian Studies, University of Iceland, Nordic NIAS Council Vice Chairman

Nordic NIAS Council Observers

- o *Lauri Paltemaa*, Vice-Director, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for East Asian Studies, University of Turku
- o *Kari Telle*, Post Doc Researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen
- o *Anne Wedell-Wedellsborg*, Professor, Institute of East Asian Studies, Aarhus University

Nordic Council of Ministers Observer

- o Senior Adviser Fredrik Melander

NIAS SUPRA – Contacts and knowledge

Katrine Herold, Project Coordinator, NIAS

Nordic Scholarship for PhD and MA students to visit NIAS

The Nordic Scholarship continues to offer PhD and MA students affiliated with institutions that are members of the Nordic NIAS Council a chance to visit NIAS for two weeks during a semester. The Nordic scholarship covers travel, accommodation and full board at "Nordisk Kollegium". The last students on the Öresund Scholarships visited NIAS in May; then the programme was suspended. Students from Lund now have the opportunity to apply for a full SUPRA scholarship.

In 2008, 46 students visited NIAS on the Nordic Scholarship, 39 of whom were MA Students and 7 of whom were PhD Students.

Student Work place

Students can apply for a 'work place' at NIAS, which gives an opportunity to become part of the Asia research environment at the institute.

More information: www.nias.ku.dk/supra.

New faces ...

Student assistant *Erik Svanström* is now in charge of the day-to-day running of the programme, as well as contact with the SUPRA students. This is done in close cooperation with Project Coordinator *Katrine Herold*.

Former Project Coordinator *Martin Bech* is now working at Nordic Centre Fudan; likewise, Student assistant *Nini Nielsen* has moved to The Danish Institute for Military Studies.

Barha

From 2009, Barha, NIAS' virtual networking space, will not only be used to register SUPRA students but also to bring SUPRA students together to share insights regarding their studies. Bringing our SUPRA students together in a virtual space to network, discuss and share knowledge is a much-welcomed addition to NIAS' traditional services towards Nordic students.

Barha is intended as a Nordic platform for networking among Asian Scholars and students.

What SUPRA students can do with Barha

- Find researchers and resources within your area
- Create communities for information or work sharing
- Start, or participate in, discussions via blogs
- Share your opinions with other Community members
- Communicate your research and collaborate with colleagues
- Use web 2.0 tools (wikis, blogs etc.) for research communication and collaboration
- Self archive Open Access documents and publications
- Easy set-up of profiles
- Get research highlights by following the different bloggers

NIAS's results 2008

Activity	Results 2008	Results 2007	Contract Goals 2007-08
Research			
Research activity, months (researchers >3 months)+short term guest researchers	122.00	125.00	84,00
- of these: guest researchers	16	2	-
Publications			
Research productivity (all researchers)			
- Monographs and edited volumes	8	3	3
- Articles in peer reviewed scientific journals	13	8	7
- Chapters in edited scientific vols	15	5	5
- Other academic publications	20	22	10
- Book reviews	8	5	3
- Dissemination publications	28	22	10
NIAS Press publishing			
Published titles	14	13	12-15
- of these Nordic authors	5	5	8
Proposals for publications	63	61	50
Nordic research support			
Number of Nordic stipends to visit NIAS			
- of these research/PhD stipends	46	47	27
PhD courses	7	8	8
Seminars	1	1	1
- of these presented by foreign guests	17	22	35
NIAS conferences/workshops	15	22	15
Conference papers by NIAS researchers	4	9	4
External seminars and lectures by NIAS researchers	13	23	12
	46	24	12
Public information			
Asia Updates/workshops	0	0	1
Media interventions (radio and TV)	147	188	21
Consulting assignments	9	16	3



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