



LUND  
UNIVERSITY

# The Centre for East and South- East Asian Studies Work Report 2021

CENTRE FOR EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIAN STUDIES





# Work report 2021 for the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies

---

## OVERVIEW

The pandemic has continued to affect the Centre in different ways, most obviously perhaps in having to teach online during the spring semester, although we were back teaching on campus throughout the fall semester. To ensure a safe work environment, larger classes continued to be taught in the Asia library. The majority of our public lectures and other events have been online. There have been difficulties to conduct fieldwork, especially due to restrictions of travel to Asia, which has affected both students and staff; and exchange programmes with for example China and Japan were cancelled. Many of the staff have been working partly from home throughout 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.

## STAFF CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS

During the year the Centre has expanded with the recruitment of two postdoctoral fellows, Paulina Kolata who began working in June and Jinyan Zeng who began working in July. We had two visiting scholars during the spring, Erik Mobrand, currently with the Rand corporation, and Jue Jiang, currently with Newcastle University. In the summer we had a visiting Ph.D. student from Myanmar, Paing Soe, currently doing a Ph.D. at Manchester University. In June our economic administration officer Alice Chen left the Centre for another position, and in August Ann-Marie Kellner was employed to replace her. During the fall two scholars were hired, partly with external funding, to work on an EU Horizon application (see below) and to conduct their own research, Maryia Danilovich and Philipp Renninger. In December the Centre was granted funding for one Ph.D. position and will using its own funding announce two positions for 2022.

In September, the staff had a retreat which was the first time all staff came together since the pandemic, and for many this was the first time they had met their colleagues in the past year. The retreat focused on current work and plans for the future and provided ample time to socialise in a relaxing environment.

## EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES

In 2021, the Centre made extensive use of Zoom to organise a range of public lectures, round tables/panel debates, and other events, that gathered on average between 20 and 80 participants. In total 12 public lectures, seven research seminars, and five round tables/panel debates on topics ranging from the Milk Tea Alliance, the pandemic in Asia, the Belt and Road Initiatives, to the Uighur crisis were held. In addition, the Centre also co-organised an event on academic freedom in Asia with the Asia Centre in Bangkok, and a workshop on Chinese feminist activism with the University of Stavanger.

## NETWORKING AND PARTICIPATION AT OTHER EVENTS IN LUND

The Centre co-organized two events with the Foreign Policy Association, one focused on East Asia: From Trump to Biden, and the other focused on Protecting Student Expression Globally. The latter event was part of a collaboration with Scholars at Risk at Lund University that also included organising a lunch seminar on the academic freedom index.

The Centre paid for the development and maintenance of the Lund University Human Rights hub website during the spring.

### **SWEDISH, NORDIC, AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING**

Marina Svensson has served as Swedish board member of NIAS as well as representative of the NIAS NNC Council. Nicholas Loubere serves as board member of the European Association of Chinese Studies, and Astrid Norén Nilsson serves as board member of the European Association of South-East Asian Studies.

### **VISITING RESEARCHERS AT THE CENTRE**

During the spring semester Jiang Jue, currently Newcastle University, and Erik Mobrand from Seoul National University, currently the Rand Corporation, spent time as visiting scholars at the Centre. Other visiting scholars during the year included, Paing Soe, Maryia Danlovich and Philipp Renninger.

### **RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OUTPUTS**

During the year individual researchers were active in different research projects (see [www.ace.lu.se](http://www.ace.lu.se)). They published a total of 16 journal articles, seven book chapters, ten popular science articles and blogs, seven news articles, and a couple of other contributions such as reports and a commissioned evaluation.

During the year research seminars have been held where staff and visiting scholars as well as scholars at other departments in Lund have presented their current research and new project ideas.

The Centre commissioned two scholars to do a study and write a report on teaching about East and South-East Asia in Swedish schools that will be published in early January 2022.

Several larger project grants were submitted with two being successful, one led by Astrid Norén Nilsson on the intersection between authoritarianism and the pandemic in Cambodia, funded by Formas, and one led by Nicholas Loubere on informal Chinese resource extraction globally, funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. Several staff got smaller grants for fieldwork and conference participation as well as a grant from the American Academy of Religion for conference organization.

One EU Horizon grant with the Centre as co-ordinator was submitted, and one ERC synergy grant with one staff member as one of the PIs; results are still pending.

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

The pandemic cut short most in person participation in international conferences although staff were able to take part in some European based conferences and in online conferences such as the AAS and ICAS.

### **EDUCATION**

Despite continuing 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 begin the master programme in Asian studies. During the year one new BA level courses focusing on South-East Asian society and politics was established, and two new MA level courses focusing on documentary film, respectively religion in East and South-East Asia. Separate funding for the latter has been secured also for 2022. In addition, permanent extra funding was given for the development and strengthening of the, currently four, BA level courses at the Centre.

Due to the pandemic, teaching was conducted online during the spring semester but resumed on campus during the fall. No students could go to Asia for fieldwork during the spring, and unfortunately it was only possible to

go to Korea and Thailand for exchange studies in the fall as China and Japan continued to be closed for foreign students. A new pilot partnership with Thammasat University was established for the spring of 2022.

Due to continuing restrictions normal social activities organised at the Centre with staff and students was severely impacted. The graduation ceremony was thus held online in June. In November, the Centre organised its fifth alumni event that this time also was held online. Three alumnae discussed their experience as students and their careers after graduation.

### **VISIBILITY**

During the year, the Centre published four newsletters and increased its social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The Centre was also visible through Nicholas Loubere's co-editorship of the online journal *Made in China* that was also co-financed by the Centre. In addition, the Centre also co-sponsored the new *Global China Map*.

Several of the staff has written on their research and hot topics in the region in newspapers and on blogs.

Staff from the Centre also held public talks outside of the university or were invited to give lectures at other universities or for government agencies and other actors.

The Centre received funding to host a series of lectures on environmental issues in East and South-East and organized four lectures during the fall.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The financial result for 2021 was positive. The surplus is used to fund one current and one incoming Ph.D. student. The budget for 2022 is estimated to a planned minus of 900 000 SEK as part of the surplus capital will be used to finance Ph.D. students and the two postdoctoral fellows.



[www.ace.lu.se](http://www.ace.lu.se)

LUND UNIVERSITY  
Box 117  
SE-221 00 Lund  
Phone: +46 (0)46 222 0000  
[www.lu.se](http://www.lu.se)