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Diversification of Korean studies at Stockholm University: From linguistics to cultural and social studies

The celebration of an anniversary, like the sixtieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Korea (ROK), is usually an occasion to look back at one's own institution's history and to reflect on the question from where we have come, where we are and where we think we should go, and also how we would and should move forward. In this paper we will discuss the origins and development of Korean studies at Stockholm University which began with linguistic studies and has undergone several phases of diversification over the course of time. Not all of the questions sketched out above can be answered sufficiently in this small paper. Notably in regard to the historical development of the subject, more research would be needed. As the author herself started to work at Stockholm University in 2012, she can just give a brief overview of the previous periods based on available papers and memories of colleagues who have worked at the university in the past. The focus of this paper therefore will be on the subject's developments in the 2010s.

Different from the other East Asian studies, Chinese and Japanese, Stockholm University is presently the only university in Sweden which offers programs and courses in Korean studies. There are no courses on Korean language or Korea-related subjects taught at any other Swedish university. Students come from all over Sweden and even from neighbouring Scandinavian and Baltic countries as well as other European countries. Within the Scandinavian region, Stockholm University has the largest teaching and research staff in Korean studies and offers the broadest spectrum of Korea-related courses.

Origins and early developments, 1950s-2000s

The history of studying and teaching Korean language in Sweden goes back to the mid-1950s, to Uppsala University. The academic interest in Korean was triggered by research on the Altaic language family, a much-discussed concept at that time. Inspired by the Finnish linguist Gustav John Ramstedt's hypothesis about Korean belonging to the Altaic language family, Björn Collinder, professor of Finno-Ugric languages at Uppsala University, invited a young Korean intellectual to do research on Korean, Japanese and Chinese at his institution. The young Korean intellectual was Cho Seung-bog [Cho Sŭng-bok]. Cho's biography reflects the vicissitudes and complexities of the geopolitical situation under which many cross-border ethnic Koreans lived in the 20th century. He was born in 1922 in Manchuria. After finishing high school in Kando (Jindao), he studied at Tokyo Imperial University and graduated in 1945, majoring in Western philosophy. In the spring term of 1948 he began his doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of Minnesota. When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, Cho Seung-bog regarded it as his duty as a Korean patriot to raise his voice against the war. Because of his antiwar speeches and publications, his visa was not prolonged and he was expelled from the USA. He arrived in Sweden in January 1952 via Oslo by help of members of the Norwegian and Swedish sections of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.¹

Thanks to Professor Björn Collinder's invitation, Cho Seung-bog in 1953 began a new academic career in a different discipline from his initial one – linguistics, doing research on Japanese, Chinese and Korean. In 1957, he initiated the first lessons in Korean language at Uppsala University and in the 1960s he also started to teach at Stockholm University, parallel to his lessons in Uppsala. Since 1967, when it was decided to give Stockholm University a profile in modern East Asian languages, the subject was moved from Uppsala University to Stockholm. Since then, Korean language and Korea-related subjects have been taught only at Stockholm University.²

¹ For details see his memoirs in Swedish and in Korean: Cho Seung-bog, *En korean i folkhemmet*, Stockholm: Podium distribution, 2014; Cho Sŭng-bok, *Pundan-ŭi han: kwagŏ-wa mirae* (The sorrow of division: past and present), 2 vols., Seoul: Tosŏ ch'ulp'an k'erigŭma, 2004.

² Staffan Rosén, *Att studera koreanska vid Stockholms universitet*, n.d., p. 2; Anders Karlsson, "Theory and practice. Discrepancies in supply and demand in Korean language education in Sweden," *Korean language education*, vol. 7, 1996, p. 270.

Similar to other European countries, in that early period there were only very small groups of students.³ Teaching and research focused on modern and pre-modern Korean language. Among Cho Seung-bog's early scientific outputs was a monograph on Korean language, specifically on phonology: *A Phonological Study of Korean: With a Historical Analysis*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Uralica et Altaica Upsaliensia. Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1967, 430 pp.

Cho Seung-bog finally became Sweden's first professor of Japanese Studies at Stockholm University in 1975 while he continued to teach and do research on Korean as well. One of Cho's students, Staffan Rosén, followed in the footsteps of his teacher in doing research on Korean historical phonology. He was the first in Sweden to produce a doctoral dissertation on Korean language: Staffan Rosén. *A Study of Tones and Tone-marks in Middle Korean*. Stockholm University. Institute of Oriental Languages, Ph.D. thesis. 1974, 147 pp.

Phonology continued to be a major research focus far into the 1980s when another Ph.D. thesis was written, this time a comparative phonological analysis of Korean and Swedish: Pyun Kwang-soo. *Korean-Swedish Interlanguage phonology*. (Koreanological Studies 2). Stockholm University, Institute of Oriental Languages, Ph.D. thesis, 1987, 171 pp.

In the 1980s a few new developments appeared within Stockholm University which certainly can be explained as a response to the increasing role that the ROK played in the international arena, namely its growing economic importance in the world. In 1982, with support of the Research Council for Social Sciences and the Humanities (Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet), a researcher's position in Korean was created which allowed the building up of a complete educational program at undergraduate as well as graduate level.

More significantly, partly with the support of the Korea Research Foundation, in 1989, a full-time professorship in Korean studies was established at Stockholm University, the first such position in Sweden. Staffan Rosén was appointed to and held this position until his retirement in 2009. Besides historico-linguistic studies, Korean history and the history of Korean people's contacts with Central Asia via the Silk Road became the primary research fields of Staffan Rosén. In the 1990s Staffan participated in an interdisciplinary research project titled "The Role of Korea

³ For more details see: Cho Süngbok, "Süoeden-esöü Han'gugö kyosu-wa yön'gu hyönhwang" (Present situation of Korean language teaching and research in Sweden), *Han'gü* (Korean script), vol. 201-202, December 1988, pp. 271-290.

and Japan in the Silk Road system” which was carried out jointly with the Department of Archeology at SU, a few Korean researchers as well as the Institute of Research in Humanities at Kyoto University. The project studied early contacts between Korea and Japan with West and Central Asia, mostly from the viewpoint of history, art history and material culture.⁴

As one of the founders and active members of the Association of Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) Prof. Staffan Rosén also contributed significantly to the international development of Korean Studies. Thanks to his initiative, Stockholm University was the host of two conferences of the AKSE (1987, 1997), along with other conferences and workshops on Korean, East and Central Asian studies. The scholarly achievements of Prof. Staffan Rosén in interdisciplinary research were honoured by appointment as member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Letters in 1994.

Since the second half of the 1980s, in collaboration with scholars in related fields who worked as second supervisors, a few students have been educated on a broader variety of subjects and, as a result, a few Ph.D. theses have been written on topics such as the role of the Korean shipbuilding industry in the South Korean economy, socio-political issues of Late Chosŏn, and adopted Koreans’ representations in Korean popular culture. These theses were the following:

Gabriel Jonsson. 1996. *Shipbuilding in South Korea: A Comparative Study*.

Anders Karlsson. 2000. *The Hong Kyŏngnae rebellion 1811-1812: Conflict Between Central Power and Local Society in 19th-Century Korea*.

Tobias Hübinette. 2005. *Comforting an orphaned nation: Representations of international adoption and adopted Koreans in Korean popular culture*.

The new study and research environment provided the basis for gradually enlarging the teaching staff in the 1990s and 2000s and offering students new courses on Korean politics and economy, history and culture in addition to the already existing ones. Among the second generation of Korean studies graduates, three persons (Gabriel Jonsson, Kang Kyung Sook and Eunah Kim) are presently teaching at Stockholm University, while one became senior lecturer at SOAS, London (Anders Karlsson).

In the 1990s, student numbers increased significantly. While there were about 9-10 in the 1980s, the number reached a top of ca. 40 in the

⁴ Major results of the research project were published in: Itaru, Tomiya, Håkan Wahlquist and Staffan Rosén, eds., *Ryusa shutsudo no monji shiryō* 流沙出土の文字資料 (Written materials excavated from the sands). Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2000.

mid-1990s. However, in the 2000s there was a temporary decline which has been explained as reflecting the general trend of less enrolment in Swedish universities in that period.⁵ An estimated percentage of 50% or more of the total number of Korean studies students were adopted Koreans.

From the 2010s till the present

Over the last decade a steadily rising interest in learning Korean language and acquiring comprehensive knowledge about Korea has been observed in Sweden. The autumn term of 2012 brought a new turn in the already apparent trend: the number of newly enrolled students in Korean I suddenly jumped up to 65, that means it doubled compared to the previous years. Since then the number has continuously stayed at the same high level, always between 60 to 65 students (see table 1 for the past year).

Accordingly, the follow-up courses of Korean language (II-V) as well as special courses on Korean history, and Korean society and culture, came to be attended by far more students than in previous years. The really amazing rise of students' enrolment in all courses has been continuing since then and, based on the observations of the last seven years, we can now predict with considerable certainty that the current trend will continue in the coming years as well (see table 2 for the past year).

Table 1: Total number of registered students (autumn 2018-autumn 2019)

Number of registered students	Autumn term 2018	Spring term 2019	Autumn term 2019
Date	26.09.2018	21.01.2019	16.09.2019
Chinese	108	33	99
Japanese	298	187	247
Korean	135	91	162
M.A. Asian studies	41	51	66
MENA/Arabic	191	82	163
Total/Department	773	444	737

* *Source:* Studentexpeditionen. *Note:* The number of registered students does not include students who were/are on study abroad during each respective academic term.

5 Staffan Rosén, *Att studera koreanska vid Stockholms universitet*, n.d., p. 8.

Table 2: Number of registered students in Korea-related courses at B.A. level (autumn 2018-autumn 2019)

Number of registered students	Autumn term 2018	Spring term 2019	Autumn term 2019
Korean I	66		92
Korean II		32	
Korean III	23		13
Korean IV		11	
Korean V	6		7
Regional culture in Korea	18		
North and South Korean relations	16		20
Korean literature and film		27	
North Korean society and culture			29
Politics and economy on the Korean peninsula		14	
Translation of Korean literature		7	
Bachelor course		4	
M.A.: Korean VI (Academic Korean I)	3		1
M.A.: Korean VII (Acad. Korean II)	3		1

* Source: Studentexpeditionen.

As our experiences in the classroom as well as questionnaires and interviews with students show, the increased attention to Korean studies cannot be simply explained by the young generation's interest in the phenomenon of the Korean Wave. The majority of Swedish students rather choose to study Korean for other purposes: because of their interest in Korean culture, anthropology, psychology, business administration, politics, even medicine or natural sciences. Consequently, students

expect and desire to receive an education in a diverse course program. For illustration, we show the students' answers to one question from the questionnaires handed out to students of Korean I in the period between 2012 and 2018. Table 3 shows the answers to the question of which courses students are especially interested in (Vilka av följande kurser är du särskilt intresserad av?). The students were allowed to give multiple answers. Please note that not all students who were registered to the course responded to the questionnaires.

Table 3: Students' interest in courses on diverse subjects.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2018
Total number of respondents	32	37	49	46	27	42
Language	32	37	23	39	26	40
History	16	21	8	24	12	24
Culture	28	31	24	41	22	35
Politics	10	10	4	12	7	10
Economy	5	9	2	10	2	5
Society (NK/SK)	18	15	7	27	11	21
Literature	9	8	0	13	6	9
Religions	11	12	1	7	2	12
History of Ideas	4	8	0	13	2	7
NK-SK relations	12	15	3	27	5	14
Others	2	7	2	7	5	6 ⁶

* *Source:* The questionnaire was worked out jointly at a meeting of the Korean studies staff. The surveys were conducted by Gabriel Jonsson in each autumn term during lessons in the Introductory course of Korean I.

Present staff

Taking the recent advancement of Korean studies as well as the resulting teaching needs into consideration, the Faculty of Humanities at Stockholm University has subsequently upgraded the existing teaching positions of the language teacher and the senior lecturer in Korean studies

6 One student each mentioned the following subjects/topics: film, music, architecture, food, human issues, technical sciences.

(from 50% to 100% of working time). To meet the increased demand in teaching Korean language, a second teacher was supported by grants from the Academy of Korean Studies (2013-15) and the Korea Foundation (2016-2017). These grants further raised the awareness of Korean studies' growth and eventually paved the way to establish a new teacher's position. After the grants expired, the department took over financing the second language teacher and in summer 2018 the temporary position was finally turned into a permanent one (with 100% of working time).

The permanent staff of the Korean studies section now consists of four full-time positions financed by Stockholm University: one professor in Korean language and culture (Sonja Häussler), one senior lecturer in Korean politics and economics (Gabriel Jonsson) and two Korean language teachers (Kang Kyung Sook and Kim Eunah). The department is also financing a student assistant who helps with administrative work and assisting students in Korean I and II. The appointment of the author, a specialist in pre-modern and modern Korean literature and culture, in July 2012 made it possible to further diversify the course program in Korean culture and to develop teaching and research on pre-modern and modern Korean literature as well.

Teaching

Presently, Stockholm University offers a B.A. degree program in Korean studies, an M.A. program in Asian studies with a focus on Korean studies and a Ph.D. program in Asian Languages and Cultures with a focus on Korean studies.

Within the B.A. program, students shall attend courses in Korean language during five terms, followed by a Bachelor's project in Korean studies. First-term students must take a mandatory introductory course in Korean Studies. Students at higher levels of the B.A. program may choose optional courses on a wide range of subjects (Korean history, culture, politics, social sciences, religion). In order to provide our students with the broadest possible spectrum of courses under the conditions of a limited staff team, we have decided to teach certain special courses once in two years while the basic ones are given annually. This strategy will enable us to continuously extend our program and to prepare our students for a large variety of job opportunities. Please see the following overview of the current course program. Bi-annual courses are marked with *.

B.A. degree program in Korean studies (3 years; 180 credit points)

Mandatory courses:

Koreanska I-V

Bachelor course:

- Theory and methods of Korean studies
- Writing of B.A. thesis in Korean studies

Introduction to Korean studies

Optional courses:

North and South Korea relations

Society and culture of contemporary Korea*

Korean history*

Politics and economics on the Korean peninsula*

Political leadership on the Korean peninsula*

Translation of Korean literature

Regional culture in Korea*

Korean Literature and film*

North Korean society and culture*

Colonial modernity in Korea*

The latter five of the optional courses were newly created after 2012. The content of “Society and culture of contemporary Korea” was substantially revised while the course on “Political leadership on the Korean peninsula” replaced the previous course on “Politics and economics on the Korean peninsula II.”⁷

To improve the students’ language comprehension, we have gradually extended the amount of language classes and since 2014 also started to use the university’s language lab (Språkstudion) with its audio teaching material for Korean I and II as part of mandatory lessons. Besides, the language lab at the department of Language Didactics helps us with providing two other facultative opportunities for students to polish their language skills: 1.) the Language Café sessions where students get the opportunity to practise languages in an informal setting, together with other students and native speakers, and 2.) the tandem program in collaboration

⁷ Besides, two new courses were taught by postdoc fellow Lukas Pokorny in 2014-15: East Asian Religions (7,5 points) and New Religions in Korea and Japan (7,5 points). Until June 2015 non-degree courses were offered in the evening: Korean language I (spring term) and Korean language II (autumn term).

with Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), the only university in the ROK which has programs in Scandinavian languages and cultures. The tandem program has just recently, in this spring term, been launched by the language lab. It gives students of Korean studies at Stockholm University the opportunity to practise Korean with students of Swedish language at HUFS by distance learning and vice versa, students at HUFS can practise Swedish with Korean studies students from SU. It is remarkable that Korean belongs to the very first tandem programs launched at Stockholm University. The other currently existing program is for Spanish and offers distance learning in collaboration with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

The Master program in Asian studies was established in 2015. Students who choose a focus on Korean studies are supposed to attend the following courses:

M.A. program in Asian studies with a focus on Korean studies (2 years, 120 credit points)

Advanced Korean I-II

Cultural flows and political conditions in East Asia

Contemporary cultural politics and identity in East Asia

East Asian history

Issues and approaches in East Asian studies

English for academic research

Scientific methods and research ethics

Optional courses at the Faculty of Humanities or Faculty of Social Sciences

Master's course (writing of M.A. thesis) (30 points)

The Ph.D. program in Asian languages and cultures also includes a possible focus on Korean studies:

Ph.D. program in Asian languages and cultures with a focus on Korean studies (4 years, 240 credit points)

Ph.D. courses in theories and methods at the Faculty of Humanities and East Asian studies (60 credit points)

Writing of Ph.D. thesis (180 credit points)

Currently one Ph.D. thesis is near to completion and expected to be defended in a few months. It is dealing with contemporary Korean litera-

ture and written by an earlier Ph.D. student, Kim Eunah. The thesis is titled *Communicating female voicelessness. A feminist-narratological study of Pak Wansö's short stories from the 1970s*.

Furthermore, in the spring term of 2016, we were able to enrol two new Ph.D. students financed by Stockholm University. One of the students, Ekaterina Malik, has a focus on Korean language and linguistics and is actively involved in Korean language teaching at B.A. level (Korean III and IV). The topic of her thesis is: "Grammar-pragmatics interface in the Korean L2 acquisition process: Focusing on speech acts learning/teaching strategies." The second Ph.D. student, Iain Sands, is doing research on "Performing and Transforming Trauma: Performance Practices and Re-constituting Political Agency for North Korean Refugees in South Korea." He also contributes to teaching with lessons on North Korean society and culture as well as identity questions and problems in inter-Korean relations.

Study in Korea

Both the B.A. as well as the M.A. program include the possibility to study for one or two terms in Korea and for that purpose Stockholm University provides a student exchange program with three Korean partner universities: Seoul National University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Dankook University. These partnerships were established in the beginning of the 2000s. Whereas in the past 2-4 students per year have used the opportunity to study in Korea, now usually about 8 students go to Korea via the university's exchange program. Our students in Korean studies increasingly have to compete with students from other faculties for placement in the exchange program as their interest in studying in Korea has considerably risen too. That's why the department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish studies has undertaken efforts to expand its international exchange and concluded an agreement with Sogang University which is targeted at student exchange in the Master program and, possibly in future, also higher grades of the B.A. program. Based on this new agreement, the first two students of the Master program from Stockholm University are currently studying for one term at Sogang University.

Apart from the exchange programs offered by Stockholm University, a number of students also use other opportunities for studying in Korea, with or without financial support by outside institutions. Among the programs sponsored by outside institutions, the Korean government scholarship program (KGSP) is perhaps the favourite and most attractive one. After receiving a KGSP grant, a few of our students have continued

their education in Korean studies at M.A. level, while others have chosen to major in psychology, business management or design management at a Korean university.

We have also encouraged and supported our students to use short-term study opportunities to visit and learn about Korea, for instance the summer schools which have appeared in great variety over the past two decades. A few of them, like the summer school at the Academy of Korean Studies, provide free travel and accommodation and therefore have become highly competitive. We are glad if one of our students occasionally gets admitted. Another favourable summer school is the training program for future translators (*Yebi pönyökka yönsu*) at the Literature Translation Institute of Korea launched in 2017. Since the inauguration of this new program, Stockholm University was able to dispatch one student per year. The two-week-long training program offers lectures and discussions on contemporary Korean literature, meetings with Korean authors, visits to cultural events and a tour to famous places of literature (so-called *munhak kihaeng*).

Guest lectures and other activities

Besides the regular teaching program, the Korean studies section organises a guest lecture series with 3-5 lectures per academic term. Lecturers are invited both from domestic and foreign research institutions, providing an excellent chance for students to learn about innovative research. In order to assist students in their future search for working opportunities, seminars by persons from non-academic, practical fields are occasionally held as well. The guest lectures and seminars are also open for the general public and are usually well attended (20-50 persons). For the guest lecture series, we have been able to get partial support from the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, ERASMUS+ and, in 2014-15, from the European program for the Exchange of Lecturers in Korean studies (EPEL) funded by the Korea Foundation and organised by the Association of Korean Studies in Europe.

Furthermore, we arrange various events in the field of Korean literature, presentations of contemporary Korean films and other activities⁸, both for our students and the general public.

⁸ Since 2014 the Korean studies section at Stockholm University has held an annual Korean speech contest jointly with the Korean school (Hanin hakkyo) in Stockholm and the Embassy of the ROK to the Kingdom of Sweden.

Activities related to contemporary Korean literature and literary translation

In collaboration with the Literature Translation Institute of Korea and the Arts Council Korea, the Korean studies section at Stockholm University organises public readings of Korean contemporary literature and meetings with Korean authors. These events likewise attract a large audience of students, colleagues and persons from outside of the university. In particular, the reading with children's book author Hwang Sun-mi on November 10, 2015, was a tremendous success. Her reading was attended by 75 guests. Also, her readings in 2013 and 2017 were very well received by an audience of ca. 40-50 persons. Other authors who visited us in recent years were: Moon Chung-Hee (2014), Kim Kyung Ju (2014), Choi Jeongrye (2014), Won Yousoon (2014), Lee Kyoung-hye (2015), Choe Sang Hee (2016) and Cho Yongmi (2018). Occasionally, Korean literature events have also been held with the support of Swedish publishers, namely Tranan (2017) and Southside publishers (2018) which introduced the Swedish translations of Cho Se-hŭi's and Kim Unsu's novels to the audience. When the Gothenburg Book Fair in September 2019 hosted the Republic of Korea as the guest of honour and the theme country, we could invite two of the participating Korean authors, Kim Keum Hee and Shin Yong-mok, to a Korean Literature Night at Stockholm University.

Realising the need to train specialists in the translation of Korean literary works into Swedish, in the spring term of 2015, we launched a new project for students above the 2nd grade in the B.A. program. The project was sponsored by the LTI Korea and included theoretical and practical seminars on literary translation and culminated in a workshop and a public reading with one of the selected Korean poets, Ham Min-bok. The translations made by students were further improved and polished by a Swedish poet (Vendela Fredrikson) and finally published in a special issue of the Swedish academic journal *Orientaliska studier* (no. 143, 2015). The translation project has proved to be very inspiring for the participating students and produced more results than originally planned. In sum, 25 poems by 6 poets have been translated: Ham Min-bok, Kim Kwang-gyu, Chŏng Hosŭng, Chŏng Hyŏnjong, Moon Chung Hee, Choi Jeongrye. Korean studies at Stockholm University was among the first sections worldwide that held the Korean literature translation workshop sponsored by the LTI Korea. Based on our good experiences with these new teaching methods which engage students much more than an ordinary

course would do, we intend to repeat the project in future.⁹

For this purpose we have recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Arts Council Korea about dispatching one Korean author on a regular basis in each autumn term. The author will come to Stockholm with a grant from the Arts Council Korea's Residence program and stay in Stockholm for three months. During the stay the author will give two lectures at Stockholm University. The MOU is concluded for three years, from 2019 till 2022. The first author who is visiting Stockholm University on the basis of the MOU is children's book author Jeon Hyun Jeong. Beginning with the autumn term 2020, the author's lectures will be regularly integrated in the course "Translation of Korean literature" which will be moved from the spring term to the autumn term, to match the author's visit.

International projects in teaching

Projects with Saint Petersburg State University

The ties between scholars of Stockholm University and Saint Petersburg State University which have already existed since long ago have in recent years been strengthened further and developed into regular collaboration. Stockholm University has become one of the foreign partners in a five-year research project carried out at Saint Petersburg State University in 2016-2021 and supported by the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS)' Core University program for Korean Studies. The project's title is "Enlargement of Korean Studies Disciplinary Field at St. Petersburg University and Development of Northern and Eastern European Korean Studies Network." The project includes collaboration in teaching as well as research.

One of the project's parts is targeted at exchanging experiences in teaching courses on Korean literature and film/cinema at both universities and developing these courses further by producing new teaching material. Therefore, both universities have launched a guest lecture exchange since 2015 and are preparing a textbook which will focus on the complex relations between Korean film adaptations and their literary sources. The interaction of the literature and film sectors, more specifically the often close relationships and cooperative ties between authors

⁹ To fill the gap in publications of/on Korean literature in Sweden, we have also tried to make negotiations about long-term collaboration with publishers of Asian literatures, for instance, Tranan, especially famous for publishing Mo Yan's works in Swedish.

and directors, has produced a number of significant artistic works in South Korean film history. The textbook is intended to provide students with material necessary to examine how a literary source may be transferred from one medium to another; from a literary work to a feature film. It shall provide students with knowledge both about narrative techniques and other artistic features of modern South Korean literature and film. For this purpose, representative works of Korean literature, primarily novels and short stories, and their film adaptations will be selected. Rather than focusing on the question of a certain film's faithfulness to the literary source, the two works of art will be regarded as separate entities and studied by considering the specific narrative techniques of each medium: literature and film. It is hoped that the joint textbook project will contribute to highlighting and interpreting the different artistic approaches of author and director.

Another important part of the AKS project at Saint Petersburg State University is to foster collaboration in education by arranging an international summer school. The first such summer school was held last year, on August 27-31, 2018, with a focus on "Modern and Classical Studies of Korea in Saint Petersburg University." The summer school was organised jointly by the Faculty of Asian and African Studies, the Faculty of Sociology and the Faculty of International Relations at Saint Petersburg State University. Along with teachers from these three faculties of Saint Petersburg State University, two teachers from partner universities (Oslo and Stockholm University) gave lectures on their fields of specialisation. The summer school also included a visit to major East Asia-related research institutions and libraries in Saint Petersburg. From Stockholm University, seven students were able to participate with the financial support of AKS. The other foreign students came from the universities in Turku, Warsaw and Hamburg. It is intended to repeat this kind of international summer school in two years.

Nordic Korean Studies Days

The Nordic Korean Studies Days is another newly launched joint project. This one has been designed to share expertise and cooperation among both teaching faculty and students of Nordic universities, supported by the Korea Foundation. The Nordic Korean Studies Days were held in the form of a 5-day intensive course on March 11-15, 2019 and took place at the University of Copenhagen. The primary objective of this intensive course was to give students the opportunity to become familiar with the multifaceted spectrum of Korean Studies. Nine participating professors

and lecturers from Helsinki, Oslo, Turku, Stockholm and Copenhagen covered the disciplines of anthropology, folklore, history, sociology, politics, literature and cultural studies. From Stockholm University six students and two teachers participated.

The Nordic Korean Studies Days are expected to be held again, perhaps with a rotating venue change among Scandinavian universities, and it is hoped that they will result in a more permanent and institutionalised teaching cooperation between the five universities involved. Such cooperation would facilitate the urgently needed diversification of the curriculum in Korean Studies at each university and could serve as a model for future projects.

Current research projects

The research activities in Korean studies at Stockholm University comprise studies in contemporary Korean politics and international relationships, modern Korean language, Korean literature and film, as well as North Korean cultural politics, in particular heritage politics. The author of this paper is also continuing her long-term research on pre-modern Korean literature and intellectual history, namely “The phenomenon of a recluse in Early Chosŏn dynasty literature: Studies of Kim Sisŭp’s ‘Four records of pilgrimage (*Sayurok*)’.”

Besides the above-mentioned Ph.D. theses and research for the textbook on Korean film and literature, the following research projects are currently being carried out:

- *Changes in North Korean cultural politics* (Sonja Häussler)

The project aims to examine the complicated relation of the North Korean state to its cultural heritage, in particular classical literature and folklore, which is an important – yet still largely neglected – field within North Korean studies. Like other spheres of culture, the reception of and attitude to cultural heritage is closely related to socio-political and ideological developments in the North Korean state. Evaluation of the country’s heritage has undergone significant changes in various historical periods, sometimes mirroring and sometimes setting the trend for general changes in North Korean cultural policy. The project focuses on a number of cultural phenomena that have been reintroduced or newly invented since the 1980s and came to constitute major components of cultural life in recent years. Based on personal observations as a foreign exchange student, as well as later research on North Korean literature and cultural

heritage policy, the study tries to reveal the strategies and mechanisms that might underlie modifications, alterations and even total revisions of certain aspects of culture, both in terms of implementation and representation.

• *Does South Korea respect human rights?* (Gabriel Jonsson)

The study investigates to what degree South Korea since the revision of the constitution in 1987 has respected human rights and whether respect has shifted throughout time. The basis of evaluation are the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, the 1987 South Korean Constitution and the tasks of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) established in 2001. Definitions of democratic consolidation are another basis. Interactions between political developments and respect for human rights during the terms in office of six presidents are illuminated on the basis of concrete examples. More emphasis is put on national aspects of observance than international.

The importance of the National Security Law (NSL), the Constitution Court, the NHRC and South Korea's adherence to UN Conventions on human rights are analysed. In particular, how the NSL, that is commonly pointed out as the main obstacle to respect of human rights, has affected politics since 1987 is analysed. In order to present a more diverse view of the state of respect for human rights, the degree of thought, speech and press freedom as well as the situation of HBTQ-persons and migrant workers are included. The study will, by covering a long period of time and linking respect for human rights with political development, widen knowledge about how democracy has worked in South Korea since 1987.

Conference of the NAJAKS

Stockholm University hosted the 10th Conference of the Nordic Association of Japanese and Korean Studies (NAJAKS) on August 17-19, 2016. The conference was jointly organised by the section of Korean studies and the section of Japanese studies at Stockholm University. About 100 scholars from the Nordic region, Korea and Japan as well as other countries attended the conference. Papers reflected the overall increased variety and breadth of Korean and Japanese studies in the Nordic countries and covered such subjects as sociolinguistics, language teaching, translation studies, modern and classical literature, modern and classical culture, historical studies, anthropology, and social sciences. The NAJAKS 2016 conference served as a tool to strengthen the ties between

scholars in Nordic countries and also to encourage close cooperation with Korean and Japanese studies scholars all over the world.

Other national and international scientific collaborations

The members of the Korean studies section at Stockholm University are taking an active part in building and maintaining regional and national academic networks: as council members of the Association of Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE, 2013-2017), board members of the Nordic Association of Japanese and Korean Studies (NAJAKS), and as chair of the Association of Oriental Studies (Föreningen för Orientaliska studier). They also contribute to the development of research in Korean and Asian studies by acting as editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Orientaliska studier*, as members of the editorial board of *The Review of Korean Studies*, and as members of the editorial board of the *Saint Petersburg Annual of Asian and African Studies* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag).

The Korean studies section at Stockholm University maintain close ties with other research institutes in Stockholm (Institute for Security and Development Policy, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and Swedish Institute of International Affairs) cooperating in the exchange of guest lecturers and discussants at various events. Also, they frequently give guest lectures and seminars on Korean topics at other Swedish and Scandinavian universities (Copenhagen, Oslo, Lund, Göteborg, Trondheim, etc.).

Due to the fact that the Korean studies section at Stockholm University is the only such academic body in Sweden, its members are frequently asked for their expertise on Korean questions from people outside the university. In general, this concerns interviews for Swedish mass media or public lectures for social organisations concerning current political developments on the Korean peninsula, but sometimes also consultations on cultural or linguistic issues. Members of the staff also give presentations at the annual meetings of Koreanska sällskapet (Korean Association in Sweden) and the Korean Residents' Association in Sweden.

Guest researchers

In February 2013, the Korean studies section was able to win one of the prestigious postdoc fellowships for foreign Ph.D. degree recipients which are offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University (the competition included 240 applications for 25 positions). The two-year postdoc fellowship which was granted to a specialist of Korean New Religious Movements (Lukas Pokorny, University

of Aberdeen) gave us the opportunity to broaden our research and teaching to Korean religious studies as well.

In the spring term 2016, the Korean studies section hosted Park Hyeon-Sook, professor of Swedish language at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul. Her research at Stockholm University (January-August 2016) was sponsored by the Swedish Institute. With the purpose to write a textbook on Swedish grammar, Prof. Park studied comparative approaches of composing textbooks in Korean and Swedish languages.

In the autumn term 2019, Prof. Lee Duk Hee spent two months of his sabbatical year at the Korean studies section pursuing research on network economy and complex systems.

Library cooperation

Already for a long time, there has existed a close cooperation in library exchange between Korean studies at Stockholm University and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), Copenhagen which includes an agreement on specialised purchase and exchange of books depending on the research focus of each institution. Since February 2013 this cooperation has been significantly extended. Together with three other North European universities (Copenhagen University, Helsinki University and Oslo University), Korean studies at Stockholm University and NIAS, Copenhagen, now share an E-Korean studies sources licence funded partly by the Korea Foundation, partly by the universities themselves. This joint library service significantly helps to facilitate access to new research and teaching materials for all four universities in the Scandinavian region.

The Korean studies section at Stockholm University has been selected as a HUB Library Member by the Literature Translation Institute of Korea which allows us to build a representative collection of Korean literary works in translation. Besides, Stockholm University gets book donations from other institutions, for instance, through the annual Reference Materials Distribution Program of the Korea Foundation.

Perspectives

Building on already established ties with other universities in Scandinavian countries and Saint Petersburg State University, we intend to widen our network in the North European region and contribute to laying the foundation for a systematic, close cooperation both in research and teaching. More intensive cooperation among Korean studies scholars in Northern Europe, we believe, will stimulate synergies to raise the productivity in teaching and research which goes beyond the capacities of

each small academic unit alone.

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