

# Annex 1: Background, Definitions and Recommendations

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## INTRODUCTION

### **The Scandinavian-Santal heritage: past, present, and future**

The Scandinavian-Santal enlightenment legacy was a composite religious and spiritual mass movement, framed and formed by a particular European colonial order, Norwegian cultural nationalism, low-church evangelism, and the Santals' will to resist foreigners' intrusion and land grabs by way of script, education, legal literacy and mobilizing Scandinavian intermediaries as advocates. The movement morphed into a Lutheran Trans-Atlantic missionary society. When Paul Olav Bodding on behalf of the Mission (under shifting names<sup>1</sup>) donated his vast collection of manuscripts, ethnographic, and pre-historic objects to the University of Oslo,<sup>2</sup> both the mission leadership and the Santals saw the custodianship as a new building block in an enduring trust-based relationship between the Santal nation and these Northern lands and institutions. The public in Scandinavia and colonial India was not simply well aware of this legacy, they had a genuine stake in it. As Indian Independence approached, the Mission embarked on building a national Lutheran church in India. The Trans-Atlantic missionary society nevertheless maintained considerable direct and indirect influence for decades after 1947. Secularization in the late twentieth century led to the closure of the Santal Mission and national mergers in the U.S., Denmark, and Norway. This transformation, combined with the Indian government's increasingly restrictive visa policy, limited and altered the very nature of the bond between missions, national churches, and other related faith-based institutions. The void and public disquiet this created, especially in India and East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) were not heeded or addressed through bilateral development projects or cooperation between new civil society actors or academic institutions. The University of Oslo remained a preservation-focused custodian for the whole of the Bodding Collection, until it was decided to transfer the manuscript collection from the University Library to the National Library in the late 1980s.

The Bodding Symposium 2015 explicitly aimed at more than simply debating the poorly understood reasons for and serious consequences of the long cooperative vacuum. We invited old and new stakeholders to contribute to the development of a future-oriented platform, addressing strategies and actions that would gradually fill the void, revitalize the legacy, and even renew bonds beyond the historical legacy as such. Therefore, the international and Scandinavian academic community (including the current custodian institutions), Adivasi-focused civil society organizations and mandated government agencies were all invited to debate and recommend viable approaches and concrete actions for a first phase of 3 to 5 years, and for the much longer term. Of invited stakeholders, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the only body not to attend. Prior to the Symposium, the University of Tromsø and Adivaani hosted an e-consultation

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<sup>1</sup>Indian Home Mission to the Santals (IHM) 1869-1911, The Santal Mission to the Northern Churches 1911-1950, then The Ebenezer Evangelical Lutheran Church 1950-1959 and later Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1959 to the present.

<sup>2</sup>Smaller collections were bestowed to university museums in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Denmark.

that invited inputs to the Symposium's platform from organizations and individuals in South Asia unable to attend in Oslo<sup>3</sup>.

This diverse oral and written legacy spans more than 150 years. Its geographical outreach is enormous, including three continents: South Asia, Scandinavia and the mid-west of the U.S. Much of the legacy exists as externalized memory. One storage medium is publications, including mission history (a genre with limited public appeal currently) and other religious and secular literature written over four generations, predominantly by Scandinavians. There are comparatively few Santal voices, underlining the critical importance of addressing this deafening silence from a subaltern and post-colonial perspective. Storage media include Bodding's own huge scientific production. Some of his most important publications, such as the three-volume *Santal Folktales*, have never been widely accessible in South Asia, unlike the five-volume *Santal Dictionary* and the religious literature in Santali. Much of the material legacy remains preserved and stored in private and public archives in Norway, Denmark, and the U.S. The ongoing digitization of unique Bodding Collection will enable entirely new avenues of virtual co-management. Danmission's recently completed digitization of its historical photo archive represents another notable virtual repatriation effort.

India and Bangladesh harbor large numbers of main and subsidiary mission stations and mission-built public service facilities that constitute another very important material legacy. It actually constitutes a vast cultural landscape and property mass in India and Bangladesh. The successor churches own and manage much of this cultural heritage. For decades, they have been bitterly divided by legal claims to this immensely valuable ancestral property (in both commercial and social terms). Proper guardianship, conservation, and maintenance of this property mass, exposed to tropical climate and opaque mortgage and sale practices (circumventing existing land laws) are beyond the means and capacity of its current owners. Public and private oral memory constitutes another crucial sub-category. Oral memory in Scandinavia is currently largely confined within mission circles, including the small milieu in Bodding's hometown of Gjøvik. This community organized a Jubilee Program back-to-back with the Bodding Symposium in Oslo. In South Asia oral memory of Bodding as cultural hero has attained hagiological proportions, as in his hometown. And, not to forget, storytelling traditions (both sacred and profane) remain vibrant among both Northern and Southern Santals.

## Core concepts and definitions

**Remembrance:** Is not simply about recalling famed and forgotten persons, places, deeds, and stories of the past. Remembrance cannot be realized simply by physical or virtual access to large archives or to Bodding's published classics, mostly long out of print. Remembrance invokes complex emotions such as mourning, fulfillment, anger and pride. Memory is inherently biased and selective. In order to become self-reflexive, memory critically depends upon avenues for public and private reflection of different kinds, such as the arena the Bodding Symposium 2015 was able to offer.

**Reflection:** The Symposium became a venue for people whose professional and personal histories intertwined with the Scandinavian-Santal legacy in vastly different ways. Combining a variety of arenas and modes of facilitation, the Symposium kindled an incipient collective process in which new ideas and propositions emerged and established dogmas, and views and truths claims were critically debated and reconsidered. Many participants underlined the necessity to sustain and extend this reflective and reflexive process. Several participants proposed approaches and concrete means by which the process could be sustained and deepened.

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<sup>3</sup> We like in particular to acknowledge the valuable views and suggestions of Mahendra Nath Manji from the Santal Research Foundation (SRF). The stakeholder interest of *Ol-chiki* users as articulated by SRF is of importance.

**Reconciliation:** The Symposium initiative caught momentum, motivated by the Scandinavian-Santal's Heritage Initiative's recognition of the dire need to rebuild trust and cooperation around heritage management, research and advocacy between Scandinavian and South Asian constituencies. The participants at the Symposium reaffirmed that it is absolutely high time. Santal participants spoke persuasively about a range of critical issues which they underlined have to be addressed in the short and intermediate run. They vented grievances but also hope that this new dialogue on equitable cooperation (including co-management of the Bodding Collection) would lead to reconciliation and help mend relations overtime. The Scandinavia-Santal rapprochement must strive to build neutral ground and alliance partners in order to contribute to conflict mediation addressing decades' long bitter social and legal rifts between the successor churches in India and Bangladesh.

**Museum:** The Symposium advanced a primary definition of museum as "a storehouse of ancestral tales and imperishable things." This cross-cultural definition encapsulates two crucial yet interdependent dimensions of the Santal Bodding Collection. Firstly, the notion "ancestral tales" evokes and makes visible the Bodding Collection as immaterial heritage. "Tales" refers to not only the vast manuscript collection of published and unpublished stories, but also the ethnographic records that in intricate detail convey "the social life" of objects. Secondly, the Collection is embedded in a highly specialized technical conservation regime that has made much of it "imperishable." The delegations from India and Bangladesh marveled at the excellent condition of much of the ethnographic collection, including exemplars of biodegradable century-old leaf cups, fishing nets of natural fibers, and wooden weaponry. As the conference proceedings highlighted, the ancestral tales will remain muted (in stores and archives), unless their voices can be read, invoked, listened to, debated, re/interpreted and replenished with new versions and entirely novel stories. Therefore, custodian access and future co-management initiatives were the topics of two sessions, stirring much debate. This primary definition is proposed complemented by another cross-culturally mediated concept, "the outdoor museum. This concept encapsulates the Scandinavian concept of the open-air museum (*friluftsmuseum*) and the South Asian notion of out-door fair (*mela*).

**Virtual and physical repatriation:** The completed digitization of the ethnographic sub-collection and ongoing digitization of the manuscript collection offer entirely new possibilities for virtual repatriation, while not precluding original custodians' need for improved physical access to the three sub-collections. The co-organizers chose to place virtual repatriation at the forefront of the discussion, without wishing to preclude a debate on future physical repatriation. The debates on physical repatriation shifted somewhat in tone and focus during the Oslo conference. In the beginning, emotional and political expressions and arguments naturally took center-stage. The concluding discussions became more practically grounded, cognizant of the considerable technical and financial challenges involved in physical repatriation. In this context, sharing of experiences by the people in charge of the ongoing Bååstede Project (repatriation of Saami artifacts to Sami Museums in Norway) proved useful. Much has to be done in terms of stakeholder consultations and feasibility studies before any principle decision on the matter can be taken. Overall, the symposium concluded that virtual repatriation may be well on track (albeit not completed) within a five-year perspective. Physical repatriation, if decided, will require a longer planning and implementation horizon.

**Trust-based and rights-based management:** The Santal Mission's original bestowals over nearly four decades to the ethnographic collections at the University of Oslo presupposed a trust-based form of custodianship, under which the source communities, who mostly lived on the Indian subcontinent, would be granted proper access to the collections in Oslo. Between Paul Olav Bodding's demise before the WWII and the present, physical access to the collections has been very limited in the absence of Indo-Norwegian institutional cooperation. The first virtual repatriation initiative ever, the microfilm project of the late 1980s, gave five Indian institutions microfilms of parts of the manuscript collection. *SSInherit* has documented that this effort partially failed, since it was based on a misplaced, simplistic approach to repatriation as

technology transfer. The Symposium discussions recommended instead a multifaceted repatriation approach, fine-tuned to the needs, requirements, and expectations of well-defined custodian groups and stakeholder constituencies. Only such a respectful and longitudinal approach can restore trust and simultaneously comply with rights-based management, fully cognizant of the Santals' and their neighboring peoples' right to own cultural heritage.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Academic institutions in Scandinavia and South Asia

- The co-organizers of the Bodding Symposium 2015, MCH at the University of Oslo and the University of Tromsø are urged to follow up their stated plans for formalized cooperation with partly identified South Asian academic institutions and civil society organizations that are committed to heritage management and promotion of cultural and developmental rights of the Santals and related Adibasi groups.
- The Symposium welcomes the Museum of Cultural History's announced commitment at the Symposium to prioritize primary custodian access and co-management of its ethnographic collections in the coming five years. The participants uphold the unique cultural importance of the Santal Bodding collection and urge MCH to accord this collection top priority.
- The Symposium therefor welcomes the MCH's decision to establish the five-year Santal heritage management pilot project. The Symposium foresees that during this first plan period, the virtual repatriation process may be on track. At the same time, one should be able to assess (in consultation with key stakeholders in India and Bangladesh) the long-term possibilities for a physical repatriation of the collection, if not in full, then more realistically in part.
- The participants welcome the decision of MCH, the Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust, and Museum of Santal Culture to collaborate. This effort will be an important building block in the virtual repatriation to primary user groups and custodians in India and elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent.
- The University of Tromsø and the Central University of Jharkhand (CUJ) are urged to effectuate their recently signed cooperation agreement, and to identify jointly priority areas for research, staff mobility, student exchange, technical support in heritage management and outreach.
- The Symposium urges in this connection UiT and CUJ to incorporate (in the frame agreement) the priority areas presented by the CUJ representative at the symposium. The partner institutions are advised to also seek the support of the University of Copenhagen and, as needed, other European institutions that possess relevant expertise in the priority areas under the agreement.
- The Scandinavia-Santal Heritage Initiative (*SSInherit*), the initiator of the Bodding Symposium, is urged to continue its efforts as a think tank and social platform for policy development and action initiatives. Its policy of participatory engagement with established and new stakeholders in South Asia and Europe is of considerable importance and should be continued.
- *SSInherit* is urged to form an Advisory Board of eminent Santals and Scandinavians; use its planned book launch in 2017 to showcase and promote public interest and ownership in the Scandinavian-Santal Legacy in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, in Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe; function as door-opener for a new generation of Santal scholars, writers, artists, and *Adivaani* in Scandinavia and similarly for Scandinavians in South Asia; and establish a *SSInherit* website with interactive user functions.
- *SSInherit* is especially urged to scale up its networking and collaboration with custodian institutions of Santal and tribal culture such as the Tribal Cultural Heritage in India Foundation, with custodians

of indigenous and minority cultures in Norway, and Scandinavian universities, not the least the University of Copenhagen.

- The Central University of Jharkhand is encouraged to initiate a network of Indian and Bangladeshi universities and institutes, whose mandates, educational and research priorities render the Scandinavian-Santal legacy vitally important. The network may include (but not be confined to) the five Indian institutions who were party to the concluded microfilms repatriation project. The academic network should stimulate innovative basic and applied research and education that make relevant and full uses of the newly expanded access to the Santal Bodding Collection.

### **Other Custodian Institutions of the Santal Bodding Collection**

- The National Library of Norway (NLN) is currently digitizing the Santali Bodding manuscript collection. About 50 per cent of the collections is digitized so far. The NLN pledged in the Symposium to complete the digitization of manuscripts within the next five years. The Symposium finds it extremely important that this work be completed at the earliest possible date, while also addressing several other pertinent capacity-building and technical issues.
- The National Library is urged to address the following important issues: prioritize digitization of previously unpublished manuscripts; provide an online inventory of already transcribed materials; make use of its technological platform in order to transcribe remaining material and make it available in e-book form; ensure technically and financially practical solutions for custodians/users in South Asia to download and print scanned unpublished manuscripts; make available printed materials as OCA files, identify e-communication tools in order to reach out to original custodian constituencies with basic information about the facilities NLN offers visitors who wish to access the manuscript collection physically; and finally, develop user guides downloadable as apps (see below).
- The National Library plans to prioritize eventual future transcriptions by way of Latin script. Online access will make it possible for users of *Oi Chiki*, *Devanagari* and *Eastern Nagari Script* (Bengali) scripts to undertake their own transcriptions. Software programs offering translation from Latin to *Oi Chiki* are currently available in India. The proposed online inventory should, when established, cover transcribed manuscripts in the most important different scripts/alphabets.
- Mindful of the reasons for the failure of the micro-film repatriation to Indian institutions, the Symposium raised several important issues about how to ensure user-friendly support services, in order to ensure real access to the collections by bi and tri-lingual user/original custodian groups in South Asia and elsewhere. In addition to the above suggestions, another entails the production of a downloadable app. This app should offer versions in Santali, Hindi, Nepali and Bengali, introduce the manuscript collection, and take the external users through step-by-step routes to access the unpublished and published parts of the collection.
- The National Library is urged to make effective use of the services of the proposed *SSInherit* expert body, which can provide guidance on how to establish a database that may provide regularly updated overviews of transcriptions and translations of the Bodding manuscript collection worldwide. The database could also provide links to relevant research institutions specialized in Mundari languages, Santali included.
- NLN views its collections in a millennium perspective. The recommendations for the next three-five years should therefore lay the basis for ensuring that the Bodding Collection remains the collective memory of the Santals for coming generations. The Symposium embraced the bold proposition that we should strive to get the collections nominated for inclusion on UNECSO's Memory of the World List or on World Heritage List for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This innovative, ambitious, and consequential proposal should be taken forward by NLN in collaboration with other

institutions (present at the Symposium). Norwegian authorities, who are entitled to submit nominations, should therefore be approached to this end. Realistically speaking, the 2017 deadline is the absolute earliest possible. Consultations and preparatory work will have to start in earnest in 2016. The Symposium would like to think that even if such a nomination submission should fail in the strict sense, it would nevertheless send a strong positive message to the transnational Santal nation, to the Norwegian government and public, to the public and governments of India, Bangladesh and Nepal and to likeminded constituencies.

### **The Lutheran sister churches and related institutions as custodians**

- The Lutheran successor churches in India and Bangladesh are custodians of the tangible Scandinavian-Lutheran heritage in the form of a large number of mission stations and other infrastructure, such as health facilities, boarding schools etc. It is urgent that the successor churches develop a cultural custodianship policy and build basic competence, skills and commitment to manage their custodianship in a transparent, socially and financially responsible and inclusive manner. The custodianship should build on participatory consultations as a guiding principle, and seek to build down internal distrust and encourage solutions to conflicting claims of access, rent, and ownership.
- In view of the above recommendation, a road map for participatory cultural heritage inventories needs to be drawn up and implemented. The first pilot inventories should prioritize mission stations in India and Bangladesh of particularly high heritage value.
- Cultural management plans for the important heritage sites, such as Benagaria, Khairabani, Dumka and Santal Education Centre, should over the coming years be drawn up, aiming at providing improved access to surrounding communities and to relevant cultural associations, Indian, Bangladeshi and Scandinavian universities, and Santal-led publishers such as Adivaani. These mentioned heritage sites are excellently suited (when restored, rehabilitated, and upgraded) to provide space and other infrastructure for: writers' resorts (for poets and scholars), students' excursion centers, visitors' center for heritage tourists, exhibition spaces, printing press facilities for Adivaani and likeminded publishers.
- At the Symposium, BNELC, the Lutheran successor church in Bangladesh announced their willingness to offer infrastructural facilities for Santal heritage trainings, seminars, and exhibitions at the Santal Education Centre in Dinajpur. The Symposium welcomes this potentially important contribution to implement the Santal Heritage Initiative in Bangladesh and urges BNELC and its NGO-branch to follow up.

### **Normission, Danmission, and the World Prayer League as custodians**

- Are urged to develop a comprehensive custodianship policy on the Scandinavian-Santal enlightenment legacy. The policy should pay due attention to heritage management issues in both Scandinavia and in South Asia (specified above).
- Based on negotiated partnership arrangements, the Trans-Atlantic successor missions are urged to prioritize allocating seed money and co-funding arrangements for high priority rehabilitation and restoration projects in India and Bangladesh and to support pilot initiatives on participatory heritage inventories in Santal Parganas, West Bengal, Assam, and Bangladesh.
- Encourage the involvement of the Santal Lutheran Churches, the Lutheran Church Council of India, other highly competent native and Scandinavian faith-based and secular/academic entities, which

may provide neutral, competent advice, technical support, and support to indigenous co-financing initiatives for rehabilitation and restoration efforts and establishment of a cultural center.

- Danmission's digitized photo archive is an important contribution to a repatriation-focused custodianship policy. The Symposium recommends that Danmission extends technical assistance to Normission, in order for the organization to make a final decision on which public institution should be offered custodianship of the Santal Mission archives, currently owned by Normission.

### **Indigenous and tribal associations, networks, museums and enterprises**

- The Symposium upholds the overriding importance of developing a culture of cooperation and mutual recognition of each other's past and current roles in sustaining and renewing public memory of the Santal-Scandinavian legacy, and avoid letting the script issue create major and enduring divisions, distorting the grander collective purpose. We urge all parties to seek constructive solutions, to share responsibilities, provide support, and to nurture a spirit of inclusion.
- The Symposium recognized that there is ample scope for more than one single center for Santal culture with attached museum in India. The Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adivasi Trust and Museum has the unique advantage of being rooted in a locality of vibrant Santal communities, having their distinct educational philosophy and resource base.
- The Museum of Santal Culture is a local museum with the potential to be gradually developed into a regional hub for engaged indigenous learning and skills development. The approach and pace at which the museum should develop must be cognizant of certain critical preconditions that may ensure sustainability: the availability of human resources, competence building and research on intra-cultural subjects; exchange visits to Norway (stays in the Collections) and India; a highly adapted museum and exhibition policy, customized trainings (for full use of the digitized Bodding Collection) and outreach for well-defined constituencies in Ghosaldanga area and beyond.
- The Symposium recognizes the strategic national importance of the proposal to establish a Santal cultural center in Central Jharkhand (for example in Dumka). Such a center must complement the profile of the Museum at Bishnubati, and showcase the cultural diversity of the Santals and their neighbors in India, Bangladesh and Nepal as a transnational community.
- The proposed center project, if realized, must have an inclusive policy to all faiths, denominations, indigenous and secular spiritual worldviews. It should have a museum wing holding permanent and temporary (including mobile) exhibitions. Should a decision be taken to locate the center on church-owned land or in church-owned buildings, the above-stated principles must be enshrined in the center's mandate, lease agreement, in its program development and publishing activities, sponsorship, exhibition and membership policy.
- Established editorial boards of Santal journals like *Perahor* and *Jugsrijol* could be located within the space of such a proposed cultural center. It is recommended that the center is designed/or upgraded so as to offer space for exhibitions, seminars, permanent artisan workshops, a store for the sale of high quality crafts products, book café, residential quarters for visiting writers and artisans, and outdoor areas for fairs etc.
- Financial models for the establishment and running of such a cultural center should be primarily tap into well-accepted and sustainable native pooling and funding systems in India and elsewhere. Individual and collective memberships and other forms of donations could be available to Indians, Bangladeshis, Santal diaspora communities and European institutions and individuals alike. Construction or rehabilitation of buildings to accommodate a cultural center are, realistically speaking, likely to require co-funding arrangements between European and the Indian partners.

- The recently started publishing house *Adivaani* represents an innovative cultural enterprise with a publishing policy and vision that may contribute greatly towards revitalization and innovation of the Scandinavian-Santal enlightenment legacy. *Adivaani's* current publishing and editorial policy and design, which lend value and visibility to both oral and written cultures and indigenous and non-indigenous traditions, render the enterprise important in this cultural policy context. Proposals for *Adivaani's* future publishing initiatives include: new abridged versions of Bodding's "classics"; an anthology showcasing modern Santal and Scandinavian (both indigenous and non-indigenous) creative writers; a work on how contemporary oral storytelling "encounters" Bodding's collections of folktales; a publication on India's cultural heritage gems ("the unknown world of historic Santal mission stations"); and finally a handbook on the Santal Heritage.
- The Symposium would like to emphasize that every repatriation process has unique traits, including historic and contemporary preconditions. Even so, the *Bååstede Project* (of physical repatriation to Saami museums) offers lessons learned for the planned repatriation of the Santal Bodding Collection. The Symposium urges the managers in charge of the two projects to establish timely, mutually beneficial, networking contacts.

### **Rights-based development oriented civil society organizations**

- The Bangladeshi Adibasi Forum is urged to take a national lead role in an early phase, mustering support for the establishment of a "Virtual Plain Adivasi Cultural Museum." Approval of the web-portal's resources should be sought from relevant educational authorities in Bangladesh and the resources used as part of the curricula in mother tongue education, history, religion, botany, health sciences and cultural geography in primary, secondary, intermediary and college level education. Academic institutions, HR-based NGOs, including those who pioneered Santali mother tongue education (basically faith-based NGOs), NGOs currently offering Santali as mother tongue education, the recently established Mother Tongue Language Centre, the Universities of Tromsø, Oslo and Copenhagen and professional groups (such as teachers associations) are possible partners for a development of a web-based cultural museum.
- The Symposium expresses its grave concern about NORAD's decision in 2015 to cease funding the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples. This recent withdrawal of funds (while no other alternative funding arrangement is in place) risks slowing the momentum of cooperation between indigenous NGOs and museums in Norway and tribal and indigenous organizations in South Asia. This happens at a time when direct advocacy, networking, and cooperation are becoming more relevant than ever, because of common struggles for recognition of cultural rights through co-management and repatriation.
- In view of this new lacuna in North-South cooperation between indigenous peoples, solidarity-based networking and advocacy are required with national actors. Those include, not least, the *Saami Museum Association*, *Norsk Folkemuseum* and leading indigenous NGOs, such as *Galdu*. The Symposium urges these actors to actively support the Santals' rights to their own im/material cultural heritage collections in Norway, currently under the custodianship of the Museum of Cultural History, National Library and successor missions.

### **Norwegian Cultural Council**

- In recent years, NCC has under the rubric museum grants increasingly supported Saami Museums, and thereby contributed to the gradual institutional capacity development in the management of indigenous people's own cultural heritage. The Symposium urges NCC to develop a grant policy



that no longer overlooks, but instead accords priority to initiatives that contribute to the realization of non-European indigenous people's rights to collaborative management, including virtual and physical repatriation of their heritage collections in Norwegian museums.

- NCC should also be cognizant of the valuable Scandinavian-Santal heritage represented by mission archives, currently mostly privately owned and managed. The Symposium urges NCC to start supporting projects aimed at realizing cultural and democratic rights through transfer of ownership and digitization of this currently threatened material heritage, resulting from inadequate storage conditions and conservation methods.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD**

- Norway is a state party to several binding conventions, including ILO Convention 169 and UNESCO Conventions on cultural heritage, and has endorsed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNRIP). The Symposium notes that Norway as state party has proactively supported the development and ratification of binding instruments aimed to fulfill the human rights (including cultural rights) of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide, and incorporated this rights regime into Norwegian law. The Symposium is concerned by the fact that Norway is nevertheless lacking a policy focus (in bilateral cooperation areas such as culture, research and education) that recognizes the 150-year Scandinavian-Santal enlightenment legacy and addresses the Santals' rights to their own national material heritage, under century-long custodianship of (currently) two Norwegian public institutions.
- The Symposium regrets that no representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was able to participate at the Bodding Symposium. The meeting urges the MFA to enter into a policy dialogue with the partner institutions behind the Bodding symposium 2015. The participants further urge the MFA to invite high-level dialogues with relevant national stakeholders in Scandinavia and through the MFA in Oslo diplomatic missions in Delhi, Dhaka, and Kathmandu. The Symposium would wish to see an institutional memory of the history of Indo-Norwegian relations, which recognizes that Norway's early official recognition of Indian Independence was greatly facilitated by a century of people-to-people contact between Norway and British India through the Santal Mission.
- The Government of Norway is urged, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to support heritage initiatives, which visibilize and safeguard the Scandinavian-Santal legacy. Such initiatives should range from establishment of cultural centers and virtual museums to heritage management, including restoration of the most important historic station stations. The latter constitute a neglected Indo-Scandinavian social history and architectural heritage gems, currently facing multiple threats in today's India and Bangladesh.

