



Photo: Christopher Lance, flickr

Nordic Centre Newsletter *Autumn 2015*

Greetings from the Nordic Centre in Shanghai

It's the Golden Week here in China, which marks not just the changing colors of the foliage but also the celebration of the People's Republic's national holiday. While the country turns 66 this year, four of the Nordic capitals — Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo, and Stockholm — mark the 65th anniversaries of their diplomatic ties with Beijing. Among the first countries to have built such ties, the Nordic region today enjoys an unprecedented amount of exchanges with China within culture, business, government, and academia, on a scale that would have been hard to imagine back then. It has become widely recognized that ties with China are crucial to the Nordic societies within a wide range of different spheres, education and research being no exceptions.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Nordic Centre, located here at Fudan University in Shanghai, the country's most thriving metropolis. For two decades, the Nordic Centre has served as a platform precisely for collaborations within education and research, and an evolving one, today sporting a great diversity of member institutions and an ever-increasing number of activities that promote mutual understanding through collaborations by researchers and students across borders. In this issue, you can read about our plans for the anniversary celebration later this month, and more importantly, get insights into some of our current academic activities and profiles of participating scholars from member universities.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our anniversary and other activities this autumn, and welcome everyone to visit us and approach us with new ideas for collaborations and projects. On behalf of the Nordic Centre, I wish you all a golden autumn.



Magnus Jorem
Program Manager
Nordic Centre

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About

- The Nordic Centre at Fudan University is a platform for academic collaboration between the five Nordic countries and China
- If you wish to subscribe to the Nordic Centre newsletter, which is published 3-4 times yearly, please email magnus@nordiccentre.net

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Take some time to celebrate

Nordic Centre's 20th anniversary kicks off



The Nordic Centre was founded in 1995, and therefore celebrates two decades of existence this October. The anniversary will feature a mix of festive, cultural, and academic events, and will be attended by around 150 people from the Nordic region and China — most of whom have been actively involved in the collaboration in one way or another through the years, and some coming here for the first time.

The main event takes place on Wednesday, October 21, with keynote speeches on Sino-Nordic ties within academia and otherwise, four academic panels within the areas of environmental studies, security, welfare, and gender studies, a celebration dinner co-sponsored by the Nordic consulates in Shanghai, a musical surprise, and of course a formal ceremony.

The events already begin on Monday the 19th however with a Nordic movie night. Tuesday features the career event Top Talent Denmark (following the biannual Council Meeting), while Thursday includes both a workshop+debate on innovation in higher education in the morning and two parallel afternoon sessions, one highlighting Nordic businesses in China and the other various fields of lifelong learning, both rounded off with cocktail events. It all closes with Nordic Education Day on Friday, at which our member universities promote their programs to Chinese students.

These are only some of the activities taking place during the anniversary week. You can see the whole program at nordiccentre.net (Please note that some updates are still pending. The final program will be released in a few weeks).

Engineer meets human

Nordic Centre's learning space for Turku-Fudan students

Words Ville Taajamaara

"Flexible, inspiring, helps our teamwork, fun!"

Those are some of the words used by students to refer to the multifunction room at the Nordic Centre, which otherwise is utilized for social gatherings, studying, and a variety of different activities. The course "Product Development and Rapid Prototyping", organized by Fudan University and the University of Turku, Finland, aims to enhance students' skills within product development, teamwork, and problem-solving in the field of ICT engineering, as part of the double degree program FuTurE (Fudan Turku Rethinking Education). Since the semester began, they've been using the multifunction room for their project work.

The students receive assignments that vary from elderly people's mobile healthcare to smart homes and smart solar recharge bands. They get four weeks to work on their projects in teams, and complete them by submitting a viable, feasible, and desirable "proof of concept" and a business plan to support it.

The use of the multifunction room at the Nordic Centre catalysed the teamwork and prototyping when the students were able to use, manage, and create the space according to their needs. As the FuTurE program emphasizes innovation and non-conventional idea-development processes, that's just the kind of learning space the students need.

Read more about the program at future.utu.fi



Bio-energy: Closing the knowledge gap

Visiting scholar Pradipta Halder's work on education and bio-energy

Words Robin Bodin

Since April 2015, the Nordic Centre has been hosting scholar of bio-energy Pradipta Halder, a PhD fellow from the University of Eastern Finland. Dr. Halder, a forester at heart, came to Finland for his postgraduate studies and has found a new home in the land of a thousand lakes. For the past 2.5 years he has been occupied with post-doctoral research in the field of bioenergy-related education and policy. The engine that motivates his work is the contrast between the importance of the field and the majority of people's limited knowledge of it: "These are challenging issues at the moment and the way to confront them is through educating people, particularly our young. What is good for the environment? Only education can tell you that."



During his stay in China, Halder has had the objective to conduct research on teachers' and students' perception in approaching topics within the field of bioenergy. He believes that the work will be helpful in finding opportunities for development in exposed regions and help increase environmental awareness. During his work he had the opportunity to collaborate with Professor Ping Jiang from Fudan University's Department of Environmental Science and Engineering as well as the Tyndall Centre's affiliate at the Fudan campus.

"What is good for the environment? Only education can tell you that."

As Pradipta Halder was closing in on his final week of research at the Nordic Centre he was able to give a personal reflection on his time collaborating with us as well as his time spent in the lively city of Shanghai. "The Nordic Centre experience has been great, and if I get the opportunity again I would much like to come back". From a connection standpoint he emphasized the fact that the Center enabled access to a great network of scholars to collaborate with in collecting data and engage in discussions. Fudan received praise for being "very open with their research opportunities between other regions of the world" and the city of Shanghai has been more than pleasant to explore in depth. He finds it surprising that the Centre does not get more attention as it is a much valuable source for knowledge exchange and an abundant opportunity for researchers interested in China. He will be happy to share and promote the experience at the University of Eastern Finland.

In the near future he is looking to build upon generated results in order to further develop an understanding for people's perception of bioenergy and how to implement it in development processes. But more than anything at the moment, he looks forward to meeting his wife and to sink his teeth into some Finnish breakfast.

The Nordic Centre has highly appreciated Pradipta's kind spirit and look forward to potential opportunities in the future.

Reinforcement has arrived
New intern at Nordic Centre



Throughout the fall semester of 2015, the Nordic Centre is being reinforced with the addition of an intern. Robin Bodin, a business major from the University of Stockholm, has been selected to help us in our daily responsibilities. He spent last spring studying in Singapore, where he began studying Mandarin next to his major subjects, and is continuing to explore Chinese culture and foreign affairs.

"I feel privileged and excited to have the opportunity to contribute to the Nordic Centre's activities. My initial impression of the Nordic Centre as a foundation promoting collaboration and communication between China and the Nordic region has been great. My working experiences in the past has revolved greatly around the private business sector and therefore I find it refreshing to be faced with a different challenge. After spending time studying around the world my interest in Asia, particularly China, has taken a great leap. With hopes of a global carrier ahead understanding China is a central piece to that puzzle," says Robin.

We at the Nordic Centre are pleased to have Robin with us and wish him the best of luck during his stay.



Class of Nordics at Fudan (unrelated to story)

Teaching those Nordics...

Interview with associate professor Zheng Qinqin

Words Regina Kanyu Wang

Rainpocalypse now!

The Chinese government may occasionally control the weather, for instance by inseminating clouds to make them rain in order to ensure a blue Beijing sky for big events. But that didn't stop the weather gods from wreaking a bit of havoc on the Fudan campus this summer.

First, heavy rains in June had the whole campus flooded, to such an extent that the Nordic Centre had to close on the final day of the University of Bergen's law PhD course, sending the participants (who are used to a bit of rain) in exile to nearby Crowne Plaza.

Later, in July, news of super-typhoon Chan-hom caused a scare for the first day of the Doing Business in China course. While it was rumored to be the biggest typhoon in decades, it ended up almost disappointing in its gentleness. Everyone stayed indoors studying, though — better safe than sorry!

In previous issues, we have heard about Nordic researchers' teaching experiences in China. But what is it like for a Chinese teacher to teach Nordic students? We interviewed Zheng Qinqin, associate professor at School of Management, Fudan University, for the answer.

Zheng's research focus is on business ethics and international business. On July 21 this year, she delivered a lecture on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in China to the Nordic students from our member universities. The students were here for two weeks, participating in the Nordic Centre summer course 'Doing Business in China.'

Although Zheng has been teaching business ethics and CSR for seven years in the School of Management, she made special preparations for Nordic students. "The major modification was that I focused on the current CSR status of Chinese business environment rather than give a general CSR introduction," she says.

When talking about the biggest difference between Nordic and Chinese students, Zheng says that the former are more interested in the unique character of CSR activities in China in particular — and that they like to get involved in the lecture by sharing opinions.

What impressed Zheng most was the Nordic students' active participation. Zheng recalls that they not only asked questions but also shared what they knew and thought in class.

It was Zheng's first time teaching Nordic students, and it seems to have been quite a different experience from teaching Chinese students — a positive one. The students responded well to the lecture, giving Zheng a high score in the evaluation session. Here at the Nordic Centre, we hope to continue inviting her for lectures in the future, and that she can bring some Nordic enlightenment back to teaching Chinese students.



The view from the Nordic Centre in June.



New light on Chinese climate efforts

Interview with visiting scholar Iselin Stensdal

Words Robin Bodin

On this clear Tuesday morning in early September, the green campus grounds surrounding the Nordic Center still shines bright. Accompanied by cheerful chatter from peers, undergraduate students are making their way past our windows to the first class of the fall semester. With this backdrop we sit down with Iselin Stensdal, one of our visiting scholars, for insight on her work and experiences from her time spent in Shanghai. Having arrived the last week of May, she is now closing in on her return date which is set to be in early November. Iselin has followed a very busy schedule over the past months: In addition to her employment as a research fellow at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, she is working on her PhD in Chinese Studies at the University of Oslo.

Currently, Iselin is committed to research concerning the difference in ways that local governments and districts in China handle and approach climate change. She is working in close collaboration with Dr. Anna Korppoo, a PhD in energy policy from the Imperial College of London, who specializes in Russian climate efforts. Together they are conducting a comparative study between Chinese and Russian efforts against climate change.

Iselin talks passionately about Chinese efforts: It's clearly a topic she keeps close to heart. In her view, focusing on the negatives is the easy path: "If you are negative you will always win. But if you look into it, things are actually happening in China." She mentions that a national carbon market has been implemented, that green jobs are being created, and that many inventions are not just being tested but also made and executed in certain regions of the country.

While she does touch on the many problems facing such efforts, she underlines a general obliviousness to the positive steps that are being taken.

In many regards Iselin is a savant when it comes to doing research in China. Over the past years she has come out with an impressive number of in-depth publications intertwining and revolving around topics of China, climate change, Asia, and efforts in the Arctic. "We (researchers in China) like to think that issues faced in our work are unique to the region. However, the problems that we face are usually universal issues that any foreigner would experience in trying to gather sensitive information or get in touch with important people." She also says that almost every person she's met in her work has conducted themselves in a friendly and helpful manner. Not entirely homesick, Iselin says that she really only misses her friends and family. Shanghai's diversity and culture satisfy her other cravings.

Much of Iselin's time as an undergraduate was spent abroad, which contributed to her choice of pursuing a postgraduate degree in Chinese studies. One year was spent at Fudan University as a language student, and another semester was spent at Hawaii Pacific University. Her introduction to the Nordic Center as an undergraduate language student at Fudan came to be the reason why she contacted the Center to assist her in Shanghai. The experience cooperating with the Nordic Centre has been frictionless and she has enjoyed the provided opportunities.

The Nordic Centre staff has truly enjoyed Iselin's company over the summer. We wish her remaining weeks to be productive and all the best in the future.

Executive decisions

Hanken Executive MBA's China Module

Words Gavin Chen

Hanken School of Economics's executive master of business (EMBA) has been holding a China Module at the Nordic Centre since 2009. This year on April 14, a group of 15 EMBA students from Hanken Business School paid a visit to China and attended courses at the Nordic Centre.

The EMBA's are key managers or directors of companies, and most of them haven't been to China before. During the one-week intensive module, the participants learn about the management, marketing, and development model of contemporary China from professors at Fudan University. Senior managers from international companies based in Shanghai also come to the Nordic Centre to share their decision-making expe-

riences with the Nordic visitors, who this year also paid a visit to BAOSTEEL, one of the biggest iron and steel corporations in China.

After the module, the participants had a better understanding of the economic, cultural, and political environments in China, and had learnt about dealing with the management and leadership challenges facing companies in China. "The module challenged my way of thinking and let me meet new and interesting people," Monika Liikamaa, Director of Crosskey Banking Solutions, said.

The module ended with the group presentations and a dinner with Hanken alumni in Shanghai.

Get ready for the Swedish invasion *Lund and Uppsala spearhead seminar week at Fudan*



New website under way!

You may have noticed that nordiccentre.net has not been especially active lately. That's because we're working on an all-new site with better features and easier usability. Stay tuned.

This November, Fudan University is gearing up for a Swedish invasion — of top academics.

Six Swedish universities — Lund University, Stockholm University, Uppsala University, Linköping University, Chalmers, and KTH — have banded together in the Swedish Academic Collaboration Forum (SACF), which organizes seminars around the world on topics of current societal importance both in Sweden and globally, and are now headed for Shanghai to host their events at Fudan, in close cooperation with the Nordic Centre.

The areas highlighted at November's seminar week (November

16-19), which is spearheaded by Lund and Uppsala, include aging society, material science, sustainable development, education, and university management. All key topics of high priority not just to European leaders but also to the Chinese leadership, both locally and nationally. Around 140 participants are expected, and the events are made possible by the sponsorship of STINT.

If you are interested in participating in the seminar please contact Ulrica Ouline or Petra Moser-Noergaard.

ulrica.ouline@uadm.uu.se
petra.moser-norgaard@er.lu.se

Read more at sacf.se/china/



A high-energy stay in Sweden *Guo Xueling's Lund experience*

One of our commitments is to offer distinguished researchers the Nordic Centre Research Platform, a grant to support field work and academic projects by Nordic scholars in China and Chinese scholars in the Nordic region. PhD fellow at Fudan University Guo Xueling was recently awarded this contribution, which allowed her to fund a research trip to Lund University in Sweden. On her journey she worked with a number of academics in her field, who aided her work on molecular a physics paper titled “Theoretical investigation of energy levels and radiative data for Kr-like W38+” – a study of ions with particular radiation and electrical charge properties.

In addition to her academic work a great number of friendships came out of her visit. Xueling speaks with admiration of her Swedish friends taking her in with open arms, the traditions, natural beauty and the city of Lund.

“The Centre opened my eyes to the outside world, it is an unforgettable and happy memory which I will cherish my whole life,” Xueling writes in her report on her time in Sweden.

Covering the territory *Q&A with Edyta Roszko, University of Copenhagen*

Offering scholars from our member universities a base to conduct research is one of the key services of Nordic Centre. Dr. Edyta Roszko from the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at the University of Copenhagen came here in February and stayed until June. As the Nordic Centre very much enjoyed her company we were eager to check up on her and to let her tell the story of what was and what is now.

Nordic Centre: Where lies your biggest research interest and please describe the essence of it?

Edyta Roszko: My biggest interest lies in fishing communities, city ports, and urban markets. They form multiple networks that link up coastal and maritime areas, straddling and often transgressing national borders. Against the backdrop of political and environmental change I take a historical and anthropological perspective on the struggle to define and demarcate the sea boundaries that takes place at many levels. I hope to contribute to understanding how asymmetries brought about by historical, political, economic and military processes incite local communities to formulate their own responses to new differentiations and contestations over spaces they have long considered their own.

NC: What are you currently working on?

ER: My current research “Territorializing the Sea: Tracing ecological and livelihood consequences of the South China Sea dispute for local fisheries” is an anthropological study focusing on fishermen’s livelihoods and the dramatic impact of the South China Sea conflict on local ecologies.

NC: What kind of fieldwork did you conduct during your stay, and what were some of the challenges?

ER: I carried out my ethnographic fieldwork in fishing villages and trading hubs mainly in Hainan, but also on small islands in Guangxi and Guangdong provinces. The goal was to enhance our

knowledge of the increasing competition for natural resources and maritime enclosures, the impact of environmental change on the ecological basis for future fishing, and the strategies of coastal communities in securing livelihoods. My extensive field experience in Asia teaches that the best strategy is to start with unstructured conversational interviewing methods and gradually move to semi-structured interviews. In turn, participant observation allows for exploring complex aspects of people’s activities, but also serves to check their subjective statements as to what they believe and do. Fieldwork is not only about getting valid data, but about getting it ethically, without doing harm or violating local customs.



Photo: Storm Crypt, flickr

NC: How was your experience collaborating with the Nordic Centre in Shanghai?

ER: The Nordic Centre in Shanghai is a great asset for all Scandinavian researchers working on China. I received a great support from the Centre at every stage—whether I applied for visa, bank account or asked for a formal introduction letter to be sent to local authorities in my research field setting. My successful fieldwork would not be possible without the great assistance from the Centre. I would like to particularly thank Regina and Gavin who were very professional and always ready to help when there was a need.

Want to become a Visiting Scholar at Nordic Centre, like Edyta, Pradipta, and Iselin, all profiled in this issue? Our facilities offer an office space with a computer here at the centre for scholars at our member universities at a fee of just 100 euros monthly. We can assist you with a number of practical issues and also help put you in contact with relevant scholars in your field. Use it as a base for your fieldwork or discussions with other scholars, and hold seminars in our various meeting facilities. Write to magnus@nordiccentre.net to book a place — durations typically range from weeks to months.

A smarter summer

About 70 students in total attended this year's summer courses

From late June to late July, the Nordic Centre was busy with our two annual summer courses, *Chinese Politics and Society* (pictured right) and *Doing Business in China*. Both courses had about 35 students participating each, representing the five Nordic countries and nearly all of our member institutions.

This year, the Chinese Politics and Society course was led by former Nordic Centre program manager Teemu Naarajärvi and Jukka Aukia, who are pursuing their doctoral degrees at the University of Helsinki and the University of Turku, respectively. The course this year was more focused on foreign policy and international relations than previous summers, but also went into a variety of social and political issues domestic to China.

The *Doing Business in China* course was once again led by Can Seng Ooi, professor at Copenhagen Business School, and Karin Bryntse, assistant professor at Lund University. Besides a range of lectures on how to be competitive as a business in today's China — a market moving so fast and with such strong domestic players, entering and succeeding in it for a foreign company is a formidable accomplishment — the students visited several factories and company HQ's, including Vacon and Grundfos, and met Nordic businesspeople including IKEA's legal council for Asia/Pacific and the CEO of a headhunting company.

Both courses received high marks across the board from the students, and many of them are promoting the courses as student ambassadors at their home institutions this fall to increase visibility further.



Making it our business

Aalto behind new business initiative

Aalto University professor Riitta Kosonen has been one of the main researchers involved in a network of scholars funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers who have been researching challenges and conditions for Nordic businesses in the difficult but rewarding Chinese market.

Now, years of research are being applied to a series of symposia examining Nordic businesses in China, a meeting place for academics and executives to exchange knowledge and experiences. It kicks off on October 22 during anniversary week with the first symposium, which professor Kosonen and a number of colleagues from other member institutions are behind. Stay tuned for the outcome of this interesting new initiative.

Mile-high faux pas

Watch your mouth!

Professor Can Seng Ooi, one of the main instructors of the *Doing Business in China* course, had a hilarious anecdote to share on its first day. On the plane to Shanghai, he sat next to a young man from Norway, and they started chatting about what they were going to do in China. The young man, who will not be named here, told Can Seng he was attending a summer course at Fudan University.

"What's it called?" Can Seng asked. "Oh, it's too cheesy to say, you don't want to know," he replied. Insisting on learning the course's name, the young man finally told him it was called "Doing Business in China." Needless to say, the student couldn't dig himself deep down enough in his plane seat when professor Ooi revealed that he was the teacher of the cheesy course.

The global perspective

Q&A with Hans Egil Offerdal, the new head of the Secretariat

As the new head of the Nordic Centre Secretariat in Bergen and as such the Center's key contact person in the Nordic region, Hans Egil Offerdal is involved in much of the ongoing communicative work of the Centre, particularly in relation to board and council meetings. We asked him some questions to learn more about his background and outlook.

Nordic Centre: Please give us a briefing on you background and how you ended up at the position you are now?

Hans Egil Offerdal: My background is in the humanities, in particular theology and religion. For some years I worked at an international research program – hosted by the University of Bergen – focusing on world poverty. Later I was doing research and teaching at a large private university in Mexico which, subsequently, led me to a very interesting stay at a small state university in the heartland of the US.

NC: As you are very familiar with international university collaborations, could you touch up on their importance and some of the challenges you have faced working in that environment?

HEO: We all live on the same planet even though many of us have grown up within the borders of nation states. Knowledge and wisdom belongs to all of humanity and collaboration across frontiers and cultures is imperative in order to understand each other.

I think one important challenge is ethnocentrism. We need to be more humble, not thinking we have all the answers and we need to start to listen more, especially to non-western/non-European cultures. Due to the large number of students in Africa, Asia and Latin-America, it is also probable that the great scientific discoveries of the future will come from outside Europe and the US.

NC: What are some of the factors that make working with and doing research on China important?

HEO: My immediate reaction is that this is not a question about working with and doing research on China as such. The issue is expanding cooperation between peoples from all across the globe. There can never be too much cooperation.



Now, in the context of collaboration between China and the Nordic countries in particular, I think what makes it important is what we can learn from each other about what it means to be a human being in the world of today. How can our knowledge and wisdom – both from China and from the Nordic countries – help in making it easier to live with and for each other? These can be discoveries in medicine and engineering etc., but it can also be crucial reflections and wisdom found during questions and answers about life as such.

NC: What is your future outlook for the Nordic Centre and its activities? Any ambitions that you would like to implement down the road?

HEO: In addition to the more overall issues I have already mentioned – that the Nordic Centre will function as a bridge of communication and transfer of insight and awareness between China and the Nordic countries – I think that implementing the current strategy of the Nordic Centre is important. Here I am thinking especially about educational collaboration. When students from different background meet life-long friendships and future research collaboration are created. The joint courses model is interesting and I would like to see even more exchange and visits of Chinese students and scholars to the Nordic countries and vice-versa, both for long-term and shorter stays.

Research events since April 2015

May 19-21: Modernization, gender, and generation – reconfigurations of everyday life. Cases from China and the Nordic countries. PhD course. Primary organizer: University of Oslo

June 3-4: Seminar on Rule of Law: A Dialogue between Chinese and Nordic Young Legal Scholars. Primary organizer: University of Helsinki

June 15-18: Chinese legal culture. PhD course. Primary organizer: University of Bergen.

July 6-10: Advanced Statistical Methods for Epidemiology Research. PhD course. Primary organizer: Karolinska Institutet.

September 20: BI Norwegian Business School meeting of academics and managers.

Upcoming research events

October 21: Panels on 1) Welfare (Primary organizer: University of Bergen), 2) Security (Primary organizers: University of Copenhagen and Nordic Institute of Asian Studies), 3) Feminism and gender equality (Primary organizers: University of Oslo and Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 4) Environmental challenges (Panelists: Stockholm University, University of Oslo, Fudan University).

October 22: 1) Workshop on innovation in higher education (Organized by Nordic Centre with help from students at Sino-Danish Centre), 2) Symposium on Nordic businesses in China (Primary organizer: Aalto University) 3) Seminar on lifelong learning (Organizers: Tampere University, University of Turku, Helsinki University, University of Eastern Finland)

October 26-27: Chinese Accents and Accented Chinese. Seminar. Primary organizer: Aarhus University.

November 2-12: Course on Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Two-week seminar. Primary organizers: University of Eastern Finland and United Nations Environmental Program.

November 3-6: SNoW PhD course on welfare. Primary organizer: University of Bergen.

November 17-20: Sino-Swedish Excellence Seminars. See newsnote "Get ready for the Swedish invasion" in this issue. Primary organizers: Lund University and Uppsala University.

If you would like to organize a research event at Nordic Centre or elsewhere at Fudan University, please write to magnus@nordiccentre.net

Remember that you can also apply for Nordic Centre funding for holding such events (all have been allocated for 2015, but 2016 is wide open as of October 2015). You can also apply for funding for shorter research stays through the Research Platform. Read more at nordiccentre.net