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Nordic Centre Newsletter *Summer 2016*

It's been a hot and busy few months in Shanghai, and while many of you are on summer vacation, the Nordic Centre has had the pleasure of hosting the courses Chinese Politics and Society and Doing Business in China, with students from all over the Nordic region, and even the odd Italian and Russian. Ever being developed with new lecturers, company visits, and programme features, these courses are among the absolute highlights of our yearly calendars, and we continue to be impressed by the students with their diversity of academic backgrounds and smart approaches to China.

Since the last newsletter, we have also hosted a big cultural event promoting the Nordic region, with keynote speaker Dagfinn Høybråten, the Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Ministers; redecorated the lobby with a new Nordic mural and pictures; launched a Nordic Centre podcast to highlight the activities of our member universities; and even made a video exploring what regular people on the streets of China think of us Nords — while also undergoing an important change of personnel.

Our summer break begins now! The Nordic Centre team looks forward to receiving many of you after August — whether for the double degree seminar, Council Meeting, SNoW workshop, or Nordic Studies course, or as a visiting scholar — and hope you remind your colleagues of the September 10 deadline for applications for funding of academic seminars.

See you this fall — or soon thereafter.



*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, head to nordiccentre.net

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Nordic Impressions — watch on YouTube!

China is frequently in the news in Nordic countries, and more and more Nordic students have studied Mandarin, and even more Norids have travelled to China for tourism. But what do the Chinese know or think of the Nordic countries?

Our team got sponsored by the Nordic Council of Ministers to make a short film about the impressions regular people have of our small region, in the streets of Shanghai and on Fudan campus. [It can be viewed on YouTube](#), where you can not only hear what associations our interviewees have of the region, but also see them sample specialties like licorice and herring.

Our favourite quote? “People in Sweden are kind and peace-loving, like the Virgin Mary.”

Nordic Centre podcast launched

First episode highlights anniversary of BI-Fudan MBA collaboration

We’re pleased to announce the launch of our [Nordic Centre podcast](#), which will feature interviews with researchers and students from Nordic Centre member institutions on their various activities in China or with Chinese collaborators. The podcast can be found on our website, or on iTunes, and is of course free to stream or download.

The first episode features a conversation with Wang Xiaozu, professor at Fudan University’s School of Management, and programme manager Dan Bjørke from BI Norwegian Business School, who is managing the two institutions’ collaboration on their MBA programme. In its 20th year now, the MBA programme has proven a big success both in terms of endurance and number of graduates, but also in international rankings.

This collaboration will also be highlighted at the [October 17 Double Degree seminar](#), which we wrote about in the last newsletter.

[Stream or download the first podcast episode to hear the conversation](#). And don’t hesitate to contact us if you have an idea about a theme or project to highlight in a future episode.

Invitation from Finnish scholars: Interview on your academic experiences in China

Dear colleagues,

We are currently trying to identify scholars from the Nordic countries who have some experience doing research and lecturing in Chinese universities (Mainland). To our knowledge there is no research on this.

If you have worked at a Chinese university for a short or long period, may we ask you to contact us for a potential interview? This should not take more than 30 minutes and could be done online. Anonymity and ethical aspects will be respected.

This study is part of the research activities of the Chinese Education Research Group at the University of Helsinki (<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/chineseeducation/>).

Best wishes,

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Call: China-Nordic Arctic Cooperation Symposium

With the successful operations of CNARC (China-Nordic Arctic Cooperation Symposium) fellowship program for the past two years, CNARC Secretariat is about to launch its Fellowship Program for Year 2016 - 2017. In this new round of applications, fellowships shall be granted to 2 Nordic and 2 Chinese fellow candidates respectively, to advance their own research project that falls on CNARC's research priorities or the themes of the 5th China-Nordic Arctic Cooperation Symposium is to be hosted by Dalian Maritime University in 2017, for a 1-2 month period in an institute within CNARC's network.



Photo: Loris Paleari(flickr)

You are highly welcome to apply for this opportunity of academic exchanges. Also, it would be appreciated if you could circulate and recommend this opportunity to any research fellows and young scholars in your respective academic network, who might have an interest for such a program. To note that fellow candidates are supposed to submit their application **no later than September 15th, 2016** along with a recommendation letter from a CNARC Member Institute. Successful candidates shall choose to conduct the fellowship during the following period: **October 15th 2016 – May 31st 2017**.

Please read more at cnarc.info

A fruitful clash of legal cultures

Words Magnus Jorem

A group of students and professors from Bergen travel to China to learn about China's legal culture – and reflect on their own.

The meaning of 依法治国 – literally “according to law, rule country” – is the subject of some debate and confusion. One might first assume that the term, frequently emphasized by the Chinese government, is equivalent to “rule of law” in English: that the law of a country must be followed by all its people and institutions, in a uniform and predictable way.



"This isn't a democracy. But when you're working in the academic world, at a place like Fudan University, it's very much like being home in Europe. The researchers you meet have their own opinions, it's not propaganda"

However, the Chinese phrase, which dates back millennia, is related to the English, but not precisely the same. It is perhaps better translated as “rule by law,” a term meaning that the rulers of a country, even if their power is under no dispute, cannot exercise this power arbitrarily. Their practice of power, in other words, must be in accordance with a legal framework. It does not necessarily mean, however, that the application of law is uniform or predictable.

This distinction is hardly alone in the legal questions that scholars, both Chinese and foreign, debate, whether pertaining to Chinese law or how it is differentiated from Western legal systems and cultures. Intellectual property rights, prosecutory proceedings in criminal justice, and dispute resolutions are among the many other contemporary subjects being discussed.

But how do visiting academics from Nordic countries experience such discussions here in China, when some of them may touch upon controversial subjects?

"This isn't a democracy. But when you're working in the academic world, at a place like Fudan University, it's very much like being home in Europe. The researchers you meet have their own opinions, it's not propaganda," says University of Bergen law professor Karl Harald Søvig, one of the organizers of an annual PhD seminar at Nordic Centre, held for the fourth time this June.

cont...

The seminar, Chinese Legal Culture Studied from a Nordic Viewpoint, has a dual purpose: To give PhD candidates an introduction to Chinese law and legal culture, and to offer them feedback on their own projects from a Chinese perspective.

An introduction to Chinese law and legal culture over a short-term visit can only be just that: an introduction. With its aforementioned millennia of history, Chinese legal culture has many unique characteristics, and its contemporary legal system is under evolution in a variety of areas, making it a moving target of study with myriad questions to delve into. But with a combination of lectures by top legal scholars at Fudan, visits to local practitioners like the Norwegian law firm Wikborg Rein, and discussions on academic papers, the PhD seminar offers its participants a rich platter of Chinese legal dishes to sample – perhaps also inspiring further study later.

The second purpose of the seminar, besides understanding China, is to get a foreign perspective on the legal culture of Norway, including feedback from local researchers on the papers the candidates are working on. Even though the Chinese professors are not experts in law from the Nordic countries, the feedback they offer can help clarify what makes, for example, Norwegian law and legal culture special.

"When we first launched this program, I admit I was a bit skeptical. I thought it would be nice to go to China, but questioned whether travelling so far would give any special outcome," says Søvig. "But what we've experienced is that visiting a country with such a different legal culture helps you reflect on your own country – and not just on the law itself, but on how it is enforced."

Malin Johansen, a PhD candidate at the law faculty of the University of Bergen and one of the participants in this year's seminar, agrees. "The commentary I have received from the professors here has been very useful. Western values become more clear when you receive inputs from China."

Writing her dissertation on private investigations of financial crimes in Norway, Johansen was struck by a difference in how the two legal systems treat individuals and individual rights. In Norway, suspects under investigation are allowed to not answer questions about the circumstances under scrutiny – and if they lie to the investigator, it is not a punishable offense, unless the lie is an accusation of someone else's guilt. In China, on the other hand, suspects have no right to remain silent.

That is but one of many differences between the Norwegian and Chinese legal codes. But Søvig and Johansen agree that it is precisely in such details that one can illuminate not just aspects of the Chinese legal system, but the features that make one's own special.

Norden Now!

Nordic Centre hosted event promoting Nordic culture and society, with 150 guests

On May 27, 2016, Nordic Centre hosted an afternoon that highlighted a variety of contemporary Nordic culture — literature, music, cinematography, innovation, and journalistic experience — in addition to a presentation on the Nordic social model by Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Mr Dagfinn Høybråten. Attendance went beyond all expectations, with people lining up in the lobby as if room 101 were the city's hottest night club... Was it the keen interest in all things Nordic, the VIP keynote by Høybråten, or perhaps the delicious complementary Danish smørrebrød? Probably a bit of each.

The Consulates of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland in Shanghai kindly supplied a speaker each to highlight a project from their countries, and the Embassy of Iceland in Beijing shared a video showing movie-making in their country, with scenes from such hits as Game of Thrones and Prometheus. Danish author Mathilde Clarke read one of her short stories featuring a metamorphosing fish lady, Swedish entrepreneur Jesper Larsson suggested ideas for how the smog in Shanghai could be turned into an opportunity, Finnish journalist Antti Järvi talked about his impressions from living in China, and the Norwegian Consulate's Siri Borgen presented a range of new music videos by Norwegian artists, filmed in China.

Mr Høybråten shared not only his views on the Nordic welfare state and other aspects of Nordic cooperation, but also anecdotes about his own family history, which has far-reaching links to China if you go a few generations back. His organization, the Nordic Council of Ministers, kindly sponsored the event and its Danish smørrebrød, in addition to the video we made of Chinese people's Nordic impressions (see page 2), plus a whole new "Nordic Wall" in our lobby (the old one had faded badly).

Huge thanks to the Nordic Council of Ministers, especially Tobias Grut, for making this happen, and also to the Consulates and Embassy!



Norden Now! pictures





Farewell to Gavin Chen, programme officer

After working as programme officer at the Nordic Centre for more than two years, Gavin Yanbin Chen left us this spring to pursue new work-life adventures. We know we will miss him a lot because of his excellent working skills and cheerful personality, and take this opportunity to interview him and thank him for everything.

Q: You had been studying and working in Sweden for years before you started the job at the Nordic Centre. What brought you to the position at the Nordic Centre?

Gavin: I saw the position announcement from former programme officer Freya Gao's Weibo. I knew that Nordic Centre is an interesting place and the job is connecting Fudan and Nordic universities.

Q: What do you think the biggest challenge of working at the Nordic Centre?

Gavin: The biggest challenge for me was having patience in working with so many distractions.

Q: Could you share a moment related with the Nordic Centre that you cherish a lot?

Gavin: My birthdays. The programme managers Natalie and Magnus bought me a nice cake!

Q: After leaving the Nordic Centre, what are you going to do? Can you talk about your future plans?

Gavin: After leaving Nordic Centre, I start up a company with my friends. My future plan is working hard step by step to build up my company.

Q: What do you want to say to all the friends of the Nordic Centre?

Gavin: I want to say "Thank you!" to all the friends of Nordic Centre. I want to express my gratitude to all the friends who has helped me and supported me.

... and welcome Murphy Chen!

Murphy Chen is Nordic Centre's new programme officer, having taken over from Gavin Chen (no relation!) a few months back.

Q: Hi, Murphy. Tell us a little about your personal background.

I grew up in Urumqi, Xinjiang and came to Shanghai eight years ago to attend Fudan University. I just finished my master's degree in comparative literature.

Q: What are your greatest academic interests, and what did you study at university?

I have always been fascinated by all forms of arts, and I was thinking to become a writer when I was little. So I studied Chinese Language and Literature in my undergraduate years, learning a lot about the history and theories of Chinese and Chinese literature, and continued this journey through reading more overseas literature masterpieces in my graduate years.

Q: It's almost August and therefore summer vacation, and you have been with Nordic Centre since April. How have your first months been?

It has been great working with Regina and getting to know more about the Nordic Culture and how the Nordic Centre operates. As it is my first fulltime job, our manager Magnus has taught me a lot, and he is also a very nice person to work with.

Q: You played a big role in coordinating this year's Doing Business in China course. Tell us about your experience planning the program.

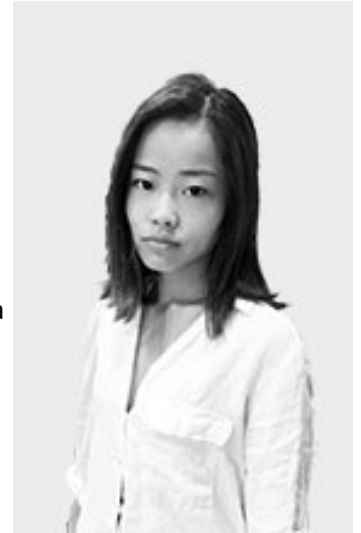
Murphy: I was completely new to this program and barely knew about how to plan it. So I studied the program of the same course from last year, and Regina has been giving me lots of helpful instructions too. I am not by nature a detail-oriented person, but planning the program has surely made me paying more attention to the small details including the due dates, all the reminders for lectures, and students and restaurant reservations.

Q: And what did you think of the students?

Murphy: They are all taller than me! Well, most of them, haha. They are very friendly and easy to talk to and they are definitely good students. I haven't seen anyone who disobeyed the rules made by the instructors, but at the same time, they seemed to enjoy the culture, including nightlife, here in Shanghai. I truly want to know how they manage to accomplish both things at once!

Q: Any plans for the summer vacation?

Murphy: Yay, vacation! I'm going to Thailand and Vietnam for 2 weeks!



The Story of Shanghai Forum

Words Regina Kanyu Wang

The annual conference Shanghai Forum 2016 was held at Fudan University at the end of May, and featured among its keynote speakers Mr Dagfinn Høybråten, Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers. We interviewed Chen Yinzhong, Secretary-General of Shanghai Forum and former Director of Nordic Centre, to learn more about the conference.

First organized in 2005, Shanghai Forum has celebrated its 10th Anniversary last year. The first 10-year agreement ended and 2016 will be the start of another 10 years. “Shanghai Forum started in the same year with the 100th Anniversary of Fudan University. Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies sponsored two forums in China, Peking Forum, focusing on culture/civilization, and Shanghai Forum, focusing on Asian economics as well as sociology and politics,” Chen recalls.



Chen tells us that Shanghai Forum is organized by Fudan Development Institute, or FDDI. FDDI was established in 1993, by Yang Fujia, President of Fudan at that time and professors from history, politics, economics and international relations. It was aimed to be a think tank providing suggestions for the government. Apart from organizing the three major forums (China University Think Tank Forum, Shanghai Forum, and Fudan Development Forum), FDDI also serves as a research platform, providing academic services to both domestic and foreign scholars. FDDI also establishes research centers, including Financial Research Center, Center for BRICS Studies, Shanghai-Hong Kong Development Institute and etc. Three of the centers are actually established abroad, Fudan-Tec de Monterrey Research Center for Studies China and Latin America in Mexico, Fudan-UC Center on Contemporary China in USA and Fudan-European Centre for China Studies in Denmark.

Shanghai Forum is one of the most important projects for FDDI every year. The organizing committee decides the topics of the forum as well as the panels. “Call for roundtable/sub-forums” is then published online. Those who are interested can apply for a roundtable or sub-forum and be the chair. Once it is approved, the chairs can invite other participants of the roundtable/sub-forum. In 2016, the topic is “Interconnectivity, Integration and Innovation: Building Community of Common Destiny in Asia”. More than 1/3 session chairs are under 40 years old. Over a half of the participants are scholars, others include senior government officials, global think-tank staff, chief economist, president of universities, and etc. VIPs are invited from different channels and will give keynote speeches at the forum. Mr Dagfinn Høybråten will talk on “Regional integration and development-Nordic lessons learned”.

Liu Chunrong, Executive Vice Director of Fudan-European Centre, played a key role in inviting Mr Dagfinn Høybråten. Liu also co-chaired a session in Shanghai Forum this year, with the topic of “Building the Community of Human Destiny in Asia: Multicultural, Ethnic, and Religious Dimensions”. Many of the Nordic participants this year joined the discussion in this session, including people from NIAS, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (University of Oslo), University of Copenhagen, and Copenhagen Business School.

Chen told us that in previous years, Shanghai Forum has also attracted scholars from Stockholm University, Uppsala University, KI, and many other Nordic member universities. He also welcomes more scholars to apply or joint-apply roundtable/sub-forums of Shanghai Forum in the future. Topics related to Asia will be preferred.

[Read more here.](#)

Q&A with U Helsinki's Kaisa Kantola

Kaisa Kantola, PhD candidate of University of Helsinki, has been awarded a 23000 EURO grant from the Joel Toivola Foundation. We took the opportunity to ask her a few questions on her project.

Q: Hi Kaisa, could you please say a few words about yourself and your academic background?

Kaisa: I am from Finland and I'm a PhD candidate at the University of Helsinki, in the Department of World Cultures. I am in the doctoral programme for political, societal and regional change. I received my MA degree also from UH in 2011. I worked in China in the private sector and at the Embassy of Finland in Beijing for a few years before returning to do my PhD.



Q: Could you tell us how your interest of China grew?

Kaisa: I came to study Chinese through a mixture of careful planning and total coincidence. I was interested in India, Buddhism and Tibet when I was younger and wanted to study something close to that. At the same time I realized that I needed to do something with good job opportunities, so I ended up choosing East Asian studies as my major and Chinese as my focus. I haven't regretted my decision, as researching China is what I really love.

Q: You just received the grant from Joel Toivola Foundation. With such a large amount (23,000 euros), how did you feel when you got the news? What do you plan to use the money for?

Kaisa: I was very happy and relieved. I might have even shed a few tears of joy. The economic situation is not easy and it is difficult to find funding. I am grateful to receive such generous support from the Joel Toivola foundation. The money will enable me to focus on research full time, without the need to work on the side to support myself. I have also rented a workspace from my university, so that I can focus on research and work near my colleagues.

Q: Could you tell us more about your project that help you to win the funding?

Kaisa: My dissertation is about the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party rule. I am looking at the sources of legitimacy of the CCP rule by analysing political and academic discourses. I will focus on the role of ideology in legitimacy building during the current administration headed by president Xi Jinping. I want to find out if there has been a shift from performance legitimacy to a focus on ideology in the legitimization discourse.

Q: What's your future research plan? Do you plan to do your research in China since you are a researcher of China studies?

Kaisa: I will of course go to China to do some field work at some point, but for now I will mainly work from Finland. I returned from Beijing only a few months ago and my husband and I have just settled in Helsinki, so we wish to stay here for some time. But I do think it is important to keep a close connection and visit China often as a China researcher.

Selected events since April 2016

March 28– April 2 Economics course for Lund MA students

April 5 Social night for students, movie screening

April 12 Swedish-Chinese translation seminar

April 14-15 Council Meeting and Communication Seminar at University of Iceland

May 13 Meetings with new permanent secretary of DK's ministry of education

May 27 Norden Now! Event featuring SG of the Nordic Council of Ministers

June 11-13 Physics conference in the PEARL network

June 20-23 Chinese Legal Culture Studied from a Nordic Perspective PhD workshop

June 23-July 6 Doing Business in China summer course

June 30 Pre-departure event for Chinese students going to Norwegian universities to study

July 8-21 Doing Business in China summer course

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 (next deadline is September 10, 2016!). You can also apply for funding for shorter research stays through the Research Platform. Read more at nordiccentre.net