Rediscovering

CHINA

NEWSLETTER OF THE FUDAN-EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR CHINA STUDIES

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Our centre was officially established at the University of Copenhagen in October last year, under the same roof as NIAS. Taking the first steps of a long march, we have been preoccupied with building on our academic network and planning various research initiatives. Thanks to the reciprocal partnership with NIAS and many other important actors such as the Asian Dynamics Initiatives (ADI) and the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen, we are in the process of building a productive academic corridor for China studies in the region.

As a centre for knowledge development and dissemination, we provide opportunities and resources for relevant academics, professionals and practitioners to exchange views and to develop new research initiatives on China. Examples of such activities include the China Seminar Series, which was formally kicked off by Fudan President, Professor Yang Yuliang on October 15, 2013. This event examined critical socioeconomic trends in China, focusing on thoughts about society, social policy and financial reforms. The seminar was received very positively by participants from academia, government, business and the wider community. The series will be a routine platform from which we will promote comparative studies and cross-sector dialogue on Chinese affairs.

Among the many activities we have co-organized and participated in, the Asian Insights Course at Nuuk was particularly notable. Initiated by NIAS, this event offered an unparalleled opportunity for Greenlandic intellectuals, policy makers and other stakeholder to interact with leading international scholars on sociopolitical dynamics in East Asia and its implications for Greenland’s Asia strategy. The positive feedback from the participants strengthens our commitment to promoting China studies from comparative and relational perspectives.

In this issue, you will find accounts of our adventures since establishment as well as relevant Sino-European academic activities on issues that we focus on. Thank you for reading.

Geir Helgesen | Director
Liu Chunrong | Executive Vice-Director
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China Seminar Series Kicked Off

President Yang Yuliang delivered a speech about Fudan’s initiative to establish overseas platforms for China Studies

On October 17, 2013, the Fudan-European Centre for China Studies held a workshop on “critical currents in China” with the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) at Asia House in Copenhagen. Serving as the official launch of the Centre’s China Seminar Series, the workshop included presentations by an academic delegation from Fudan University led by President Yang Yuliang.

Three leading scholars from Fudan University, Prof. Zhang Rulun, Prof. Ying Xiaohua and Prof. Sun Lijian presented their perspectives on three individually important but interconnected issues in China: the nature and modern relevance of traditional Chinese thought and philosophy; the establishment of a social security system, focusing especially on public health reform against the backdrop of rapid urbanization and population aging; the significance of the new Shanghai Free Trade Zone and the transformation of China’s financial sector as a response to the post-crisis global economy. The workshop was co-moderated by the Centre’s directors, Prof. Geir Helgesen and Prof. Liu Chunrong, who noted that the speakers all shared a keen understanding of the vital dynamics of China’s transformation.

President Yang Yuliang kicked off the Seminar Series with a keynote address at the luncheon, congratulating the Centre and praising the thought-provoking discussions at the workshop. He shared his vision behind establishing overseas research platforms for China.
The opening ceremony of the China Seminar Series
President Yang Yuliang with the Fudan delegation
The venue: Asia House in Copenhagen
Professor Zhang Rulun speaking about Chinese thought and philosophy
Professor Sun Lijian speaking about economic and financial reforms
Professor Ying Xiaohua speaking about public health in China
Counsellor Xu Yong delivering a speech
Director Geir Helgesen addressing the audience
Professor Niels Thygesen applauded the workshop

studies, and said he expected the Centre at the University of Copenhagen to play a significant role in providing cutting-edge research that can lead to a more balanced understanding of China’s development and promote mutual understanding between China and the world.
The workshop was applauded by participants from academia, government, business and the public. Danish top economist, Prof. Niels Thygesen, commended the seminar series and expressed belief that the Centre’s programs will generate wonderful ideas and research opportunities. Counsellor Xu Yong, representing The Chinese Embassy in Denmark, delivered a special talk at the opening session, introducing the audience to recent developmental policies in China. At the luncheon, also Prof. John E. Andersen and Mr. Carsten Dencker Nielsen addressed the delegation and the audience on behalf of the University of Copenhagen and Asia Business Forum, respectively, congratulating on the establishment of the Centre and the success of the workshop.
Thank you to President Lenzen for letting me have the chance to speak here.

Speaking here, today, I am reminded that from 1986 to 1988, when I was very young, I was a post-doc at the Max-Planck-Institut für Polymerforschung. But I am embarrassed to say that, because my German is still not very good. Even at that time, the Max-Planck-Institut, was very internationalized, and because there were so many people from different countries, the working language was already English.

In 1986, only very few Chinese people had the chance to go abroad for studying or doing research. I can tell you that at that time I was thinking whether I would have the chance to come out again or not, if I went back to China. But now it seems that my worry was wrong because now China is very open. At the university, we keep saying that internationalization is becoming so important. So maybe I should say something about this.

I believe that you, the students here, are the top talents of Germany and from all around
the world. And I should probably also say the same regarding the students from my own university, because it is very difficult for young Chinese people to get into Fudan University. But the students in China, and the students here, you are all the hope of the future. This was a deep realization for me when I became the president of the university.

Before I came here in 1986, I had read many books written by German authors, even philosophers like Kant or Hegel. So it seems I should have known Germany, but at that time, Germany was still kind of like a myth to me. I did not know how German people behaved, or how German people thought. But after I came to Germany and stayed here for two years, the most important conclusion for me was that all human beings are the same.

But, I am not sure about the German students here: how do you think of Chinese students? I am also not sure how our Chinese students think of German people now, if they have never been to Germany. I think one thing that is very important, is to let the young generations talk to each other. That is why we dedicate a lot of efforts, and as the president of the university, I invest lots of money, in letting the students go abroad. Not only to take courses, but mainly also to create opportunities for them to get in contact with people outside of China.

At my university, we think there are several things which are very important for the students. First, you have to know about the different cultures all over the world. The second requirement is that you have to understand, to some extent, the main cultures around the world, no matter what major you have taken. Third, and even more importantly, you should be tolerant towards different cultures, and not simply think they are strange because they are different from yourself. So the students should be open and tolerant. Finally, we train our students to be able to communicate with people that have a different cultural background.

But how to realize this? What we have done is that we have set up research centers abroad for contemporary China. We have set up one in the United States, UC San Diego, and another one at Copenhagen University, but we try to set up more. We would like to do research jointly with foreign scholars, studying contemporary China. I feel that China has been largely misunderstood. I have had the chance to read what is said in the media. Also our domestic media does not always say everything in truth. Therefore, you have to make contact with the people. Then you know the reality. And that is why our university has invested
in several contemporary China research centers in different universities outside of China.

The second thing is that we are going to set up a new kind of research center for the Chinese Classics. I am sure that I know German philosophers much better than you know Chinese ancient philosophers. It is very difficult for foreigners to understand ancient Chinese philosophy and literature. That is the reason why Fudan University, as the first university in China, tries to open research centers for the Chinese Classics outside of China. I believe that only in this way can we dispel the myths about China amongst the young generations here. Only in this way can we take away the misunderstandings, and make it possible to build a more harmonious world in the future.

The cooperation between Fudan University and the Hamburg University started very early on. Not least because Shanghai and Hamburg are sister cities. We started the Confucius Institute in 2007, and now it will move into the very beautiful Yu Garden in Hamburg, very close to here. In the Confucius Institute, lots of activities have been going on, and are going to be happening. For example, Fudan University and the University of Hamburg jointly organize a variety of academic activities, such as the Shanghai-Hamburg Leibniz Forum. Last year, we hosted the first forum at Fudan University on the topic, “Germany in China – Ideas and Technologies”.

We also have a plan for the students at Fudan University, that by 2020, every qualified student from Fudan University will have at least one chance to study abroad during their studies, which is four years for undergraduates. At the same time, we try to have more students from foreign countries come to us as well. Fudan University has the highest number of international students in China. We provide scholarships for foreign students and for people doing research on contemporary China or Chinese classics. You can also study abroad or at other universities in China, and you can do social service. We provide financial support for all this.

My main purpose is to make people understand each other, understand the traditions and understand the cultures. People say that culture generates barriers. No, according to my own experience, it is not culture which generates the barriers. The only problem is when you do not know the culture of a country, but you pretend to know it. You do not know this culture yourself, but even at this stage you just simply reject it. That is when the barrier happens. But if you make contact with each other, discuss things in depth, you will find that people all over the world are the same.

During their study at Hamburg University, the students should think about taking some time at Fudan University. I think this will be very important for your future career. And Fudan University welcomes you.

Thank you very much.
Lunch Seminar: “Chinese Perception of the EU”

On November 11, Jean Monnet Professor Chen Zhimin, Dean of Fudan University’s School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA) was invited by the Fudan-European Centre for China Studies to deliver a lunch talk on China’s perception of the EU.

Prof. Chen analyzed the Chinese view of the EU as a major player in global affairs, and noted how Chinese views have changed over time. He argued that as a sui generis actor, the EU was seen in general by China as a progressive force in world affairs. In the context of China’s continued economic growth and increasing international influence, the Chinese leaders, elites and general public are beginning to develop a more realistic view of Europe and scaling down former expectations to the EU’s ever-growing influence. Yet, at government level, relations with the EU and its member states are still at the top of China’s foreign policy agenda. By offering a helping hand to the EU, the Chinese government is hoping that the current crisis might turn into a stimulating factor for a closer relationship between China and the EU member states on both bilateral and global issues.

The event was moderated by Prof. Lars Bo Kapersen, head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. A part of the China Seminar Series, this event was enthusiastically attended by a group of leading experts on EU studies in Copenhagen.

After the lunch seminar, Geir Helgesen and Liu Chunrong organized a special discussion session on academic collaboration between SIRPA and the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. Both sides were highly interested in promoting student and faculty exchange and keen on exploring joint research and activities on European politics and state theory.

China Policy Roundtable: Domestic and Diplomatic Agendas

A special China Policy Roundtable was held on 12 November 2013 at the Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen. Professor Chen Zhimin, Dean of SIRPA at Fudan University and associate professor Liu Chunrong gave presentations about China’s foreign policy and urbanization drive, respectively. Prof. Chen briefed the audience on the key aspects of the foreign policy agenda of China’s new leadership which took office in 2013. In his presentation, Prof. Liu examined the national strategy to advance urbanization, particularly focusing on the associated governance challenges relating to land rights disputes and the transformation to city residency. This event was co-sponsored by the Fudan-European Centre for China Studies and hosted by Prof. Stein Kuhnle. The roundtable closed off with a lively discussion by a group of Bergen scholars and students interested in China studies.
PhD Course: “Knowledge and Power: East and West”

The 7th Annual Nordic NIAS Council (NNC) Conference was hosted by the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Sønderborg on 4–8 November 2013. The Fudan-European Centre for China Studies was invited to discuss strategies for further collaboration between the Centre and the NNC, and to contribute to the PhD course attached to the conference.

The PhD course was titled “The Power of Knowledge: Asia and the West”, and was co-organized by several of our partners, including the Leiden-based International Institute of Asia Studies (IIAS). Niels Bohr Professor of Cultural Psychology at Aalborg University, Jaan Valsiner, delivered a keynote speech on cross-cultural studies from the perspective of psychology. Around thirty PhD students from Europe and Asia attended the course. Director Geir Helgesen and Liu Chunrong moderated and facilitated the lively panel discussions around four thematic clusters: “discourse and identity”, “theory travel – East and West”, “state, governance and soft power”, and “civil society and knowledge transfer”.

International Conference: “Asian Insights”

The first inaugural Asian Insights course at the University of Greenland (Ilisimatusarfik) was held on 11-12 December, 2013. The Fudan-European Centre for China Studies was actively engaged in this event which was organized by NIAS and Ilisimatusarfik. It was supported and attended by delegates from the Greenlandic government, Sermersooq Business Council, private consultancies and students and staff from Ilisimatusarfik.

The future of Greenland was discussed in the context of its increasingly important relationship with three major Asian countries: China, Korea and Japan. The course was a brilliant chance for delegates to learn more about the state players and to hear about different cultural, historical and political frameworks. It covered a wide range of topics from cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication, over traditional and contemporary social values and norms in East Asia. It also provided introductions to state, society and market in the three Asian countries, as well as their political and business cultures. All of these issues are very relevant for Greenland and its current development. The Minister for Industry and Mineral resources, Jens Erik Kirkegaard opened the course and Kai Holst Andersen, Deputy Minister of International affairs presented Greenlandic experiences with Asian partners so far.

Director Geir Helgesen moderated this event together with Prof. Claus George Hansen of Ilisimatusarfik. Vice-director Liu Chunrong joined three other prominent China experts, Prof. Daniel Bell from Tsinghua University, Prof. Jorgen Delmen from University of Copenhagen, and Prof. Geir Sigurdsseon from University of Iceland in addressing cultural and political aspects of China for the audience. Dr. Aki Tonami of NIAS and Prof. Jong Kun Choi from Yonsei University presented Japanese and Korean perspectives.
Asia Alliance Meeting: Strengthening the Community of Asia and China Studies in Europe

A coordination meeting of the European Alliance for Asian Studies (Asia Alliance) was held on February 18-19, 2014 at NIAS. Leaders from eight participating institutes jointly discussed recent challenges and opportunities of Asia and China studies in the context of changing research landscapes and funding policies. The institutes were NIAS, International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Leon Institute of East Asian Studies, Directora Centro de Estudios de Asia Oriental, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Asian Dynamics Initiatives (ADI) at University of Copenhagen and Fudan-European Centre for China Studies.

The meeting provided critical updates concerning project operation and research initiatives on Asia studies in Europe. In addition to information sharing, the delegates also discussed questions regarding the professional and public visibility of the Alliance as well as joint PhD courses and joint publications. There was broad consensus that more substantial efforts must be invested for institution-level coordination and for keeping up with the (research) developments in Asia and Europe.

The Asia Alliance was established in 1997 as a cooperative network of European institutes specializing in Asian studies. The aim of the Asia Alliance is to contribute to bringing together the fragmented forces in Europe in Asian Studies in order to establish scholarly excellence in central areas of research and expertise on Asia, and to benefit the research environments and the European community at large. An important part of the work of the Alliance is to encourage closer scholarly contact within Europe and beyond by sponsoring conferences and workshops. Collaborative research programs are set up to stimulate academic mobility, to increase interaction between scholars studying Asia, and to make it possible for the Alliance members to draw on high-level international expertise. The Alliance’s secretariat, which is currently run by the IIAS, is responsible for organizing meetings, publicity, the Asia Alliance website, and financial matters. In addition, it has the task of exploring the possible participation of new partners such as the Fudan-European Centre for China Studies.
Fudan-European Collaboration on Economic Research

On October 14, 2013, a delegation led by Fudan President, Yang Yuliang, visited the headquarters of Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim, Germany, on invitation from the ZEW. ZEW is among Europe’s top economic research centers and enjoys an excellent reputation amongst international academic researchers, as well as in the fields of politics and economics. Over a long period, the ZEW has built up substantial experience working with economic indicators and research. Great achievements have been made with related professional investigations carried out in Germany, Switzerland, and Eastern Europe for several years.

During the visit, President Yang and Prof. Clemens Fuest, president of ZEW, signed a “Fudan-ZEW Cooperation Agreement”. The agreement includes the following items: promoting the China Economic Panel (CEP); making a plan for joint research projects, research activities, conferences and lectures; setting up and maintaining an international research network; building a talent exchange scheme; cooperating on talent cultivation and academic exchange. At the signing ceremony, president Yang expressed his high expectations to future collaboration. In turn, Prof. Clemens Fuest agreed that “this agreement is based on mutual academic exchange.”

The goal of the “Fudan-ZEW Cooperation Agreement” is to strengthen mutual cooperation, especially in international finance, environmental economics, resource economics, industrial economics, competition and supervision. President Yang stressed that Fudan University continues to honor a splendid legacy of internationalism — for example, Fudan is the Chinese University with the most foreign students. “Based on this tradition” he said, “I believe the cooperation with ZEW will facilitate more cross-disciplinary exchange and benefit both parties.”

The CEP program is an existing result of the collaboration. This program was set up in the beginning of 2013, and conducts quarterly surveys of experts home and abroad who play an active role in finance and industrial economics. Benefiting from the research capabilities and international reputation of Fudan University and ZEW, we believe the CEP program will receive considerable attention from economics and finance, industrial companies, relevant government offices, and the press worldwide. ZEW is a long time partner of Fudan University. In July 2013, the Financial Research Center, Fudan University (FDFRC) and the ZEW issued the first “Fudan-ZEW Indicator of Economic Sentiment (FZIES)”, which is a monthly investigation into Chinese economics and finance. After the success of the first issue in October, ZEW and FDFRC issued the second FZIES to positive reactions. The China Economic Panel program is set to continue its work.
Sino-Nordic Welfare Research Network (SNoW)

The PhD course, “Analyzing Welfare Institutions, Policies and Politics in China and the Nordic Countries” was held at the Nordic Centre at Fudan University on October 17-21. It was followed by an open SNoW Workshop on October 22 on “Welfare Research in China and the Nordic Countries: State of the Art”.

The course was organized by the SNoW network and financed by NordForsk and the Nordic Council of Ministers, with the aim of stimulating cross-disciplinary and multi-perspective discussions on social policy and the development and challenges of welfare states in general, but particularly in China (and East Asia) and the Nordic countries. It moreover discussed concepts, theoretical approaches, research methods and empirical research on the many social welfare related issues within this sphere from a variety of social science perspectives.

25 PhD candidates from seven countries had been accepted and participated in the course. Each PhD candidate presented a paper for discussion in workshops, where they also acted as discussants for each other. 12 international scholars were invited to give lectures for this course.

Sino-Nordic Welfare Research Network (SNoW) is financed by NordForsk (2011-2013) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (2013-2015). SNoW is open for participation by scholars and PhD students from higher education institutions in China and the Nordic countries who are interested in welfare research.
Gender Dynamics in the 21st Century: Gender, Class, Culture in a Globalizing World

The symposium “Gender Dynamics in the 21st Century: Gender, Class, Culture in a Globalizing World” was held at the Nordic Centre at Fudan University in Shanghai on 23 October, 2013. The theme of the symposium reflected that gender studies are becoming more complex while aiming at including intersecting themes, such as ethnicity, class, age and sexuality.

Five sessions were held during the one-day symposium with a total of 13 speakers. Themes such as legal and social activism, welfare and environment, globalization, developments and new family structures within the middle class, as well as gender roles and identities were presented, compared and discussed from Eastern and Western perspectives.

The symposium was made possible through funding and support from the Nordic Centre at Fudan University, the Sino-Danish Center in Beijing and the Department of Sociology at the University of Copenhagen. It will be followed up by the establishment of educational- and faculty exchange programs between the University of Copenhagen, Peking University, and Fudan University.

Sustainable development and urban governance is becoming increasingly important as an area of collaborative research between China and the Nordic countries. In order to further facilitate this development, the Sino-Nordic Urban Governance for Sustainable Cities Network (UGN) has been set up with funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Network consists of members from Uppsala University in Sweden, the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, Lund University in Sweden, and Turku University in Finland as well as Fudan University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, and Zhejiang University in China. Its goal is to coordinate exchange of information and experiences about research projects through workshops, scholar exchange, and PhD courses, and thereby to stimulate Chinese and Nordic scholars to obtain new and innovate perspectives on urban governance and sustainable development.

On October 24-25, 2013, the UGN organized a workshop titled “Urban sustainable governance and citizen perception and action” at Zhejiang University, which was attended by more than thirty scholars from China and the Nordic countries. The second UGN workshop is scheduled to be held in Shanghai at Fudan University’s Nordic Center in October 2014, and will include a PhD course. Its focus will be on environmental and sustainable governance innovation in Chinese and Nordic cities.

Professor Ren Yuan from Fudan University’s School of Social Development and Public Policy is a member of the Network’s steering committee.

The Sino-Nordic Urban Governance for Sustainable Cities Network
ADI: Integrating Asian Studies at the University of Copenhagen

The Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI) is an Asia focused cross-faculty initiative at the University of Copenhagen. ADI aims at coordinating existing research and teaching on Asia and to create a common platform for new, interdisciplinary research within Asian studies. The purpose of the Initiative is to strengthen the position of the University of Copenhagen as a major strategic source for knowledge about Asian societies and communities.

ADI recognizes that, for Denmark and the Western World, Asia has become increasingly important as a powerful player on the global scene. It is thus of strategic importance to tackle what is often called the challenge of the "Asian Century". To grasp the dynamics of Asia, ADI aims to both understand and learn from Asia, which includes focusing on intra-Asian relations that invariably influence decisions and developments in and outside of Asia.

With the aim of creating a common platform for social science and humanities research and for cross-disciplinary teaching, the initiative focuses on the following strategic research themes:

1. Knowledge in transit
2. Security at global and local levels
3. Borders, territorialisation and regionalization
4. Belonging, citizenship and identities
5. Local responses to global challenges
6. The economics of the Asian challenge
7. Political institutions and cultures

These themes are seen as crucial for understanding Asia’s dynamics and the role of the continent in international development and globalization processes during the coming years. With these themes as platforms, the initiative seeks to gather research groups from the social sciences and the humanities in common endeavor while also opening up to researchers with an interest in Asia from other faculties, as well as to international partners in Asian studies.
ThinkChina.dk: Creating dialogues on Denmark and China

Launched in late 2012, ThinkChina.dk is an initiative at the University of Copenhagen that brings research about China into play with a variety of different institutions and professionals in Danish society. Rather than keeping China research confined to journals and the halls of the university, it is ThinkChina.dk’s aim to create dialogues with society at large that explore questions of how to understand contemporary China, how China’s growth can benefit Denmark, and how Danish-Chinese collaborations can develop to the mutual benefit of both countries. In exploring such questions, ThinkChina.dk organizes events and activities within various areas of Danish-Chinese relations – economics and business, politics, green growth, and health – always as an interplay between university researchers and outside professionals.

ThinkChina.dk believes that Denmark can play a positive role in China’s urbanization – especially due to Danish expertise in such areas as water management, waste management, and economic growth decoupled from increased CO2 emissions – and therefore supports the efforts of Danish municipalities and regions in their city-to-city relations with Chinese counterparts, for example by offering recommendations for effective collaboration and courses on understanding Chinese public civil servants. In collaboration with the Fudan-European Centre for China Studies, ThinkChina.dk has also organized a seminar looking at green initiatives in Hangzhou and Shanghai to highlight efforts to prevent air pollution and climate change at the local level in China.

In these activities and other pursuits, ThinkChina.dk will continue its fruitful collaboration with professionals outside the University of Copenhagen, as well as with the Fudan-European Centre for China Studies, which is an excellent partner for understanding China from a comparative perspective.