



Nordic Centre Newsletter *Early winter 2017*

It has been a semester surging with activities for Nordic Centre at Fudan University, and what was intended as an autumn newsletter eventually became an early winter newsletter...

Besides participating in various innovation-related events externally (see page 3), we have been organizing courses and events for students on our campus, including social "ice-breaking" events, our biannual Nordic Education Fair in which we promote programs at member universities (see pages 14-15), the Nordic Studies course (which has about 45 students enrolled this semester, taught by researchers from the University of Copenhagen, the University of Tampere, and the University of Bergen), the Swedish course, prototyping classes for students from Turku/Fudan, weekly debates over lunch on gender and LGBT issues, and a variety of public lectures by researchers from our member universities, one of which you can hear a podcast recording of (link on page 4). We have also hosted a conference on Digital Culture and Society, workshops on brain plasticity and exotic transitions in ions, Sino-Finnish Research Days, and of course visiting scholars from across various parts of the Nordic region for medium-term stays.

Also included in this newsletter are articles on gender equality in China, an intro to our autumn intern Ida, and a piece on the outrageous Chinese consumer fest known as Single's Day... Enjoy!

Best regards,

The Nordic Centre team

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About

- 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, please sign up at

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Masthead

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Upcoming seminar on the Arctic

On April 26, 2018, Nordic Centre will organize a seminar on the Arctic, taking place at Umeå University. The theme is very comprehensive and could include many aspects such as climate, environment, indigenous people, transportation, geo-politics, natural resources, etc. We would like all the members to come up with suggestions on topics and scholars who could participate during the seminar. Please write to per.a.nilsson@umu.se by December 1 with any suggestions.

Updated handbook for visiting scholars

A slightly updated edition of our [Handbook for Visiting Scholars](#) is now online. Read it to get a sense of what it's like to work at Nordic Centre as a researcher, practical issues related to temporarily relocating to China, advice on how to conduct surveys here, and more.

Chinese delegations visit University of Southern Denmark

On 3 November, the University of Southern Denmark was honoured to host a large delegation of Chinese Universities headed by the China Education Association for International Exchange. University leaders from both sides participated with presentations on university-industry interactions, industrial PhD schemes, innovation and entrepreneurship. Many fruitful insights and relations were forged throughout the day on their Odense campus.



SDU also had the pleasure of hosting a visit by Beijing University of Technology on 7 November. The two universities enjoyed fruitful discussions on possible future areas of research and program cooperation.



Government-backed innovation events

Nordic Centre has been actively taking part in various innovation– and entrepreneurship related events organized with and by the Chinese government this fall. This has included, among other things, professor Stein Kuhnle giving a keynote speech on social innovation at the Week of Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation (an initiative backed most notably by Premier Li Keqiang) in early September, where programme manager Magnus Jorem also moderated a panel discussion on innovation eco-systems in China and the Nordic countries.

Nordic Centre was also represented at the Pujiang Innovation Forum, which this year highlighted Denmark as a country of honor and important innovation partner for China. On September 23, Magnus hosted “The Night of China and Denmark” in connection with the forum, organized by China’s Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and Denmark’s Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the [Danish Innovation Centre in Shanghai](#).

Congratulations to Sino-Danish Centre in Beijing

The day before the Night of Denmark and China, Søren Pind, the Minister of Higher Education and Science of Denmark, had made a visit to Fudan University and Nordic Centre with a delegation, which later travelled to Beijing to celebrate the official opening of [Sino-Danish Centre](#) (SDC), which shares five of our member universities and runs a number of programs in education and research on a new campus just outside the Chinese capital. Sino-Danish Centre, which was initiated by the Danish government with the participation of each of the eight Danish universities, has been around for some years already, but held its official opening now because its new campus and building, featuring state-of-the-art Danish design, has just been completed.

Earlier this year, we enjoyed having Aalborg University’s Dmitriy Slepnirov, who runs the Innovation Management program at SDC, as a visiting scholar at Nordic Centre. We find it natural to continue collaborating with SDC, and would like to offer our congratulations on their (now official) opening!

Podcast on legal culture in Greenland and China

'Welfare, Well-being and Harmony in World Society'

Lecture by professor Hanne Petersen, University of Copenhagen



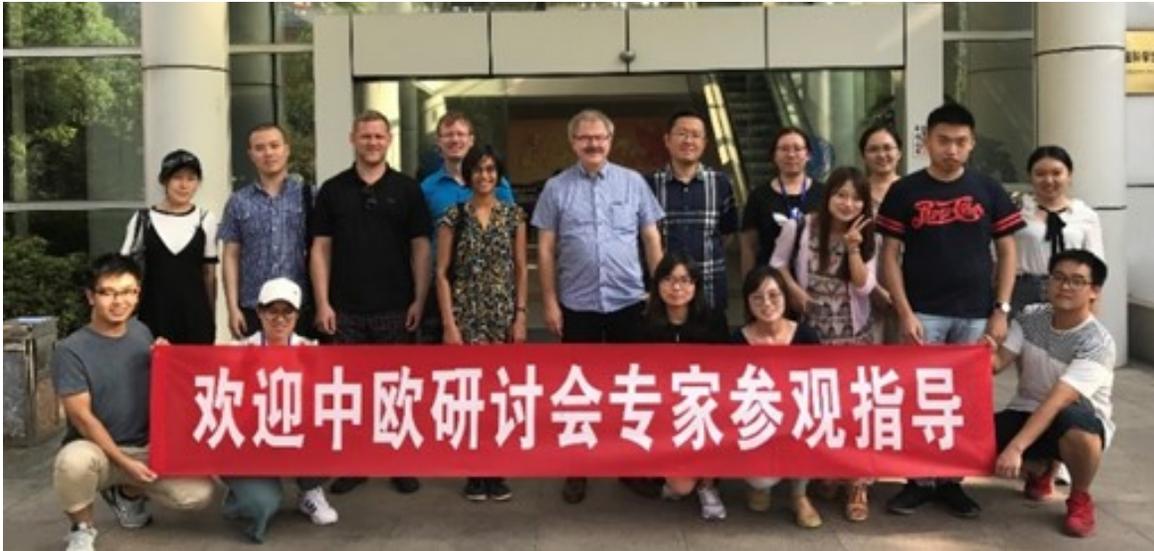
The seventh episode of the Nordic Centre podcast is a recording of a public lecture held on October 17, 2017, by professor of legal culture Hanne Petersen. It explores conceptions of welfare and wellbeing in different legal cultures, with a focus on Greenland and China, and in doing so touches upon a range of ideas about community, harmony, and relationships between man and nature in these vastly different places.

[Stream or download here.](#)

Breaking the ice between Chinese and Nordic students

As in seasons past, Nordic Centre has held a series of social events this autumn, inviting Nordic exchange students, double degree students, and local students with an interested in our region to mingle and make new friends. Besides a welcome event (pictured below) at the very beginning of the semester, our intern Ida Illum has hosted a fiercely competitive quiz night, a mostly platonic speed-dating event, plus a number of movie nights. A secondary function of these events is to introduce students to Nordic Centre, showing them which parts of our building they can use for studying, and telling them about the various academic services we offer.





Meeting of minds

Therapeutic strategies based on brain plasticity – Nordic-Chinese brainstorming meeting September 11-12, 2017, Shanghai, organized by professor Jukka Jolkkonen, University of Eastern Finland, with colleagues from Aarhus University, Helsinki University, Fudan University, and China Medical University.

Funded by Nordic Centre and National Natural Science Foundation of China, 40 scientists from the Nordic countries and China gathered in September to discuss brain repair as a possible option to treat diseases with no proper therapy, such as having a stroke. Strokes are a major cause of adult disability, representing a heavy burden on families and society. Effective solutions are limited. A great deal of hope is now being placed on restorative therapies based on recoverability and plasticity of brain — i.e. the brain's ability to change.

According to the presentations, exercise, rehabilitation, cell therapy, and novel pharmacotherapy might all facilitate brain plasticity, leading to functional improvement. The challenge is to translate promising experimental data into clinical practice.

Professor Yang Guoyuan, Shanghai Jiaotong University, described his progress in a basic experimental study of rats, using the most advanced synchrotron radiation light source technology in China. The dynamic change of vessels in rats with cerebral ischemia were observed by using synchrotron radiation angiography (a medical imaging technique), and the

effect of butylphthalide (a chemical constituent of celery oil) on the recovery of vessel diameter was observed. By observing the vascular density, they found that butylphthalide can open the blood vessels and improve the blood flow in the distal cortex, and obtained breakthrough new evidence of collateral circulation.

The topic on the second day of the workshop was also challenging: how to boost collaboration and apply funding for joint projects. One attractive option is the upcoming Horizon2020 calls that are now open to Chinese partners through co-funding mechanisms.

Scholars from Tongji University and Shanghai Jiaotong University, and doctors from various hospitals in Shanghai, Dalian, and Shenyang, attended the meeting, in addition to the organizing institutions mentioned above.

Q&A with Guan Meiting, The First Hospital of China Medical University

Can you tell us one or two methods for improving brain plasticity?

Constraint-induced movement therapy (CIMT) has been extensively used for stroke rehabilitation. This approach, which encourages use of the impaired limb along with restraint of the ipsilesional limb in daily life, has provided substantial evidence of efficacy for promoting behavioral recovery and enhancing functional reorganization of brain. Age is associated with poor outcome and impaired functional recovery after a stroke. Fluoxetine, which is widely used in clinical practice, can regulate hippocampal neurogenesis in young rodents.

How did you test the methods in your research?

As the rate of neurogenesis is dramatically reduced during aging, we studied the effect of post-stroke fluoxetine treatment on neurogenesis in the subventricular zone (SVZ) and subgranular zone (SGZ) of dentate gyrus (DG), and whether this would be associated with any behavioral recovery after the cortical infarct in aged rats. Aged rats were randomly assigned to four groups: sham-operated (i.e. placebo surgery), sham-operated rats treated





with fluoxetine, rats subjected to cerebral ischemia, and rats with ischemia treated with fluoxetine.

Q3: Can you tell us something about the role of sleep, role of alcohol, and role of cigarettes on brain plasticity?

Smoking can inhibit the nerve center of spinal cord, reduce the secretion of spinal nerve cells, and even affect the growth of nerve. Therefore, during periods of nerve recovery, smoking may slow nerve growth or cause abnormal growth (neuroma), slowing the recovery of nerve function, and sometimes even preventing recovery.

Our studies have shown that children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder are impaired on multiple saccade measures. Saccades are rapid eye movements that bring an image of interest onto the retina. Previous research has found that in healthy individuals performing eye movement tasks, the location of a previous visual target can influence performance of the saccade on the next trial. This rapid behavioral adaptation represents a form of immediate neural plasticity within the saccadic circuitry.

Memory consolidation is conceptualized as an active process whereby newly encoded memory representations are strengthened through selective memory reactivation during sleep. However, our learning experience is highly overlapping in content, and memories of events are organized in an intricate network of overlapping associated events. It remains to be explored whether and how selective memory reactivation during sleep has an impact on overlapping memories acquired during awake time.

From cozy capital to bustling metropolis

Q&A with Ida Ling Yun Zhang Illum from Copenhagen Business School, Nordic Centre's autumn 2017 intern.



Where and what did you study before interning at the Nordic Centre?

I just finished my bachelor at Copenhagen Business School (CBS), where I studied Business, Asian Language and Culture. During my bachelor's degree I spent a semester in South Korea, where I attended Ewha Woman's University and took courses within the field of International Relations. I am currently enrolled in a master's degree called Brand and Communications Management at CBS.

What made you apply for the internship?

Working at the Nordic Centre seemed like a great opportunity. I have grown up surrounded in a natural mix of diverse cultures, and believe that bridging the gap between different societies is very important. While I have worked and volunteered in international settings before, at high school and university, working at the Nordic Centre is still quite new to me. I was eager to put my theory and learned knowledge into practice, so with my background and interest this was just the place to do an internship.

Have you been to China before?

I have actually always had a relation to China. Being half Chinese, I have often travelled to China to visit my Chinese family in Shenyang. In 2010, I moved to Tianjin with my family, where I attended high school at International School of Tianjin. It was during these three years I began contemplating a career involving China as I became more and more intrigued by Chinese culture and society. After graduating high school I spent a year learning Mandarin in Shanghai, and then proceeded to studying at CBS. After graduating, I decided it was time for a change of scenery. I had almost just come back from Seoul but I was ready to go straight back to Asia.

Despite having been to China several times and having studied Chinese I still make the common 外国人 mistakes in Chinese though. When I first arrived at Pudong International Airport, I had forgotten to fill out the yellow arrival card, and went to a Chinese clerk to ask to borrow a pen. When he gave me a strange look, I suddenly realized I asked to borrow his nose, not his pen... "Welcome back to China, Ida!"



Thinking Big. Gender Equality in China

Words Ida Ling Yun Zhang Illum

An interview with Ms. Chichi Wang



王亚晶, otherwise known as Chichi Wang, is one of the main catalysts driving the initiative for gender equality in Hangzhou, China. In 2015, she and her colleagues brought **UN Women's HeForShe** initiative to China. Since then, increasingly more attention has been brought to the issue of gender inequality, and the community in China supporting the initiative is growing rapidly. This summer, Chichi organized a HeForShe event along with the Nordic consulates in Shanghai, at which Nordic Centre's Programme Manager, Magnus Jorem, was invited to speak about LGBT people and equality. We've since kept in touch with Chichi on issues of gender in China.

When did you realize you wanted to take action in the fight for gender equality?

It started after I went to Canada to study at University of British Columbia at the Sauder School of Business, where I experienced a major life change. I saw how women were empowered, led and made influential changes in private sectors, in government and in society. Canada, like the Nordic Countries, is one of the leading nations supporting and advocating female empowerment. I studied, lived, and worked in Canada for about 10 years, and while keeping my Chinese origins, I also consider myself living with Canadian values, and with a global vision. When I returned to China in 2011, I experienced reverse culture shock. Quite a few young ladies around me were not confident enough to make the life choices they wanted. I was 28 at the time, and in Canada, women this age usually concentrate on achieving their goals in life or their career development. Yet these young ladies were more worried about marriage and some of them were desperate to marry before it was too late. No one wants to be perceived as a "left over woman". When I heard Emma Watson's famous speech in 2014 at the UN's launch of the HeForShe gender equality global campaign, it was as if her words were coming out of my mouth. She said exactly what I wanted to express. Afterwards, my friends and I approached UN Women China and expressed our interest in advocating this global campaign for gender equality to other cities in China. After a few visits and meetings, UN Women, All Women Federation, and Hangzhou Municipality agreed to host the first ever gender equality and CSR conference in

my hometown of Hangzhou. We had more than 300 participants ranging from government representatives, diplomats, business leaders, scholars, and major media. During the launch of HeForShe, UN Women, actress Hai Qing was chosen as a UN Woman National Ambassador for China. Since the successful 2015 Gender Equality conference, we gained the full support of people, business communities, as well as municipal, provincial, and central government, and have held 22 events since then with over 50,000 people supporting us.

What is your next move?

In some of the biggest cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Hangzhou, people are more aware of this issue now. They are starting to ask “What can we do to make a change?” HeForShe believes in any positive changes whether large or small, in any shape or form. For instance, if back home the husbands start to take more care of the children, this increases the wives’ possibilities to develop their own careers. Larger changes include changing corporate policies concerning fair gender neutral promotions or eradicating the pay gap. Our next step is twofold. One is to include more corporate action. I am trying to find suitable corporates which can collaborate with UN Women and have them enroll in UN Women CSR programs.

The second step is to increase awareness through education. The most crucial time of developmental stage is during high school years. Here you develop your own world view and individual opinion. It is crucial to target awareness among the group of 16-18 year-olds, therefore we want to start out by picking top high schools in Zhejiang and Hangzhou, and involve them in discussions on gender equality through initiatives such as self-organized debates on various topics within gender equality. We also want to increase education at middle school and university level. For the earliest age group (3-5 years old), our motive is to involve the parents so their children are raised in a healthy environment in which gender equality becomes a norm within the children’s lives.

The HeForShe movement draws attention to the fact that men play an equal role in the fight for gender equality. Do you believe Chinese men acknowledge this?

I have gotten several reactions to this, and they are actually quite cute. Sometimes they will ask, “Oh but Chichi, at home I am the one washing my wife’s feet, what more can I do?”. In the end, men need to understand that female empowerment does not endanger the male position. It is when the two genders work together in a joint effort that we can really create miracles. If I encounter men who do not understand this viewpoint, I ask them, “What about your mother?

Your sister? Your daughter? Do you want them to have the great life they choose to have?" And of course, their answer is always "yes".

It seems you experience men's willingness to improve women's domestic life, but do you see their willingness in improving the conditions for women in the workplace?

I see increasingly more female entrepreneurs, and I think they initially will be the ones influencing big change, and after their presence in the workplace becomes the norm, more people will accept this as the status quo. Currently, I still think Chinese men could take a more progressive part in encouraging more female presence in the workplace, and in higher positions. China still needs to develop, but in time, I am confident that China will be in the leading position in empowering women and for promoting gender equality.

While Chinese society has been changing immensely, the status of woman is not ideal yet. Change takes time, and we are headed in the right direction. We are not just talking, we are actually taking action.

Do you have a particularly inspirational story?

Every day I hear more and more individual stories, and together these stories create a bigger, beautiful story. The fact is that it is becoming more difficult to pick out a single story out of so many memorable ones, and this symbolizes the growth of this social movement. It is like a mosaic, it is a magnificent picture, and when you get closer, each part is an individual story that strengthens the larger story. I am also just one of the little pictures and in the end, it is not about one person, it is about every single person that joins out movement. I am amazed that here I am today with my volunteers, with our HeForShe community, our great nations in a global world promoting gender equality together.

If you could give any advice, what would it be?

To both men and women, I would tell them to read. Become knowledgeable and gather as much information as possible, both to learn and understand from the past, about the present, so we can together lead the future. Another important point is to dream wild, think big, but then to also set up realistic goals. Worry less about which famous school you want to apply or how much money you want to make. These are not goals, they are the means. You should always think about what your true passion is, what you want to contribute with and pass on to the next generation. Through your answers you will help make a measurable change to the world we are living.



To the stars and back

Roger Hutton is a physics professor at the Institute of Modern Physics at Fudan University. He specializes within atomic, molecular, and optical physics. After obtaining his PhD at Lund University in Sweden, he came to Fudan University and began working full time at the Institute of Modern Physics in November 2005, making this year his 12th at Fudan. In 2008, he received the Magnolia Silver Award, which is one of the highest honors a foreigner can receive in Shanghai.

On October 26 –27, in collaboration with Tomas Brage (Lund University) and Wei Baoren (Fudan University), Roger Hutton hosted the international workshop 'Exotic Transitions in Ion (ExTra)' at the Nordic Centre. The following Q&A is an interview with Roger to take a closer look at the building blocks of life.

Words Ida Ling Yun Zhang Illum

What is atomic spectroscopy exactly?

Atomic spectroscopy is the study of the electromagnetic radiation emitted and absorbed by atoms. Sounds quite technical, but this is actually an easy one. Each atom has a "fingerprint," a spectrum, and they are all unique to each atom and ion (an atom which has lost several electrons). If you map the fingerprints then you can examine a star and see which elements it consists of, what the concentration of atoms are within, and even the temperature and density. What causes the spectra is the transition of an electron one excited level to another in the atom under question. The excess energy in transferring

from a higher to a lower excited level is released as a photon. The fingerprint is determined through the number of photons released and the function of the wavelengths. So far so good!

And within atomic spectroscopy you specialize in Exotic Transitions in Ions?

Yes, this is a sub-topic of atomic spectroscopy. You see, some transitions in atoms or ions are not supposed to happen, thus we call them 'forbidden' or 'exotic'. We call the excited levels from which forbidden transitions occur metastable, as they can survive without decay much longer than normal excited levels. In very rare cases, maybe only

one, an ion can have a metastable level and a normal level so close in energy that they can interfere under the presence of an external magnetic field. If we measure the intensity ratio of the spectral lines from the metastable and normal level we can get a measure of the external magnetic field.

What can be accomplished by gaining knowledge within atomic spectroscopy?

Exotic transitions occur in the solar corona, which is the much hotter sphere of plasma outside the sun, beating the sun's surface temperature by a factor of 100. If you look at the ratio of the exotic transi-



To the stars and back

tions in the solar corona compared to normal transitions, you can measure the magnetic field strength of the corona, something which currently we do not have the technology to realize.

One important reason of studying exotic transitions in ions lies within the growing activity of the sun causing 'solar flares'.

Occasionally, the sun erupts and throws solar mass into space. This is caused by the coronal magnetic field changing condition and becoming active. When this matter reaches Earth it gives rise to "space weather" affecting our electronic equipment. At its strongest, it has in the past knocked out an entire power grid in Sweden. The power of solar flares can equal 1 billion nuclear weapons released in 20 minutes. Consequently, we cannot do anything to prevent it, yet we can take precautions if we in the future are able to study the magnetic field of the solar corona and predict when solar flares happen. Studying the finger-

prints of the atoms will help understand the magnetic conditions in the solar corona.

With atomic spectroscopy being a diverse field, how does collaboration work between researchers working with very different sub-topics?

It is important to understand the atomic structure as a whole. A discovery in another field could likewise help us understand something in ours. We have a strong cooperation with Lund University, and I have worked closely with Tomas Brage since we defended our PhDs within a week's timeframe in 1988. This conference held in October was also in part to agree on new potential research partners for our project. We do, however, want to keep it a Chinese project as we also collaborate with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, National Space Science Center. If the project is successful they may send an instrument into space to monitor the magnetic field of the solar corona.

Have there been any recent, major breakthroughs within your field?

There have not been any major breakthroughs recently, but it is quite difficult to make them. Atomic spectroscopy is a very old field, and in the beginning (over 100 years ago) we studied all the simplest elements. Now we need to study the more complex elements, and it takes time to examine these closely. Our collaboration is actually the first group to have discovered a transition which is sensitive to the small internal magnetic fields in the solar corona.

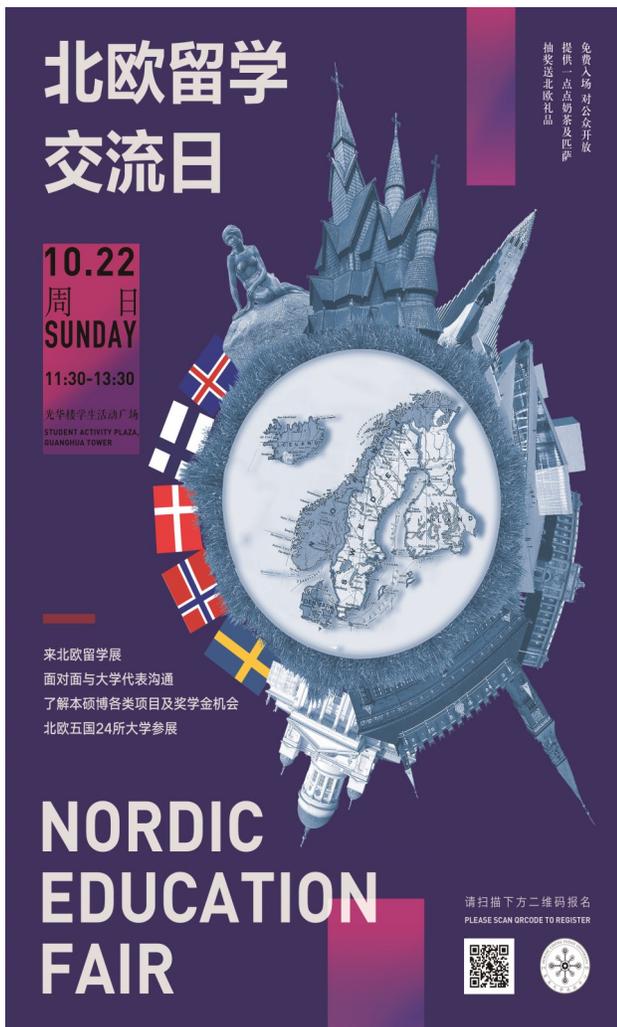
How did you discover this?

Trial and error! We had a PhD student working with us, and with a kind of trial and error solution she began examining every relevant element, until she finally discovered iron has a certain special behaviour. She did around 30 calculations and finally she came to Tomas Brage and myself and showed us her results. She asked is this interesting? Yes! It certainly was.

Nordic Education Fair 2017

The 2017 Nordic Education Fair took place on October 22, the first time it was held after becoming a biannual event. Rather than organize it every year as a smaller affair, we have made it a bigger happening with students from all over Shanghai attending, not just Fudan University students but ones from institutions like Tongji University, Jiaotong University, East China Normal University, Shanghai University of Science and Technology, Shanghai International Studies University, and others.

The interest among students is not just in exchanges, full-degree master's programs, and grants, but also increasingly in PhD programs, as was remarked by several of the university representatives attending. With around 300 students stopping by to learn more about study opportunities at our Nordic members, the event was quite successful, and we look forward to our next Nordic Education Fair in 2019.



海报内容包含：

- 主标题：北欧留学交流日
- 日期：10.22 周日 SUNDAY
- 时间：11:30-13:30
- 地点：光华楼学生活动广场 STUDENT ACTIVITY PLAZA, GUANGHUA TOWER
- 活动亮点：免费入场对公众开放，提供一点心奶茶及匹萨，抽奖送北欧礼品。
- 宣传语：来北欧留学展，面对面与大学代表沟通，了解本硕博各类项目及奖学金机会，北欧五国24所大学参展。
- 主视觉：以北欧地图和建筑剪影为核心的圆形设计，周围环绕着挪威、瑞典、芬兰、丹麦、冰岛的国旗。
- 底部：NORDIC EDUCATION FAIR 字样，以及二维码和注册提示“请扫描下方二维码注册 PLEASE SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER”。





2017 Nordic Education Fair



Sino-Finnish Research Days

On September 24-25, Nordic Centre hosted the Sino-Finnish Research Days, organized with our members Lapland University, University of Turku, University of Tampere, University of Eastern Finland, and Hanken School of Economics. Besides celebrating 100 years of Finnish independence (including with some incredibly cute performances by Chinese and Finnish kids, see pictures), the main purpose was to facilitate the meeting between researchers from Finland and China in four topical tracks; children and youth, education, health, and environmental studies. We spoke to two of the participants from the children and youth track, one from China and one from Finland, about their experience.



Q&A with Chen Honglin, associate professor at the School of Social Work, Fudan University

You took part in the children and youth track. What kinds of issues came up in the session?

There are quite some interesting issues concerning child education, child abuse, loneliness among Nordic children, social welfare comparison between Chinese and the Finnish system.

What was your own presentation about?

Our paper is about a joint research of social welfare policy on child protection in China.



Why are you interested in working with Finnish researchers in particular on children and youth issues?

We would like to learn some good models and policy initiatives on child protection in China from Finnish experience.

Did you meet anyone you might collaborate with in the future?

Yes, we had a great discussion and two of the researchers will continue work with us on an application for research funds.

What was your overall impression of Sino-Finnish Research Days?

Very fruitful and impressive. I very much enjoyed the communication process.

Q&A with Suvianna Hakalehto,
associate professor, Child Law and
Education Law, University of Eastern
Finland



You took part in the children and youth track. What kinds of issues came up in the session?

There was an interesting presentation on digital solutions supporting children's health and another on playful learning pedagogy. One topic was loneliness during childhood and adolescence. This can be linked to bullying at school which is a serious problem both in Finland and in China. One presentation was about migrant children in China. In Finland the topic of migrant children has been important last years because of the bigger amount of asylum-seeking minors arriving to Finland.

What was your own presentation about?

My presentation was about the development of children's rights in legislation and legal research in Finland. The paradigm of children's rights is quite new. A hundred years ago children were seen merely as a social problem. Then little by little as in need of protection. Both China and Finland have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in which children are seen as participants in all decisions concerning them and as rights-holders.

Why are you interested in working with Chinese researchers in particular on children and youth issues?

There are many reasons to be interested in China when it comes to research concerning children. One of my main field of research is education law. China is aiming to develop their education system. Lots of challenges in schools worldwide are similar. Chinese are very interested in Finnish way to educate children. I am also very interested in how China is going to implement CRC: what will be the priorities when promoting children's rights in Chinese society.

Did you meet anyone you might collaborate with in the future?

I met people involved in our joint Sino-Finnish Centre for Child Protection Research. We had a productive board meeting and planned our activities. I will be for example writing an article on migrant children and child protection with my Chinese and Finnish colleagues.

I also met a professor from the Fudan University law faculty and he invited me to lecture on children's rights at school. Teaching will take place next autumn. I am very excited about it!

What was your overall impression of Sino-Finnish Research Days?

I was happy to be present there. I am sure both Finnish and Chinese researchers got lots of new ideas during the days and those will be seen in their research projects and teaching in the future. It is very stimulating to familiarize oneself with legal culture that is quite different from your own. Still the questions we are trying to answer in both countries are often the same.

DOUBLE ELEVEN

双十一

The Chinese consumption extravaganza dwarfing America's Black Friday

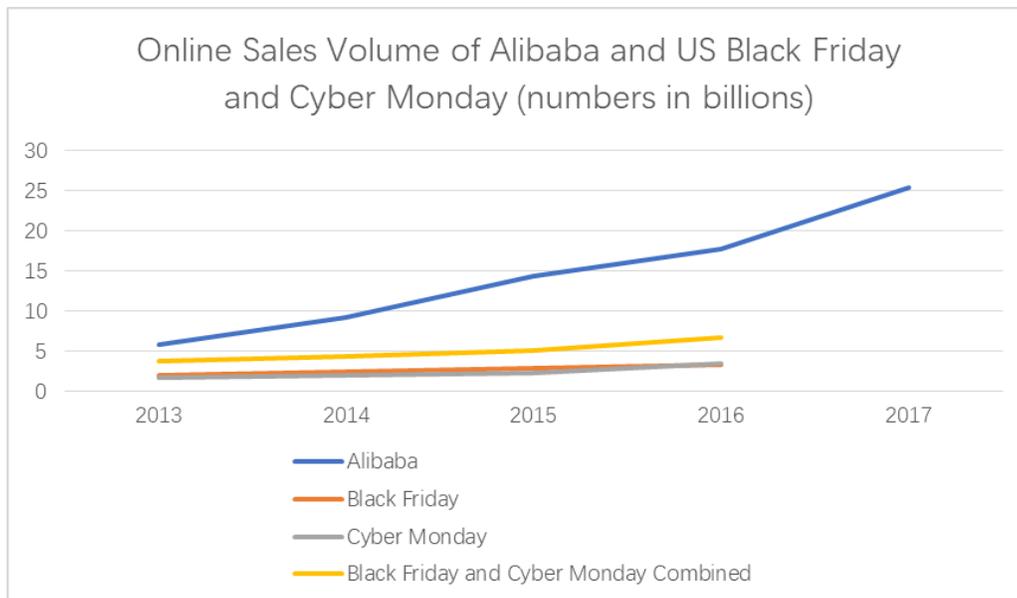
Words Vincent Wen

In recent years, the contemporary Chinese holiday Single's Day, held on November 11 (i.e. double eleven), has evolved into a shopping extravaganza whose accelerating sales numbers far outpace those of America's famous Black Friday. But how did a small celebration of not being romantically committed grow into the biggest consumption fest in the universe?

Any decent explanation of what Chinese Single's Day must start with the giant e-commerce corporation Alibaba. At its core are three online shopping services — Taobao, Tmall, and Alipay — which form an eco-system of consumerism in cyberspace.

While Taobao is an online platform connecting consumers and small businesses, Tmall is focused on cooperating with big brands and stores to set up online accredited flagship shops. To simplify online transaction, Alipay started as the online payment solution only for Taobao and Tmall, but today it has grown to a much larger score as mobile payment and e-banking service.

While today, all sorts of stores in China, including various online platforms and traditional brick and mortar ones, take part in offering massive sales on November 11, the holiday emerged



from and still centre's on Alibaba's Taobao.

Why, then, is it called Single's Day? Chinese Singles' Day or Bachelors' Day, which originated from Nanjing University in 1993, was initially celebrated at various universities in Nanjing during the 1990s. It got the name "Singles' Day" because the date consists of four ones. Upon graduating, Nanjing's college students carried the university tradition into society. In the year of 2011, this date had six ones rather than four, granting an excuse to take celebrations to a higher level. That's why Alibaba decided to make it an online promotion day. In a nutshell, the festival was created purely for commercial reasons and has no real roots in Chinese history.

A shot of adrenaline into China's e-commerce industry

However ridiculous and meaningless the festival might sound, big discounts made it quite the success in 2011, and the madness has only grown since then. Chinese buyers would add their chosen goods to shopping carts in the countdown to midnight when promotions begin. Sales on this particular day in Tmall and Taobao concluded at USD 5.8 billion in 2013, USD 9.3 billion in 2014, USD 14.3 billion in 2015, USD 17.8 billion in 2016, and over USD 25.4 billion in 2017. (Source: Alibaba). A comparison with the US Black Friday (see the previous page) will provide a better understanding of the scale. Keep in mind that the statistics here are only for Alibaba, and not all the other shops and platforms that have joined the party since 2011.

This is definitely a shot of adrenaline on the sales volume, but it's more than that. This passion to aim for bigger also accelerates the growth and modernization of national delivery system, boosts artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, reshapes online and offline coordination strategies, and even strengthens China's trade relations with all over the world. New package hubs have been set up in most major cities across the nation with robots taking care all the operations even including 24/7 equipment maintenance. Alibaba established its own AI design lab, and its latest program "Lu Ban" designed over 400 million banners and posters in 2017 for the festival. Offline warehouses and stores are more logically located based on big data results, and it makes things previously thought impossible possible. According to Xinhua News Agency, a buyer living in Jiading district, Shanghai, got his package from a nearby warehouse just 12 minutes after clicking "order."

It seems everyone is happy with the carnival, but criticism follows when the heat turns down. With 1.5 billion packages (Source: Xinhua) handed out to the buyers this year, people have started talking about the environmental issues brought by overpackaging and needless consumption. Even though you can see campaigns to promote using eco-friendly packages in some universities and compounds, it would seem the national conversation is only just starting.