

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from the Carolina Asia Center, and welcome to our newsletter for 2011-12! In it you will find a range of activities that the Center sponsored and supported throughout the year. Here are a few highlights:

This past February the Center hosted an international workshop as part of its Sawyer Seminar on "Precarious Work in Asia," organized and chaired jointly by Professor Arne Kalleberg of the Department of Sociology and Professor Kevin Hewison of the Department of Asian Studies. In addition to its research activities, the Seminar brought several prominent speakers, such as Professor Ching Kwan Lee of UCLA, for its public lecture series at UNC in 2011. The spring workshop was the culmination of over a year of collaborative work with the Seminar's country partners in various parts of Asia, and a follow-up to an earlier workshop held in Seoul last summer.

The Center was one of the sponsors for the new Triangle China Forum. The Forum was launched, with additional funding from the Center for Global Initiatives and our partners at Duke and NCSU, with the aim of bringing together scholars and students interested in China in the Triangle area for workshops and exchanges on a regular basis.

Another event sponsored by the Center that attracted a large audience was the visit of Professor Charles Armstrong of Columbia University that was organized by Professor Ji-Yeon Jo of Asian Studies. Professor Armstrong's talk on "North Korea under Three Kims" stimulated a wide-ranging discussion and exchange of views that reflected the rapidly growing interest in Korean studies and affairs both within the university and in the wider Triangle community.

The Center is pleased to have been able to provide student awards this year to both Undergraduates working on Honors Theses as well as Graduate Students doing Pre-dissertation Fieldwork.

On personnel matters, Tracey Cave, the Center's Manager, filled in most ably when the Center's Associate Director, Stephanie Nelson, went on maternity leave last fall, and enabled the work of the Center to move along smoothly. Stephanie returned in the spring and picked up where she left off without a hitch. I would like to thank them both for their invaluable support during my term as the Interim Director, as Kevin Hewison resumes his position of Director of the Center after his year-long leave.

-Michael Tsin, *Interim Director*



CAROLINA ASIA CENTER HOSTS WORKSHOP ON PRECARIOUS WORK IN ASIA

Arne L. Kalleberg

On February 27-28, 2012, the Carolina Asia Center hosted the second Precarious Work in Asia workshop. This event was part of the 2011-2012 Sawyer Seminar on this topic, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and directed by Kevin Hewison and me. It was also a follow-up to the workshop held in Seoul, South Korea on July 19-20, 2012. In addition to the regular members of the Sawyer Seminar, participants from nine Asian countries attended, the workshop, representing China, India,

Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand.

The topic of the workshop and the Sawyer Seminar—"precarious work"—refers to the uncertainty, instability and insecurity of work in which employees bear the risks of work (as opposed to businesses or the government) and receive limited social benefits and statutory entitlement. Precarious work has become a critical challenge for the governments and

continued on page 3



STUDENT AWARDS

PRE-DISSERTATION ASIA TRAVEL AWARD

For the past two summers, the Carolina Asia Center has been able to award Pre-dissertation Asia Travel Awards in order to get doctoral candidates at UNC-Chapel Hill into the field to do preliminary explorations of potential research materials in preparation for writing a dissertation proposal on East, South or Southeast Asia.

Shengjun Zhu in the Geography Department was given an award in the summer of 2011 and the following is a report of his research.

My preliminary fieldwork examined recent cases of Chinese textile and apparel industrial restructuring. China's rapid growth in its export-oriented textile and apparel industry has been driven by low wage and unskilled or semi-skilled workers who migrate from western and central region to coastal China. Until recently, China's position in international trade for high-value-added and high-tech products has lagged behind. Since early 2000s, however, factories in China's coastal regions have been increasingly confronting difficulties generated by this growth model, and these difficulties are forcing major changes in the organization and geography of economic activity in labor-intensive, low-wage industries like textile and apparel. External pressures (e.g. consumer concern about labor and environment conditions, appreciation of China's currency, and slackening demand especially after the outbreak of financial crisis) and internal pressures (e.g. rising labor wage and labor shortage) have squeezed Chinese manufacturers' profit margins to such a degree that some have been forced to shut down. Thus, in recent years, China's enterprises now struggle to resolve these limits by experimenting with a complex array of responses: Go Up (upgrading), Go West (regionalization through relocation to western and central China), and Go Out (delocalization through outsourcing to Southeast Asia).

In summer 2011, supported by Carolina Asia Center's Pre-Dissertation Travel Award, I conducted fieldwork in China. The research in China included interviews with scholars, governmental officials, representatives from

industry associations, and factory managers. The purpose of these interviews was to reveal the changing landscape of Chinese textile and apparel industry and cutting-edge industrial restructuring occurring. Scholars and professionals from Peking University, who have been working on related topics for years, offered me important information about how China's textile and apparel industry have developed and kept transforming since 1970s, what benefits and costs governments and manufacturers should take into consideration during the new round of restructuring, as well as who are the key players that might be helpful to my dissertation work. Interviews with governmental officials and representatives from industry associations in Beijing and Anhui facilitated me to better understand the role governments and industry associations are playing in upgrading and relocation of textile and apparel industry, the relevant policy initiatives and/or informal advocacy, even the upgrading and relocation that they have already seen. Representatives from enterprises told me why and how they change their strategies, how they respond to the changing business as well as policy environment, and what the advantages and disadvantages are in upgrading, regionalization and delocalization.

Also, with the support of Carolina Asia Center, I have attended the 2011 Annual Conference on Social Responsibility of Chinese Textile and Apparel Industry held by China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC). The conference was held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and was attended by key players in China's textile and apparel industry. It provided me with two aspects that were both closely connected to my research: "Go-West" trend of manufacturing (relocation) and the spread of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards and initiatives in Chinese textile and apparel industry. The conferences covered widely from scholars' working



papers on the on-going shifting trends of Chinese textile and apparel industry, through company managers' presentations on their experience of the westernization and CSR, to government and industry association representatives' reports on related policy initiatives and their cooperation with private sectors.

My pre-dissertation travel helped me to develop the main issues I will focus on in my dissertation research which will center on the major changes in the organization and geography of economic activity in textile and apparel industry. The main research focuses on the complex ways in which governments and firms respond to the changing business environment: upgrading, regionalization and delocalization. I therefore investigate two related governance in global value chains and regional production networks:

1. governance generated from China's central and local governments and industry associations,
2. governance generated from the private sectors, firms and factories.

As a result of my pre-dissertation travel, I refined my dissertation research, had chance to build up connections with key players in this area, and conceptualized my work as a case study of geographical and organizational change of Chinese textile and apparel production networks.

In 2012, two more Pre-dissertation Asia Travel Awards were given: Kumi Smith, *The Feasibility of Eliminating HIV in China* (Department of Epidemiology); and Mabel Gergan, *Young lives, Indigeneity, and Hydropower in the Eastern Himalayas of India* (Department of Geography).

TRIANGLE CHINA FORUM

This newly formed group held a series of workshops on different China-related topics at Duke and UNC throughout the year, where invited speakers from outside the Triangle presented their research alongside local scholars. A workshop on “Sustaining the New Chinese Urbanism,” was organized by UNC Professor Robin Visser of Asian Studies in March and included guest panelist Dr. Piper Gaubatz from University of Massachusetts Amherst who presented on “Environmental Narratives and Urban Change in China”. It was followed by another well-attended workshop on “China in Africa” that was organized jointly with the African Studies Center at UNC, with speakers that included Professor Deborah Bräutigam of American University; Yoon Jung Park, Visiting Professor at Howard University; and Professor Margaret Lee of the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC.

NORTH KOREA UNDER THREE KIMS: A LECTURE BY DR. CHARLES ARMSTRONG

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR
KOREAN RESEARCH AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Do you know what is in common between North Korea and North Carolina, especially with UNC? Of course, they have ‘north’ in their geographic title, but more profoundly they share a ‘passion for basketball.’ Basketball even became a medium of soft diplomacy when the former Secretary of State Madeline Albright visited Pyongyang in 2000 and presented a basketball signed by our alumnus Michael Jordan to the late leader Kim Jong-Il as a gift. North Korea’s current leader, Kim Jong-Un, is also known as a huge fan of basketball.

On April 3, 2012, students and faculty members at UNC and members in local communities had a rare opportunity to learn about North Korea.

The talk titled ‘North Korea Under Three Kims,’ which was presented by Dr. Charles Armstrong, a specialist in North Korean history, provided not only a comprehensive and critical overview of North Korean politics and governing ideology over the past sixty years, but also glimpses of normalcy through portrayal of their everyday lives.

North Korean issues frequently make headlines around the world. However, our knowledge and understanding about North Korea, arguably one of the world’s most isolated countries, is very limited. The recent news of Kim Jong Il’s death reaffirmed how much we don’t know about North Korea. His death was known to the outside world only after North Korea officially broadcasted the news almost two days after Kim Jong Il’s death last December. With Kim Jong-Il’s death, attention was quickly drawn to North Korea’s new leader, Kim Jong Un, whose upbringing and personal information were little known. Kim Jong Il’s death, Kim Jong Un’s hereditary succession of North Korean regime, and the subsequent announcement of North Korea’s plan for missile launch to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Kim Il Sung’s birth created an atmosphere for vibrant discussions. Dr. Armstrong’s well-

continued on page 4

Precarious Work in Asia, continued from page 1

workers in each of these Asian countries, which have come to increasingly rely and depend on a workforce that is characterized by precarious employment. All these countries have adopted firm-level and industry-based work practices that limit collective organization and have weakened the power of workers.

These nine countries differ in their level of development and so they diverge in the aspect of precarious work that is most salient to them. In less developed countries (India, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka), the notion of precarious work denotes mainly whether or not one works in the informal sector of the economy. In more developed countries (such as China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), we

also observe a brisk increase of precarious labor in the formal sector due to rapid changes in the economy; this is reflected in a growing distinction between employees who are on a “standard employment relationship” as opposed to those who have “nonstandard” work arrangements such as temporary and contract work. Popular terms used to denote precarious work in these countries range from “nonregular” employment in Japan to “irregular” employment in South Korea to “nonstandard” workers in Taiwan and “informal” workers in China.

At the workshop, our Asian partners presented papers that provided an overview of the nature and consequences of precarious work in their countries. They provided statistics on the

extent of, and trends in, precarious work and (as relevant) the informal economy and described the conditions that led to the growth of precarious work in their countries. They also discussed the consequences of precarious work for income inequality, poverty and in some cases family formation, and illustrated reality of precarious work through illuminating case studies. We hope to publish these papers soon in special issues of a refereed journal.

The workshop wasn’t all work. Some of us attended the UNC-Duke women’s basketball game (unfortunately, Duke won). We also had a great time at a dinner at the Granary in Fearington Village (featuring bluegrass music) and at other social events.

ASIA UNDERGRADUATE HONORS THESIS RESEARCH GRANT

The Carolina Asia Center supported four undergraduate students working on an Honors Thesis on Asia in 2011-2012. These awards are intended to help offset expenses incurred by students undertaking senior honors projects on Asia.

- Benjamin Neal, *Branding in China*
- Burcu Bozkurt, *The Attitudes of Health Providers towards Abortion in Vietnam*
- Eric Powers, *Establishing the Tamil and Kannada Identity through Language*
- Joseph Daniels, *Financializing Singapore*

North Korea, continued from page 3

received talk dealt with imminent issues in Korean peninsula with engaging anecdotes of personal experiences visiting North Korea.

This talk was hosted by the Korean Language and Culture program, and sponsored by the Carolina Asia Center and the Department of Asian Studies. Korean Language and Culture program has been active in opening conversations to discuss important issues and to raise awareness of Korean society and culture within and beyond Carolina community. The Korean Language and Culture program currently provides six levels of Korean language instructions and a growing number of content courses in Korean history and society. Our program plans to create more vibrant academic community in Korean Studies through on and off campus collaborations. Please stay tuned for our exciting events and guest lecture series in the upcoming year.

This article was written by Dr. Ji-Yeon Jo, Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian Studies.

MAKE A GIFT TO UNC GLOBAL

Support the Global Education Fund, which benefits student and faculty initiatives, international events, and programs to advance UNC's top international goals and priorities.

To make a gift online, please visit <http://global.unc.edu>.

Or send a check payable to UNC-Chapel Hill to:
Development for Global Education, Campus Box 5145
FedEx Global Education Center, UNC-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5145



UNC
GLOBAL

Non Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit # 177
Chapel Hill, NC

CAC Carolina Asia Center

Carolina Asia Center

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

FedEx Global Education Center

Campus Box #7582

Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7582, U.S.A.

carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu

p: 919.843.0129

f: 919.843.2102