

Introduction of Dispatched Institution

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Here, I will introduce the Development Studies Institute (DESTIN) of the London School of Economics (LSE), to which I am currently dispatched. LSE is a college specializing in social sciences established in 1895 and located in Aldwych in the central part of London. Since its establishment, it has produced many renowned scholars in various social sciences fields, including such figures as Lionel Robbins, Ronald Coase, Arthur Lewis and Bronisław Malinowski.

At present there are approximately 30 scholars dealing with development issues in the developing countries at DESTIN. These scholars also assist undergraduate and graduate students with their research and education. They come from a variety of specialties: economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, etc. They work on related researches within five clusters of interdisciplinary research expertise (institutional change and governance, war-torn societies and human rights; globalization and international financial markets and trade, local level livelihood strategies, and rural development). My work involves an analysis of cooperation and conflict concerning resources in Southeast Asia from the viewpoint of political economy. I am working in close cooperation with Dr. Tim Forsyth, a faculty member of the institute, whose specialty is politics of environment and development.

Since my arrival in the UK in September, I have gone to the library every day in search of literature, papers and books to read. LSE's library, said to be the largest library in the world in the area of social sciences, contains an enormous number of books, materials, and electronic resources. As the library is open from 8:00 in the morning to 12:00 at night, it is possible to spend the whole day buried in books. There are various daily events such as public lectures, seminars, and documentary showings. Lectures by famous scholars, journalists, and politicians are not unusual. Last month there was a lecture by Anthony Giddens, Professor Emeritus and former director of LSE. This month there was a public lecture by Professor Jagdish Bhagwati

of Columbia University, who is known for his advocacy of free trade. On Wednesdays, series of public lectures (Thinking Like a Social Scientist) are offered in an attempt to invite students and scholars to enter into interdisciplinary discussions.

Of course, not all the events are “serious” ones. At lunch time every Thursday, concerts are held, giving the students and scholars a chance to enjoy performances by famous artists from various genres. It is a really pity that the performances are limited to just one hour during lunch time.

The people there are studying in a truly magnificent environment, and it seems that the students are well aware of that fact. The students, whether undergraduates or graduates, study intensely. There are many students from abroad, and I am always impressed to see so many students from China, to say nothing of those from Europe and the United States, Middle East, and India, Their vigorous activities are quite stimulating for me too. I would like to continue to work hard on my research to ensure that they do not leave me behind.

