



## PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Address at the Norwegian Reception in Beijing  
7 November 1995

Mr. State Counselor,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you, Mr. State Counselor, to this official dinner. It is also an honour to welcome so many of our Chinese friends here tonight, and it is a special pleasure for me to greet the considerable number of Chinese business contacts and partners of our Norwegian businessmen.

We are visiting China in an historic period of economic and political changes and modernization. As we travel across China as your guests, we are reminded of what Deng Xiaoping pointed out 10 years ago when he said: "We are doing something that China has never done before, not in a thousand years". And he added: "The current reforms will have an impact not only domestically, but also internationally."

Deng Xiaoping was right. Children who grow up in the West today may be the first generation in five hundred years to experience that cultures with roots outside Europe will play an increasingly dominating role on the international scene. In this historic transition, China will play a vital role. We welcome your Government's policy of open doors and your firm dedication to take fully part in international cooperation, such as your steady effort to join the World Trade Organization, an effort that Norway fully supports.

We have come to China with great respect for the Chinese people, a respect which has only increased during these first days here with you. Modern China's achievements in the first five decades of its existence impresses us all. We have been reminded by the great achievements in life expectancy, infant mortality, education, nutrition, and all the other aspects that are the hallmarks of a great people heading towards prosperity. We have also discussed some issues where the situation is different in China than in Norway, and we appreciate the frankness and friendliness that have been common to all our discussions.

President Jiang Zemin said earlier this year that in order to develop itself, a nation should be good at learning from and assimilating from other nations' experiences. At the same time, it must consider its own conditions and blaze a path of its own.

During my visit, we have the opportunity to explore how Norway can share with you the experiences we have gained from our own Nordic economic model.

The companies represented in my delegation, have opted for long- term involvement in China. They are ready to invest in the people who work with them, providing training and opportunities that will in turn benefit your country and mine.

We have also wished to highlight the cultural dimension of our cooperation. Later tonight, we invite you to join us at the Ibsen performance of the National Theater. Culture builds bridges - and there could be no better bridge from Norway to China than the works of Henrik Ibsen.

Tomorrow in Shanghai, I will have the honour to open the Nordic Centre at the Fudan University. This reflects our sincere ambition to encourage closer ties between our educational institutions. We also wish to encourage Norwegian students to become more familiar with the Chinese language.

Europe and Asia - and Norway and China - are growing closer together. We wish to take advantage of this to increase our knowledge about the great cultures of Asia which gave the world major religions, philosophical thoughts and the most advanced civilizations.

Mr. State Counselor, China's earliest prominent woman poet and scholar, Ban Zhao, wrote some 1900 ago a poem called "Traveling Eastward". It talks about the need to focus on the future - while remaining faithful to the past.

We too have been traveling eastward. By visiting China, we learn about the great civilizations of the past - and about the prospects for a brave and courageous people in the future. As the old Chinese saying goes: **BAI VON BO RO I DJENN** - Seeing something once is better than hearing about it a hundred times.

We thank you for this memorable stay here in Beijing, and we are looking very much forward to visiting Shanghai and Hainan.

Let me propose a toast:

- to the great people of China and to China's prosperous economic, social and democratic development,
- to the friendship and cooperation between Norway and China
- to the health of all Chinese and Norwegian friends present here tonight.

**GANBEI**