



PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Address at the Inauguration of the Nordic Center at Fudan University
Shanghai, 8 November 1995

Today we are present at the creation of an essential link in the relations between the Nordic countries and China. It is a great pleasure for me to be present here at the opening of the Nordic Center at the Fudan University.

The ambition of strengthened academic links between China and the Nordic countries dates back many years. When President Fuija Yang visited Norway one year ago, concrete work began to establish a Nordic focal point at Fudan University. Our admiration goes to all those dedicated people who worked so hard to translate the idea into reality.

It is a pleasure for me to observe that Norwegian Universities have played such an active role in the development of this project and in the preparation of this ceremony.

I would like to express a special gratitude to President Fuija Yang for his own dedication and the prestige he is bestowing on the Nordic Center by serving as its Director.

For Norway, China is becoming a major partner in East Asia. The Norwegian Government is encouraging the development of broad relations between our countries. We have developed an "Asia strategy", where China holds a very special place. We put emphasis on three dimensions; political dialogue, economic cooperation and cultural exchange.

Strengthened cooperation between our universities cover all three dimensions.

- We expect increasing interest and activities in the political field. This fall, the University of Bergen starts teaching a course in Nordic politics at Fudan. We hope this can be reciprocated so that our students can improve their knowledge of modern China.
- In the economic field, we expect our business communities to get better acquainted with management practices. Next year, the Norwegian School of Management will start teaching a course in business administration here at Fudan. These courses may provide a new dimension to the growing number of Chinese-Norwegian joint ventures.
- In the cultural field, experience shows that increased knowledge helps bridge gaps and strengthen ties. After the Second World War, an important part of confidence building in the West came from student exchange. We hope to see this happen between Fudan and its Nordic partners as a result of the future exchange programs .

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. Many

people assert that as the 19th century belonged to Europe, the present belongs to North America and the next will belong to East Asia.

These fundamental changes must also be reflected in our educational outlook. Today, our universities lack expertise in East Asian legal systems. Our departments of history could benefit from more specialists in East Asian history. We need stronger competence in East Asian art history, philosophy, economics - and not least in the Chinese language.

We can not change this from one day to another. But changes are underway. The Norwegian universities present here today are paving the way, integrating East Asian affairs in their activities and curricula.

I take it as a strong symbolic sign that a professor from a Norwegian University is appointed Professor of Chinese at Fudan University here today. The promotion of Professor Harbsmeier is a recognition of the Nordic sinological tradition within Chinese linguistics.

The Norwegian Government has supported the establishment of the Nordic center since its inception. Today, we wish to make a special contribution to encourage the activities under the auspices of the center.

Together with the companies in our delegation, the Norwegian Government has the pleasure to present 30 scholarships which will be awarded to Chinese employees in private companies or in the public sector.

The scholarships will enable students to attend the Change Management Program which will be taught during 18 months by The Norwegian School of Management here at Fudan University.

We would also like to send a message to Norwegian students. The Norwegian Government together with the Norwegian Research Council and the companies in my delegation are creating a fund to support Norwegian students and scholars who wish to pursue a part of their studies here at Fudan.

The conditions for such an exchange remains to be developed. But we want to send a clear signal to our students that this is an important, stimulating and rewarding path to pursue in their future academic career.

Let me finally extend my best wishes to all those who will be working with the Nordic Center. We are proud to have an operational center here at this prestigious University. May the Nordic Center develop to be a dynamic and imaginative center for cooperation to the benefit of Nordic and Chinese students.