

Tale ved åbning af Fudan Center på KU, 16. april 2013. Af Rektor Ralf Hemmingsen.

Dear Minister, Your Excellency, Vice President, Professor Lin Shangli,
Colleagues and students

As the rector of the University of Copenhagen it is a pleasure to welcome you today.

Let me start with a statement by education expert Ben Wildavsky from the Kauffman Foundation: He claims that universities and countries compete in a global "brain race". A race which is won by those countries which keep investing in research and education. Its all about attracting students and researchers because they are considered imperative to success in the global economy.

It is certainly true that a rapidly growing economic power like China is also on the rise as a "great power" in academia. Fudan University is a fine example of this movement towards excellence. And I think our Chinese colleagues are very conscious about the value of investing in knowledge as a means to attracting and sustaining "brain power".

Within just ten years, China has tripled its investments in universities – notably as a share of a rapidly growing GDP. China now has the world's largest student population. Next year research spending in China will be higher than in the European Union. And today, only researchers from USA, Japan, Great Britain and Germany publish more than their Chinese colleagues.

It may be that China and other Asian countries are moving fast forward. And that we even can observe changes in the "balance of power" of the Academic world.

However, I don't like the term "brain race". Not only because it reminds me of the "arms race" during "the Cold War". But also because it indicates that students and researchers act like foes rather than friends.

Instead of "brain race", I propose the concept "brain circulation" where researchers and students work together and go back and forth between countries – to our mutual benefit. This is indeed the philosophy behind the Fudan Center.

I think the Center has great potential. Let me just mention a few promising areas:

- Researchers and students from both social science and the humanities can draw on the Center in their conduct of comparative studies.
- All departments at campus can use the Center to enhance their work on China and engage in dialogue with partners from one of China's finest universities.
- Because the Center is hosted at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, it means access to 25 partner institutions in the Nordic countries
- The Center can become a hub for European sinologists and Chinese researchers working with European topics.
- Finally, it is my impression that countries in Asia, including China, have a positive view on the Nordic model of society - and that the center can assist in promoting dialogue on the development of institutions and regulatory structures across societies.

In spirit with this thinking, let me finish by suggesting a Chinese metaphor for what I called "brain circulation" before.

In Mandarin, a sea turtle is called "Haigui" - and it literally means "someone who returns". Just like sea turtles who return to the same beach to lay their eggs.

The egg-laying beach is often far from the feeding areas. And the turtles cross several hundred kilometers of ocean to get there.

The University of Copenhagen is looking forward to welcoming sea turtles from Fudan to our shores. Just as we expect to send our own to Fudan.

Thank you.