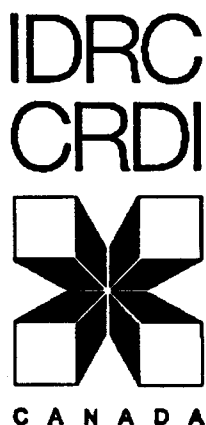


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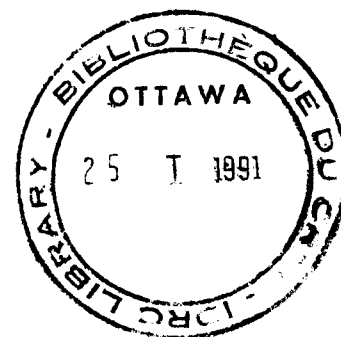
BEIJING FORESTRY UNIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRANTING OF AN HONOURARY DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF FORESTRY

BEIJING, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA,

15 NOVEMBER, 1990



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no. 96

Mr. University President, State Counsellor Song Jian, Mr. Vice Minister of Forestry, Mr. President of the Academy of Forestry, Counsellor Tse of the Canadian Embassy, Members of the University Teaching Staff, Distinguished Guests:

The honour which you are so graciously bestowing upon me today is much more than a personal honour; it stands as a symbol of the relationship between Beijing Forestry University and the Chinese Academy of Forestry on the one hand and the International Development Research Centre on the other - a relationship of mutual respect, of integrity, and of immense productivity. It is a fitting year for me to stand here and say these words, for 1990 is a year of anniversaries, of birthdays.

Twenty years ago marked the beginning of a new and auspicious time for our two nations, as the People's Republic of China and Canada took the first steps down the then novel path of mutual recognition and formal cooperation. It was twenty years ago as well that a clearly inspired Canadian Parliament created the International Development Research Centre, an organization funded entirely by Canada, but governed by an international Board of scientists from 11 different countries. One of those is a distinguished Chinese - Xi Hui Da, here with us this morning.

It is exactly ten years since IDRC launched a new relationship - one that then and now remains very special. I am of course speaking of the Centre's partnership with China, crafted with the State Science and Technology Commission. The Centre and SSTC signed a Memorandum of Understanding in September, 1980.

It is in many ways a misnomer to speak of 1970 as the "beginning" of Canadian-Chinese relations. Our two countries had long dealt with one another informally. Additionally, all the nations of the North reflect the immense contributions to their development made by the Chinese peoples, dating back many centuries, including moveable printing and the compass.

As the countries of North and South become increasingly interdependent and as disequilibria of all types (economic, environmental, demographic) escalate in intensity, I believe strongly that communication and sharing of information are indispensable to the sustainable resolution of issues and to the improvement of the well-being of billions of our planet's inhabitants. I am proud that the Memorandum of Understanding signed by IDRC and SSTC in 1980 was a signal step in fostering such a relationship of communication and sharing of knowledge for the benefit of all.

State Councillor Song Jian, whose responsibilities as Chairman of the State Commission for Science and Technology have been extended to include the Environment Committee, on the occasion of our joint dedication of the Yellow Seas Fisheries Research Institute in 1988, was most generous in describing IDRC as the ideal institution with which to engage in cooperative research activities. I wish to state here, as I have many times elsewhere, that IDRC's cooperation with China has been characterised by an extraordinary presence of shared goals. Centre staff have repeatedly expressed to me their appreciation for the discipline of Chinese scientists and the quality of Chinese scientific efforts.

The number of research projects in China that have been supported by IDRC is now 99, an auspicious figure, made more so when one thinks of the modesty of our joint beginnings. Of that number, 64 remain active, indicating the vibrancy of the relationship. These projects cover a wide range of areas: forestry, agriculture, medicine, marine science and fisheries, energy, urban studies and socio-economic studies.

It is fitting to point out today that the very first project supported by IDRC in China was in the forestry field - the now celebrated study of bamboo. Over the last 10 years, IDRC has supported a total of 14 forestry or wood related projects, representing 12.5% of total IDRC grants to China. The

majority of these have been in conjunction with the Chinese Academy of Forestry as the President of the Academy mentioned in his remarks.

We are only beginning to understand the true importance of forests to the health of eco-systems and of humans. Forests are one of the planet's "vital signs" and the tragedy of their diminishment the world over demands our concern. By the year 2000, China could lose more than a quarter of its already scarce forests. Grasslands, farmlands, fisheries and water are suffering from the effects of deforestation and the resulting severe soil erosion. The annual consumption of timber for fuel, building and paper (300 million cubic metres) far exceeds the growth rate of 200 million cubic metres.

Canada, too is encountering many of the problems you face here. Our present consumption also exceeds our growth rate; our tree-planting programs still fail to meet the replacement requirements. Conservation and restoration programs are of vital importance in both our countries. It is my firm opinion that the cooperation of the last ten years between IDRC and this Academy and this University is a major contribution to such restorative action. The bamboo research project is a prime example of the type of success that that cooperation has generated.

The Paulownia project in Henan Province, described in some detail by

the President of the Academy, is another example of important, successful research on a fast-growing species. Paulownia has permitted thousands of hectares of currently productive farmland to be reclaimed from what, thirty years ago, was virtually desert.

Another project that I would like to mention is one of the most recent: a farm forestry project which (incidentally) represents the largest single contribution which IDRC has ever made in China - some 1.1 million dollars. The proposed program of support will involve a number of integrated research activities on different farm forestry issues, some new to the Academy, and others already part of its research agenda. A major element of the project involves researchers from this university.

Each project, each association that IDRC has had with Chinese scientists in a score of institutions has yielded similar successes. Each has produced benefits which have accrued to the most needy communities of the Chinese people.

Each demonstrates the long-term advantage of the kind of assistance offered by IDRC - still unique in the entire world - based on a pure partnership, premised on the essential needs of countries such as China for both scientific and technological enhancement and for the means to decide for itself its own development priorities.

Much hope was invested in the 1980 Memorandum of Understanding. I accept with pride this honour today as evidence of the achievement of the vision we dared project and share.

I regard it as recognition of the integrity which marks the SSTC-IDRC relationship, as a message to all that there is immense advantage to be gained in sharing the principles of scientific truth, in the equitable distribution of resources, in participatory decision-making processes, and in environmentally sustainable activities.

I am very touched by this signal honour and wish to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Song Jian and the other State Councillors, to Beijing Forestry University, and to the Chinese Academy of Forestry for their approval of my candidature.

I regard this degree as a testament to the trust in which the Chinese Forestry community and IDRC deal with one another. On behalf of IDRC, I promise that that trust shall be nurtured for many years to come, that we shall continue to join with you in working for a brighter future for all the people of China.

Thank you.