

**Toast by President Hu Jintao
of the People's Republic of China
at Welcoming Banquet
Hosted by the Emperor of Japan**

Tokyo, 7 May 2008

Your Majesties,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to begin by expressing, on behalf of my wife and my colleagues and in my own name, sincere thanks to Your Majesties the Emperor and the Empress for hosting this banquet on the occasion of my state visit to Japan. I would like to take this opportunity to convey the warm greetings and best wishes of the Chinese people to the Japanese people.

China and Japan are neighbors separated only by a strip of water. There exist a close affinity between the two cultures and a bond of friendship between the two peoples. We have a history of friendly exchanges for more than two thousand years, and by learning from each other's successful experience, we have not only advanced the development of our respective countries, but also promoted the progress of East Asian and world civilization. The time-honored friendship between the

two peoples is our shared wealth and both countries should cherish it.

China-Japan relations have shown fresh vitality since the normalization of diplomatic ties in 1972. The two sides have agreed on the basic principles governing bilateral relations and leaders of the two countries have maintained close contact. Our mutually beneficial cooperation and people-to-people exchanges have been expanding, coordination and cooperation on international and regional issues have been strengthening and the understanding and friendship between our two peoples have been deepening. The growth of China-Japan relations has not only brought tangible benefits to our two peoples, but also contributed to peace and development in Asia and the world at large.

Reviewing the past and looking to the future, we have every reason to believe that China-Japan relations are at a new historical starting point and face new opportunities for further growth. The purpose of my visit is to enhance mutual trust, strengthen friendship, deepen cooperation, plan for the future and, together with the Japanese side, work for new progress in the all-round development of China-Japan strategic relations of mutual benefit. Since arrival, I have had fruitful talks with Prime Minister Fukuda on these important subjects and we have reached broad agreement. We agreed that the two sides

should make concerted efforts to enhance strategic mutual trust, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and expand cultural and people-to-people exchanges. We should work together to promote the rejuvenation of Asia, meet global challenges and advance China-Japan strategic relations of mutual benefit. The two sides issued the fourth political document between China and Japan, which represents a joint plan for the future growth of our relations.

Your Majesties, people of both of our two countries cherish fond memories of your historic visit to China in 1992. It was an event greatly appreciated in the annals of China-Japan relations. We wish to express our sincere thanks to Your Majesties and other members of the imperial family for the important contributions you have made to China-Japan friendship.

I now propose a toast

To the health of Your Majesties the Emperor and the Empress,

To the health of other members of the imperial family,

To the health of all the ladies and gentlemen present here,

To the prosperity of Japan and the happiness of the Japanese people, and

To the everlasting friendship between the Chinese and Japanese peoples!