



Greenwoods Newsletter

Website: <http://web.hku.hk/~grnwoods>
Email: grnwoods@hku.hk

Issue 1
23rd March 2009

Concerning global warming and the water crisis Act from “Dongjiang Outline”

There are at least 300 million people who lack clean drinking water in China. The water crisis is predicted to be more serious over time, in light of global climate change. Friends of the Earth Hong Kong launched the “Dongjiang Outline Programme”, with emphasis on long-term tree-planting, making methane ponds for the local villagers and motivating university students to give lessons to the local primary school students on environmental protection at the worse-off Qinwu County in Jiangxi, the real origin of Dongjiang. Apart from protecting the safety of Dongjiang drinking water, the programme also safeguards the well-being of the local residents.

In light of the eve of the “Festival of tree-planting”, Hong Kong Friends of the Earth motivated volunteers and donors from Hong Kong and Guangdong, as well as the villagers and children from the origin of Dongjiang to set up “Hong Kong Forest” and “New Marriage Forest” at the origin of Dongjiang to plant 5000 young seeds, as the first step to guard the safety of the drinking water for over 30 million people living along Dongjiang. I hope Hong Kong people will not take for granted the notion of “I will have drinking water as long as I turn on the tap”.

Since the start of the “Dongjiang Outline Tree-planting Programme”, over 300 Hong Kong and Guangdong residents has supported it, including Lau Tak Wah and Chung Chor Hung from the entertainment sector and Pan Yue, the vice minister of China Ministry of Environmental Protection. In addition, Computershare has promised to donate money for tree-planting for their customers who bought their warrants via their new electronic system; Hong Kong Ip’s Chemical and Guangzhou Aobang Enterprise also sent their representatives respectively to protect the origin of Dongjiang by planting trees. Dr. Wong Tam Chi Woon donated \$2000 to plant trees at the “New Marriage Forest” and gave the trees as a present for a new couple’s marriage. He even went to the origin of Dongjiang to plant trees for other new couples.



The speaker for the Friends of the Earth said, “Do not underestimate a tree, in fact, the burden of the planting of trees and the protection of forests falls on the villagers and students from the origin of Dongjiang. \$100 contributed by the citizens downstream can be used to employ local residents to plant a tree, providing them with an additional source of income. This programme is meaningful, as it helps alleviate poverty of the villagers and protect clean water as well as the ecology.

Mrs Kat and her daughter from Guangzhou is the only mother-daughter pair among the representatives. Mrs Kat said, “I decided to join this trip after I had told my daughter clearly the objective and significance of the trip.” To be able to plant trees with her daughter made her feel even more strongly the huge significance of making forests and accumulating happiness for the next generation. Ngai Hon Yeung, a prospective student of the University of Hong Kong as well as a Year 1 student of the University of Zhejiang, was born in Guangzhou. He has a special affection of Dongjiang water. He came miles away from Hangzhou, solely for planting greetings for this origin of water. He will

participate in tree-planting with the representatives from Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong Ningnan University, and he is prepared to give English lessons on environmental protection for the children from the villages near the origin of Dongjiang. Simultaneously, Green Point Guangzhou, an environmental protection organization in Guangzhou, also motivated local university students to take part in this Dongjiang conservation movement of “Dongjiang Outline”.

Mrs Ng Fong Siu Mei, chairperson of the Hong Kong Friends of the Earth Chinese Affairs Committee, advocated both Hong Kong and Guangdong to think of the origin of Dongjiang water before drinking it, “Every mouthful of water we drink comes from the collection of upstream water drips by drips. All we have today does not mean that it will stay forever. How can we do nothing and hope for the best amid natural disasters, pollution, climate change and wastage of water resources?” The aim of setting up “Hong Kong Forest” and “New Marriage Forests” is to realize ecological benefits of returning farmlands to forests and protecting the origin of Dongjiang by planting trees. Protecting clean drinking water starts from protecting the origin of water supply.

Details of the “Dongjiang River Partners-Upstream Downstream Partnership Programme”

http://www.foe.org.hk/welcome/gettc.asp?language=tc&id_path=1,%2011,%20482,%2039

After the trip to DongJiang

Being born in Hong Kong and growing in Hong Kong, what I have been drinking since I was young is exactly the water from this mother river---Dongjiang.

Since 1960s, 80% of the fresh water in Hong Kong have been imported from Dongjiang. Yet, we have not asked how Dongjiang water comes to us. If I wild guess, I would guess those water comes from Guangdong, because Hong Kong pays Guangdong over 2 billion Hong Kong dollars for 800 million cubic metres of Dongjiang water on a yearly basis.

How many people know that the origin of Dongjiang is an impoverished village in Jiangxi?

As the origin of Dongjiang is within the boundary of Jiangxi Province, the over 2 billion Hong Kong-dollar “water fee” is not fallen into the pockets of the villagers living near the origin of Dongjiang. In addition, most of the fresh

Kane Wong

water in Jiangxi is not originated from Dongjiang, therefore the villagers do not receive sufficient support from Jiangxi provincial government. However, the villagers work hard to protect the origin of Dongjiang from pollution. They have been determined to use less chemical fertilizers and they spend on beneficial insects to confront pests, providing people living upstream, including us, with clean drinking water. We have not done anything for them, shouldn’t we feel ashamed?

Participating in this event provided me with the opportunity of giving English lessons on environmental protection to the local primary school students. I can still remember the innocent and beautiful smiles on their faces when I played games with them. I can also remember the satisfied expressions on their faces after the lessons, making me even more ashamed. In Hong Kong, where everything can be found, warmth is always provided and hunger is never a problem. Entertainment is also available everywhere. Yet, I have not seen people smiling as beautifully as the children, and as satisfied as them in facial expression.

The more I get, the more I want.

Living in Hong Kong, we have got parental care since we were young. My mother gave me \$1 when I asked her, then I would ask her for \$2 at the second time, \$3 at the third time. Gradually, our expectations will get higher. But for the children living in the village near the origin of Dongjiang, whose mothers do not have the ability to give them even \$1, how can they expect more from their mothers? As they get only a little, their desire is little. I only taught them a few English vocabularies, and the children were already very satisfied and grateful. That was worthy of our reflections: Satisfaction is originally easy to achieve, whereas in a rich society, it is difficult to acquire.

I can still remember when I was about to enter a vehicle and leave the village, a primary school student said to me, “Brother, remember to teach us English and knowledge of environmental protection next time.”

I answered, “Definitely.”