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-the Role of Environmental NGOs

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To all these my sincere thanks.

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## Preface

In recent years, it has become apparent that deterioration of the China's natural environment cannot be neglected any longer. In the big cities it is becoming more and more difficult to find a place to enjoy fresh air while in the countryside even in the Yangzi river delta the area historically given the name of "a land flowing with fish and rice" there are many places that lack clean water. Such apparent problems have given rise to a growing concern with the environment in Chinese society. In general environmental problems are found in all Chinese territories, but since China is a big country with much regional diversity, the phenomena of environmental deterioration are also highly diverse. For instance in the southeast the major environmental problems are industrial pollution while in the northwest the major environmental problems are due to the agriculture production and the comparatively vulnerable natural surroundings. Underneath the diversity, the cause of environmental problems is primarily the same namely the tension between economic growth (industrial and agricultural development) accompanying the change in way of life (consumption, luxury, etc.) and the natural environment. From the author's point of view, the Chinese society is now witnessing the awakening of an environmental consciousness. Even though the ideas of environmental protection and pollution control were introduced to China in the 1970s, a broader social concern and deeper sense of individual responsibility for the natural environment became apparent only in the 1990s. Many non-governmental environmental organizations (or more precisely in Chinese social groups) that can be regarded as having grown from the blow, or the "grassroots", emerged in this period trying to foster environmental consciousness of the Chinese people with a hope that if every individual or a majority of them have environmental consciousness, the Chinese environment will improve.

Why are environmental consciousness and environmental NGOs worth studying in China? Personally, the author of this thesis is to some extent a beneficiary of China's "opening" policy and the awakening of environmental consciousness. I was born in 1981 when China started her economic and social transformation. Willingly or not, we are somewhat unique

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compared with the previous generations. We have better opportunities for education, we are regarded as the center of the family, we received some environmental education in school and elsewhere, we started to learn English in elementary school and probably we know more about the Western culture. As a consequence of the necessity to carry out environmental protection in industrial plants, many technical universities in China gradually started environmental engineering programs. In the university that I graduated from, an environmental engineering section was founded under department of chemical engineering in the 1990s, besides, another more “fashionable” biochemical engineering section was also founded at almost the same time. Chemical engineering students such as me, in their senior years could choose one specific course among these branches to enrich their knowledge. At the same time, the university started to build her new campus, the vision of the new campus was described as “ecological, garden-like, and digitalized”. It was in this atmosphere that I received my university education in China. The attempt to sort of “realize” the visions of our new campus was that a green student group was formed, as a volunteer group to help plant trees, recycle garbage and educate students by making posters etc. in the university (Chinese university students live in the university campus). Normally such environmental organizations are categorized as one form of Chinese environmental NGO. In China people tend to say that universities are “small” societies because students study and live in the universities for a couple of years and take some responsibility to manage themselves with the help of teachers and university staffs. Compared with the “big” society outside the ivory tower the relationship between environmental consciousness and the environmental groups are quite similar.

From the author’s point of view, environmental consciousness first reach a group of people as pioneers who then form environmental groups or organizations to carry out specific projects and try to awaken more people, this in turn develops the environmental consciousness over time. This idea is to some extent a down-to-earth interpretation of what Andrew Jamison and other scholars referred to in their works with the expression “from movements to institutions” and the “green knowledge making” in the Western environmental movement. What happened in China is that global environmentalism came

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later to China, and a number of environmental NGOs emerged first in the late 1990s. Most of them see themselves as carrying the responsibility to raise environmental consciousness in Chinese society. The reason for their endeavors of environmental consciousness-raising in China is based on the presumption that when people are aware the importance of environmental protection they will try to bring changes. The author of this thesis shares the same view with them and the author think that environmental consciousness is not static in the sense that when it is “formed” or “created” it will never change. I think environmental consciousness is to some extent elastic and keeps on developing, or changing.

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## Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is to look at the roles of environmental NGOs in promoting environmental consciousness in China. It is my hope that study of Chinese environmental NGOs may offer some interesting knowledge about the societal aspect of environmental management in China.

The research question of this thesis is what are the roles of environmental NGOs in environmental consciousness-raising in China? In order to give a reasonable answer, I would like to study this question by first discussing what Chinese environmental consciousness actually means and then how it is being mobilized. When we compare the term “environmentalism” and “environmental consciousness” I think both of them contain the meanings of ideas, and knowledge. “Environmentalism” might include more political meanings and are often discussed by scholars and maybe politicians (such as the green parties in the West) or professionals (such as those work in environmental groups) while “environmental consciousness” is more focused on certain environmental awareness that exist in the society. If “environmentalism” can be deemed as environmental knowledge that is clearly expressed, “environmental consciousness” is a kind of hidden presumption that helps people to make judgment and influences their behaviors. Even though “environmental consciousness” might not have a clear definition, the contents of the core of “environmental consciousness” are ideas and knowledge. In that sense, according to knowledge traditions and current circumstance “environmental consciousness” might have some Chinese characteristics, it might not be something that is truly Chinese but it could be different from the Western style. Furthermore, environmental consciousness-raising can be regarded as “knowledge making”.

Environmental NGOs are actors in Chinese environmental movements. (Even though the Chinese environmental movement is not oriented toward direct political results, it does have a certain collective contribution to make changes of the current situation.) Mostly they work

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in the grassroots to organize environmental protection programs and educate people toward a more environmentally sound lifestyle, some of them publish magazines and books to generate a kind of green culture. No matter what their different focuses are, they tend to mobilize green knowledge in China. Some of them focus on some practical knowledge such as community garbage recycling others may have programs in the elementary schools in the countryside where they think environmental knowledge should be taught. All of these relate to what Andrew Jamison and his colleague called cognitive praxis in social movement (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991) that is reading environmental movement as a process of green knowledge making (Jamison, 2001).

My study of Chinese environmental NGOs and their role in environmental consciousness-raising is not directly trying to apply the cognitive approach of social movements study to analyze Chinese environmental movement or its actors. The reason for this is that, I found that we could not even be sure that there has or had been an environmental movement in China. According to the discussions of different definitions of social movement in the book *Social Movements A Cognitive Approach*, I found social movements often accompanied with protests and especially with some political intentions, social movement is a sort of bottom-up process that requires changes in the society. (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991:10-44) However, in China environmental protection is to a large extent channeled by the government, actually it was initially introduced to the society by the government. In China some scholars such as Xiaohua Wang and the informants whom I interviewed think there is certain environmental movement and some literatures are published to tell stories about actors in the movement. (one example is the book *Xue Shan Xun Meng* (searching for dreams on a snow mountain)) In this thesis I tend to think that an environmental movement exists in China because of its collective identity but it is certainly not the same as the environmental movement in Western Europe and North America. Regardless of the uncertainty of the existence of Chinese environmental movement, environmental protection is definitely a kind of collective behavior. A collective green knowledge making and mobilization is certainly happening in China. Therefore, the approach to “read” the cognitive praxis in environmental social movements in the West can

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help to understand what happens in China as indicators. What I am trying to do in this thesis is to offer, in my own term, a narrative study of what the Chinese environmental NGOs have done to help make the Chinese public more environmentally conscious. This is a study of reading Chinese environmental NGOs' work as actors of green knowledge making and mobilization.

The study consists of two parts, a literature study and an empirical study. One part of the literature study is about western environmentalism and environmental movement which I will discuss in connection to Chinese environmental consciousness and movement. The other part of literature study is mainly about Chinese environmental politics in terms of the formation of institutions and policies, and especially the circumstances of environmental NGOs. The empirical part is mainly based on literature surveying on the Internet resources about different NGOs and several interviews of environmental NGOs in Beijing that were carried out in December 2004 in a field study. The reason for choosing Beijing for a field trip is that most Chinese environmental NGOs are located there, (the earliest ones, and the most influential ones). The field trip lasted for about 10 days and three Chinese NGOs were interviewed namely Friends of Nature, Global Village of Beijing and China Development Brief. The informants who were interviewed are not pre-decided. It basically depended on the availability of the NGOs. Interview questions were designed to be open-ended with an aim to get some information of what they think their role is, and what their environmental concerns are. Interviews are taped, and most of them are carried out in Chinese. The transcripts of interview recordings done by the author will be offered in the appendix of this thesis.

The thesis contains eight chapters. Chapter one discusses why environmental consciousness-raising can be seen as knowledge making in China and why a cognitive approach can be useful for studying environmental NGOs. I also look into how global environmentalism hits China. Chapter two introduces Chinese environmental knowledge traditions and briefly their relationship with the contemporary environmental concerns in China. It is hoped that by reading this chapter the reader will get a better understanding of

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the indigenous part of the environmental knowledge in China.

Chapter three is a study of the evolution of Chinese environmental policies and institutions and public participation in Chinese environmental politics. The reason for this is that by looking at the history of environmental governance in China, a picture of the political context of environmental politics is sketched. This is helpful to understand the situation of environmental NGOs face today.

Chapter four offers information on the growth of environmental NGOs in China, and their functional conditions. In Chapter five detailed information about Chinese environmental NGOs including their activities will be illustrated by categorizing them into three types based on their organizational orientations with regard to their forms of green knowledge making.

Chapter six and chapter seven present the results of the empirical study in this thesis. Chapter six offers a narrative description of some of the author's experiences on the field trip to Beijing and interviews with three Chinese environmental NGOs. Chapter seven is based on the interviews at three Chinese environmental NGOs. It is intended to give readers in the NGOs' own words an expression of what they think about environmental problems in China and why they think environmental consciousness-raising is important.

Chapter eight serves as the conclusion of this thesis. It is about the authors' understanding of environmental NGOs' roles in consciousness-raising. I discuss Chinese environmental NGOs and their actors by using the lens of cognitive praxis, intellectual roles and the context of communication.

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## Research Design

In the Preface and Introduction I expressed the initial motivation, purpose and the research question of this thesis, and briefly introduced the structure of chapters and the context of each chapter. In this part I would like to present the research design of my study.

My study of Chinese environmental NGOs is neither “theory verification” nor “theory generation”. Even though the research question concerns what are the roles of environmental NGOs in environmental consciousness-raising in China, the focus of the study is not to evaluate environmental NGOs’ effectiveness but to find out why do they work on environmental consciousness-raising and how do they work. My study of Chinese environmental NGOs is in some sense a descriptive study to interpret and understand their actions. The general design of my research was not fixed in advance, in the sense that I started with a theory, deduced hypotheses from it, and designed the study to test these hypotheses. My study is more oriented toward “theory generating” by a flexible research design. This kind of research design is used by those researchers who do not start with a theory but aim to end up with one, and develop systematically from the data collection. (Robson, 2002) Actually I started with some environmental social movement theories that offer interpretations on the Western or global environmental movements. For some reasons which I will discuss in detail in the following chapters, I found that they could not be directly used to understand Chinese environmental movement and NGOs. But they could provide a kind of theoretical framework that will offer some “hints” or maybe “indicators” to study Chinese environmental NGOs’ involvement in the movement. Eyerman and Jamison’s theory of the cognitive praxis in social movements offered useful “hints” to describe NGOs’ actions by looking into their different dimensions of cognitive praxis and their “intellectuals”. Jamison’s categorization of environmentalisms by actors’ roles in green knowledge making and Diani and Donati’s theory on organizational change in western European environmental groups provide important guidance on how environmental NGOs in China can be categorized. In summary my approach started from theory but with no

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hypotheses to test. The focus of this thesis is based on the consideration that research questions should be answered within the period of time of study. In the course of my study it was found that the effectiveness of NGOs actions in environmental consciousness-raising was too complicated to answer. It might need large scale surveys to give a reasonable and reliable answer to that. But based on the information from both literature study and some empirical evidence, it could be valid enough to offer some understanding on why they work to raise environmental consciousness in China and specifically how they do that.

My descriptive flexible research design come from certain research traditions of social studies. In general my research design of the study of Chinese environmental NGOs is similar to one tradition of qualitative research, namely the ethnography tradition. (Robson, 2002) This kind of research is often used by cultural anthropologists and sociologists. The focus of such research is to describe and interpret a cultural and social group. The narrative form of such study is to describe the cultural behavior of the group and the empirical data collection methods used are primarily observation and interviews in the field. The study object of this thesis is environmental NGOs in China and they can be deemed as a newly emerged social group in the Chinese society. The purpose of the study is to give some descriptions and interpretations of the Chinese NGOs and their actions. Besides these similarities there are obvious differences in my research design from this established tradition. The central feature of ethnographic study is that it is normally a long period study and the main purpose of this approach is often considered to be its production of descriptive data free from imposed external concepts and ideas. My study is to some extent guided by theories at the initial stage, in the sense that I had some theoretical frameworks in mind when I started my empirical research. However, those theories are not developed from the experiences of the Chinese situation; therefore, during the empirical study I have to be open-minded to accept any results that might emerge different from my expectations. One example of these unexpected results that appeared in my research is on the understanding of Chinese environmental knowledge traditions.

Data collection method used in ethnography studies is often called a participant observation.

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In my study of Chinese environmental NGOs this approach is not used. Except some visits to them, I did not stay with them very long. But the main virtue of participant observation is used in my data collection. Doing research in a descriptive and reflective manner, it seems that listening to what people said is very important. Here it is not only listening to what informants said in the interviews but also “listen” to different literatures that wrote about them. The central consideration of my data collection is to reveal the “real” situation of Chinese environmental NGOs by as many sources as possible.

One part of my study of Chinese environmental NGOs is based on a literature study of their social and knowledge context, the history of different environmental NGOs, and their organizational features. The other part of my study is based on the interviews that I have done in Beijing. The interviews are designed to be semi-structured, in the sense that predetermined questions are prepared, but the order can be modified based upon what seems the interviewer’s perception of what seems most important; question wording can be changed and explanations given; particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones added. The interviews are informant interviews because a focus group of interviewees can not be formulated, and it might be better to talk to different people in each organization respectively so that their different ideas could be explored. In general I had many areas of interests and concerns when I did interview, and I tried to let the conversation develop within these areas.

Data analysis in this thesis is mainly carried out by categorization. Categorization in this thesis is not trying to develop a typology of Chinese environmental NGOs, the purpose is to bring the seemingly diverse data in some order, and try to express what I found in a logical way. The categorization of Chinese environmental NGOs in Chapter 5 is aimed to present different NGOs according to their orientations and focuses in environmental consciousness-raising. The discussion of interviews in Chapter 7 is another categorization to illustrate NGOs self-image of their roles in environmental consciousness in different logically connected questions.

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In summary, the study of Chinese environmental NGOs is designed to be flexible. Theories served as conceptual frameworks that help to read what I have found in the sense that they are tools for interpretation of the empirical study. The semi-structured interview and the presentation of literature are aimed to avoid prejudice that might be caused by established studies known to the author. It is hoped that a reflection based on an objective study ensured by a flexible and descriptive design and a data collection free from value judgment will increase the reliability of the thesis.

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## Chapter 1 The Making of Chinese Environmental Consciousness

### 1.1 What is Environmental Consciousness in China

Before I discuss what Chinese environmental consciousness is, let me try to do some linguistic analysis of the Chinese meaning of the English word ‘consciousness’. I think it is necessary to do so because by interpreting this highly abstract word in Chinese, we could understand what is included in Chinese environmental consciousness and what is more important is what this term might mean to the Chinese people. In Merriam-Webster Dictionary there are five definitions of the word consciousness. Consciousness means 1) a: the quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself b: the state or fact of being conscious of an external object, state, or fact c: AWARENESS; especially: concern for some social or political cause. 2): the state of being characterized by sensation, emotion, volition, and thought: MIND. 3): the totality of conscious states of an individual. 4): the normal state of conscious life (regained consciousness). 5): the upper level of mental life of which the person is aware as contrasted with unconscious processes.

In Chinese according to the English definition there are at least three translations of “consciousness”. The first translation 意识 and 知觉 (Yi Shi and Zhi Jue) corresponds with the first and second definition. The second translation 自觉 (Zi Jue) corresponds with third definition. The third translation 觉悟 (Jue Wu) which is more focused on the upper level of mental life. In English consciousness is no doubt a noun, while in Chinese as a compound word it is a noun but the characters “意” (Yi) “识” (Shi) “知” (Zhi), “觉” (Jue), “悟” (Wu) are all verbs in their original meaning. For example “识” means knowing by words and languages. “知识” (Zhi Shi) means knowledge in Chinese. “悟” symbolize understanding by heart of certain upper level mental feeling or knowledge. These words share a common meaning of making somebody known, understood or even enlightened. In

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my understanding of the English definitions, consciousness focuses on a state of understanding, while in the Chinese language terms such as Yi Shi, Zhi Jue are more focused on the process of making consciousness. Therefore in China consciousness is not only a static state of understanding it tend to be a mobilization process of knowledge or even knowledge making. When it comes to environmental consciousness in China, it contains varieties of knowledge maybe not only green knowledge but also the process of making people aware of Chinese environmental issues.

I am not trying to say that Chinese environmental consciousness is highly different from the Western environmental consciousness. Actually the construction of Chinese contemporary environmental consciousness is quite similar to the Western construction of environmentalism in the environmental movement. Furthermore, contemporary Chinese environmental consciousness is to some extent influenced by the Western 'environmentalisms' and other forms of knowledge.

Western environmentalism is not just science that study the relationship of living beings to their environment, as Isabelle Lanthier and Lawrence Oliver wrote in their article 'The Construction of Environmental Awareness' (Lanthier and Oliver, 1999: 64).

Environmentalism refers to a broader field of knowledge that seeks to rethink our relationship to nature and to take action to transform the system of values on which this relationship has been based for a long time.

Andrew Jamison reads western environmental movement in terms of "green knowledge making" (Jamison, 2001). He argued that environmental movements in the West contributed to the revitalization of environmental knowledge traditions and creation of contemporary green knowledge. Green knowledge is not just about the environmental conditions in which we live, nor it is not just about how we incorporate a concern of the environmental conditions into our pursuit of sustainable economic development. Green knowledge has a tendency to integrate an environmental concern in all aspects of our human society. (Jamison 2003)

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Western environmentalism and one of its eastern counterparts the Chinese environmental consciousness both contain two fundamental elements, environmental knowledge and the mobilization of environmental knowledge. In this thesis I would like to discuss the Chinese environmental consciousness both in terms of the contents of knowledge and the mobilization process.

## 1.2 Global Environmentalism Hits China

In our countries, and almost all other industrial countries as well, for that matter, environmentalism was a product of the 1960s. For developing countries, the situation is more complicated, as environmentalism was also a product of “knowledge transfer”, that is an import from the West as well as something homegrown. For industrial countries, however, environmentalism was one of the unintended results of the 1960s, even though its development into a social movement differed from country to country (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991: 89)

The above statement is quoted from *Social Movements A Cognitive Approach*, a book about a new approach to the study of social movements. The quoted statement about environmental movement contains at least two central meanings. First, it said that environmentalism was some sort of a global phenomenon even though it might have different contents in different countries. Second, environmentalism as a collection of knowledge gradually develops in environmental movements which are deemed as “cognitive praxis”. In the movement, environmentalism was given some concrete meaning in many dimensions. Besides, this statement also offers some information about the origins of the “new” environmentalism in the West.

Both McCormick (1989) and Jamison (2001) think that the roots of “new” environmentalism included the traditions of conservation and preservation. Both of these two traditions that influence environmentalism in Europe and North America have their philosophical

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backgrounds. The conservation tradition can be traced back to Francis Bacon the seventeenth century philosopher in the West; he disseminated a utilitarian view of nature and emphasized the role of science in human development. According to this view, nature is something that needs to be tamed by human beings by their application of science. Nature is resource for human benefit. From this, the conservation tradition develops their ideas of environmental protection in a logic that nature is a resource for human benefits so the utilization of it should be careful in the sense that natural resources can not be wasted and should be used more efficiently to maximize its benefits.

Bacon's philosophy, and the subsequent institutionalization of an experimentally oriented science of nature, had been part of an exploitative ecology through which the non-human environment was portrayed as raw material or as natural resources for human use and benefit. (Jamison, 2001: 74)

Conservationism is indeed treating nature as a system of component parts to be tended, or operated, like a machine so that the productive utilization for human benefit could be made more effective and extensive. (Jamison, 2001:75) Opposed to the conservation tradition were those who hold a different point of view of the role of scientists. Thoreau and other scientists pursued their science in a more participatory way and would like to create knowledge that seems to be more holistic. They developed a different way of investigating and understanding nature which is more descriptive and poetic type of knowledge-making. They are called "Arcadian" in association with their particular version of ecology. In the nineteenth century this kind of Arcadian approach of environmental protection could be found at work in the Sierra Club in the United States, which adopted that thought to preserve particular valuable, or striking, landscapes from further exploitation. The two streams of ecological study gave rise to two different ways of thinking about ecology and carrying out ecological research. The preservation tradition of ecological study was more systemic while the conservation tradition tends to focus more at the individual level. (Jamison, 2001: 76-77)

Jamison (2001) suggested a third tradition of environmentalism, in his terms, a tradition of

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human ecology. Along with the Western industrialization, human beings step by step extended the border of human society with the natural environment, and there was a tendency that human beings would incorporate the whole nature into their own activities. This kind of trend was especially obvious in North America. By the early twentieth century it had become apparent to many that a further kind of ecology was necessary—a human, or social, cultural ecology—that investigate the borderlines and the hybridizations, the multifarious relations between human societies and their natural environs. (Jamison, 2001: 79) Finally by the 1930s this kind of human ecology had become branches of various scientific disciplines. The several scientists of human ecologies seek to link natural and social knowledge into a coherent whole, usually focused on a particular region or community. After the Second World War it has become an important feature of academic life and public policy in both Europe and North America, as well as in other parts of the world.

The first two traditions of environmentalism or environmental knowledge particularly ecology focused on the role of human beings to the nature. In my view both the conservation traditions and the preservation traditions treat humans as individuals who are trying to get either a participatory understanding or a management and exploitive knowledge of nature. However, the third tradition of human ecology trying to look at human society as a whole, and would like to find out the relationship of the organization of human society (geographically) between the society and the nature. The hidden aim of the third tradition is to give some rational explanation of collective human transformation of the nature into the society. That is the reason why notions such as “planning” came into the way human beings treats their relationship with the natural surroundings. No matter what their differences are, they are foundations that later contributed to the development of western environmentalism and from this we know that environmentalism itself has many sources.

The development of western environmentalism or global environmentalism can be seen from different angles. John McCormick (1989) in his book *Reclaiming Paradise* portrayed environmentalism development as a process of transformation of the state and condition of the environment from a private into a public issue. The principle vehicle for this

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transformation he mentioned is a popular mass movement. Similar to him, Andrew Jamison thinks environmentalism developed in the environmental movement that emerged from the 1960s. He thinks environmental movement contributes to green knowledge making and in general environmentalism has experienced a transformation from movements to institutions. (Jamison, 2001) Seen from different angles environmentalism is a global phenomenon and it is still developing. John McCormick wrote:

As private concerns became public concerns, so the efforts of this movement were increasingly reflected in legislation, public policy, the creation and operation of public environmental agencies, and changes in social, economic, and political values. This process has not yet ended. Although Reclaiming Paradise draws heavily on the British and American experiences, its central argument is that environmentalism must be seen not as a series of separate national movements, but as part of a wider and more long-term change in human attitudes. Only in this way can it be properly assessed and understood. (McCormick, 1989:10)

In order to know how environmentalism came to China, and the relationship of environmentalism development and the emergence of environmental NGOs, we need to read environmentalism development in several phases. In *The Making of Green Knowledge* (Jamison, 2001) Jamison portrayed environmentalisms development in six phases, he focused on the transformation of movements into institutions so in his point of view, six phases are:

1. Before the 1968 is the period of awakening of the environmental concern
  2. From 1969 to 1974 “age of ecology” during this period of time some environmental organizations begin to emerge such as the Friends of the earth
  3. From 1975 to 1979 environmental issues begin to be “politicized” stemmed from the anti nuclear power movement
  4. From 1980 to 1986 environmental movement started to be “differentiated” think tanks emerged and so many other organizations appeared
  5. From 1987 to 1993 environmental issues began to be internationally institutionalized, this phase is what he calls “internationalization”
  6. From 1994 afterwards, “integration” phase
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Seeing environmentalism development from another angle that is transforming private environmental concerns into public environmental concerns John McCormick (1989) divides environmentalism into many but not so systematic phases. Even though this book is not up to date, the information about environmentalism before mid 1980s is in great detail. The first phase he thought is from the 1945 to 1961, in the post Second World War year conservation and preservation traditions of environmental protection still played an important role. From 1962 to 1970 during which an environmental revolution took place in the West, the environment started to appear in the public arena and was given different meaning developed from the environmental traditions. This corresponds to what Jamison also mentioned about the environmental movement in the 1960s. 1962 to 1970 is the second phase. Phase three as McCormick defined from 1968 to 1972 is about the debate that appeared with a critic about economic growth, population growth, etc. “The Prophets of Doom” is typical during the debate about development and our planet. The 1972 Stockholm Conference can be deemed a milestone in global environmentalism development, in that conference environment becomes sort of a global concern and the United Nations Environment Program was launched then. The period 1972 to 1982 could be seen as the fourth phase, within which environmental development was highly differentiated from the more developed to the developing countries. Environmentalism in the developed countries started to bring life to environmental politics and varieties of environmental organizations (the environmental NGOs) was formulated, it seemed that environmental concern was activated in the developed countries. In the developing countries environmentalism was something that is concerned in the development plans to mitigate some bad results of economic growth. The main theme in the developing countries is “Environment and Development”. There is no doubt that from the 1980s environmental issues became an international matter even though the strategies to deal with environmental problems were different.

I see environmentalism development in China in terms of how it came to China and how it changed over time. I divide Chinese environmentalism development into three phases: the first phase 1949 to 1972 which I call a blank, the second phase 1972 to 1992, the period of “state environmental governance”, the third phase 1992 afterwards, the years of diversity.

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From my point of view, 1960s the time when basic values of western environmentalism were formulated and shaped in the sense that in the 1960s environmentalism was given its “cosmological” identity. While the later phases of environmentalism development could be deemed as transforming the more “cosmological” environmentalism to more concrete environmental knowledge, professions and institutions and broadening its concerns from local to international. For example the anti nuclear power movement in the 1970 added some a political discussion about technology and growth to what had emerged earlier in the environmental movements.

Environmentalism had many ‘sources’:

There was the scientific input, the concepts of systems ecology that had been developing among scientists for half a century. The environmental movement took that language and its assumptions about natural processes and translated them into social terms, into political actions. Ecology was transformed by the environmental movement into social ecology, an ecological social philosophy, and as such it has become an important ingredient in new political programs as well as theories in several social sciences. There was the material or technological input, the visible destruction of the environment brought about by chemical industries, polluting automobiles and wasteful industrial production processes, as well as the potential risks inherent in nuclear power plants. The environmental movement was formed as a critique of those technologies and even more of the technological paradigm or system on which they were based. And there was the movement input, the influence from the participatory fervor, the rediscovery of democracy that was the 1960s. The environmental movement focused that interest in participation into particular directions. (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991: 77).

It was in the 1960s and the 1970s that the three ‘sources’ integrated so as to form the contents of environmentalism of the West. In the 1960s and 1970s, compared with other “revolutions” the so called “environmental revolution” was difficult to find in China, and there is not much evidence to show that in China there was any real debate about the potential danger of modern science and technology to the environment. Even though some collective behaviors could be deemed as public health movement such as “eliminating the four pests movement” (flies,

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mosquitoes, rats and sparrows), a lot of environmental problems that is given emphasis in the West were neglected by the Chinese in the 1960s and 1970s. Lin Gan (1993) argued that between 1949 and 1957, pollution control policy was almost absent. Borrowed from the Stalinist “big push” development model of the former Soviet Union, China emphasized the development of heavy industry, which over consumed energy and raw materials particularly in the defense sector. In addition, the location of industries was not taken into account by planners. This resulted in the combination of residential and industrial areas. It is this lack of planning that created considerable environmental problems in subsequent years. During the mass movement of the Great Leap Forward (1958-60), and encouraged by decentralized economic policies, the development of the iron and steel industry became the top priority of industrial policy. The oversimplified small scale rural iron and steel industries expanded from 170,000 in 1957 to 310,000 in 1959. As a consequence of the lack of proper protective measures, environmental quality declined considerably. The massive state organized environmental movement during this period was the so called “eliminating the four pests movement”, which attracted the participation of the general public. (Gan, 1993: 3)

China presented the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm 1972. After that China started to set up her environmental management institutions. The National Environmental Protection Agency and its sub-divisions stated up in that year. From then on, environmental protections or environmental issues began to be listed on the official agenda of the Chinese government. However, an environmental movement appeared in China only many years later. For a long time, environmental management was totally a state responsibility.

The Chinese delegation had arranged to come to Stockholm only at the last minute, and there was some concern over its plans for the conference sessions, particularly that it would assume the leadership of the less developed countries. Indeed the positions taken by many Third World countries were strengthened by China’s presence. In a major address to the conference, Tang Ke, the chairman of the Chinese delegation, argued that China supported the Less Developed Countries in exploiting their natural resources in accordance with their own needs.

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He said: “each country has the right to determine its own environment standards and policies in the line with its own conditions, and no country whatsoever should undermine the interests of the developing countries under the pretext of protecting the environment.” At the beginning of the conference China to some extent strongly disagree with some principles in the Declaration on the Human Environment. For example China suggested that the Preamble should be enlarged to state that the environment was, in some places, endanger by “plunder, aggression and war by the colonialists, imperialists and neocolonialists.” China also suggested an amendment to Principle 13 to the effect that overpopulation was caused by “plunder, aggression and war”, and theories of limits to growth are absurd in theory and groundless in fact. However, to the end of the discussions Chinese delegation mentioned that all principles on which consensus had not been reached should be omitted. (McCormick, 1989: 99-100)

During the 1970s environmental management institutions were established as a follow-up action after the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972. The establishment of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and regional environmental offices and authorities are examples of this follow-up. From 1978 until 1989, under the drive of economic reforms and the “open door” policy, designed to attract foreign investment, the development of environmental policies has undergone a fundamental change, and substantial progress has been made. Environment became a priority in national plans. As a result, energy efficiency rose and the urban environment improved to some extent. During this period, environmental management was strengthened. This led to a series of environmental laws and regulations being stipulated and implemented. (Gan, 1993: 4)

In general from the 1990s, China encountered the multiple dimensions of global environmentalism. Accompanied with the growing environmental awareness emerged in Chinese society, environmentalism development has been involved with more actors. From 1990s environmentalism development in China became highly diversified in terms of environmental concerns, method of dealing with environmental problems, and new organizations coming out.

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First, with Deng Xiaoping's "Southern tour" in 1992, during which he praised the virtues of economic reform, China accelerated its integration into the world market system. Then, following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the Chinese government published its strategies for sustainable development in a "China Agenda 21" white paper issued in March 1994. A large amount of environmental laws and policies has since been promulgated, leading some analysts to observe the "greening" of the Chinese state. In the 1990s, multilateral banks, bilateral aid agencies, and international NGOs poured into China, bringing funding, projects, expertise, and legitimacy to Chinese NGOs. A growing awareness of China's grave environmental problems - like dust storms, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution of trans-border watersheds, and deforestation - has increased China's connections to the world. Many international environmental NGOs, such as WWF, Ecologia, Pacific Environment, and Friends of Earth, have set up projects or opened offices in China. Even the radical Greenpeace now has an office in Beijing. As recently as November 2003, its executive director, Gerd Leipold, even gave a public lecture at Beijing University. The 1990s also saw the dramatic growth of an Internet population and culture, with the number of Internet users rising to 80 million in December 2003. Of the numerous citizen groups, China's environmentalists were among the first to embrace the Internet to advance their cause. Although China's political system generally does not welcome input through unofficial channels, two important public trends have emerged that reveal people's concerns about the environment. One is the growing range and intensity of public debates on environmental issues. These could range anywhere from environmental rights and animal rights to the ethical lapses of extravagant lifestyles. The other trend is the rise of NGO-led citizen action, such as environmental monitoring, community recycling campaigns, and educational projects in rural schools. (Yang, 2004)

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## Chapter 2 Chinese Environmental Knowledge Traditions

In Chapter 1 I discussed how global environmentalism influenced the formulation of Chinese environmentalism. As I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, environmentalism is to some extent a formal knowledge that is clearly expressed by varieties of professionals. Environmental consciousness is a kind of knowledge that is sort of latent and could be deemed as presumptions. The influence of global environmentalism to Chinese environmentalism certainly gives a great many western or maybe modern ingredients to the Chinese environmental consciousness. However, western science/knowledge has been largely introduced to China for just a few hundreds of years, compared with the five thousand years of Chinese civilization; it could be deemed as a contemporary phenomenon. What make up the characteristics of the Chinese environmental consciousness might derive from the Chinese knowledge heritages.

### 2.1 Cosmology

Chinese traditional environmental knowledge contains many aspects. It might not be able to be categorized as different schools of “sciences”, but it make sense to the Chinese both in forms of the “formal” scientific knowledge and the “informal” knowledge of wisdom and experience.

Ancient Chinese cosmology regards the great nature to be an organic structure; the human is only one being in this organic whole. This particular human nature relationship in Chinese is “tian ren he yi”(天人合一 merging of nature and people into an organic whole). “Tian ren he yi” is a fundamental theory of the traditional Chinese philosophy, besides it is also an ideal goal of human life. The idea of “tian ren he yi” existed for thousands of years in China, it was accepted, developed and interpreted by many Chinese scholars, therefore it could be deemed as a dominant thought of traditional Chinese philosophy. “Tian ren he yi” first

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appeared in “Zhou Yi” or “Yi Jing” (周易 or 易经 an ancient Chinese work completed in Zhou dynasty 1122 to 256 BC, literally translated as “the book of changes” by Richard Wilhelm), however its origin can be traced back to the “Fu Xi” (伏羲 a pre-historical king )years even before written records were kept. Traditionally it was believed that the principles of the “Yi Jing” originated with the legendary “Fu Xi”. In this respect he is seen as an early culture hero, one of the earliest legendary rulers of China (traditional dates 2852 BC-2738 BC), reputed to have had the trigrams (八卦 Ba Gua) revealed to him supernaturally. (Wikipedia Website) In “Xi Ci Xia” (系辞下 an ancient Chinese text, an interpretation of “Yi Jing”), it is recorded as follows: “Fu Xi the King, watch the phenomenon from the sky above, acquire the laws from the earth below, study languages from the living species, after thinking about human beings themselves, thinking about the external nature, he first created “Ba Gua” “the eight trigrams” (八卦 three symbols of “yin \_\_” 阴 and “yang \_\_\_” 阳 consists one trigram), in order to understand the morals of the heaven, and the phenomenon of all natural beings on earth.” Each trigram, consists of three short lines (respectively symbols of yin and yang), each line has its abstract meaning. The top line represents the sky, the heaven, the middle line represents human beings; the bottom line represents the earth. The later authors of “Yi Jing” inherited such basic view of the universe and by adding three more lines to the diagram created the “hexagram” to explain more changes in the universe. Heaven, human, earth were still considered as the fundamental components of the universe, in ‘Yi Jing’ these three fundamental concepts were given one name ‘San Cai’ (三才 three ‘Cai’). (Xu, 2004)

When King Wu of Zhou, son of King Wen, toppled the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC- 1046 BC), his brother Zhou Gong Dan created Yao Ci (爻辞 Yao Ci, “Explanation of Horizontal Lines”) to clarify the significance of each horizontal line in each hexagram. It was not until then that the whole context of “Yi Jing” was understood. Its philosophy heavily influenced the literature and government administration of the Zhou Dynasty (1122 BC - 256 BC).

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Later, during the time of Spring and Autumn (722 BC - 481 BC), Confucius wrote Shi Yi (十翼 Shi Yi, “Ten Wings”), an introductory comment on the “Yi Jing”. By the time of Han Wu Di (漢武帝 Han Wu Di) of the Western Han Dynasty (circa 200 BC), Shi Yi was often called Yi Zhuan (易传 Yi Zhuan, “Commentary on the Yi Jing”), and together with the “Yi Jing” they composed Zhou Yi (周易 Zhou Yi, “Changes of Zhou”). All later texts about Zhou Yi were explanations only, due to the classic’s deep meaning. (Wikipedia,2005)

Confucius is the Latinized form of Kong Fu-zi, which means Kong the master. Confucius was born in the small state of Lu in 551 BC and died in 479 BC (the late Zhou Dynasty) into the lower aristocratic class of the impoverished knights. This was a time of turmoil, political intrigue, and numerous small wars in the last part of the Spring and Autumn era. Assassinations, bribery, and other crimes were common even though punishments were severe. In Lu three families contended for the hereditary rulership, while numerous educated aristocrats sought positions in the government, and many suffered poverty. The teachings of Confucius harmonize well with those of Lao-zi. While the approach of Lao-zi was mystical, Confucius emphasized ethics and social philosophy. Confucius was the first well-known professional teacher in ancient China, and he served occasionally as a political advisor to princes. Through the influence of Confucius’ teachings it became possible for men to rise in social position by educating themselves and developing their abilities. (Beck, 2003) Confucius’ effort and his theory were all about building up a harmonious society the order of which was based on heavenly moral. He thought the chaotic situation in his time emerged because of the lack of social order, and since human being is considered as one component of the universe, the heavenly moral should be followed by humans. Confucius considered the moral as the law of the universe, and only if human beings followed that law could the harmonious society in his image be realized.

Confucianism made major contributions to the theory of “tian ren he yi”. In addition Confucius was greatly influenced by “Yi Jing”. He wished he could have more time to learn

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from the “Yi Jing”. “Give me a few more years so that I can devote fifty years to study Change, and I may be free from great mistakes” (Spring and Autumn Annals translated by Sanderson Beck, 1996) Confucius wrote his “Chun Qiu” (春秋 Spring and Autumn Annals) to study the moral of heaven and the nature of human beings. He wrote “Yi Zhuan” (易传) to interpret the relation of the “San Cai”. Confucius considered that heaven initiates everything; earth gives birth to everything; human beings maintain everything. The three can not be separated; they are procedures in a whole process. Student of Confucius Meng Zi (孟子) and Zi Si (子思) grandson of Confucius, all emphasized moral as an important factor in the theory of “tian ren he yi”. They both regarded sincerity as the essentiality of the heaven and it is the foundation of all beings in the universe. In Zi Si’s work ‘Zhong Yong’ (中庸, “the center of harmony” translated by Sanderson Beck) he wrote:

What heaven gives to people is called human nature. Following our nature is called the Way. Cultivating the Way is called education. The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment..... Only those who are absolutely sincere can fully develop their nature. By fully developing their nature they can fully develop the nature of others. By fully developing the nature of others they can fully develop the nature of things. Those who fully develop the nature of things are worthy to assist in the transforming and nourishing process of heaven and earth. Those worthy to assist in the transforming and nourishing process of heaven and earth can thus form a trinity with heaven and earth.(Zhong Yong- Developing Our Nature translated by Sanderson Beck)

Confucianism disseminates a philosophy of harmonious social relationship, virtue of sincerity was deemed as a critical factor of constructing such harmonious social relationship. In order to maintain a harmonious relationship of the man and nature which defined in their terms the heaven and earth, human beings should construct a harmonious relationship within their own society. Therefore sincerity was emphasized as the essential factor of human nature. With sincerity and success in maintaining a harmonious relationship with the nature and within their own society human beings can be qualified to be counted as one of ‘San Cai’ the three fundamental elements in the universe.

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Later Confucian scholars gave further meaning to the theory of “tian ren he yi”. They expand the moral of benevolence from within the human society to the external nature. Dong Zhong Shu a Han dynasty Confucian scholar said “if a person only love human beings, and show no love to animals, insects how could this be regard as benevolence.” In Song dynasty Zhu Xi, interpret the moral of the heaven and earth in terms of “to create, to give birth and to maintain” (in Chinese the Character 生 “sheng” concludes the three meanings). He wrote in his article “Ren Shuo” (仁说 theory of benevolence) “benevolence is a moral of the heaven and the earth, it is the preference of heaven and earth to create beings, make living beings alive,..., the heaven and earth give all beings a nature to live, this is the root of all virtues, if we can protect the living beings, all virtue of human beings will emerge from this”. In Qing dynasty Dai Zheng wrote “ benevolence, the virtue of making the living beings alive,..., when it comes to the meaning of making the living beings alive it can be interpret as a person he himself love all beings, and persuade the mass to acquire this virtue, that is benevolence”. (Xu, 2004) These developments of classical Confucianism are expansions of the original idea of human responsibility to the cosmos. The efforts of searching for methods to create a harmonious relationship between human and nature resulted in this recognition of the “living” aspects of heavenly moral. Therefore in traditional Chinese culture there is a strong tendency to protect the diversity of living beings, for it is highly immoral to eliminate life, any forms of life.

Another branch of traditional thoughts that had great influence to Chinese environmental consciousness is Taoism developed by Lao Zi. Similar to Confucianism, Taoism was initially created as a social philosophy to build up a harmonious society even though they developed different methods. Lao Zi lived in China in the sixth century BC about the same time as Confucius. Historical records indicate that he was the Keeper of the Archives in the imperial capital at Luoyang. Legend tells us that when he was old and tired of the corruption of the world, he rode an ox-drawn chariot to the mountain pass of the Western frontier. The Keeper of the Pass, having observed omens in the weather and expecting a sage, begged the old man to write a book before withdrawing from civilization. So Lao Zi

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composed the Dao De Jing, (道德经 Way Power Book translated by Sanderson Beck) consisting of about 5,250 Chinese characters (words). This concise book is probably one of the greatest writings in the world and became the scriptural foundation of the Taoist religion. Dao means the way and implies an absolute reality, roughly comparable to the Western idea of God; yet it is described not anthropomorphically but as a dynamic and natural process. De means virtue in the sense of spiritual power. Jing is the word for book or classic. In the Dao De Jing Lao Zi described a simple, natural, and peaceful way of life. Serenity may be found by returning to the eternal source, by emptying oneself of all desires, and by flowing like water. The universe has two complementary principles-the male (yang) and the female (yin). Harmony results from the natural balance of these active and receptive qualities. Those who are too aggressive in their affairs cause unnecessary problems, while those who are too passive lose their center and fail to maintain a natural order. Since the human tendency is to be too active and interfering, Lao Zi emphasized the inward process of action through non-action (wu-wei 无为). By being receptive to this transcendental way, one knows intuitively how much to do and when to stop. The primary responsibility of each person is to understand and master oneself. (Beck, 2003)

Taoism, interpret “tian ren he yi” by postulating “Dao” as the only origin of the heaven, human beings and the earth in the sense that “Dao” is the origin of the universe. Lao Zi said: “Dao generate one, One generates two. Two generates three. Three generates the ten-thousand natural kinds. The ten-thousand natural kinds bear Yin and embrace Yang. Blend the life-forces and deem-make harmony.” (Dao De Jing Chapter 42 translated by Chad Hanson) His follower Zhuang Zi thought, “The heaven and human beings are one” (Zhuang Zi Autumn Floods translated by Lin Yutang), “The heaven and the earth originated at the same time as human beings, every thing and human beings should be one” (Zhuang Zi On Leveling All Things translated by Lin Yutang). The heaven, human beings and the earth are consistent in the universe; they both followed the law of Tao. Therefore “The clear understanding of the virtue of Heaven and Earth is what is called 'The Great Root,' and 'The Great Origin;'- they who have it are in harmony with Heaven, and so they produce all

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equable arrangements in the world;-- they are those who are in harmony with men. Being in harmony with men is called the joy of men; being in harmony with Heaven is called the joy of Heaven.” (Zhuang Zi *The Way of Heaven* translated by Lin Yutang).

Taoism and Confucianism both consider that ‘San Cai’- the heaven, the earth and human beings- are the components of the universe, the three are given an equal status at least human beings are not given higher status. They both consider the three components to be independent but they are strongly connected with each other. Human beings can not be separated from the other two, and play a role to manipulate because the moral that lies in each component requires human beings to obey. The founders of the two schools of thoughts respectively Lao Zi and Confucius both developed their ideas from “Yi Jing” which was deemed as the “bible” of Chinese civilization. That might be the reason why as a fundamental world view the two seemingly conflicting Chinese schools of thoughts share a common base. Nevertheless, the difference of Taoism and Confucianism human nature relationship is to some extent obvious. Taoism claim human beings should obey the ‘moral’ of the heaven and earth, human beings can not have any intervention to nature and even to human society itself, because the universe is “Zi Ran” (自然 literally so of itself), any external intervention will bring disorder to “Zi Ran” the perfect system. Taoism would like to adopt the principle “Wu Wei” (无为 literally no action) of all human behaviors including construction human society themselves. Confucianism holds a more anthropocentric view that human beings have the responsibility to maintain everything. Confucians believe the three components are created at the same time they have different responsibilities in the universe, in the sense that human behavior have cosmic consequences, so that a harmonious human relationship will give prosperity to everything in nature. However, this harmonious relationship relies on the realization of the virtue of moral in the human society. In *Chinese Traditional Thought and Practice: Lessons for an Ecological Economics World View* T.N. Jenkins wrote (Jenkins, 2001:42-43):

Taoism, according to Chinese thought, has long complemented

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Confucianism by promoting a greater understanding of the harmonious natural world and downplaying the importance of human interventions. Together, Zi Ran and Wu Wei provide appreciation of the need for humanity to understand, identify with, and yield to, natural rhythms and processes, and encourage the harmonious use of senses and technologies, rather than the imposition of form or moral judgment upon life's processes, in order that humanity maintains a 'consciousness of participation' in the cosmos....Confucianism promotes an 'anthrocosmic' social ecology with a spiritual dimension of embeddedness in the universe. Confucianism predicates human order whose rationality is based on the natural moral order of the universe, promotes harmonic balance with the natural order together with moral perfection, and suggests an ideal state which is agrarian and socially responsible.

## **2.2 Ancient Ideas of Sustainable Development**

Besides the formal scholar knowledge, there are other forms of knowledge in ancient China that contain some sort of naive thoughts of sustainable development. In contemporary time sustainable development refers to the following three dimensions: sustainable economic development or growth accompanied by sustainable ecological system and a balanced social development. Ancient Chinese texts contain some knowledge that endeavored from the Chinese point of view to make things or human society grow "bigger" and last "longer". Those are quite primal ideas that target a sustainable development.

Many of these ideas came from "Yi Jing", because originally it was a book that was written to predict the future. Scholars learned from it and developed their theory telling people how to behave. However, many traditional popular practices also used "Yi Jing" as a rational reference. Some hexagrams in "Yi Jing" directly expressed information on the wills and meaning of making things "bigger" and lasting "longer". In the interpretation of "Heng" hexagram has such text "Duration. Success. No blame. Perseverance furthers. Thunder and wind: the image of Duration." (Translated by Richard Wilhelm) It means only if things (development) that could endure, can be regarded as successes.

Traditional popular practice in China was normally aimed to achieving good results of

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certain human behavior. Some of these practices include some environmental considerations. One example is the practice of “Feng Shui” geomancy. “Feng Shui” is an ancient Chinese practise dating back at least 3000 years, although its philosophy can be traced back to the teachings of the “Yi Jing” from 6000 years ago. It was used to site palaces, government buildings and monuments, until finally whole cities were designed and built according to “Feng Shui” principles. Over time, the classical practice of “Feng Shui” developed to include detailed observation of the living world and the way in which earth's energy affects our daily lives. “Feng shui” was devised through the cultural paradigms of China, with its unique geography and rather stable social structure, which varies little from generation to generation. “Feng Shui” means 'wind and water' - the two most powerful forces of nature - and the fundamentals of life. The underlying principle of “Feng Shui” is to live in harmony with your environment so that the energy surrounding you works for you rather than against you. It is a complex art involving many disciplines from site planning to psychology, based on the Chinese understanding of the dynamic flow of energy throughout the universe. “Feng shui” explains how the environment in which people live affects their lives. Beyond this, it is the art of using the environment to influence the quality of a person's life. Ultimately, “Feng Shui” is a sound and sensible way of living with a conscious connection between our outside environment and our inner world. (The Feng Shui Society Website)

### **2.3 Environmental Management and Practice**

China has a long history of environmental management, and natural resource protection. Up to the Xia dynasty (21 to 17 century BC) there had already been an old admonishment which ruled people's behavior to protect natural resources and appropriate utilization. It said: “March, early spring, no one can go into the forest with an axe to cut down trees, it is because this is the time when plants begins to grow, no fishing is allowed at this time of the year, we need to give aquatic creatures a time to reproduce.” Even the king must obey this rule, and natural resource protection was regarded as the virtues of preminent kings. The first law of natural resource protection or environmental protection “Tian Lyu” (田律)

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formulated in Qin dynasty (221 to 206 BC). Besides environmental policy making, environmental institutional setting also had a long tradition in China. Ancient Chinese environmental protection official system was called the system of “Yu Heng” (虞衡). Ministry of “Yu” (虞) was the governmental body that carried out the task of managing forests, water resources, hunting and fishing. Ministry of “Yu” is both a policy making institution and an enforcement body. Its goal was to protect natural resources, to ensure that citizens could maintain their lives on the natural resources. This might be the earliest governmental environmental protection agency in the world. It is recorded that the first Minister of “Yu”, was called “Bo Yi” (伯益) who lived in the age of the king of “Shun” (帝舜) about 4000 years ago. “Bo Yi” had abundant knowledge on botany and zoology. That is the reason why he was appointed to the official position. It is said that his effort was quite successful and he was deemed as a hero in ancient ages. (Yuan Qinglin, 1988) The tradition of “Yu Heng” lasted for generations until the last feudal dynasty the Qing dynasty (1644 to 1911 AD). The responsibilities of the ministry “Yu” varied from dynasties, however the original task of managing natural resources was never altered. In Qing dynasty more than just serving as a governmental ministry of natural resource management the ministry “Yu” was given the responsibility to provide military materials. This might be because pre-modern military development rely more on the usage of natural resources. In “Qing Shi Gao” (清史稿 History of Qing Dynasty) it recorded: “Yu Heng was in charge of the management of all natural resources and metallurgy of military purpose.”

More than 4000 years of traditional agricultural practices have enabled Chinese farmers to evolve various agricultural techniques, e.g. thorough tillage, crop diversification and rotation, animal husbandry, use of organic fertilizers, irrigation, drainage and terracing. These techniques, which were largely shaped by the coevolution of nature and culture, have contributed to the maintenance of soil fertility after thousands of years of cultivation. Through recycling organic manures that require little in capital input while applying environmental knowledge accumulated by generations of farmers, traditional agricultural

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practices were ecologically reasonable and sustainable and adapted to relatively high population densities and different regional conditions throughout history.(Tian, 2002) In general traditional Chinese agriculture followed the rule of ‘San Cai’(三才), in one article of “Lyu Shi Chun Qiu” (吕氏春秋 A Chinese Text) contained the following statement. “agriculture, human beings work on it, however the prosperity of man’s job need to rely on heaven and the earth, therefore, only when man obey the rule of heaven, know the conditions of the earth, made effort to take care of it, the result would be good”. (Xu, 2004) Chinese agriculture on the one hand emphasizes human being’s effort, on the other hand respects the nature. Unlike contemporary “chemical agriculture”, by which agriculture production heavily relies on minerals that can not be recycled, Chinese traditional agriculture was often designed to be a circulated “closed” system. One example of such agriculture design is in Chinese “Sang Ji Yu Tang” (silkworm and fish raising combined system). This production system emerged in the late Ming dynasty (1368 to 1644 AD). It first appeared in Guangdong province then quickly spread all around Zhujiang river delta and gradually in other parts of China as well. A regular “Sang Ji Yu Tang” was formed like this: “Dig a pound in a muddy ground, plant mulberry trees along the pound, keep silkworms by leaves of these trees, and use the dejection of the silkworms to feed fish. Get silt from the pound to nourish mulberry trees. In this circulated process, fish, silkworms, and trees can be benefited.” (Luo Guihuan, 1995). From contemporary views such process of silkworm and fish raising could be identified as ecological agriculture. Luo and Han (1990) identify three principal objectives of Chinese ecological agriculture: protect and conserve natural resources and the environment as the foundation for sustainable agricultural productivity; co-ordinate agro-ecosystem relationships with the needs and characteristics of the socio-economic environment; and facilitate the recycling of agricultural resources to reduce adverse environmental impacts and to lower production costs. Even though ancient Chinese farmers could not anticipate the influence of their practice on today’s concepts of ecological agriculture, they do represent some Chinese wisdom such as the integrated relationship of “San Cai” in the universe and some primal thoughts of creating a ‘sustainable’ human nature relationship.

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These knowledge traditions are to some extent inherited by the Chinese people today, but they are not as dominant as they were in ancient China.

In Mainland China after the demise of the Qing dynasty in 1911, the popular tradition was diluted by westernization and secularization, especially in urban areas; after 1949, it was stigmatized as superstition, despite continuing respect from the elite traditions and constitutional guarantees for religious freedom. (Jenkins, 2002: 46)

Fu Tao the staff writer in China Development Brief whom I interview also thinks that traditional elements in Chinese society became less and less important. (Interview with Fu Tao, Appendix)

Making a harmonious society has always been a dream for the Chinese. Harmony is so deeply rooted in the Chinese culture therefore recently it was given a call for its “re-birth”. Reforms and opening-up over the past two and a half decades have brought prosperity for many Chinese citizens. But at the same time, problems, such as the widening gap between the rich and poor, conflict between an increasing demand for energy and exhausting available natural resources, and a lack of an effective social welfare system, keep crying out for solutions. (China Daily, 08, 03, 2005) Chinese President Hu Jintao has urged local officials to fully implement the “scientific concept of development” and to protect the fundamental interests of common people and to build “a harmonious and well-off society,” as he wound up his five-day visit to southwest China's Guizhou Province. He urged local officials to strengthen and improve macro-economic control policies, speed up the readjustment of economic structure, convert the economic growth mode and stick to the "sustainable development" strategy. Besides he featured harmonious society as democracy, the rule of law, equity, justice, sincerity, amity and vitality. (People's Daily, 12, 02, 2005) This kind of emphasis on the calling for a “re-birth” of a harmonious society is very important of environmental groups in Chinese civil society (mainly the Chinese environmental NGOs) to carry out their works because most of them need official support

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to operate their different environmental programs.

Chinese environmental knowledge traditions offer environmental NGOs a lot of resources for changing the current situation. It would be better to use what Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi had portrayed rather than trying to persuade the mass public to accept the so called Acadian's lifestyle. This means on the one hand Chinese environmental traditions need the NGOs to revitalize, on the other hand it is because of these traditions their propagandas can easily be understood and accepted.



## **Chapter 3 History of Environmental Governance in China**

### **3.1 China's Relationship with the Environment**

During the Mao era between 1949 and 1976, China treated the environment harshly in the sense that the mistreatment of humans in class warfare led to the destruction of the environment: forests were cut, slopes eroded, grassland opened, and lakes filled. During the post-Mao era, as the state shifted its focus from class struggle to economic development, the government has paid more attention to environmental issues. But even as some environmental problems have been alleviated, the single-minded pursuit of economic growth has led to continued urban air and water pollution and rural land degradation. (Jiang, 2004)

In both eras, dealing with the environmental problems has largely been a task of the government. There is a good deal of evidence that shows that China lacks public participation in environmental protection and the role of civil society in environmental issues is relatively minor. (Interview with FON and China Development Brief) Even in the years when the society had a higher environmental concern compared with the past, public participation is not a significant part of handling environmental problems in China. The following table is a statistical evidence of public participation in terms of citizen complaints in Chinese environmental issues.

**Table 2.1 Citizen Complaints about Pollution to Environmental Authorities in China (1,000s)**

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Letters	64	57	53	60	56	55	54
Visits	78	76	78	81	82	79	85
Combine	142	133	131	141	138	134	138

Source: Statistical Yearbook of China (Beijing: Statistical Publishing House of China)

Some indications of citizen's participation are shown in Table 1, from year 1987 to 1993, offering data on the number of officially recognized complaints about pollution. There is no evident trend to indicate an increasing or decreasing public participation in terms of complaints among Chinese citizens. The most significant point is that citizen complaints on a per capita basis are minor. These data support the impression that the overall impact of citizen opposition to polluting behavior has only a marginal significance. The few successes of popular protests have ultimately depended on support from high levels in the Chinese government. On the other hand, the lack of democratic participation that might oppose environmental regulation has enabled the Chinese authorities to move quickly to establish pollution controls once the leadership decided to do so. (Lotspeich and Chen, 1997)

In general all the evidence gives an impression that Chinese people deal with environmental problems by their government, environmental issues in China is largely an official issue. Furthermore, it seems that the way of Chinese environmental protection is through environmental governance by different governmental bodies. China's relationship with the natural environment tends to be a relationship more relying on the state policies rather than a variety of actors including the civil society and the market.

The reason for this could be that when the communist party came into power in 1949, they followed the Soviet model of economic development that is to shape Chinese economy into a Central Planning mode. The Central Planning Economy seems to tackle environmental problems as follows: the leadership has direct control of the production units generating

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pollution and the authority to allocate capital to pollution control technologies and a pollution control industry. (Feng, 1994) This pattern of economic development limited the possibilities for direct citizen involvement in environmental policy formulation and implementation.

The other reason for the overwhelming role of the government on environmental issues can be traced back to Chinese political traditions. Fu Tao the staff writer of China Development Brief in the interview mentioned that Chinese Confucianism propagates an ideal society that is obedient to a centralized power, and in China power is legitimated as top-down. Lucian W. Pye in his book *Asian Power and Politics* wrote:

Hence in Chinese scheme of things all legitimate power was limited to officialdom, and no significant forms of power were supposed to be at the command of any other elements of the population, regardless of social station. (Pye, 1985: 57)

It means in China, the government is more or less deemed as the only legitimate actor to deal with environmental affairs and also other public affairs. Other social actors do not have sufficient power to carry out actions, besides their roles might not be recognized. It seems that in Chinese political traditions to be obedient to the central power is very important, in case of environmental issues this underling principle is still important and the space that is left for non-governmental actors is limited because the government tends to take everything under its control.

In the Mao years, socialist ideology played an important role in every official policy in China, and most significantly some nation-wide political campaigns which demonstrate such the socialist ideology in China had great influence on the environment. The Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) called for “taking the grain as the first link.” This movement encouraged people to increase the arable land by whatever means necessary so as to cultivate more grain. The already limited forest land was stripped to harvest grain; lakes once used as fisheries were drained; soils that were better suited for other crops were forced

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to produce cereal crops. This campaign increased the deforestation problem because as farmers cut trees to open more farm land, the soil did not contain enough nutrients to sustain grain. Eventually, farmers would cease harvesting the unproductive land and cut down more trees so as to maintain grain quotas. After the country had recovered from the damage of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution began (1966-1976). During this period thousands of people were sent to the countryside to be “re-educated” through manual labor. These people had no relevant skills in farming but were expected to meet state targets in agricultural production. The complete damage done to the environment as a result of these campaigns is not known, but it is evident that environmental conditions worsened during the period of time. (Williams, 1994)

In the later Post-Mao years the focus of the state was transformed from ideology to economic development. During this period of time the significant evolution of Chinese environmental policy has occurred in the context of transition from a centrally-planned economy toward a hybrid system that relies more extensively on market forces and private initiatives. In the agricultural sector, the household responsibility system was one of the first experiments in the reform period. Individual families contracted small plots of land for harvest. They are given the autonomy to choose what to plant. They could sell their products on market price and retained profits from their yields. This kind of system gradually became a national policy of agriculture.

This system has both positive and negative effects on the environment. On the positive side, farmers are now able to grow crops which best fit the environment and soils or allow the ground to lie fallow while they pursue nonagricultural endeavors. Although the government had hoped that the farmers would take care of their contracted land and work to improve the soil, this system did not motivated farmers to invest in the land to which they have been given only rights, not full ownership. Therefore, they tend to spend their wealth on consumer goods or homes rather than on the land. Overall, the soils have received less long-term care under this system. This system can also lead to soil depletion as farmers attempt to maximize profits by planting too much in too small an area, or cultivating

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nutrient-draining cash crops (such as tobacco). Another problem accompanied by the pursuit of more profits is the wide use of pesticides and fertilizers to increase its fertility. Unfortunately, farmers are often unaware of how to properly use these chemicals. They have caused environmental damage and threatened human health by using too high concentrations of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. At the same time, the residual chemicals get into the water sources used for household consumption and irrigation, contaminate the crops grown by the farmers, and deteriorate much of the natural ecosystem. (Williams, 1994)

The reforms have also radically altered the industrial sector of the economy. Industries are now allowed to retain a percentage of their profit to be used at their own purpose (often toward wages and bonuses). Out of this system has emerged an emphasis on profit maximization. The enterprises are given more responsibility over their funds, and also over the employment of workers in hopes of increasing worker productivity. Also, the management within a firm has been given more power and the state has less direct intrusion in the decision-making process within an organization. The government has loosened its controls on fixing prices of many commodities and allowed price adjustment according to market value. Competition between firms has been introduced in the reform years as private businesses and entrepreneurs have entered the market. Domestic and international businesses have grown rapidly in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Throughout the country rural Township-Village Enterprises (TVEs) have emerged out of former collectives. TVEs and SEZs have allowed Chinese communities or entrepreneurs to start factories and produce goods for export or domestic consumption. (Lotspeich and Chen, 1997)

The reforms have made industries more accountable for all aspects of their organization and they are now less stuck to state regulations than when they were closely tied to the state. By making enterprise revenues related to productivity, firms are striving to increase efficiency, which should encourage firms to optimize on the consumption of raw materials and to find productive uses of their waste products. This trend of manufacture is furthered by tax incentives for products manufactured from recycled materials. (Williams, 1994) However,

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because the reforms have introduced incentives for enterprises to increase their profits, enterprises are less likely now to implement costly environmental protection measures. Small scale businesses, such as TVEs, are largely exempt from the licensing process which requires pollution safeguards in design, construction, and operation. They are exempt because they have such small budgets. Although the larger and more profitable enterprises are subject to environmental regulations, the problem is that small industries are now major polluters in China. (Lotspeich and Chen, 1997)

In the next section of this chapter detailed discussion of the government response to environmental problems in terms of environmental policy making and institution formation will be presented to give the reader better understanding of the role of the state in Chinese environmental politics. Even though the power of public participation in environmental issues and the role of the civil society are minor, there are still many forms of public involvement in environmental issues in China and especially the government has more or less realized that public participation needs to be strengthened for a variety of reasons. Section 3 in this chapter will provide more detail on the roles of citizens and social organizations in Chinese environmental protection.

### **3.2 The Evolution of Chinese Environmental Policies and Institutions**

It is normally considered that from 1949 to 1972 environmental issues were irrelevant to political affairs. There were no specific laws or institutions for environmental protection. It was taken for granted that environmental problems existed exclusively in the capitalist countries, not in socialist China. After 1973 China started to build up her environmental institutions and policies that means environmental issues were put on the political agenda since then. In an earlier article written by Lin Gan (1993) he briefly discussed the evolution of Chinese environmental policies. He divided the whole development process into five phases: 1949-1957 No Environmental Policy; 1958-1965 Massive Environmental Movements; 1966-1977 Environmental Institutional Build-up; 1978-1989 Environmental

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Management and Law Enforcement; 1990 afterwards Initiation of Global Environmental Policy (Lin Gan ,1993) A recent article about Chinese environmental policies written by Pei and Zhou (2004) simply ignored the period of 1949 to 1972 with the presumption that there was no official environmental concern in China then. After 1972 according to Pei and Zhou the evolution of China's environmental policy has a close relationship with strategic transformation of ideology or some significant events. The development process can be divided into three stages. (Pei and Zhou, 2004) 1972 to 1982 the foundation stage when China started to make her first environmental laws and governmental environmental protection agencies. Some initial principles of environmental protection were first mentioned during that period of time. 1982 to 1989 was the second stage, environmental policies and institutions had further development accompanied by economic reforms. When it comes to the 1990s some significant changes appeared in environmental policies, and environmental policy making and enforcement tended to be improved. This period is what they call the stage of reform and improvement. No matter what method is used to divide the development of Chinese environmental policies and institutions into phases, it seems that environmental policies and institutions changes in China were influenced by some important events and maybe movements.

### **1949-1973: Environmental Issues Were Far From the Political Views**

No matter how serious, environmental issues did not enter into political affairs from the founding of New China in 1949 to the first national conference on environmental protection in 1973. The government even forbade the discussion of environmental issues. This 24-year period may be categorized into three phases as follows:

The initial stage of the founding of PRC (1949-1957) environmental problems were in certain ways very serious at the founding of the PRC. Key environmental problems were water and soil loss and erosion by deforestation through expansion of plantations, and industrial pollution in big cities. Those environmental problems were locally distributed due

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to the smaller scale of both the population and industrial production. The new Chinese government was not capable of paying much attention to national environmental problems as there was great pressure to heal the wounds from the long period war and re-building the economy. There were few specific institutions, laws, or regulations to protect the environment. “Temporary Sanitary Standards on Industry and Company Formation” issued by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Construction in 1956, and “The People’s Republic of China Compendium for Water and Soil Conservation” promulgated by the State Council in 1957 were among these first few documents. Improving basic facilities for new urban development, constructing water conservancy, preventing water and soil loss through forestation, utilizing waste, and improving environmental hygiene are in part covered in these related laws and regulations. (Luo and Wang, 1995) Environmental problems were also “solved” through mass movements (Gan, 1993) in Mainland China at that time, but not through regulative methods. Some achievements were made in the early days of the new China can be attributed to the activities of citizens in implementing the newly-issued policies under the influence of the mass media. Environmental issues were not relatively problematic so most political leaders paid little attention to them.

“The Great Leap Forward” started in 1958. Mao Zedong believed that it would take an intolerably long time to make underdeveloped mainland China strong enough to protect itself if the conventional development path was followed. He and his colleagues established a set of risky policies that intended to change China into a powerful country overnight. The policy set impossibly high goals, but citizens set out to achieve them as the best as they could. Economic construction at an unprecedented scale was carried out all over the country, often at great expense to the environment. Small steel plants and industrial companies boomed all over the country under the policy of “Mass Movement for Economic Development.” In 1958 alone, over 600,000 steel smelting plants, 4,000 power stations, 9,000 cement works and 80,000 rural facilities plants were built. By 1959 there were over 60,000 industrial companies. The urbanized population increased from 90 million in 1957 to 130 million in 1960. (Huan et al, 1989) This zealous and arbitrary development resulted in extreme ecological destruction and environmental degradation. (Gan, 1993) This

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development was unaccompanied by planning and management, or by measures necessary for pollution prevention. The limited laws and regulations that had been issued for environmental and resource protection were fully discarded. Toxic waste gas, water and residues were senselessly discharged without any controls or treatment; forest resources became depleted. Few people realized how unreasonable the actions were, and even if they did were unable to complain. (Luo and Wang, 1995)

The Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976, was a mistake in politics, economics, and culture. It also resulted in a catastrophe for the environment and natural resources. Laws and regulations relevant to environmental and resource conservation were either ignored or criticized as the product of capitalism and revisionism. Environmental problems were taken for granted as creations of capitalist countries, so socialist China by definition should have none. Several accidents caused serious pollution during this period beyond the public's knowledge. (Luo and Wang, 1995) Serious water pollution occurred in Dalian and Beijing in 1972. Wildlife suffered and human health was damaged, but most people did not hear about these incidents until the late 1980s. (Gu, 1997)

The period from 1949 to 1973 endured with no national institutions specifically focused on environmental and natural resources management, and no laws specifically aimed at regulating social behavior towards the environment. Environmental issues were not politically accepted. Scientific research was a servant to politics. The Cultural Revolution delayed the emergence of an environmental management in mainland China by at least 15 years. The result was a missed opportunity to address birth control and to coordinate the relationship among population, economic development and the environment. Great pressure from China's huge population has existed since then. The population increased from 500 million in 1949 to 800 million in 1972, creating a massive population bubble which will sustain the population peak until the middle of 21st Century. (Huan et al, 1989) Population load will become a limiting factor influencing the development of the economy, and a dominant factor with impact on environmental quality and the ecological systems.

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### **1973-1983 Politics Start to Incorporate Environmental Issues**

This period began with the First National Conference on Environmental Protection in 1973 and ended with the enactment of the Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China in 1983. Environmental protection was initiated and received preliminary recognition from a political viewpoint. The country's leaders had to take environmental issues into consideration for several reasons. Population pressures began exceeding the carrying capacity of some local environments. Furthermore the chaotic operation of the country for 20 years, especially during the Cultural Revolution, directly and indirectly led to ecological degradation, resource depletion and environmental pollution, which in turn harmed economic development. It is fortunate that China's government sent a delegation to the First Human Environment Conference held at Stockholm in 1972, with the support of former Premier Zhou Enlai. The group of more than 20 delegates represented important central governmental ministries. At the conference they heard tales of environmental degradation from elsewhere in the world, and saw that China was suffering from similar environmental problems. (Luo and Wang, 1995) This period may be divided into an initiation phase and an operational phase.

Initiation phase, 1973 to 1978: The first National Conference on Environmental Protection was held from the 5th to 20th August 1973. It was at this conference that environmental pollution and ecological destruction were firstly officially accepted, and the public first heard officials consider that China might be environmentally stressed. The conference marked the first time that environmental issues were considered not just economic problems, but with a very important political affair as well. The first official document specifically concerning environmental protection "Several Regulations on Environmental Protection and Improvement" was enacted and implemented in 1973. The National Planning Committee (a principle administrative institution in China's planned economic system) itself issued a document dealing with environmental planning. Revolutionary Committees at all levels were required to put environmental improvement into their daily routine work. The Leading Group of Environmental Protection of the State Council was set up in 1974, the first

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environmental protection institution founded by the central government in Chinese history. The officials in the institution were composed of directors or vice directors of the ministries of planning, industry, communication, water conservancy and health. (SEPA, 1997) From that beginning there have been environmental management institutions, environmental research institutes and monitoring stations at central and provincial levels. Although environmental protection began penetrating the range of leaders' concerns, the Cultural Revolution still prevailed so environmental protection was not carried out in a comprehensive, systematic manner. Environmental issues were considered local and resolved in isolation from one another. (Luo and Wang, 1995)

Actual environmental quality was further deteriorating during this period of time. Industrial pollution occurred mainly in large cities during the Great Leap Forward. However, urban development and industrial distribution were in chaos throughout China's cities so pollution spread broadly. For example, the amount of atmospheric dust in the air surpassed 400 tons per square kilometer in most cities; the underground water in 41 of 44 cities was polluted, and water in 9 cities was seriously polluted and undrinkable. The area of water and soil loss rose to 1.53 million square meters from 1.16 million square meters at the founding of PRC. This extent of soil erosion was equivalent to the loss of 1 centimeter of top soil from all arable land in the country. The loss of nutrients was equivalent to all the fertilizer production of China in a year. The eroded area in the Loess Plateau accounted for over 80 percent of this total eroded area, with the Yangzi River accounting for the rest. The total capacity of reservoirs in China fell by one-quarter due to siltation. The largest fresh-water lake Dongting shrank 30 percent in size. Herbicides and pesticides polluted about 33 million hectares of land, and 40 billion kilograms of grain were left inedible. A net increase of 200 million people occurred from 1973-1978. (Huan et al, 1989) Natural resources such as farming land, forests, meadows and fresh water became overused, and the shortage of resources was continually exacerbated by the relentless increase in the population.

Operational Phase (1978-1983): With the Cultural Revolution ending in 1978, great changes took place in the social and political environment in mainland China. Chaotic political

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affairs gave way to economic development. Especially after the implementation of the policy of reform and open to the outside world, great social progress was achieved in all spheres in China. Environmental problems, which had a direct impact on socio-economic improvement, gained a place in legitimate political and economic realm.

The Updated Constitution of People's Republic of China enacted in 1978 stipulates: The state protects and improves the living environment and the ecological environment, and prevents and remedies pollution and other public hazards...The state ensures the rational use of natural resources and protects rare animals and plants. The appropriation and damage of natural resources by any organization or individual by whatever means is prohibited. (SEPA, 1997) These statements laid a sound foundation for the construction of a system of laws for environmental protection.

The Communist Party added environmental protection to its scope of work. On 31 December 1978, the Central Committee of the Communist Party praised the document entitled "Report about Environmental Protection" issued by the State Council, and pointed out that elimination of pollution and protection of the environment should be among the most important parts of socialist construction and modernization.(Qu, 1992) The Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China (trial) was enacted by the Eleventh Plenary of the Fifth National People's Congress in September 1979. (SEPA, 1997) From then on, a series of laws on environmental protection came into legislative enactment. Environmental protection became incorporated into the daily routine of the government at different levels. In April 1981, the State Council proposed A Decision on Environmental Protection During the Period of Modulation of the National Economy and required governments at all levels to treat environmental issues as key tasks among conventional affairs. (SEPA, 1997)

In summary, from 1973 to 1978, the increasing emergence of environmental pollution damaged socio-economic development, forcing the state to begin recognizing and addressing these issues; during the 1970s, increasing environmental awareness worldwide

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drove the Chinese government to consider environmental issues and to take action to stop environmental decline. During this period, national institutions and management networks targeted at environmental protection were established, and legislative work began to have effects. Decision-makers paid more attention to the effects of the environment and resources on social development. However, environmental issues had just begun to be taken into account; they still had not been elevated to the level of important political affairs. In the meantime, new environmental problems arose due to misunderstanding of the complexity of environmental issues. For example, a new policy carried out in the countryside -the “contract responsibility system” which linked incomes to output- led to uncontrolled deforestation in order to create more farmland. A similar problem in the industrial sector provided unintentional incentives for companies to emit untreated wastes, so and industrial pollution increased dramatically. (Qu, 1992)

### **1983-1992: Environment Gain Political Significance but Deterioration Continues in Economic Rapid Growth**

At the Second National Conference on Environmental Protection held in December 1983, the State Council announced that environmental protection is a strategic task in the socialist construction of China’s modernization, and a basic national policy. (SEPA, 1997) This became the second basic national policy after family planning. The extent of attention paid to environmental protection by the Central Committee of Communist Party (CCCCP) and Central Government fundamentally increased. Environmental protection as a basic national policy was written into most important documents promulgated by the CCCC and Central Government, becoming an important part of the policies of economic and social development between 1984 and 1992. For example, environmental protection was taken as an important goal in reform and construction of the country both in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth National Congresses of the CCCC, and was included in the 7th and the 8th Five-Year Social and Economic Development Plans. All governmental reports have dealt with environmental protection as a necessary component since 1984. (Chen, 1998)

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During this period environmental protection legislation was basically completed. The Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China was officially passed and enacted by the National People's Congress in December 1989. Besides the Constitution and the Basic Law of Environmental Protection, China enacted and promulgated 12 special laws on environmental protection, 22 administrative decrees issued by the State Council, 26 regulations issued by National Environmental Protection Agency, over 1000 local laws, and 263 items of National Environmental Standards. In addition, China signed and acceded to twenty nine international treaties. (SEPA, 1997)

Environmental issues were fully recognized politically and environmental protection policy was well established and publicized, but resolution of environmental problems was quite limited. The reasons are of course complex, but a partial answer may be found in the following outlines: Both environmental protection and economic development were important in political affairs, but the latter was dominant and often inconsistent with environmental protection. As a result, influential actions for environmental protection were not implemented, but rather given modification service. Environmental protection was overpowered by continuously expanding economic incentives. The enforcement of laws on environmental protection was not as good as intended. Many laws were full of contradictions and lacked systematic foresight. The distribution of benefits among interest groups, between present and coming generations were not well studied. With the great changes in social structure brought about by reform policies, the central government could not control adequately of the lower level governmental bodies, so the legislative reach was not far enough. Environmental considerations were often absent from economic decision-making. Scientific knowledge about how nature operates and how environmental issues arise could not be taken into account when a decision related to the environment was made. (Zhang, 1994)

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## **1992-Present: Environmental Concerns Strengthened but Intrinsic Social Mechanism**

### **Hinders**

Although the Act on Construction of Three Gorges Project was passed at the Fifth Plenary of the Seventh National People's Congress in 1992, disagreement with the project has continued until the present. The controversy aroused public environmental concern which had greater impact on political affairs than before. When the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in 1992, the Chinese government pushed environmental issues in relation to economic and political affairs.

Environmental degradation and resource shortage became more serious and limited the development of China's economy. Economic development became more dependent on product exports, which forced exporters in China to obey international conventions about green production. China is seeking a sustainable development path suitable for its national situation. China will never have the heritage of natural resources of other nations, and until now has followed the "pollute first, clean up later" trend familiar to all nations. China is not able to restore the degraded environment through huge investment and high technology fixes. Under these circumstances, sustainable development is the only appropriate path to follow in the future. (Qu, 1992) Essential measures for integration of environmental protection into economic development have been taken. Regulations on the Conservation and Management of Terrestrial Wild Animals and Criterion for the Capturing and Hunting of National Protected Animals were issued by the State Council in 1993; two developments in the legislation indicate that economic means can assist in the conservation of wildlife in China. The Chinese Association of Environmental Protection Industry was established, showing that the government will encourage environmental protection through new industrial policy. The Chinese Foundation for Environmental Protection was established as well. During this period environmental publicity is used to good ends. (SEPA, 1997) The names of 3000 key industrial companies were released. These companies discharge over sixty percent of all equivalent pollutant loads yet make up only four percent of all industrial companies. (Zhang, 1994)

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New progress has been made in environmental legislation and enforcement. The Environmental Protection Committee was founded at the First Plenary of the Eighth National People's Congress, which established its special position in national legislative work. (SEPA, 1997) The enforcement of environmental laws has become more powerful and influential. Several nation-wide inspections specific to environmental law enforcement have been organized since 1993, several high-profile criminal incidents have been publicized, serving as a warning for some companies and individuals who attempt to make profits without care for the environment.

More funds and support for activities sponsored by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be offered by the government. The ability of the public and environmental NGOs to influence decision making regarding to environmental issues is increasing. Reports and comments on environmental issues in the mass media publicize environmental news. The well-known TV series *Jiaodian Fangtan* (Focus on Hot News) and *Jingji Ban Xiaoshi* (Economic Thirty Minutes) give more space for environmental forums. Increasing numbers of environmental NGOs have been set up and play a greater role in environmental protection activities. Governments at different levels are more positive in response to what NGOs have done. For example, a journalist noted that deforestation in northwestern Yunnan extremely damaged the habitats of the Yunnan Snub-nosed Monkey (*Rhinopithecus bieti*), and several environmental NGOs such as Friends of Nature and Action For Greening made efforts to publicize the event. The central and local government soon engaged in measures to stop habitat destruction. (Chinese Environmental Daily, 1999, 10, 2)

However, environmental protection in China is still unsatisfactory and far from resolved. From an objective view, environmental issues are complex, comprehensive, and interrelated, and China has only a short history in dealing with environmental issues though modern legal and administrative approaches. At the same time a weak citizen environmental awareness and the extreme pressure of a huge population needs always to be taken into account. The following issues are the new problems emerged in the 1990s that hinder the

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resolution of Chinese environmental degradation.

The government in China is both player and rule maker. It not only initiates and manages economic development, but controls and administers environmental protection as well. It is a great challenge to deal with environmental issues using the mechanisms of central planning in today's market economic system. China has adopted a quasi-market economic system to develop its society. Within such a system, adhering to the rule of law is the only way to achieve economic and environmental results. But China is still relying mainly on administrative systems to protect its environment, and legislative means have not yet played a very strong role. With reform advancing rapidly, administrative means will be decisively weaker soon, but the legislative method will not necessarily be strong enough to replace the previous system. There may be a partial vacuum for governing environmental protection. Understanding nature and the interaction among environmental factors and human activities is fundamental to taking action for environmental protection. But scientific research on the environment is not well developed, resulting in poor decision-making. (Qu, 1999) A key characteristic of China's social development is that decisions about economic and environmental affairs are made by political leaders in local areas or by the institutions that those leaders direct. This means that the achievement of environmental protection depends to a definite extent on the personal interest and commitment of a local leader. Only through public participation based on solid scientific understanding can positive decisions on environmental protection be assured. (Interview with Fu Tao, Appendix)

### **3.3 The Role of Civil society in China's Environmental Management**

Social organizations and the mass public have some influence on China's environmental management. It is stressed in the Decision on Certain Problems of Environmental Protection by the State Council that the public participation mechanism should be set up so as to bring the role of the social groups into play. Also, the public should be encouraged to participate in environmental protection, report and expose various behaviors breaking the environmental

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laws and regulations. It is also stipulated in the Law of Environmental Protection that all the units and individuals are responsible for the environmental protection and also entitled to report and accuse the unit and individual polluting or damaging environment. In revising the Law of Water Pollution Prevention and Control, it has integrated the stipulation that the environmental impact report should incorporate the comments by the units and residents in the location of the construction project. The law of environmental impact assessment stipulates that departments responsible for planning, which may create possible environmental problems and involve the public's environmental interests, should hold appraisal meetings or hearings or apply other methods to solicit opinion from related institutions, experts and the public, on the draft environmental impact reports. (SEPA, 1999) It illustrates that the state attaches importance to the public's environmental interests and values their participation in and supervision of environmental protection policies.

### **The Ways for Public Participation**

For the behaviors polluting or damaging the environment, the social groups and citizens can generally use the ways such as prompt stopping the behavior, reporting to the mass media, administrative complaint and justice litigation, and no matter which way taken, the control of illegal behavior against the environment is effective. The public can also convey their opinions and suggestion on environment through the people's congress and the political consultative conference as well as the local authorities (e.g. resident commission and village resident commission) at all levels.

Among the ways, the most common ones are the letters, visits and complaint reports from the public. In the environmental protection institutions at various levels, there generally establishes an office of letter complaint and visit which exclusively handles the public opinions and suggestions. Through the office, some emergent environmental incidents and environmental disputes can be solved with the guidance and intervention by the upper-level environmental institutions; on the other hand, the decision-makers of the environmental

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departments also take the letters from the public as an important information source to learn the actual situation. Also, this information is complementary to the information from the normal sources (e.g. environmental statistics and environmental report) so as to help bringing about the policy based on the accurate information. (Qu, 1999) In recent years, there are averagely 90,000-100,000 letters, 60,000 visits and 8000 proposals on environmental matters per annum, amongst which, letters from the developed region account for a large proportion while the under developed region accounts for less. For example, the number of letters and visits happened in Beijing is 4.7 per 10,000 persons while Shannxi and Yunan Provinces, the numbers are respectively 0.7 and 0.4 per 10,000 persons. (Qin, 2001) If the role played by the social groups and individuals in the implementation of the environmental policies could be called as civil mechanism, this civil mechanism will be much more influential.

The supervision by the media is another important way for the public participation in the implementation of the environmental policies. With the reports by the news media, some environmental problems attracted the attention of the governments which is also a way of pushing the governments. The Chinese government consecutively organized the pollution control initiatives in Huaihe River and Taihu Lake in 1997 and 1998, in which, the news media played an important role. Today, exposure in the news media of the environmental problems is not less influential than the administrative instruments in terms of environmental management and control and its impact is still on the rise. At the same time, it is also conducive to raising the environmental awareness of the whole society. (Song, 1997)

In order to bring the role of the supervision by the mass media into full play and also raise the public environmental awareness, State Environmental Protection Agency together with the Committee of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of the National People's Congress, Department of Publicity of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China jointly launched the initiative of Chinese Environmental Protection Century Tour since 1993. With the participation of more than 750 news units from the central government and more than 40 provinces and municipalities, Century Tour identifies the major subject each year in line with the national environmental situation such as protecting the water for life and

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combating the air pollution etc. The news units conducted activities focusing on the subject as well as the local key environmental work. Over the last few years, there have been more than 6,000 reporters taking part in this initiative and over 48,000 reports brought about which has facilitated the solving of an array of hard environmental problems, such as the ecological damage by the coal exploitation in the triangle area of Shanxi, Shannxi and Inner Mongolia Region and the environmental pollution by the gold exploitation in Xiaoqinling. The report of Invisible City from the Satellite (a survey of environmental pollution in Benxi City by a reporter from Xinhua News Agency) helped the launching of pollution treatment in Benxi City which is now under the blue sky after 7 years of efforts; and after the exposure of the pollution problem in Baiyangding, the local authorities and people have now brought back the clean water after 6 years of struggle. (Chinese Environment Daily, 1999, 10, 2) All these are the successful examples of promoting the environmental protection through the supervision of mass media, with its publicity and education.

According to a survey conducted jointly by SEPA and the Ministry of Education in 1998 on the public environmental awareness nationwide, 79% of the public access to the environmental information through the news media such as TV and radio. Also the news media are making further efforts in making reports on environment. According to the survey of 76 newspapers conducted by the Friend of Nature consecutively from 1995 to 1997 across the nation, the environmental awareness and participation awareness of the leading news media raised dramatically. In 1995 there were 1358 reports on environment for each news paper and in 1996, it rose to 2508, and 2903 in 1997. (Cui, 1999)

### **Volunteer Participation and Non-Governmental Organizations**

Volunteers taking part in the environmental protection activity is a fashion over the last decades. Together with the Ministry of Railway, SEPA launched the activity of clearing the white pollution along the railways. In which over 200,000 youth volunteers were involved and 23 million tons of wastes were cleared. Organized by SEPA and the All-China Women

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Federation, the activity of Woman, Home and Environment called for 1 million women to take part in the environmental protection. With their unique social role, women have facilitated the all walks of life to concern about the environment. Together with the Chinese Society of Science and Technology, SEPA organized 100 Biological Activities for the Chinese Youths which involved 20 million middle and primary school students to attend the science publicity and hand-making with science and technology. (Zhong, 1998) These activities cultivated a large number of young environmental activists. Together with the State Tourism Administration, SEPA organized the Eco-tourism activity to train the tourism managers by elaborating the correlation between tourism development and environmental protection. Thus, the environmental behavior of the tourism managers were regulated and through them to convey the environmental conception to each of the tourists. SEPA also together with the central committee of the Youth League launched the initiative of Hand in Hand, to Pick Up a Hope and Protect the Big Earth With Small Actions. In which the children nationwide were called for to donate the money from the sale of recyclable material to help setting up the Environmental Protection Primary School, and the first one has been set up in Jiangxi Province in 1998. (Chinese Environment Daily, 1999, 10, 2)

In recent years, there has come out a large number of non-governmental environmental protection organizations and environmental volunteers. As a survey conducted by the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau, for example, there are over 50 associations affiliated to the Society of Science and Technology which conducted environmental sciences research all throughout the year. Also, among 36 colleges and universities in Beijing, 13 colleges and universities has set up 15 environmental groups which have been very active on the campus and in the society to conduct various environmental activities. (Beijing Daily, 2002, 6, 1) The NGOs such as Friend of Nature, Global Village and Green Home have been in wide contact with people from all aspects of life to clean the white pollution, promote the waste classifications, propose saving the trees by refraining the use of postcards, call for green consumption as well as organize the afforestation, and all these efforts have received positive response.

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## **Chapter 4 Development of Chinese Environmental NGOs**

### **4.1 From Quasi-Nongovernmental to Grassroots Organizations**

#### **The “GONGOs”**

Environmental NGOs are relative newcomers of mainland China, with the first organization formed in 1994 (15 years after the first quasi-nongovernmental groups was founded). Up to 2001 there are approximately 40 domestic environmental groups registered with the government, but since the registration process often can take years, there are most likely many more NGOs operating while waiting for official legal status or simply implementing projects as nonprofit corporations. The number of individuals undertaking independent environmental activity at the local level is possibly quite high. (Turner and Wu, 2001)

It is often regarded that there is a virtual absence of civic organizations during the collective period (1950-1978), when the state take over each domains of the Chinese society. Peter Ho in his article wrote:

“Those institutions that were established in the later years and seemed ‘non-governmental’, such as the Youth League, academic societies and trade unions, were in fact the state’s outposts in the society”(Ho, 2001:902)

Before the reform period began in 1979, all environmental organizations were part of the Chinese government. Most of the staff people in these organizations belonged to government agencies, and all funds were from the state. Beginning in the early 1980s, the central government devolved greater administrative and financial authority to lower-level governments. In this period of institutional reform, the Chinese government also opened political opportunities for NGOs to be created. Some environmental organizations created by the government itself was certified and registered with a government agency to work as independent and legal social organizations.(Ho, 2001) Such social organizations are defined

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as Government Organized NGOs (GONGOs) in China.

Among such organizations the Chinese Environmental Science Institute (founded in 1979) is China's earliest nonprofit organization that carries out environmental activities. The establishment of the Chinese Environmental Science Institute was intended to provide expert suggestions for the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) the preexistence of the State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). In the 1980s, China had a closer relationship with the international community than the past a few decades, during this period of time many bilateral, multilateral and unofficial financial aid for environmental protection could be received, however, in most cases the receiver of these supports are required to be a non-governmental agency. In order to get these assistances government started to set up new quasi-governmental environmental organizations, such as the Chinese Wildlife Association founded in 1983 lead by the National Forestry Bureau. One major motivation for the setting up of Chinese Wildlife Association was to receive international financial aid to protect pandas in southwest China. In the 1990's especially after China's attendance of the 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development in Rio, government established more quasi-nongovernmental environmental organizations, such as the Sustainable Development Association and China Environmental Protection Foundation. These newly founded GONGOs have some features compared to the earlier environmental organizations. First they receive less funding from the government and could have relatively independent decision making. For example their recruitment of organization staff does not require official procedure as in the governmental agencies. Second they are highly professional; they are formed to deal with new environmental problems and often to carry out one or few tasks in international cooperation of environmental programs. For instance the UNDP's Capacity Building for the Rapid Commercialization of Renewable Energy 5 years' program played a critical role in the establishment of the Chinese Renewable Energy Industrial Association. (Wu, 2002)

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**Table 4.1, National Level Environmental GONGOs**

Name	Date of Establishment	Associated Governmental Agency
Chinese Environmental Science Institute	1979	NEPA
Chinese Wildlife Association	1983	National Forestry Bureau
Chinese Sustainable Development Association	1992	Department of Science and Technology
Environmental Protection Foundation	1993	SEPA
Beijing Energy Efficiency Center	1993	Energy Center in National Planning Agency
Environmental Education Center of the SEPA	1996	SEPA
Chinese Renewable Energy Industrial Association	1999	Department of Construction

“Governmental Organized Non-governmental Organizations” is itself a paradoxical name. They are peculiar phenomenon of the Chinese social and economic reforms. In this thesis they are not treated as NGOs. Nevertheless, they did played and are still playing some unofficial role in China’s environmental protection but their management and operation are to some extent intervened by governmental agencies. Western environmental NGOs normally do not receive any governmental intervention in their own administrations, which means NGOs should be highly independent even though Chinese environmental NGOs do not have the same origin developed from the environmental movements as their western counterparts. Environmental NGOs in this thesis refer to those civic social organizations that “grow from the grassroots” without any governmental official interventions.



### **Emergence of NGOs**

Historically Chinese civil society is rather weak, it has many reasons one important reason is that Confucianism advocate a hierarchical society with a strong central government which means that power should be centralized. This mindset influenced the Chinese political culture for thousands of years.(Interview with Fu Tao, Appendix) Similar to the birth of quasi-nongovernmental environmental organizations, the emergence of China's environmental NGOs may also be traced back to some international "pressure" or influence, but this time the initiator was changed to some environmentally "enlightened" intellectuals.

China had no environmental NGOs before 1994. When Beijing launched her first bid for the Olympic Games in 1993 and was asked by officials from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), our delegation did not even know how to answer the question whether or not there were environmental NGOs in China. The first environmental NGO in China was formally registered on March 31, 1994. This was the Academy for Green Culture, affiliated to the non-governmental Academy for Chinese Culture. It is now called Friends of Nature (FON) for short. Liang Congjie, a descendant of Liang Qichao (a prominent reformer of the late Qing Dynasty) and a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), is the President of this organization. (Wang, 2002)

Another reason for the emergence of environmental NGOs was that different levels of governmental bodies focused on economic development, at the same time they gave up some management responsibilities, withdrew from some social services, and that gave different Chinese NGOs some opportunities. The reason for NGOs' emergence is to fill in those blanks that were withdrawn by the government. Governmental agencies would like to support NGOs even though this support may only be rhetoric or they might just want to have a good political image. In environmental issues NGOs are relatively active. One reason is that environmental protection has already become the concern of the whole society. Last year the new EIA law

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was promulgated, it urged public participation in the environmental impact assessment in construction projects. The SEPA at an earlier stage knew international environmental movements, so they might be more flexible to NGOs. They might accept suggestions from some social organizations. (Interview with Fu Tao, Appendix)

More environmental NGOs have been set up after 1994. These have included Global Village of Beijing and Green Home which were set up around 1996. Together with Friends of Nature, they have become China's three main pioneering environmental NGOs. According to news released by the Sino-US environmental NGOs forum in November of 2001, there were by then over 2,000 environmental NGOs in China and millions of participants. Those involved become volunteers working towards environmental protection throughout China. They spend their time and money in reclaiming wasteland, observing birds, planting trees and protecting endangered animals. They also work to establish green communities. (Wang, 2002)

When China made its bid for the 2008 Olympic Games, leaders of these three environmental NGOs, including Liang Congjie and Liao Xiaoyi were appointed as environmental advisers to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee (BOBICO). They impressed the International Olympic Committee members with their advanced ideas and sound practices in environmental protection

## **4.2 Functional Conditions of Environmental NGOs in China**

### **Legal and Financial Circumstances**

In the area of policy, the two new regulations that need to be discussed are the 1998 "Social Organization Registration Management Rules" and the "The Temporary Regulations for the Registration and Management of Non-Industrial Enterprise Citizen Run Work Units." (SEPA, 1999) The opportunities for the development of an autonomous NGO in China are limited by highly restrictive rules for associational activity. The registration process involves three conditions that limit the nature and range of NGOs' activities. First, all organizations must be

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sponsored by a government, party or mass organization department in a relevant field. This condition seriously hampers innovation and creativity in the NGO sector. Second, only one NGO of one type is allowed to register at each administrative level, which constrains the diversity of the NGO sector. For example, if there was already a quasi-nongovernmental organization doing educational work on coastal waters, an NGO wishing to register to do similar work would not be able to get approval from a registration management organization (usually a government agency). This regulation limits the number of civil society environmental organizations and constitutes a major hindrance to the development of established environmental organizations. One positive trend is that, following the increased devolution of authority to lower-level governments; some local governments are giving official and semi-official environmental organizations greater opportunities to develop. Third, NGOs are not allowed to operate outside the region in which they are registered. Since the competences of the Ministry of Civil Affairs departments are restricted to their respective regions, this condition is designed to prevent NGOs from spreading outside the departments' sphere of influence. Another possible explanation for the second and third conditions is the government's intention to limit competition between social organizations. (Ho, 2001; Wang, 2002; Interview with Fu Tao, 2004 Appendix; Young, 2001)

Registered NGOs must submit an annual report to the sponsoring government or party department regarding their activities. Furthermore, they have to undergo an annual investigation by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The Ministry has significant legal and political power over NGOs. According to the "Regulations for Registration and Management of Social Organizations", it can issue warnings, demand organizational changes and even cancel an NGO's registration if the NGO "diverts from its original objectives". (Young, 2001)

NGOs that manage to register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs either have strong governmental backing or some link to the government or the party. They are often established by influential individuals and funded from various sources, such as personal savings of the leaders, some donations from members, and grants from international foundations and NGOs. For example, China's first environmental NGO, Friends of Nature, was founded by Liang

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Congjie, a member of the People's Consultative Congress. Liao Xiaoyi, a former researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, established Global Village of Beijing in 1996.(Lee,2003) However, registering an NGO with the Ministry of Civil Affairs is very difficult even for influential individuals. In particular, it is hard to find a government or party department that is willing to sponsor a new NGO. According to the social organizations law, a sponsoring department can theoretically be held responsible for misconduct on the part of an NGO under its authority, which makes officials very cautious about approving registrations. The single biggest reason why NGO leaders give up trying to register their organizations is difficulty in finding a sponsoring government or party department. Although being a privileged person in Chinese politics, when enlisting Friends of Nature, Liang Congjie waited for a year without receiving any response from the National Environmental Protection Administration because NEPA was not willing to sponsor Friends of Nature. (United States Embassy Beijing, 2000)

Faced with a very difficult process to register a new NGO, many NGO leaders choose other ways of establishing their organizations. Some found a company instead and register with the Bureau of Industry and Commerce as enterprises, which is easier than registering as a "social organization". Other NGOs have been able to establish themselves as organizations associated with universities, commercial enterprises or other institutions. They have taken advantage of an important exception to the requirement of registration concerning groups that can be considered "internal" organizations belonging to an existing institution. (United States Embassy Beijing, 2003) For example, the "NGO Research Center" is a subordinate body of the School of Public Policy and Management of Tsinghua University.

Non-registered NGOs in China face many problems. Besides their uncertain legal status, the main constraint is the lack of funding. Large amounts of Chinese NGOs' funding come from international sources. (Interview with FON, GVB, Appendix)The principal reason for this distorted funding situation is China's lack of an institutional structure for charitable contributions. There are no government incentives for donations, and street collections are prohibited without official permission. Besides, when NGOs working in areas such as

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environmental education receive funds from the government, the money is allotted to a specific project and cannot be used for salaries or other expenses. Scarce funding greatly complicates the ability of NGOs to attract quality employees. In addition, Chinese NGOs suffer from a lack of management skills, technical information and clear goals, as well as from weak organizational structures. Another serious problem for some NGOs is the fact that their success has depended heavily on their influential leaders. (Lee, 2003)

There are a number of university student associations working in the area of environmental protection and education, such as China Green Student Forum, Green Stone City, Tsinghua University Green association, Environmental Volunteers Association at Sichuan University and Green Team at Lanzhou University. Students and faculty in universities and professional institutes usually establish these organizations. The university administration, rather than government bureaus, grants approval for student run environmental social organizations. One example is Tsinghua University's Green Association, established in April 1995. Today this group has a membership of 500 students who come from a variety of degree programs. Similar to other student groups in China, Green Association carries out most of its activities within the university. Student green group activities have included establishing student environmental photography contests, organizing environmental information lectures, and campaigning to abolish the use of Styrofoam and disposable chopsticks in university cafeterias. Such student associations depend on three types of funding sources: the university, membership fees, and donations from public and local industries. University environmental groups are developing quickly and have grown in number from a handful in the mid-1980s to nearly 120 today. They also have spread from a few major cities to universities in most provinces. After student members graduate, they bring to society a greater environmental awareness. The impact these new graduates will have on the development of the environmental movement in China should not be underestimated. (Jin, 2001)

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### **Challenges and Capacity Building**

The legal and financial circumstance that Chinese environmental NGOs face bring them many difficulties, and they also have some challenges. Some challenges might be perceived as internal while others come from the society.

China's environmental NGOs lack influence. Commercial activities like logging and trapping which run counter to the interests of environmental protection are well established. Liang Congjie felt strongly about this when interviewed. Recently FON received a message from members in Nanjing. They were told a department of Jiangsu Province had enclosed a site in the Forest of Zijinshan Mountain in order to build a new hotel in the eastern suburbs. There are nearly 60,000 trees within this development area. Many are long established and over a hundred years old. Liang Congjie reported this immediately to the authorities but the reply was only that they were building a hotel on abandoned burial land. They even said: "no trees will be cut down". But pictures e-mailed to Liang Congjie by members in Nanjing told the real story. Building materials like cement and bricks were piled high in the dense forest and the site designated for hotel building had been almost fully enclosed. (Wang, 2002)

"They have no respect for NGOs so they just say anything at all," said this member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference with indignation, "However, compared with some who have no channel available to report malpractice, I am the lucky one." (Wang, 2002)

Environmental NGOs need to set and develop clear goals in order to strengthen their organizational capacity. NGOs should develop a good reputation through efficient work and not simply depend on propaganda. In short, if an NGO wishes to survive, it will need to professionalize. Some successful groups have been the Beijing Environmental and Development Institute and SNISD (See. Chapter 5 in detailed information), both of which have their own professional staffs. These kinds of organizations will give strength to the developing nonprofit green sector in China. Public participation is entering a new phase in

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China's environmental protection sector. Formal and informal NGOs are not only motivating the public, but also are playing a role in monitoring the government's environmental protection work. This movement shows that environmental protection is not just an area for government agencies or experts, but also an area ready for contributions from a new and growing NGO sector. (Jin, 2001)

The management of nongovernmental environmental organizations is relatively good. Although these groups are independent from government agencies, they already possess skills and systems for management, accounting, and fund generation. Sometimes these groups use inefficient and heavily bureaucratized management methods. Environmental NGOs that developed independent of the state sector often lack proper management skills and experience. Clearly, inefficient management and supervising systems hinder the development of green NGOs in China. (Jin, 2001)

### **Relationship with the State**

Mainland Chinese environmental NGOs do not stage protests against the government or factories. Instead, many Mainland Chinese environmental NGOs have built up cooperative relations with governmental agencies and institutes. These close linkages are not simply due to the requirement that NGOs must have a government "mother-in-law" sponsor, but also because many of the individuals who created environmental NGOs in Mainland China wished to help increase the government's capacity to protect the environment. Some groups work with local governments and citizens to create waste reduction and recycling programs. Large numbers of unregistered groups arise spontaneously to address a local issue in the community. Such groups of loose volunteers often operate quite independently from government, but generally do not aim to challenge government authority. Green student groups have increased from 1 in the mid-1980s to 120 today, which could help to cultivate a growing pool of environmental activists ready to create new civil society organizations over the next decades. (Turner and Wu, 2001)

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Quasi-nongovernmental environmental organizations serve as the state's outposts in the society and therefore they to some extent represent government. In many cases they have a close relationship with environmental NGOs in China. (Ho, 2001) Some of the highly autonomous GONGOs are very supportive of registered and even non-registered NGOs. For example, the Center for Environmental Education and Communication maintains close relationships with major Chinese environmental education NGOs (e.g. Global Village Beijing). Some GONGOs, such as the Beijing Energy Efficiency Center, regularly train members of NGOs. Furthermore, the moral support of GONGOs, e.g. by inviting NGO representatives to national events, has been crucial in legitimizing the work of NGOs, which has facilitated mutual trust building between the public and NGOs. Such cooperative relationships and coordinated projects between GONGOs and NGOs could become an important element of Chinese civil society in the future. GONGOs could provide a bridge between government agencies and local NGOs, as well as between Chinese NGOs and international donors. However, the decrease of government funds for GONGOs represents a problem for the potential cooperation between GONGOs and NGOs. According to Dorit Lehrack, International Senior Advisor at the China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO) in Beijing, many GONGOs are currently struggling for their financial survival and are thus not able to support grassroots NGOs. Instead of cooperation, there could even be increased competition for funds between NGOs and GONGOs in the future. (Wu, 2002)

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## **Chapter 5 Models and Activities of Environmental NGOs in China**

In this chapter I will present empirical information on Chinese environmental NGOs. Because of the numerous numbers of organizations it is almost impossible to offer detailed information on every organization and their activities. The selected organizations presented in this chapter are those to some extent typical and “successful” NGOs in China. It is primarily those activities closely related to their orientations on environmental consciousness-raising that will be illustrated in detail. Most of the information in this chapter came from NGOs’ web-pages and some from interviews.

### **5.1 Sketching the Models of Environmental NGOs in China**

Environmental NGOs are different in all parts of the world and so they are in China. Studies on their organizational differences have been done by many scholars. Mario Diani and Paolo R. Donati (1999) wrote an article about organizational changes in western European environmental groups. In their study, they categorize western European environmental groups into four categories. The Public Interest Lobby which is a kind of a political organization managed by professional staff, with weak participatory inclinations and emphasizes on traditional pressure tactics, comes closest to the conventional interest group. The Participatory Protest Organization with an emphasis on participatory action and subcultural structures combines with a strong inclination to disruptive protest. This model is closest to the classic idea of the decentralized, grassroots social movement organization, prepared to adopt confrontational strategies. The Professional Protest Organization shares with the public interest lobby the emphasis on professional activism and the mobilization of financial resources. However, it includes confrontational tactics, along with more conventional ones. The Participatory Pressure Group is similar to the participatory protest organization, since rank-and-file members and sympathizers are involved in organizational life but the focus is on conventional lobbying techniques rather than protest. (Diani and Donati, 1999) Their typology of environmental groups was based on social movement organizations’ political efficacy and

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their resource mobilization strategies. The first two types of environmental groups are to some extent extreme cases. The Public Interest Lobby is an organization which is highly professionalized and their actions are carried out by political lobby. On the opposite end, The Participatory Protest Organization is non-professional and its actions are mainly public participatory protests. The Professional Protest Organization and the Participatory Pressure Group are organizations fall in between.

The above categorization emphasizes on the organizational features of environmental groups. However, in terms of knowledge making Andrew Jamison has somewhat different categories. His four categories of activism namely Community, Professional, Militant and Personal focus on different types of contributions of environmental activism to the making of green knowledge. In some sense his categories offer a framework of studying actors' orientations in environmental movement. The community environmentalists consist of the primarily decentralized groups that oppose particular cases of environmental destruction and develop alternative initiatives for environmental improvements in their communities. Their work consists mainly of the mobilization of "local" knowledge and experiences. Professional environmentalists are those agenda-setters, who formulate the strategies for the environmental movement as a whole, and who take on the responsibility of representing the broader social and political interest in the environment. Andrew Jamison considers that many of the mainstream environmental NGOs are professional environmentalists. They have employed staffs who do most of the work and the organizations are based on a particular kind of expert competence, such as legal, scientific, administrative, commercial, or educational. Community and professional environmentalists share some common interests in changing environmental policies and affecting political decisions, but their means to achieve their goals are relatively different. However, there are a large number of environmentalists whose main concerns of the environment are more moral or spiritual. Among these actors the militant environmentalists practice their environmental mortality in public while personal environmentalist do it more privately. Militant environmentalists are often inspired by deep ecology, and they have also been influenced by a kind of residual culture such as the anarchist. Their concerns or beliefs are species equality, biocentrism or ecocentrism that place human beings equal with other life

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forms. Personal environmentalists are not as visible; in that they tend to incorporate their moral beliefs into their everyday life. Their contributions to green knowledge making are that they are the major actors who represent a kind of new green culture such as green consumerism. (Jamison, 2003)

The situation in China is different from Western Europe even though there are similarities. As mentioned in Chapter 4 Chinese environmental NGOs do not protest and have a cooperative relationship with the state and at the same time it is very different to see how they are involved in the political process. No matter what they do, Chinese environmental NGOs are relatively less political than environmental groups in Western Europe. It might not be appropriate to categorize Chinese environmental NGOs according to their political efficacy and strategies. But the idea to categorize environmental groups, in this thesis the environmental NGOs, according to their contributions to green knowledge making can be appropriated to study Chinese environmental NGOs. In China the definition of NGOs are quite elastic, it seems that a variety of environmental social groups can be deemed as NGOs and they also name themselves as environmental NGOs. Therefore the author developed his own categories of Chinese environmental NGOs based on the different orientations of NGOs in environmental consciousness-raising in China.

China's environmental NGOs can be categorized in many categories on the bases of the registration status environmental NGOs are categorized as citizen environmental social organizations, citizen nonprofit enterprises, university student organizations and informal individual and volunteer groups. All Chinese environmental NGOs are one type of the above categories, however following this method of categorization the role of environmental NGOs in environmental consciousness-raising is not clearly distinguished.

Environmental NGOs certainly were not established for nothing. Almost all the Chinese Environment NGOs in their missions and goals mentioned that they are endeavored to promote environmental consciousness in the public sphere in the sense that they more or less deem public environmental education as their major task. The reason for this derives from the

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political context they are working in and the strong role of the state in Chinese environmental governance. Such reasons have been discussed in the previous chapters, and the reasons why NGOs themselves think the important role of environmental education in consciousness-raising will be presented in the coming chapters. Sharing similar visions of tasks environmental NGOs have different focuses and orientations. Some try to educate the public by organizing several of participatory activities. Some focus on policy and technology research and development; others provide professional help to the public. In what follows I have chosen to distinguish Chinese environmental NGOs according to their orientations or focuses. Thus I distinguish environmental NGOs between: the Community Learning NGOs, Public Education NGOs, and Professional Advocacy NGOs.

In this chapter each model of Environmental NGOs will be illustrated by some examples. Such examples are those relatively typical and “successful” NGOs in China. However, I am not trying to theorize a typology of Chinese environmental NGOs. Some environmental NGOs might have similar actions with different focuses, these focuses and orientations give them some kind of an identity that could be used to distinguish them. In this way, I think it is easier to understand what they do in relation to environmental consciousness-raising.

## **5.2 Community Learning NGOs**

Community Learning NGOs focus on “green community” building. Such communities are normally small districts in the cities of consist of just several neighborhoods or the streets. Their aim is to tell people how to live environmentally by different means of communicative channels such as participatory activities, TV programs, the Internet etc. Even though their environmental message might be transmitted to large areas their community activities are restricted to the place where they are registered. The earliest and to some extent most successful of such environmental NGOs is the Global Village of Beijing.

Global Village of Beijing (GVB) is an environmental non-profit and non-governmental

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organization, boasting more than 4,000 volunteers nationwide. Liao Xiaoyi, President of GVB, earned a Master degree of Philosophy from Zhongshan University in 1986. After working as a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Liao was a visiting scholar on International Environmental Politics at the University of North Carolina in the United States. Committed to developing environmental education in China, she returned to Beijing to found GVB in 1996. GVB's mission is to help China achieve sustainable development by increasing public awareness and enhancing public participation. (GVB, Website)

Its main functions include producing environmental television program, publishing environmental book series, developing an environmental training center, initiating green communities, organizing public activities such as Earth Day China, Green Olympic and Green Life. GVB uses its international status to fulfill its mission to promote public environmental movement in China. GVB has actively participated in international environmental activities. From 1998 to 2000, GVB was appointed the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) NGO Regional Focal Point and became the Environmental Country Portal, UNEP in 2001. GVB is also member of the Education Committee of IUCN and member of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Journalist League. GVB has been developing an international network promoting partnerships and communication between NGOs, companies and officials by providing forums, newsletters and consultations. GVB also organizes an environmental tour in China that includes briefing on the situation of environmental NGOs in China, a visit to local green communities, and a day trip to GVB's Environmental Training Center in Yanqing. The tour enables visitors to better understand China's environmental conditions and public environmental protection activities. GVB's effort has been internationally recognized and reported widely by international media such as CNN, NHK, Star TV, News Week, and Reuters. (GVB, Website)

Liao Xiaoyi, the leader of GVB, was awarded 2001 Banksia international Award in Australia and 2000 Sophie Prize in Norway. Using the money from the Sophie Prize, GVB has established a Chinese Award "Green Life Award" in order to share the honor with Chinese people and to inspire more citizens to participate in environmental protection in China. (GVB,

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Website)

GVB has organized many community activities among its most influential series is the Green Olympics and Green Life in Beijing City. GVB serves as a consultant to the Beijing Olympic Committee and has been involved in the creation of the “Green Games.” Together with China Charity Federation (CCF), GVB founded the “Green Angel Project” and cooperated with the China Artists Association to host the “Green Olympics Green Picture Exhibition.” GVB developed an environmental training program for Chunshuyuan community and also gave a detailed introduction on Green Communities to members of the International Olympic Committee Evaluation Commission when they visited the site on February 21, 2001. GVB cooperated with the Chinese Consumer Association to initiate the Green Consumption Volunteers Campaign nationwide. In August 2004, GVB organized “Olympic Society-Green Living” campaigns to teach communities, including children, the simple tenets of environmental protection. These campaigns are designed to engage the public in environmental awareness and to encourage participation in community programs to protect and improve the environment. In July 2004, GVB organized the 26 degree Campaign to limit air conditioner use by raising the temperature to 26 degrees Celsius thereby conserving energy and helping to improve the environment in preparation for the 2008 Olympics. (GVB Website)



Picture 1. and 2. Taken from one Green Community

Between April 22, 1996 and March of 2001 GVB has produced three hundred programs for its weekly television series “Time for the Environment” on CCTV-7. After that, GVB’s TV program was broadcasted on CCTV-10 and also chosen by television channels such as Anhui, Fujian and Shanxi for rebroadcast. In recognition of their efforts, the television

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series was twice awarded CCTV's Special Program Prize. In addition to this, GVB also produced a number of programs with an international focus. The TV series "Global Environmental View" draws on the environmental experiences of other countries and helps Chinese people to learn from international experiences and avoid the mistakes made by other nations. (GVB Website)



Picture 3. Time for Environment TV Program

GVB also has a training center in a village for environmental education of students. GVB's Training Center is located 70km outside Beijing in Yanqing County. Including mountains, forests, springs and wetlands, the Training Center covers over 187 hectares of wilderness. As an NGO-managed conservation area, the goal of the center is to provide environmental education, consultation, and training programs to the public in a beautiful, natural environment. Especially for students the Training Center offers an atmosphere of living in a real Chinese rural environment. The hotel rooms are located in the heart of a little village and food is prepared by the villagers themselves. GVB welcomes every group interested in visiting the Training Center and experiencing nature and rural China. (GVB Website)



Picture 4. Hotels of the Training Center of GVB

Another example of more local and not so widely known Community Learning NGO is the Friends of Green Environment of Jiangsu. It was founded in 1998 and located in the city of Nanjing. The establishment of Friends of Green Environment of Jiangsu received varieties of supports by the media companies and the most importantly the local government. They also focus on the construction of green communities. They organized have program such as

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prompting the use of solar heating systems and recycling batteries in different cities of Jiangsu Province. From August 2003 they started a demonstration program in Fuzimiao Street in Nanjing City on classified garbage recycling. 192 families volunteered to participate their program. Saving electricity is another issue they paid attention to. In their “green lighting” program, substitute lights were recommended in many communities. The Yangzi River is running across Jiangsu Province, therefore their activities sometimes include the protection of ecological systems along the Yangzi river. Similar to Global Village Beijing environmental education program in primary schools was often listed on their agenda. Such environmental education programs only happened in cities where Global village Beijing and Friend of Green Environment of Jiangsu located. Actually, environmental education program in primary schools is indeed a sort of community environmental activity because the location of primary schools is to large extent based on neighborhoods. The aims of such programs are to educate children so that some environmental information can be communicated to children’s families. This in turn will facilitate what NGOs promote in the communities. (Friends of Green Environment of Jiangsu Website; and Interview with GVB, 2004 Appendix)

A brief presentation of the personal experience of the founder of Friends of Green Environment of Jiangsu can provide some background for the understanding of their orientations. The founder Wei Lu graduated from the Department of Chinese Literature at Nanjing University and is now working full time for environmental NGOs. He organized various campaigns and activities to educate the public. In 2001, he went on an over 10-thousand kilometer walking tour along the Yangtze River to research ecological conditions, pollution, and folk customs. He held picture exhibitions to inform locals about hidden ecological dangers and contacted government departments and non-governmental organizations to raise public support for protecting the “Mother River”. (Friends of Green Environment of Jiangsu Website)

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### 5.3 Professional Advocacy NGOs

Professional Advocacy NGOs are highly professional environmental NGOs in China. Their programs and their work lack public participatory characteristics, what they do is to use their expertise to directly help to solve environmental problems in China and they offer help for other environmental NGOs. Most of the Professional Advocacy environmental NGOs see themselves as having the responsibility to raise environmental consciousness in China. As opposed to other more participatory environmental NGOs their method is the unitization of expertise rather than mobilization of the public.

South-North Institute for Sustainable Development (SNISD) is a Chinese non-profit NGO based in Beijing. Its mission is to carry out research for laws, regulations and policy of environmental protection and sustainable development and to promote the use of renewable energy. SNISD also focuses upon publicity, training, consulting and on environmental protection and sustainable development at regional and national levels. By introducing the founder and the chief director of SNISD we might better understand their organizational characteristics.

The founder Prof. Jike Yang studied in Tangshan Engineering College of the Communications University then traveled to the US to study for a postgraduate degree in the 1940s before returning to China in the mid 50s. He was a research fellow in China Academy of Science and taught in China Science and Technology University until 1980. Since then, he has held various important posts such as China Zhigongdang Party as vice-chairman, China Socialism Institute as president, China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) and its Energy Strategy and Technology Working Group as co-director. Professor Yang attended the Rio Summit as scientific consultant to the Chinese government delegation and on several occasions attended International Parliament Union (IPU) conferences. He is currently a member of the Standing Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and deputy-director of the Population, Resources and Environment Committee of CPPCC. Prof.

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Yang is enthusiastic about protection of the environment. He has expounded his vision and proposals in relation to several major issues concerning environment and resource protection in his book *Environment vs. Resources* and over 30 further publications. He participated in the drafting process of the Soil and Water Conservation Law, 1991 and the Nuclear Contamination Prevention Law. (SNISD Website)

Mr. Chen Qing the director holds an MBA from China University of Science and Technology. He has been Prof. Yang Jike's special assistant since the 1980s. Accompanying Prof. Yang, he has toured many places in China rural and urban, backward and developed gaining a deep understanding of China's many problems. He once was a vice mayor of a medium-sized city. He also has experience in rural energy planning, small hydropower, and biogas technology. He has previously worked part time for China Energy Research Committee and in the Environment and Resource Committee of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. In addition, he worked for five years as a secretary with the CCICED Energy Strategy and Technology Working Group. During this period, he successfully organized several workshops for the working group, such as workshops on hydrogen fuel cell technology, green building technology (energy efficient construction), and training for government officials on new energy technology. In recent years, he has been paying much attention to the development of fuel cell technology. (SNISD Website)

SNISD programs normally include the following topics: publicity and consultation on policies and regulations in relation to environmental protection; introduction of advanced overseas environment technologies and equipment to China and the introduction of Chinese such technology and equipment internationally; promoting the adoption of cleaner production techniques and the promulgation of related incentive policies through survey and seminars; training and inspecting in coordination with relevant departments on theory of sustainable development, latest energy and material technology, eco-agricultural technology; inviting international experts for lectures on topical environmental issues of global concern; feasibility studies and assessment of enterprise environment projects; promoting network and capacity building of environmental NGOs in China and promoting international exchanges and

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cooperation; promoting development and commercialization of new and renewable energy. (SNISD Website)

Center for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims at China University of Politics and Law, founded in 1998, is an environmental NGO that conducts interdisciplinary research on difficult theoretical and practical questions of environmental law, as well as train environmental law enforcers and court officials, and protects the environmental rights and interests of pollution victims. Its staff is consists primarily of professors and experts specializing in environmental law from various universities and institutes. The director Wang Canfa is a professor at the Department of Environmental Law in China University of Political Science and Law, and an attorney in the Beijing Fada Law Firm. Since 1983 he has been engaged in researching and teaching environmental law. He has not only published many academic works, but has also presided over or taken part in the drafting or numerous laws and regulations for environmental protection in China. He has had a rich experience in undertaking environmental cases. (China University of Politics and Law, Website)

Their major projects include: legal advice for pollution victims through a telephone hotline and answers letters from pollution victims and provides them with free legal advice; a “lawyer’s Mailbox” in cooperation with China Environmental News, which publicly answers readers’ letters regarding questions of environmental law; corporation with relevant law firms to undertake environmental cases which involve particularly complicated or important environmental legal questions. The center pays for a portion of the legal and administrative expenses for pollution victims who are unable to pay their own expenses due to pollution damages; research on important issues regarding legislation and enforcement of environmental law in China and offers policy recommendations to relevant organizations based on the results of the research; training for judges and lawyers who are engaged in enforcing environmental laws. The goals of the training courses are to increase institutional and professional capacities and improve enforcement of environmental law. (China University of Politics and Law, Website)

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China Development Brief was founded in 1996 by Nick Young, who has lived in China since that time, having previously worked in Latin America and Africa for a variety of internationally recognized media, including the Scotsman, the Financial Times, the Economist, and BBC World Service. (China Development Brief Website)

The mission of China Development Brief is: to improve information flows between Chinese and international agencies on funding or implementing development projects in China, with particular emphasis on the work of non-government organizations; to share such information with Chinese governmental agencies and non-profit organizations, as well as promote the development of a more independent communication culture in China; and to advance analysis and discussion of key development issues in China. (China Development Brief Website)

They publish reports in English and Chinese on development cooperation between China and the international community, with particular emphasis on the work of non-government organizations. A quarterly, English language edition, aimed at an international readership including NGOs, donor and implementing agencies. The English version offers: reports on internationally funded projects; concise analysis of key development processes; news on relevant research and policy developments. A counterpart, Chinese language edition, also quarterly, is aimed primarily at emerging Chinese non-profit and non-governmental organizations. As well as presenting an international perspective on development issues, and reporting on internationally funded programs, it sets out to strengthen the capacity of Chinese organizations by offering practical information and discussion on issues of organizational development and project formulation, management and evaluation. China Development Brief created a series of consultation workshops in 2002, which 30 Chinese NGOs joined to discuss themes and strategies relevant to local resource mobilization. They believe capacity building and networking are important for NGOs, the main actors in civil society which are key elements for sustainable development. (China Development Brief Website)

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#### 4.4 Public Education NGOs

Public Education NGOs clearly address their responsibilities of promoting environmental consciousness in China. Compared to Community Learning NGOs the activities they carried out oriented toward community activities. Public Education NGOs might have nation-wide educational programs, and their focus is more on natural ecological system protection, protection of endangered species etc.

Friends of Nature (FON) is China's first legally established environmental non-governmental organization (NGO), officially registered in April 1994 headed by former Chinese history professor and publisher Liang Congjie. Liang hopes that FON will impart to the Chinese people a sense of connection with the natural environment and responsibility for protecting it. FON is a nonprofit, public welfare organization funded by membership fees and public support. The goal of FON is to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in China by raising environmental awareness and initiating a green culture among the public. (FON Website)

Friends of Nature's president Liang has an ambitious agenda, but he is explicit about what his organization will not do. It is neither a lobbying organization nor a research institute, nor does the group plan to monitor compliance with environmental regulations. Liang argued that NGOs seeking to effect change must find ways to cooperate with the government (both nationally and locally) rather than opposing it. The methods used by Greenpeace, for example, would not generally result in satisfactory outcomes in China. But when NGOs make an effort to interact cooperatively with government ministries and committees, both the NGO and the government can benefit. FON is potentially a help, accomplishing things in mutual collaboration with the government that the government alone could not achieve. (Beijing Review, 2003,05,02)

FON develops informal environmental education, such as field trips and vacation camps for students, lectures, seminars and training classes for teachers, publications and activities for

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the general public. Anyone who agrees with FON's purpose and volunteers to help in its activities may become a member upon application. Foreigners may also be admitted as associate members. FON has now some 2000 members from all walks of life with intellectuals as the main force. Its membership is growing fast and steadily. (FON Website and Interviews to FON, 2004 Appendix)

Since 1999, FON has launched the Environmental Education Van Program as well as an action to further environmental awareness among secondary school students in rural areas The Green Hope Initiative. The "green van" has been used to teach children in cities and villages across China to listen to nature, to revere all life and understand the knowledge of ecology. FON's bird watching group, the first voluntary bird watching group in China, was formed in 1996. In the past years, the group lead by Professor Gao Wu of the Capital Normal University have had many activities including: bird watching (till now, FON toured in many places in Tianjin, Hebei, Henan, Neimeng, Liaoning, Anhui, Hunan, Jiangsu) and ornithology lectures. Through bird watching, it is intended that the participants get close to nature, be familiar with nature, learn scientific method and cultivate environment protection awareness. From the day FON was founded, they began to have campaigns to protect a kind of endangered species called Tibetan Antelope from being poached. Liang Congjie even wrote a letter in the year 1999 to British Prime Minister Tony Blair appealing for Britain's help in stopping the trade of antelope products. (FON Website)



Picture 5. The “Green Van”



Picture 6. The Protection of Tibetan Antelopes

Another environmental NGO of this public education type but whose focus limit to desert problems in China is Han Hai Sha: a Volunteers’ Network Devoted to Desert in China. It represents a relatively new form of environmental NGO in China. The problem of wide-scale desertification has caught the attention of environmentalists in China. Through personal involvement in scientific investigations, NGO voluntary activities, Internet chat rooms, and email newsletters, a group of young professionals initiated the idea of Han Hai Sha, a volunteers’ network for China’s desert ecology, in the later 2001. (Han Hai Sha, in Chinese, portrays the vastness of desert.) By March 2002, the first 50 volunteers, across the country, have joined Han Hai Sha, 14 of them gathered at the first working group meeting in Beijing in April. The network now has 12 part-time core staff members, and their professions cover law, finance, computer science, education, science, as well as environment protection. Independent environmental activists and college students also play key role in regular operation of the network. The Han Hai Sha website was launched on June 17th, 2002, so was its first electronic newsletter on desertification topics. Beyond information collection and dissemination, the network has expanded her reaches to local communities and people around the desert areas in Chi Feng and En Ge Bei cities of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Area, and Ruo Er Gai of Sichuan Province. To enhance its own capacity, the volunteers have also built up solid working relationships with many Chinese experts in the field. (Han Hai Sha Website)

As an independent voluntary organization, Han Hai Sha intends to conserve desert ecology,

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and meanwhile, preserve ethnical traditions and facilitate economic development of the cities around desert areas, by cooperating with all relevant social and governmental units. Their missions are: promoting the awareness of desertification and disseminating the knowledge of prevention; conserving customs and traditions of ethnic groups around desert areas; assisting the development of local voluntary activities to solve desertification problems; and facilitating the communication among relevant sectors and organizations in desert-prevention, ethnical culture preservation and community development. To achieve their goals the following methods are often used. Through public education works, Han Hai Sha aims to help local people reflect on their consuming habits to recognize the economic pressures on the desert ecology. Han Hai Sha is keen on the development of grassroots organizations, and helps them extend reaches and mobilize more social resources. Through the Internet, Han Hai Sha will help local residents conduct ecological investigations of their own homeland and promote the awareness of desertification problems in their areas. (Han Hai Sha Website)

Han Hai Sha is publishing a quarterly magazine called “Shan Shui” (literally Mountains and Water in Chinese). Topics in this magazine are quite diverse and record many activities they organized, as well as some feedbacks from the readers and participants. In the latest issue of “Shan Shui” magazine published in April 2005 many environmental poem like essays published to arouse reader’s love of nature and stories of Mahatma Gandhi included with an aim to let readers know his lifestyle. Selected articles in Edward Goldsmith’s book *The Way-An Ecological Worldview* was translated into Chinese. Certainly, knowledge about desert ecology was also included.

University students environmental organizations are relative unique among environmental NGOs in China, since they do not need any kind of registration. They only need an approval of the university in which they are organized. These university organizations normally carry out activities in universities even though the theme of the activities may vary from one another, the members will always be university students and staffs. Therefore, university student organizations can be regarded as organizations whose orientation is to raise environmental consciousness of the university students by carrying out different educational

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programs. The term university student environmental organizations on the one hand represents the organizations registration status, on the other hand it presents the special identity of such organizations.

One example of the union of environmental organizations in the universities is an NGO called Green Stone in Nanjing Jiangsu Province. As an environmental protection cooperative organization, Green Stone strives for providing a forum for the environmental protection groups and volunteers of university students in Jiangsu Province. It is a unity of university students' environmental organizations. Green Stone also struggles to mobilize the environmental protection campaign among the youth of Eastern China. (Green Stone Website)

Green Stone has many regular environmental programs with many focuses and aims. In general they tried to take environmental protection as starting point to integrate the love of citizens of the city and acts of environmental protection of college students. Initiated by environmental protection groups in the colleges of Nanjing and participated with colleges in Jiangsu Province, it enhances the knowledge transition and project implementation through lectures and brainstorming to exchange project experience and trends of environmental protection. On the forum, the annual report will be approved and the excellent and outstanding college students will be awarded. Fund raising of Green Stone is not only a necessary action for the survival of the organization; it is also a kind of direct communication channel for disseminating environmental ideas. Environmental protection information and the financial report of Consulting Foundation of Green Stone will be conveyed to donors through fund raising activities. By such reports and face to face contacts Green Stone intend to mobilize the donors themselves to take part in environmental protection in their daily life. The most important is that Green Stone served as organizers of daily environmental activities in the universities such as recycle no campus, planting trees, environmental investigations etc. (Green Stone Website)

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Picture 7. Investigations of Water Quality in Yangzi River

One typical university environmental organization in one single university is the Scientific Exploration and Outdoor Life Society of Beijing Forestry University (SENOL). According to different features of universities environmental groups in the universities might have different featured programs. SENOL was founded on April 27, 1994, is a college students' organization of environment protection. SENOL expects its members to be men of action, not of high-flown words. SENOL's mission is to enhance its members' environmental awareness through various kinds of educational activities, and to cultivate their ability of outdoor life. Their daily environmental activities range from, recycling on campus, environmental lectures and symposiums, taking active part in Hope Project and support the poor children financially in western China, planting trees, bird watching, to resisting one-time-only chopsticks. (Beijing Forestry University Website)



Picture 8. Outdoor Activities in Sichuan Province

Environmental organizations in universities have very close relationships to other environmental NGOs. Normally they are the major supporters and participants of varieties of environmental campaigns. Environmental NGOs such as Global Village of Beijing and Friends of Nature have many programs that requirement university students to be their

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volunteers and their leaders such as Liang Congjie and Liao Xiaoyi often give speeches in the universities. From their point of view the youth means the future so they are willing to help university students to carry out their activities. (Interview with GVB and FON, 2004 Appendix)

## **Chapter 6 Description of Interviews**

The detailed transcriptions of each interview are listed in the appendix of this thesis. In this chapter some additional information other than those conversations will be presented so that the readers could have a better understanding of the situation in China, and this empirical chapter could also be served as some kind of evidences that reflect certain information which was mentioned in the previous literature study chapters.

The three NGOs where interviews were carried out are the Friends of Nature (FON), the Global Village of Beijing (GVB) and China Development Brief. Information about these NGOs has already been given in Chapter 5. In this chapter some experiences of the author's journey in Beijing will also be introduced, therefore the information in this chapter is to some extent personal. However, in order to be objective I would like to present what I have seen and known in a narrative manner. It is hoped that this chapter will offer readers some vivid pictures of Chinese environmental NGOs in "real life".

I had planned to visit more environmental NGOs than I actually did in Beijing. There are many reasons for this, but I think the information that I get from the three NGOs offered plenty of empirical sources for this thesis. The NGOs that I picked to interview are fairly representative. FON is the first environmental NGO in China, and in my categorization FON is a Public Education NGO, GVB is maybe the first environmental NGO which focused on green community activities and whose work are quite well known and effective. China Development Brief is an NGO which focuses on many issues including social environmental issues of the Chinese civil society, the reason why I interviewed them was that I intended to get some information about the current situation of Chinese civil society and NGOs.

There were pre-designed interview questions, but I was not sure if these questions could be appropriate to ask and the informants would be willing to answer them. Actually the

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informants were quite sensitive at the beginning of each interview before they were sure what I wanted to know. They were not so willing to be involved in discussions of the political dimension of environmental issues, and they emphasized their roles as assisting of the government through each interview (especially FON and GVB). The reasons for this concern on asking appropriate questions derived from the initial contacts with them on the telephone, their attitude showed that they were hesitant to accept interviews from me. I tried to contact with Greenpeace's branch in China, but they were reluctant to offer me information. When I arrived in Beijing and tried to pay them a visit, their excuse was that they were too busy to talk to me. But without their permission I went to their office in Beijing anyway. I only had a few words with them and I was told that there was no person who would be in charge of accepting such kind of interviews. Greenpeace in China was the first environmental NGO that I had contacts with by e-mails, telephone calls etc. It was supposed to be not that difficult to pay a visit to them. Therefore, I made my interview questions quite flexible and open-ended and the interviews were planned to be conversations. However, I did have particular topics that I wanted to know. Such topics include their relationship with the state, media and other NGOs, their functional conditions, their environmental concerns, their focuses of activism, and what they think about the Chinese people's environmental consciousness etc. In order to get as much information as possible I said that I was a student to learn from them not some one who came to study them. I thought by listening to them they were more likely to tell me what they knew rather than having a certain information exchange with them in terms of discussions.

In each NGO I tried to talk to as many employees as possible, not only those important figures or leaders. Because I thought it was important to write something about those who are not "visible" in environmental NGOs about how they see their contributions of green knowledge making. When I found there were also some foreigners employed in Chinese environmental NGOs, I wanted to know some of their thoughts about the Chinese people's environmental consciousness and the role of Chinese environmental NGOs. Prof. Liang Congjie and Ms. Liao Xiaoyi were away on trip during the time I stayed in Beijing, and it was said their agendas were full. If they had been in Beijing I might have had an

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opportunity to talk with them.

In the following pages I will briefly present my experiences of the interviews that I carried out in the three environmental NGOs.

### **Interview with GVB**

Global Village of Beijing is located on the first floor in a newly built residential building about 15 kilometers from the center of Beijing (the Forbidden City). In this about 150 square meters apartment there were about 10 staff people working in several rooms. I spent about a whole morning from 7am to 11am just to find their location; it was to my surprise that they worked in such a condition compared with their “famous” reputation. Since they focus on community activities it might be better for them to work directly in a community. My first impression on them according to their location and the appearance of their office was that they looked similar to some kind of a “residence committee” that is quite common in Chinese cities which is a ground level governmental community service agency that was formed in every residential area to take care of some public sanitation affairs etc.

Ms. Li Li was their executive staff who talked to me first. She is about 40 years old, and from our talks I found that she had not had receive higher education, perhaps her teenage years came at the time of the Cultural Revolution. Only a few of them in that generation received university education since regular academic education during the Cultural Revolution was quite limited. I started with some questions about the organization, for example about their registration; this was the topic they were also concerned about in the previous a few years. She told me that GVB started to register as private company in 1996, and after 8 years of work they were permitted by the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Beijing City to become an NGO, or more precisely, private non-enterprise non-profit organization. According to her it was because of their work that they could have this proper “title”. When I asked her if there should be less stringent rules in registration of NGOs, she said no but

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later she mentioned the requirements for registration are high. The high requirements derive from the governmental recognition of them as an organization and of their work. Because if they could not find their governmental “mother-in-law”, it would be impossible for them to get registered. She thought Chinese environmental NGOs work independently however cooperation with the government can not be avoided. Even though they intend to influence environmental policy making, this kind of influence is only in terms of advice. She told me that one example of their involvement in environmental policy making is that Ms. Liao Xiaoyi was invited as a consultant of the Olympic Organization Committee.

When it came to some personal ideas of Chinese environmental issues, I firstly asked her what she thought was the most important environmental problem in China. She said it was the influences of the “feverous” pursuit of economic growth and a higher demand of lifestyle on the environment. She also suggested that to solve this problem it was important to tell people in China the “correct” way of life. She thought the younger generation of Chinese were deeply influenced by a “luxury” way of life so that they had less environmental concerns while the older generations had relatively higher environmental concerns because they had experienced a “hard” life.

She told me that such considerations of Chinese environmental problems are shared by GVB, therefore their method to tackle environmental problems is by environmental education in terms of organizing community activities. In detail, they have waste recycling programs in communities, and different programs in elementary schools. They even made commitment cards for elementary school students hoping that through them the environmentally sound way of life would diffuse into families. In her estimation their work was quite effective.

I asked her why she decided to work in an environmental NGO. She said it was because of her “heart” for the public good and she emphasized that working in Chinese environmental NGOs was not a job that could give a high salary. Their funding mainly came from international foundations. They could not accept any donations and normally Chinese

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enterprises did not offer them financial helps, however they might work together to propagate certain “green products”.

The second person that I interviewed was Poppy Tolland from Britain. She came to China to study Chinese. She learned about GVB and their recruitment from the China Development Brief website. She can speak good Chinese; therefore the interview was carried out in Chinese. Personally, she is a vegetarian and in her opinion that not the majority of the Chinese people were concerned about the environment while small groups of people -for example she mentioned the university students- seemed to have greater environmental awareness. Later she also mentioned that nowadays younger Chinese need to devote them to finding a good job so not every one of them would like to participate in environmental protection activities.

She thought that in Chinese traditional culture there were many elements which could be utilized to tell people how to live in harmony with the natural environment, for example Taoist ideas. But these kinds of good traditions remained marginal in the contemporary Chinese society. The reason for this from her point of view was that political campaigns and rapid societal changes wiped out many such traditions and too dramatic changes made people in China place more emphasis on the near future or the present situation. She played a participatory role in this GVB and their activities, she mentioned that every day she learned many things from her colleagues and was encouraged by many people. She said that her contribution to GVB was to encourage people to have a positive attitude toward environmental protection.

Sui Dongmei is GVB’s secretary and the accountant. She received professional training in accountancy and before she worked in a state enterprise in China. The reason for her to work in GVB as she thought was that she was impressed by Liao Xiaoyi because she devotes herself to working for the public good. She thought the most significant environmental problem in China is the air pollution caused by the booming increase of automobiles. And similar to Ms. Li Li her consideration of Chinese environmental traditions

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was those virtues like frugality. She was about 30 years old and had a child, she was quite optimistic about environmental protection in China because she thought that her child even though very young was concerned about the environment, and sometimes her son reminded her to save electricity.

The readers might notice that all the informants that I interviewed in GVB are female. That is because about 70% or 80% of the staff in GVB are female. This situation was similar to FON and China Development Brief. It seems that environmental NGOs in China have a kind of similar feature of educational agencies such as high schools and primary schools which have a higher percentage of female employees.

### **Interview with China Development Brief**

China Development Brief is located in a “hu tong” (In Beijing dialects, literally a narrow street) just a few minutes walk from the Forbidden City. Many NGOs choose to work in this area. Both the FON and the WWF are nearby. The office building gave me a strong impression because it was a traditional Chinese “si he yuan”(literally garden of harmony). Such architectural forms were quite common for ordinary Chinese in the old days. A “si he yuan” consists of four one-story buildings around the periphery with a small garden in the middle where trees and flowers are planted. Often a large family lived in such a building. The philosophy underneath this particular design was that people who live in this building could have harmonious relationship with the nature and the family. I did not know if they purposefully chose this building, what I guessed was that they wanted to disseminate certain messages of their work and their attitude toward Chinese development issues.

Fu Tao the staff writer in China Development Brief in charge of environmental issues talked to me. He was in his 20s but definitely with more experience than I have. I started with the question on what he thought the reasons were the emergence of environmental NGOs in China. He said that the reason for the development of different forms of NGOs in China in

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recent years was that the transformation of the focus of the government bodies made them give up some responsibilities that they used to have. At the same time, the government realized that in some development issues both the state and the society shared common goals. Therefore, the government tended to use new recourses in the society to tackle some problems. In that sense, the government tended to be flexible to environmental NGOs. The emergence of Chinese environmental NGOs was a sort of assistance for the government in those areas such as community environmental activities and public environmental education.

Fu Tao thought nowadays government could allow NGOs to work in some public affairs. The management principle of the government over NGOs was still that NGOs should be under control; however, this principle was represented by the non-competition registration rule which regulate that each NGO should be different in their areas of work. In addition that every NGO should have a relevant supporting governmental body and this also limited the development of NGOs in China. It seemed that recently NGOs were not satisfied with their assisting role they would like to play a more active role in environmental policy making. As he mentioned later in the interview, in general, Chinese civil society and the state were partners. The power of Chinese civil society was relatively weak but in particular cases the influence of the NGOs or the social organizations were strong enough.

When we talked about different backgrounds of the actors in Chinese environmental issues, he mentioned that Chinese environmental NGOs tend to be professionalized. He offered two examples of the professionalized NGOs. One was Shengli Chemical Pesticide Substitution Center in Yunan Province and the other one was the “Green Rivers” which focused on river ecological investigations and it was to some extent a group of experts and researchers. However, some newly formed NGOs are less professional but rather idealistic and culturally oriented. One example is the “Han Hai Sha” a volunteer organization that focused on desert environmental issues.

From Fu Tao’s point of view the government tends to solve environmental problems by

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introducing economic tools such as pollution quota trade and some exemplary projects had already been implemented in different provinces in China.

Fu Tao admitted that leaders of environmental NGOs were quite important for their contributions to Chinese environmental protection. Many of FON's activities and program and their involvement in environmental policy making were based on the special status and identity of Prof. Liang Congjie. Another important factor for environmental NGOs was their relationship with the media because their propaganda and some of their programs rely on the media to spread their message to the public. Fund collecting ability, management, and capacity building were also important measurements for environmental NGOs to evaluate if they were successful or not. When it comes to fund raising, Fu Tao said most of the operation funding for NGOs including them came from international foundations.

According to Fu Tao at least some of the younger Chinese were increasingly willing to participate in environmental protection activities in China. He said most of the people working in environmental NGOs were young and in Chinese universities there were many student environmental groups. But not all the Chinese younger generation was concerned about the environment.

Talking about elements in Chinese traditions that could be mobilized to foster environmental protection in China Fu Tao mentioned that not only those ideas and philosophies such as "Tian Ren He Yi" in the majority "Han" culture should be revitalized, but also indigenous knowledge of minority ethnic groups should be respected. He thought the invasion of the contemporary culture into such minority areas was partly responsible for the environmental deterioration that happened there.

Personally Fu Tao thought the most important problem of environmental protection in China was the lack of public participation. He said it was because he worked in an NGO that he thought that Chinese civil society should play a stronger role in environmental issues. However it was because of Confucianism traditions public participation and the roles of

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civil society in China were historically very weak. In this sense, Chinese traditions contained elements that could hinder the public involvement in environmental protection in China.

After talking to Mr. Fu Tao, I had a chance to talk to another staff writer in China Development Brief Miss. Gao Xuesong. However our short talk was interrupted by other staffs in their organization because they had to use the only meeting room where the interview was carried out. From the short conversation I found that Miss. Gao's motivation to work in an NGO was largely derived from her former education.

### **Interview with FON**

Friends of Nature was the first Chinese environmental NGO, because of that I was looking forward to visiting them. FON is also located in the center of Beijing, unlike GVB and China Development Brief they rent a whole story in an office building. They were more like a company or a publishing house with many different departments, and they have more employed staff people working for them than the other two. When I visited them their leader Prof. Liang Congjie was on his trip to Nanjing my hometown for an environmental protection exhibition. It was a photography exhibition with many photos taken by journalists and amateur photographers on the situation of Chinese grasslands, forests, rivers etc. The aim of the exhibition was to raise environmental consciousness of citizens in Nanjing by providing them with some factual information. The theme was the need to protect many beautiful places in China. The local TV station Channel 18 reported about the exhibition and Prof. Liang Congjie's effort on environmental protection for a few minutes in the local evening news.

Before I visited FON, I kept my contact with their "director of the office" Ms. Zhang Jilian. When visited them, it was she who talked to me first, and another director Mr. Shen Xiaohui was also in the office so my first interview with FON was a conversation between the

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directors and me.

Ms. Zhang was a lady in her 50s and Mr. Shen was about 60 years old. Both of them showed some worry about the environmental consciousness of the younger Chinese and they think that some traditions during the “hard” life era were fading into the past. Ms. Zhang told me that the reason why she worked in FON was largely because she knew Prof. Liang Congjie. Mr. Shen said that every one who devoted themselves to environmental protections and NGOs have their own stories. Before he worked in FON, he was the secretary of the Forestry Ministry in the central government. He also was a writer, the author of the book *Xue Shan Xun Meng* (Searching for Dreams on a Snow Mountain), as he portrayed the book was about the first group of environmental protection actors in China such as Liang Congjie. He received his university education just before the Cultural Revolution. After he graduated he was appointed to a job in the mountains of northeastern China. Even though at that time college graduates had limited freedom to choose their jobs, he volunteered to work there. The motivation was derived from his interests of the Russian literatures. He said he liked Russian novels that have been translated into Chinese, and the descriptions of beautiful sceneries deeply influenced him. His job in the forest in Changbai Mountains in northeastern China was to cut down trees. During the first few years of his job he witnessed the deterioration of the natural environment by the exploitation of the forests. Later he got a chance to change his job to a forest protection zone which was his first opportunity to work for environmental protection.

I read a newsletter about a speech that Prof. Liang Congjie gave to university students in Beijing. He mentioned in the speech that he thought the most significant environmental problem in China is the population. I asked Ms. Zhang and Mr. Shen respectively what they thought about the population problem. Ms. Zhang tended to think that the huge numbers of population was a great problem since it was often related to a massive depletion of natural resources. Mr. Shen tended to think not only the number of population was a problem but also the ability of the population was the critical problem. To enable the mass public he thought the appropriate method should be to make them aware. He deemed environmental

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NGOs activities as a form of public participation.

Public environmental education was their main focus. Ms. Zhang mentioned they were different from GVB, because their programs are more nation-wide. They played an assisting role with the government and in some cases they could be invited to participate in environmental policy making.

As for some general management information on FON, Ms. Zhang and Mr. Shen mentioned that their recruitment procedure was similar to that of companies. They require certain expertise but they thought a heart for the public good was more important to work in an NGO. Funding resources for FON came mainly from foundations, but a limited fund from the membership fees was also collected. They have about 2000 regular members all over China. They had a good relationship with media, many journalists involved in them by registered as their members.

Yi Yimin was the staff whom I talked with in FON. She graduated from a teacher training university in China just a few years ago. She was a student of physics and she thought the study of physics had to some extent shaped her interests in the natural environment. Ancient Chinese philosophies on human nature relationships were very familiar for her and the reason why she decided to work in FON was because of her personal interest in environmental education. In her university years, like many other young Chinese, she was a member of student environmental group in the university. This kind of experience also influenced her choice of her career.

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## **Chapter 7 Discussions of Interviews**

This chapter is written according to the transcripts of the interviews done in December 2004 in Beijing at three Chinese environmental NGOs; this chapter will focus on three questions about what NGOs think about contemporary environmental consciousness-raising. First, why environmental consciousness-raising is important in China, second, what the NGOs responsibilities and roles are in environmental consciousness-raising, third, what they think of Chinese traditions in environmental consciousness-raising.

### **7.1 Why is Environmental Consciousness-Raising Important in China?**

The deterioration of the Chinese environment has made NGOs (as well as others) think about the reasons behind these problems. Based on their different focuses, they have different interpretations on the most important or fundamental environmental problems. In the interview I ask each informant which environmental issue was the most significant in Chinese society. My intentions was try to find their motivations for their programs and activities in the sense that why they organized such programs and what ambitions were with those programs. Their answers to the interview questions I asked all stressed different environmental concerns in China, and normally in one organization it seems that the staff share similar concerns. No matter what their answer is all of them consider environmental consciousness-raising is a necessary condition or precondition to solve environmental problems in China.

Ms. Li Li in GVB when asked about what she thought about the most significant environmental problems in China answered:

I think it is the balance of environmental protection and the economic development. Now it is called a conflict or a double edged sword. The government is changing some of its point of views (concepts), a few years ago the judgment of a local government official is made upon his works to

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stimulate GDP growth, and development goes on this way. Environmental protection awareness is rather weak in China. Now you can see in many cases the consequences of this pattern of development appeared: industrial pollution, food safety, air pollution etc, and the quick expansion of private automobiles. (Appendix Interview with GVB)

When I interviewed people at FON they gave a different answer. Prof. Liang Congjie in one of his lectures said he thought environmental problems in China are indeed a problem of population. His colleagues in FON strongly agreed with him. Ms. Zhang said:

Yes I strongly agree with him, and I think the most significant problem is the population. There are many environmental problems, if not seen from a political angle, are caused by huge population. ... Mr. Liang once said we are doing multiple calculations when we consider environmental problems, everything multiplied by this huge population will have significant consequences. While Premier Wen said when we take natural resources into consideration we need to do a division calculation, resources divided by the huge number it comes too limited. I think actually they are talking in a same logic." (Appendix Interview with FON)

Mr. Shen made further comments on this, he said:

I think environmental problems have many aspects. It is not only one problem. I think the population problem is not only a matter of the numbers, it is also a problem of the quality of population (he meant educational status etc.) In China we have 1.3 billion population and it is sure to have a heavy burden on the environment. ... From my point of view, the fundamental problem in China is that in a continuous deterioration of environmental quality in China is that we lack public participation in environmental issues and public monitoring of environmental issues. But I should admit the lack of public participation partly derive from the inability of the public. I once went to Yunnan Province; there is an evident lack of public participation in the environmental impact assessment in a dam construction project of the indigenous residents. They lack required opportunities to participate. (Appendix Interview with FON)

Fu Tao the staff writer in China Development Brief also agrees that China need to promote public participation to handle environmental problems, and he stressed that effective public participation is the most critical issue. He also explained that his point of view derived from

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his work.

Besides the need for public environmental consciousness to solve these fundamental problems of environment deterioration, another factor that NGOs think very important for the promotion of environmental consciousness in China is that they think the “wasteful”, “extravagant” lifestyle of the younger generation that is stimulated by the rise of a favor of enjoying affluent material life. Most of them are worried about this trend that will cause potentially heavier burdens to the Chinese environment.

When they were asked if the younger generation have enough or more concerns on environmental issues compared with the older generation their answers is quite similar.

Ms. Li Li in GVB Said:

Nowadays the younger generations think that they live in an affluent society, so they can easily get what they want, they do not cherish a lot of things. They lack the traditions of frugality, and they don't think this could be a popular behavior.....But the younger generation is not so able to understand this, because they have never experienced the 'hard' life. I think to change the lifestyles of the young is very important, now their consumption behavior is so bad. (Interview with GVB Appendix)

Her colleague Poppy Toland (a British staff in GVB) said:

I think for some young Chinese now they think they need to find a good job earn some money and take care of themselves and their family. They do not care about people around them, but there are some people who think environment is a responsibility that they need to take. (Interview with GVB Appendix)

Ms. Zhang also expressed similar view toward this:

We grew up in they year when everything is limited. Compare to us the young people are to some extent wasteful especially those born from 1985. I

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think it is a matter of attitude. We experienced a hard life so we kind of have much concern about the future while the young Chinese tend to focus on their present life.(Interview with FON Appendix)

Fu Tao thought that few young Chinese had enough concerns for the environment. He said:

But in general environmental awareness of the young is not always good. For example in Chinese university environmental group member, some of them might be concern about environment very much while others do not have so much concern and not all university students are in an environmental group. They are differentiated. (Interview with Fu Tao Appendix)

## **7.2 What are the NGOs Responsibilities and Roles in Environmental Consciousness-Raising?**

Ms. Li of GVB in her statement mentioned the necessity of making the public aware of the relationship between economic development and environmental protection. Such is what they think needs to be done in “the third area” (the public social sphere or the civil society). Mr. Shen and Fu Tao think public participation is the key issue to solve environmental problems in China. Mr. Shen also mentioned that the lack of public participation partly derives from the unconsciousness of the environmental situation and their entitled rights of the mass public. Therefore environmental NGOs’ role from this point of view is to empower the public by making it environmentally conscious.

Their expressions of their motivations show that they recognize their responsibility in consciousness-raising in China. At the same time their role is to some extent equivalent to “tutors” in the Chinese society in the sense that they act like the person who tells people what is happening, what to do, and what should be done.

Ms. Li of GVB said:

Every staff should know our job is to promote environmental awareness of

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the public and introduce a new lifestyle... ..We are trying to tell them what should be a “fashionable” lifestyle. We need to tell the young. (Interview with GVB Appendix)

Ms. Zhang in FON evaluated their jobs like this:

Firstly I should say that, our ‘position’ our job is environmental education and communication... ..We are trying to have some influence on people’s lives.(Interview with FON Appendix)

FON’s editor Miss. Yi Yimin said:

I used to be a student in an educational university; I intend to be a teacher, now I am doing environmental education... ..I think I need to merge more elements of environmental education in my work. (Interview with FON Appendix)

In Chapter 5 their method and specific projects on environmental consciousness-raising have already been discussed. Consistent with the “tutor-like” status NGOs think of themselves as providing a kind of example. Ms. Zhang of FON in the interview said:

We also require ourselves to behave properly and live a simple life. Prof. Liang rides a bicycle to work every day. Whatever restaurant he goes, he brings his own sticks to avoid using one-time-only sticks. ....Did you see our computers here? They are not up to date at all, but our network manager tried to make good use of them. From last year, we start to focus on electronic waste, for us, maybe we can not change the whole situation but just by keep using our old computer, it represents our attitude. (Interview with FON Appendix)

They believe in the power of examples in persuading people and disseminating environmental awareness. By so doing they gained both legitimacy and respect for their organizations.

Another factor that what they think make them more reliable as an organization that work for the public benefit is about their motivations on working in NGOs. Ms. Li of GVB in her

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her interview said:

For me, when I was a child I was told that if one can have some contributions to the society, it should be a very good thing. I like this job because of this; this is a job that does not give a lot of money. If I just think about making money I would not work for an environmental NGO, because the salary is slow here in NGOs. But for me it has some extra meaning and my family now can support me economically, so I can devote myself to this NGO. Certainly, not all the people who do not want to earn a lot of money can work in an environmental NGO, I have a “heart” for the public good, so I think I can work for the public. That is the reason why I work for an NGO. (Interview with GVB Appendix)

### **7.3 What Do They Think of Chinese Traditions in Environmental Consciousness-Raising?**

In general most of the informants thought that some elements in Chinese traditional culture could be mobilized to foster environmental consciousness-raising, however their focuses are different. In the interviews I found an interesting phenomenon that the older generation normally does not relate traditional Chinese philosophy, traditional environmental practices to environmental ideas, knowledge and practices today. Even Mr. Shen a professional writer and a former governmental official who is supposed to be familiar with both traditional and contemporary Chinese culture did not mention anything about that. From his personal stories he told me how he gradually devoted himself to environmental protection. In the initial stage he was to some extent influenced by Russian literature that was popular when he was young.

I directly asked Ms. Li of GVB and Ms. Zhang of FON about Chinese traditions, their contemporary role and if these elements can be found from an environmental point of view in Chinese society. From their statements, I found that they tended to think there were some virtues of everyday life such as frugality were important to the contemporary environmental protections in China. They mentioned nothing about Confucianism, Taoism and traditional environmental practices in their words. They might know these things but they tended to

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marginalize such environmental thinking in the sense that these traditions were just periphery elements that did not have influence in environmental knowledge today. Ms. Li, Mr. Shen and Ms. Zhang share a common identity that all of them experienced the Cultural Revolution.

For those later generations who did not experience the Cultural Revolution as well as for foreigners they seem to have a different point of on the relevance of Chinese traditional knowledge for contemporary society. From their words we might even find out why the older generation ignores such traditional knowledge.

Poppy Toland said in the interview:

I do not know so deeply, but I know Taoism is concerned with a harmonious relationship with the nature. And I also know the Cultural Revolution emphasized the idea to conquer the nature, and promote a rapid progress and the “great leap forward” period, hoping to produce a lot of things in a very short time. The traditional Chinese values changed dramatically in a very short period of time. People suddenly forget how to live in nature. If you care more about the nature, the nature will offer you more. I think such traditions were lost because of those “movements”. ... ..I think there are two reasons for this, I think the Cultural Revolution has wipe out all the values and traditions of the Chinese society... .. (Interview with GVB Appendix)

Editor Yi Yimin a former student of physics said in the interview:

Yes, there are many elements in Chinese traditional knowledge. Traditional Chinese philosophy emphasizes that humanity should not intervene with the inner functioning mechanisms of the nature and also stressed the equality of all species. (Interview with FON Appendix)

Fu Tao has many comments on Chinese traditional knowledge and its role in society today. He suggested that considering the Chinese environmental traditions, knowledge from other ethnic groups and their traditions also need to be respected. He said in the interview:

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I definitely think we have such environmental concerns in our traditions. For example “Tian Ren He Yi”, but the problem is China experienced many political movements and social change such things became less important. And as I see it they are disappearing, for example the grasslands in inner Mongolia, for thousands of years the grasslands is good, but influenced by culture from outside and intervened by politics, trying to transform the grasslands to farmland, such things like that as I see is something that destroyed our traditions. When we talk about Chinese traditions, we need to know there are some minority cultures that differ from the majority ‘Han’ culture, so when the ‘Han’ culture invades to their place sometime we do not respect enough, so some elements that are the minority cultures which could be positive to the environment were destroyed or substituted. That might be responsible for the deterioration of the environment in some minority areas; I think some minority scholars would have much more to say about this. Now the majority “Han” culture that it is accepted as I see it is what we call Confucianism and Taoism. (Interview with Fu Tao Appendix)

When it comes to some popular virtues of every day life Fu Tao offered the following statement:

I think they almost disappeared, as I see those traditions restrain people’s desires. I think nowadays in China, in the time of globalization, we are so much influenced by the Western culture that everyone hopes to live like them, to have a car to have more consumption. It is very common. (Interview with Fu Tao Appendix)

In Fu Tao’s view traditional Chinese philosophy and knowledge not always had a positive influence. In the current situation he thought Confucianism to some extent leads to a lack of public participation and the weak development of civil society in China.

Confucianism emphasizes the obedience of power and a top down management. So the resource of power is somewhat top down, in the society there is no such regimes that could facilitate public participation. It is not only in environmental issues I think it is an overwhelming problem. (Interview with Fu Tao Appendix)

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## **Chapter 8 Conclusions**

In the previous chapters I addressed many issues and offered some empirical information on the work of Chinese environmental NGOs relating to their role in environmental consciousness-raising. In this chapter I would like to conclude by discussing environmental NGOs more theoretically with a focus on their “cognitive praxis”, the role of their intellectuals and their use of communication channels in this our electronic communication era. A reflection on why Chinese environmental NGOs emphasize on environmental consciousness-raising will also be presented in this chapter.

### **8.1 How to Read Environmental Consciousness-raising as a Cognitive Praxis**

*Social Movements A Cognitive Approach* is the main book that I used to refer Chinese environmental NGOs’ role to green knowledge making and mobilization. The book provides an approach to study social movements. As I mentioned in the introduction this thesis is not a direct application of the theoretical concepts and frameworks in the book. I briefly discussed the reasons in the introduction, now I would like to make it more explicit. My study on environmental NGOs in China is not really a study of environmental movement. It is a study of an important and to some extent newly emerging sector in the social systems of Chinese environmental management and education. The efforts of NGOs to raise environmental consciousness in China can, however, be seen as a kind of cognitive praxis or knowledge mobilization. There are many definitions of social movements mentioned by Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison but considering the situation in China where there is a dominant state it is hard to space of a real environmental movement. From the 1990s onwards environmental NGOs have emerged, a new EIA law that requires public participation in the EIA process of construction projects was promulgated, the dominant role of the state and the weak power of the civil society remained unchanged. Therefore, in my view, environmental movement in China is only at its starting point and many aspects of

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cognitive praxis of the movement were not yet so clear. It is not possible to “read” Chinese environmental movement in cognitive terms as Eyerman and Jamison did in their book in relation to American civil rights movement.

However, concepts and methods introduced by Eyerman and Jamison can help to understand NGOs in China because what NGOs do to raise environmental consciousness have certain features of cognitive praxis.

In order to make my understanding of environmental NGOs more theoretically or formally expressed, I would like to first briefly introduce some concepts and terms that I am going to use and I have already used from *Social Movements A Cognitive Approach*. Based on my limited knowledge about social movements, sociology, history and philosophy of science, I cannot make any critical comments on these terms and concepts. However, I try to use them by relating them to my studies of Chinese environmental NGOs.

By using the term cognitive praxis, we want to emphasize the creative role of consciousness and cognition in all human action, individual and collective. ... .. The cognitive praxis that concerns us in this book is that which transform groups of individuals into social movements, that which give social movements their particular meaning or consciousness (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991: 3)

From these statements we know that particularly in the Chinese context, cognitive praxis can be understood as a process of knowledge making both at the individual and collective levels. (See. Chapter 1 the definition of consciousness in the Chinese language) By knowledge, in this thesis, it is not only the systematized, formalized knowledge of the academic world. Knowledge as it is for Eyerman and Jamison is both formal and informal, objective and subjective, moral and immoral, professional and popular. (Ibid, 49)

In order to understand the cognitive praxis of a social movement, (in this thesis environmental NGOs in environmental consciousness-raising in China), Eyerman and Jamison suggested reading cognitive praxis in three dimensions. These dimensions derived

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from the three types of “knowledge interests” in knowledge production. (Ibid, 66-68) The three dimensions of cognitive praxis are the cosmological dimension, the technological dimension and the organizational dimension. In regard to the environmental movement, the cosmological dimension consists of the worldview assumptions, the attitudes to nature and society, and most especially of their interrelationships. The technological dimension refers to the specific topics of environmental protest, as well as the alternative techniques that have been developed. The organizational dimension refers to the anti-elitist and participatory mode of solving public problems and an ambition to deprofessionalize expertise and develop new, more participatory forms of knowledge making. (Ibid 66-77)

A focus on cognitive praxis helps to reveal motivations of those people who take part in environmental organizations. In this thesis the varieties of projects and activities of environmental NGOs in China can be categorized according to the three dimensions. Environmental NGOs are carrying out cognitive praxis in the sense that the actors who create and mobilize green knowledge. Their focuses in terms of their works and their orientations can be distinguished in relation to different dimensions characterized their features. When it comes to the individual actor’s roles in different environmental NGOs we can also recognize them by what Eyerman and Jamison call “movement intellectuals”.

Eyerman and Jamison conceptualized the term “movement intellectuals” to illustrate role of intellectuals in social movement. As they define:

Movement intellectuals refer to those individuals who through their activities articulate the knowledge interests and cognitive identity of social movement. They are movement intellectuals because they create their individual role at the same time as they create the movement, as new individual identities and a new collective identity take form in the same interactive process (Ibid, 98)

In the development of environmental movements in the West a range of movement intellectuals have been formed in the “social space” created by this movement. In the 1960s established intellectuals sparked and ignited the movement by publishing popular scientific

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works. As the movement space broadened, in the 1970s nonestablished intellectuals, often students took over from the established intellectuals in the further articulation and specification of environmentalist knowledge interests or movement identity. A particular type of movement intellectuals became important -the counterexpert- who challenged the decisions and standards of the governmental environmental experts on behalf of the “public interest”. In the 1970s other types of intellectual were formed in the movement such as the grassroots engineers, who directed a kind of sociotechnical learning process among environmental activists and taught courses and published books in renewable energy, etc. There were also public environmental educators who popularized the message of the movement in the pamphlets and magazines and even posters. Gradually, especially in the struggles against nuclear energy many movement intellectuals tended to become professional. This kind of trend continued afterwards. In the 1980s the professionalized environmental organization came into being. They are more specialized and to some extent leaving the movement “space” behind. (Ibid, 102-108)

In general all activists in social movements are, “movement intellectuals”, because through their activism they contribute to the formation of the movement’s collective identity, to making the movement what it is. All activists do not participate equally in the cognitive praxis of social movements. However, some actors are more visible as organizers, leaders or spokespersons and indeed, in the case of contemporary social movements at least most activists are movement intellectuals in one form or another and at one time or another. (Ibid 94 and 106)

In the Chinese environmental movement, I should say there are many kind of movement intellectuals involved, including popular writers, university students, established intellectuals etc. When it comes to the actors in environmental NGOs, I would like to discuss, in the next section, how their personal characteristics and experiences shaped their intellectual activities. My focus will be on those “visible” actors, however, even those working in the NGOs who are not “visible” have made contributions to environmental NGOs. Similar to what Eyerman and Jamison have written, environmental NGOs have

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“carved out” a new kind of public “place”. It doesn’t mean that those “visible” actors such as the organizers who created NGOs do not change. They are also changed in position from in the public eyes, most of them by creating an NGO transformed from established academic intellectuals into some kind of public educators. However, as I mentioned, the study of Chinese environmental NGOs is not a study of environmental movement in China, therefore, the term “movement intellectuals” is not directly appropriated in this thesis to actors in NGOs. (They are “movement intellectuals” of a not yet established environmental movement, but they are not “movement intellectuals” in an organization) According to the Chinese situation those who work in environmental NGOs have normally received a higher education, so they are, in some sense, intellectuals.

The ideas that intellectuals express must be communicated and the means of this communication are socially determined and changed over time. This obviously has a major effect on the way intellectual activities is carried out both within and outside social movements. (Ibid, 99)

There are two major trends in the contemporary contexts of communication. First, there has been an increasing professionalization of intellectual activity in modern societies, and second there has also been an increasing “technification” of the means of communication. Movements started to employ their own professionals and that is an indication that the movements have to large extent transformed into institutions. The electronic communication technology has made communication with a large and faceless “mass” much more possible than it was in the older social movements. (Ibid, 99-101) The two trends can be found in Chinese environmental NGOs when they use their communication channels for their activities. Especially for those environmental NGOs who focus on environmental education and whose projects are more participatory, they heavily rely on varieties of communicative professionals and different techniques to communicate with the public.

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## **8.2 The Role of Environmental NGOs in Environmental Consciousness-raising in China**

In my view, environmental NGOs have played an important role in environmental consciousness-raising in China in the sense that they are quite effective in raising the environmental concerns of the Chinese public.

In the cosmological dimension, environmental NGOs in China propagate a kind of world view about balancing the relationship of economic development with environmental concerns. They often worry about the changes in material life, and a fervent pursuit of economic development in the society that will and already have had severe consequences for the natural environment. They are trying to persuade people to be more sensitive about their lives and the impact on the environment. Some NGOs want to inspire respectful attitude toward traditional indigenous cultures of the minorities and they also consider the invasion of modern culture as been partly responsible for environmental deterioration in certain areas. Environmental education is thus meant to foster a more balanced attitude of development and the environment.

Professional Advocacy NGOs, focus most of their attention on the technological dimension of cognitive praxis. They utilize their expertise to carry out research on renewable energy, setting up various demonstration projects of renewable energy use and ecological agriculture practices. In the legal aspects of environmental issues, NGOs use their expertise to help pollution victims protect their rights. University student's environmental groups also sometimes carry out investigation programs on water quality, endangered species. NGOs community activities on promoting the use of energy saving electronic products and garbage recycling can also be deemed as praxis in this dimension.

The organizational dimension of cognitive praxis of Chinese environmental NGOs is focused on promoting public participation in environmentally related decision-making. Firstly they see the emergence of environmental NGOs themselves increasing public

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participation in environmental policy. But this participation must be based on a cooperative relationship with the government in order to have community environmental activities, different education programs etc. Promoting public participation in policy or decision-making in terms of direct involvement in policy process is another aspect. Chinese environmental NGOs participate in policy processes by primarily advising the governmental authorities not by lobbying. Some evidence of their participation in decision-making process relating to environmental issues can be found in the interviews.

To influence environmental policy making is one of our activities.... You mean to participate in the policy making? I think in the past a few years public environmental auditing is not so popular. Now it is quite common. We have some programs.(Interview with GVB Appendix)

When it comes to environmental policy making, we are invited. For example this year when the people's congress discussed the amendment of solid waste treating law we as a group were invited. (Interview with FON Appendix)

In the early years of environmental NGOs, that their leaders played a dominant role, which means the leader's personal characteristics to a great extent shaped the organization. Liao Xiaoyi, President of GVB, earned a Master degree of Philosophy from Zhongshan University in 1986. After working as a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Liao became a visiting scholar on International Environmental Politics at the University of North Carolina in the United States. From her background she has used methods and approaches that she learned in the United States of America for environmental education. That is the reason why her organization is the first NGO which focus on community environmental activities. Liang Congjie, a descendant of Liang Qichao (a prominent reformer of the late Qing Dynasty) and a professor of Chinese history seems like a traditional Chinese intellectual like his forefathers. At the beginning FON was initially named Academy for Green Culture (an affiliate to the non-governmental Academy for Chinese Culture). That is the reason why FON's major task is in their terms to disseminate a kind of green culture. Their first regular program, the bird watching program was heavily dependent on the help of some university professors whose area of expertise is ornithology.

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However, environmental NGOs also have changed their static “status” in the society. They have been transformed from establish intellectuals with credentials as to famous people, organizers or mediators of public participations.

Compared to the “visible” leading actors in NGOs, most of the members, staff, volunteers, and other kinds of participants in environmental NGOs are not so as them. What are their roles in environmental consciousness-raising in China? I think they can be seen as “teachers”. But “teacher” in this thesis is not of the normal contemporary meaning. It is more personal, and it is definitely not a role equivalent to an organizational one. It is much more similar to the traditional meaning of “teacher” in Confucius expressions. Confucius said:

When three men are walking together, there is one who can be my teacher. I pick out people's good and follow it. When I see their bad points, I correct them in myself. (The Analects of Confucius, Translated by Charles Muller)

Confucius’ words to some extent express the collective nature of knowledge making. I think, from the invisible actors in environmental NGOs what we can get is something good because they are the group of people who have relatively high environmental consciousness in China.

Environmental NGOs’ propaganda and actions rely on a variety of communication channels to disseminate. Except for those who publish quarterly or monthly newsletters, most environmental NGOs’ major self-owned media of communication is the Internet. almost all of them have their own website telling people who they are and what their actions are and how to contact with them. There is no evidence to show any Chinese environmental NGO has employed a TV station or established newspapers. However their actions and educational programs are often seen on TV programs and covered on newspapers. Most environmental NGOs in China cannot employ professional journalists. However, some professionals work for them voluntarily. For example GVB has a Journalist Forum on

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Energy (GVB Website) and Mr Shen of FON said in the interview:

Yes we have (media groups) and that is our advantage. Media has a very close relationship with NGOs. ... ..No, they are not employed. We have a lot of member who are journalists and normally Chinese media concern about environmental issues a lot. (Interview with FON Appendix)

The Internet as a new kind of communication tool, not only supported environmental NGOs' propaganda in China. It also gives birth to a new kind of environmental NGOs in China. The informal environmental NGO called "Han Hai Sha" was originated in 2001 by information exchange on the Internet chat rooms, forums, and e-mails etc. The Internet offers a "public place" for them to express their common concerns. They found it necessary to make informal communication into more organized in order to carry out some activities. Still they are using the Internet as an effective communication channel to disseminate their environmental concerns; their electronic edition of quarterly newsletters is among the best environmental NGOs' publications in China.

In conclusion we can say there are two reasons for Chinese environmental NGOs to carry out environmental consciousness-raising activities. The first reason is that this is the area in which they are allowed to work there is a political opportunity. The second is that there exist some needs for actors to awaken the public. According to Chinese political culture non-governmental organizations lack legitimate power to participate in political issues. Besides, a dominant state takes charge of most aspects of decision-making and social affairs in China. The public space left for environmental NGOs is limited to those areas that do not have direct impact on politics or where NGOs can work directly with the government. Environmental consciousness-raising is thus primarily non-political.

The reason why environmental NGOs work to raise environmental consciousness is also because of the need for a higher level of environmental awareness in the society today. There is both one the part of the government and there is also a part from the society. The government has realized that to foster a great environmental protection in China public a

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higher level of environmental consciousness needs to be promoted. At the same time, the focus of the government has shifted to economic development. The government needs some social actors that could play an assisting role to educate the public. Therefore it seems that in some cases, NGOs and government share common goals.

The society need on the other hand derives from some requirements for a border “public space” to express different environmental concerns. Also the society needs some one to “cool down” the fervent pursuit of wealth and find ways to tackle environmental problems that are caused by economic growth. Even though the government has already used some economic and political methods to try to balance economic development and environmental protection the need for public participation also requires a more environmentally conscious society to support their efforts. Chinese traditions both in terms of formal knowledge and everyday knowledge seem to be missing but the problems is environmental consciousness in China certainly contains those forms of knowledge. To increase the capacity for environmental protection Chinese traditions needed to be revitalized. To meet these needs environmental NGOs seem to be the most appropriate institutions because they emerged from the civil society itself and many “intellectuals” working for them are professionals with expertise in science and technology, organizational management and communication.

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## Appendix

### Interview with Global Village of Beijing

#### Interview with Li Li (Staff in Charge of Routine Work)

**I became to know GVB from varieties of literatures and reports. I would like to know more about you. Firstly I would like to ask you some general questions. Could you tell me how you get registered?**

Oh, it goes like this, when we started in the 1996, we registered as a company, because at that time the central government particularly the ministry of civil affairs has certain requirements on the registration of the environmental NGOs, especially that an NGO should find its own direct management bureaucratic body in the central government. At that time it was comparatively more difficult to find it compared with the situation as it is now. But since the year 2004, this year, we became a registered NGO, precisely, Private non-enterprise non-profit organizations.

**Non-enterprise non-profit organizations?**

Yes, so now we became the real NGO. As you know, in the past a few years, many NGOs in China worked or registered as private enterprises. Because there was some historical reasons. But not all the Chinese NGOs could successfully change their identity because you know we really did a lot of job.

**Yes as I know you are to some extent successful, so maybe....**

Yes because we have a good reputation, and some governmental ministries recognize us, so we could change our identity and recognized by the government.

**Do you think that it is easier to get registered now and the social and political environment for NGOs to work is less stringent than before?**

Yes, definitely now it is better. I need to address two main points; actually the door for NGOs is always open according to the ministry of civil affairs. Last year we talked to Beijing bureau of civil affairs, they said in fact our door is always opening but, the requirements might be higher than someone's expectation. Normally we (NGOs) think the requirements are very demanding to get registered. This brings in such a dilemma that the government thinks that the door is open while the NGOs think that it is difficult to get officially registered. So NGOs tend to avoid registration, sometimes they won't try.

**How do you find that the requirements are high for you? You noticed that in the beginning stage of setting up your organization or you found out when you have already set up.**

I think the most difficult part is that we need to find a particular governmental body to be our "person" in charge, but we really do not know where we could find this "person". If you have some relationship with the

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government you could find it, but such as you and I are common citizens we really do not have the information to find the right door. Even if you could find a right governmental body, they will think that they are not familiar with you so they can not recommend you or take charge of you. In that case you can not get registered. Eight years of work speak for us, they would like to support us and help us therefore in 1996 we are a company but now we are a real NGO.

**What is the general governmental body that takes the responsibility to manage you? Ministry of Civil Affairs?**

Yes the Ministry of Civil Affairs is the general head, but indeed we work closely with the local level authority.

**You are registered in Ministry of Civil Affairs but as I noticed that you have some relations with the SEPA.**

We have relationship with many different governmental departments at different levels; we once work with the Department of Forestry, the Development and Reform Committee, because environmental issues contain so many aspects.

**As I see the focus of your organization is on environmental education, so is it to say that your relationship to the government is only on public environmental communication and education. You served as their “mouse” to speak for them? Do you have some specific case?**

Yes we focus on environmental education, but we work independently. We could have some cooperation with the government and people from the society, for example we published this book, (An Environmental Guidance of Elementary School Students) maybe there is someone who is going to donate us to publish it, when we made it we need to find some experts and maybe these experts come from the SEPA.

**Since you have some relationships with different governmental bodies have you ever lobbied to promote certain environmental programs and regulations?**

Well to influence environmental policy making is one of our works. Let me give you some examples. The first one is separation of garbage. Environmental protection is certain kind of national policy in the sense that government pays attention to it and promotes it. However, the government’s role is sometimes limited especially at the grassroots level. That is the place where we as social and civil organizations can show our ability. We did very well in public participation activities, citizens trust us, and we can go deep into the grassroots to organize specific environmental programs. The government may offer a “red-title” document or something as guidance but to implement it is a sort of work people at the bottom are doing.

**From your expressions, I noticed that you have never been to the process of making those “red-title” documents. Have you?**

You mean to participate in the policy making? I think in the past a few years public environmental auditing is not so popular. Now it is quite common, so there are some programs...we are invited.

**Such as “Green Olympic” in Beijing have you been in the discussion process?**

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Yes definitely we are involved in this. Let me tell you one thing, we have a very special difference from the other environmental NGOs, is that our president Liao xiaoyi is employed as a consultant of the Olympic organization committee. So when the Olympic Organization Committee wants to make some rules, she is sure to be involved. As a representative for the public opinion she is sure to express something. As I know one regulation for the greening of hotels is suggested by us. The separation of garbage case is that we work together with local authority of Beijing; we wrote a letter to the mayor and tried to promote this.

**Liao xiaoyi is your? What is the title?**

Chief

**Is she working here, I mean is her office here?**

Yes her office is here, to organize our NGO is her job but she also has other engagements and public activities, so she is quite often traveling outside.

**I would like to know that some of your personal opinions on Chinese environmental issues. What do you think is the most significant environmental problems in China?**

I think it is the balance of environmental protection and the economic development. Now it is called a conflict or a double edged sword. The government is changing some of its point of views (concepts), a few years ago the judgment of a local government official is made upon his works to stimulate GDP growth, and development goes on this way. Environmental protection awareness is rather weak in China. Now you can see in many cases the consequences of this pattern of development appeared: industrial pollution, food safety, air pollution etc, and the quick expansion of private automobiles. We think under this particular circumstance we need to figure out the “position” of environmental protection and its relationship to economic development. Another point I would like to address is the citizens’ awareness, public environmental consciousness, in fact, I felt now it is not good enough. This is our job; this is what we called environmental protection in the “third area”. From Liao Xiaoyi’s experiences pollution control is not a real problem because now people in China are quite familiar with that, what matters is something that is related with people’s “lifestyle”. She thinks that if everyone’s lifestyle is environmentally sound, then the environmental problems will be solved.

**Do you think such ideas are the consensus of Beijing Global Village?**

Yes, this is our motto.

**So everyone think the same here**

Yes. Every one came here and work for us, they need to know what is our goal, and what we do here. Every employee should know our job is to promote environmental awareness of the public and introduce a new lifestyle.

**So the method you used to fulfill that goal is by environmental education and public activities? Can you give some examples?**

Yes by activities and education. In these years, we have so many activities. In the communities, we highly recommend garbage separation, this is a program that we insist on and we are always prompting it. The other

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aspect is educating the young, the school children, for they are the future, China's future is in their hand. They should have environmental awareness and concerns in their early age. We involved in many programs in schools.

**Do you think your job works?**

Yes of course, in the year 2000 we had a program on the "earth day" we made commitment cards for the 0.83 million elementary and high school students and some of them signed. We kept the cards; we might be able to offer you to see it. We thought it was a good idea to use these children to bring environmental concerns to their family. About 0.4 million feedbacks are kept in our training center. We hope children could tell their family not to waste electricity, water, trying to separate garbage, and not to use detergent that contains element phosphor, these things in their lives are important for the environment. We hope they could start from this. They are quite impressed by these, many children tell their fathers, that they need to use another detergent and they need "electricity saving" lights.

**Do you think that the new generation concerned more about the environment or have a better awareness of the environment than the old generation?**

Not exactly, in the separation of garbage case, the older citizens are more willing to do so, because China once was poor, so the older citizens normally are more frugal in their lives. We think the tradition of frugality is a fundamental element in environmental protection in China. You might not notice that. Nowadays, kids think that they live in an affluent society, so they can easily get what they want, they do not cherish a lot of things. They lack the traditions of frugality, and they don't think this could be a popular behavior.

**What about those born in the 1980's?**

Even though they have grown up they still need to be educated on environmental issues. From our experience the middle age and old citizens are more willing to accept environmentally sound lifestyles.

**Are those older generations willing to participate your activities, since you said they are easier to accept you green lifestyles?**

Very willingly, the majority of people participate in our program are the older generations. They have enough time and they are so careful to categorize different waste. And they know it is good for the country. Because of their high commitment to China (their love of China) and they experienced poor life. They tend to understand our purpose. But the younger generation is not so easily to understand this; because they have never experience the "hard" life. I think to change the lifestyles of the young is very important. Their consumption behavior is so bad. Many of them are fond of the Japanese, American, popular culture, they think that is a "fashion". They need to buy a car, even though it is just the first year of their career.

**Your philosophy is that too fast economic development and the lifestyle emerged is very harmful to the environment. You are trying to warn people.**

We are trying to tell them what should be a "fashionable" lifestyle. We need to tell the young.

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**What is your expertise?**

My major has nothing to do with environment, but my family especially my father has a relationship with environmental issues. And I think this is something for the public good.

**What are your reasons to work for an NGO?**

For me, when I was a child I was told that if one can have some contributions to the society, it should be a very happy thing. I like this job because of this; this is a job that could not make a lot of money. If I just think about making money I won't work for an environmental NGO, because the salary is slow here in China in NGOs. But for me it has some extra meanings and my family now could support me economically, so I can devote myself to this NGO. Certainly, not all the people who are not in need of money could work in an environmental NGO; I have a "heart" for the public good. That is the reason why I work for an NGO.

**May I know your financial resource?**

We have to find financial support for ourselves.

**What are the main sources? From donation?**

We can not accept donations; so we need to rely on the funding from different foundations, such as Ford foundation and environmental protection foundations in different foreign embassies in China. The developed countries have a lot of funds to help Chinese deal with environmental problems. As long as their program has some relationship to our work we are entitled to apply. They will publish what resource they can offer every year. So according to our situation we apply to those which are suitable for us. Companies in China would like to help us in cooperative programs.

**How you cooperate with them (companies) and get their support?**

For example, we promote the use of solar energy, so the companies which produce solar heating equipments will come to us, or we will try to contact them. We will make certain small scale exhibition in communities of their products. And we also have worked with electricity saving lights companies. We have to tell people there are alternative products they can buy.

**You can more or less help those environmental industries. And also give information to the customers.**

Honestly, most of funding comes from foreign foundations, only very few industries in China could actively find us and supports us to make some programs. I think this is because the Chinese industry has just become "rich" and their environmental awareness just changed gradually. So they can not be actively participated. Another reason is that there is no big tax reduces for environmental industries in China as a whole, so they might have limited money.

**I think they do not have enough motivation to participate.**

I think the government should have some tax reduce on those industries that produce environmentally sound products but now it is not good enough.

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**May I talk to your employees both Chinese and foreign nationals?**

**Interview with Poppy Tolland from Britain (English editor)**

**May I interview you in Chinese or English?**

Chinese.

**How do you know Global Village of Beijing?**

You are recording, what are you going to use it?

**I am going to use it as materials for my master's thesis. If I would like to use your comments and words I will inform you by email, if you want.**

Ok no problem. I came to know Global Village of Beijing from the website of China Development Brief, did you hear about that?

**Yes I am going to interview China Development Brief.**

They have a lot of information about Chinese NGOs (not only environmental NGOs) I visit their webpage every week. I saw a recruitment advertisement of Global Village of Beijing. I applied but they said that position was only available for Chinese nationals. I wrote to them said I can speak Chinese, I can use Chinese to do research. They offered me a chance to have an interview and I was so interested in working with them. So I got this position.

**What is your environmental concern, not only in China?**

I like the nature and the natural surroundings since I was very young, I like the animals, I have never eaten meat. I thought if the environment is destroyed it is going to affect every one. This is the biggest problem that we are facing every where in the world. In China, I think people's environmental awareness is not very high, because as the older generation they even do not have enough money to make themselves full, they might not have enough concerns about the environment. I think there is something wrong in the development process; environment awareness is closely related to development. Yesterday I went to an environmental group in the university and they are so great (environmental awareness). Their (university students) behavior is different from some people I have seen, there are some people throw their waste every where. I went to tell them, don't do this. But they said they are not hurting anyone by doing this, there is no wrong to do this. From my experience some one really has a very good environmental awareness while the others do not have even a little environmental concern and the consequence of their deeds. I think it has a great meaning to work here and I am so willing to accept this job.

**Where you come from?**

I come from Britain.

**Do you know some Chinese culture? Since you can speak good Chinese and use it to do research.**

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I know some but not deep enough because Chinese people and Chinese culture is very complicated. It has a long history and I am an “outsider”, I came here I learned Chinese but it is not very fluent, but I have interests so I can learn something every day. I really want to know Chinese, I am not that kind of people who come from somewhere else and see Chinese with their prejudices. I felt I know more about Chinese gradually.

**Do you think that in Chinese traditional culture and maybe modern culture still remains some elements that could be good for the protection of environment?**

What do you mean?

**I said for example ancient Chinese ideas.**

I do not know so deep, but I know Taoism is trying to make a harmonious relationship with the nature. And I also know the Cultural Revolution emphasized the idea to conquer the nature, and promote a rapid progress and the “Great Leap Forward” period, hoping to produce a lot of things in a very short time. The traditional Chinese values changed dramatically in a very short period of time. People suddenly forget how to live with nature. If you care more about the nature, the nature will offer you more. I think such traditions were lost because of those “movements”.

**What do you think are the reasons for this dramatic change?**

I think there are two reasons, I think the Cultural Revolution has wipe out all the values and traditions of the Chinese society. People need to change their mind completely in this period of time. After that the value system can not change back again. Now the rapid development can be the other reason, people have no time to think about the past and to worry about the future problems. They focus on the near future or maybe the present time. The do not care what will be left for the coming generations.

**What is your major? Do you think that has some relationship with your job now?**

I learn Chinese in the university, no direct relationship with environment. My job here is basically on communication and environmental education. But personally I am very concerned about the environment. I like to work with the Chinese, so when my interests can combine together, I am very satisfied with this job.

**Are you an environmentalist? Can you call yourself an environmentalist?**

I am not, a professional environmentalist. Or I you could say I am so radical. I think people need to be optimistic about things that are going to happen, sometimes when you do a very little thing, it is quite difficult. But you still need to be optimistic. I went to a university to saw their battery recycling program and garbage separation program. The members of the student union went to each dorm to collect bottles and newspapers very tiring but they are so pleased to do this, but these activities are relatively small things compared to the size of China. The things they recycled are very limited but they are so great. They spread a kind of idea that will influence people around them. So we need to be optimistic, do not worry we can not achieve because then that will never achieve.

**Do you think that the young Chinese has relative higher environmental awareness?**

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I think for some young Chinese now they think they need to find a good job earn some money and take care of themselves and their family. They do not care about people around them, but there are some people who think environment is a responsibility that they need to take.

**What is your contribution to GVB?**

I think I am not a professional, my job is to encourage people, I am learning every day being encouraged by other people and encouraging people. I think I am optimistic about the environment, I think some western people think that Chinese environmental problem are very difficult to deal with but I do not think like that. I tend to help people and made them to some kind of examples so that we can learn from each other.

**Ok thank you.**

**Interview with Sui Dongmei (Accountant)**

**How you became to know GVB?**

I did not know so much about social environmental groups and environmental issues very much before I came here. I was told by one of my friend about GVB. They are working for the public good. And Liao xiaoyi is a good person. I admire her.

**Yes she is quite famous**

I admire her, not because she is famous. I like her because of something she had done.

**Specifically?**

I was trained to be an accountant, and I do not know so much about the environment. She has a broader view of the environmental issues, and her personal experience attracted me.

**Is that your motivations to work in an environmental NGO?**

Yes.

**Do you think that in Chinese traditions and cultures still remains some elements that will facilitate environmental protection.**

Oh I think in Chinese traditions there are something still remains. Especially you can see the older generations; I think younger generations are to some extent not caring about the environment. For example in the restaurants younger people normally waste their food and use one-time-only sticks.

**You imply that the consumption behaviors of the young are so wasteful in the senses that not environmentally sound.**

Yes. I think environment issues should contain this aspect.

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**What do you think are the most significant environmental problems?**

I think it is the air pollution. Too many cars.

**Do you have a child? How you educate him or her about the environment?**

Yes I have. I teach him from the small things, I told him to turn off the light when it is not necessary, and to save water. He kind of knows why he needs to do that. And in the school teachers also would teach him to do so.

**Are you optimistic about the Chinese environment?**

Yes, sure because I have my son, (next generation)

**Will your son also remind you on your behavior?**

Yes sometime he will remind me if I did something wrong.

**How many years have you been working here?**

Two years.

**Do you think that the money you earned from the NGOs will be enough for you to live?**

Yes, I do not have very high demanding requirements for life. I work here not just because of the money they can offer, it is because I would like to.

**Do you know there are any relationship between you and the other NGOs?**

Yes, we have cooperation with them in this summer we had a program on electricity saving air conditioning.

**Do you have any contacts with the media?**

We have a lot of contacts with them, every month we have a salon of the "energy" journalists. We have a kind of club, so when we have programs we will inform them.

**Interview with China Development Brief**

**Interview Fu Tao (Staff Writer)**

**What are the reasons for the emergence of Non-governmental organizations in China especially the environmental NGOs? Your personal thinking**

The government now devotes itself to economic development, at the same time government gives up some management responsibilities of some social areas, it withdraw from some social services, this gives different

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Chinese NGOs some opportunities. The reason for NGOs to emerge is to fill in those blanks that were withdrawn by the government. Both from the public point of view and the governmental point, things like children protection, taking care of the old, public education, women rights, poverty reduce, the goal of NGOs and the government are to some extent the same. So governmental agencies would like to support NGOs even though this support may only be rhetoric or they might just want to have a good political image, they might not have some fundamental change of attitudes toward NGOs, for example, the management of NGOs is still “double” management, and still remains the principle of “non-competition”, from these, I would say that the government still want to take control of the NGOs. However, in China other than published regulations, there are still some regulations that remains un-published but accepted, governmental officials could connive NGOs to do some jobs, in some places the environment for NGOs are relative less stringent for local governmental officers might made the decision by their own judgment that in certain social areas NGOs could have their role. Another important factor is that personal relationship with the government, if the organizer has a good relationship with the government, they could be registered to be an NGO, even if they are very “grassroots”. They could be recognized by the government. So in these “gray” areas NGOs could have their place. In general the government is trying to control.

In environmental issues NGOs are relatively active; there are many reasons for that. One reason is that environmental protection now has already become the goal of the whole society. Last year the new EIA law came out, it urged public participation’s role in construction projects. Another reason is that the international society has some influence; environmental NGOs get support from varieties for foreign agencies. These supports guaranteed the funding of operation and the introduction of environmental concepts. The SEPA knows something about international environmental movements, so they might be more flexible to NGOs. They might accept suggestions from some social organizations. For instance “green Olympic”, they would like to show their willingness to work with NGOs in this process, in this campaign some NGOs are involved. Those are the reason that environmental NGOs are very active.

Maybe you noticed that something happened this year, that NGOs are not satisfied with their current status, they are not satisfied with just participate in the area of environmental education, planting trees, such public services. Now some of them are trying to be more “suggestive”, they required to participate in public policy making. They would like to be the representatives of the public and the weak social groups; one obvious case is that this year, NGOs mobilized citizens to prevent the relocation of the zoo in Beijing. They succeed. Another case is that from last year, NGOs actively presented in the protest of dam constructions in Sichuan province and Yunnan province. I felt these programs are different from before, for previously environmental NGOs only focus on the natural or ecological environment the relationship of human and the nature, now the focus on social equality, for all of these huge project have some impacts on some weak groups in the society and how these people could get involved in public policy making. They pay attention to the local people there, their rights; this has become a major concern of such NGOs.

**Is that to say that now such NGOs promote sustainable development both ecological and social?**

Social justice and environmental justice, they tend to take more and more social elements into consideration.

**I think now in Chinese environmental movement actors come from three main streams the technical, cultural and governmental. From your personal experience what do you think of this, and could you tell me some famous or representative actors in Chinese environmental movement.**

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I think that is for sure that engineers in China participated in environmental protection, pollution control experts. There are so many of them I could not identify some one who is very “famous”. What I want to say is that, they might be an expert in their field, but they might lack some “social” concern, for example in the construction of dams, the experts and engineers might not “really” understand the social impacts of the dam. They lack enough concern; their expertise is to use their known technology to solve the problems of man and nature. I could say they have a good will but they do not have enough concern to the people. They might over trust their technologies. Another kind of actors I think might be some one who would like to make a new lifestyle, their representatives are some NGOs, they might use traditional ideas to balance the invasion of modern culture, but within these NGOs they are differentiated. Some might be utopian while some are quite professional.

**Professionalized?**

Yes, to some extent. Some are professionalized, for instance in Yunnan province there is one NGO, called Shengli chemical pesticide substitution center. Their job is to work with enterprises and the local government to help farmers and educate them, tell them to minimize the usage of chemical pesticide, help them sell their products. I think they are quite professional. They have a very clean goal and they have some feasible method to do this.

There is another called “green rivers” they are trying to take the mass public into consideration especially the indigenous community; they focus on public participation in river environmental management and justice in decision making. Most of the members of this NGO are experts and researchers of river management.

One NGO called the “Han Hai Sha”, the members are focusing on desert control, but they are some kind of idealistic. From their publications and environmental experiment, they are definitely out of the mainstream; they would like have a sort of harmonious life with nature.

I think the government tends to use economical tools to deal with environmental problems, the forestry department plan to begin using forestry labeling, already has some exemplary programs. It is quite technical. The SEPA is trying to introduce pollution trade quotas into the Chinese industry.

**As I know the exemplary program has already been implemented in Jiangsu Province in China.**

And maybe in the northeastern China. These programs the SEPA works together with professor Ma Zhong in Remin University of China also with an American NGO called “Environmental defense”. I think these exemplary programs are fine, with a lot of expertise and economical tools, but public participation and democratic decision making is rather weak. I think we have a lot of things to do in this aspect. For example if you are not a victim of pollution, you can not litigate the polluter. I think even though something has changed but the role of public participation and NGOs in environmental issues was not acknowledged by the government. This is not to say the one particular governmental department could change this situation, it is something related to the whole political atmosphere. In some small cases NGOs might have influence but in general the power of NGOs is very limited.

**NGO as a form a public participation, some of them are quite successful while other are not, (some are well-known) what do you think are the reasons to make this difference.**

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Well I think at the beginning stage when we talk about successful or not, is mainly rely on the person who initiate, for example Prof. Liang congjie he is a figure with some political power. Some suggestion that Friends of Nature made to the parliament was because of his unique status. Protection of certain “golden monkeys” etc, it is by his own channel that these suggestion being heard. Depending on different initiators, NGOs may have different resources. Media is another resource that will make a difference, Friends of nature has its own media group, and the members of that group are all journalists so their activities will quickly be known to the public. “Green hometown” they also have a journalists’ salon; they have regular meetings so their ideas could be expressed. To be successful or not by measuring the public influence I think, we should see if the oath of that organization being accepted by the public or not, or at least being known.

But there are other measurements we should also take into consideration when we discuss if an NGO is successful. Their management, their legitimacy (registered or not), the ability to get sufficient funding, etc. In general NGOs have their different features, in fact it is very difficult to say that some NGOs are successful while others are not.

**Have you ever received any help from international NGOs or other international organizations? Just now you said that Chinese environmental NGOs were given special international attention and support.**

For us China Development Brief, the operational funding for us, for many years has been coming from foreign support, foundations. We are an NGO, but we are trying to be independent, to keep our observation objective. The donors did not influence our works and publications, we are independent. We begin as an English publication, so we have a very close relationship with the international community; so many organizations have very good relationship with us. We served as information sources for them when they want to have some programs in China. At the same time, we have a Chinese version now, so that we can introduce international information to our Chinese readers to tell them some international supports and the possibility for the cooperation within Chinese civil societies. For example we have published a book about Chinese NGOs and we are going to renew it. And we have published a book called Chinese civil society in that making, 255 Chinese NGOs. We collect some information of the Chinese NGOs, in that book, our definition of Chinese NGOs is not so strict because Chinese society has its features, so we think NGOs has some many forms. We include GONGOS and grassroots NGOs (registered and not registered), as long as we think that they are NGOs and no matter it is big or small, we would like to offer a picture of the Chinese civil society. To let people know what those organizations are doing and their roles.

We also offer training course to help NGOs improve their own management. So by doing those things we kept a good relationship with NGOs and support them.

**From the NGOs’ eyes, what does China Development Brief look like? Do you know that? Because I have interviewed some one who came to know other NGOs by your website.**

I think we offer a platform to share information and introduce programs and organizations. The Chinese version is mainly for the readers within China, while the English version is written mainly for international readers. From the international point of view we are somewhat very local, while from the Chinese NGOs’ view we are to some extent with some international identity. This is my personal view.

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**What do you think of the Chinese young people's environmental concerns, as well as the older generations? Do you think that the younger Chinese are more willing to participate in Chinese environmental protection?**

Most of the people who work in NGOs are young, they concerned about the environment very much, and they are so willing to take actions to protect the environment. I should admit that the initiators of NGOs are somewhat of the older generations, while now NGOs are becoming much younger. In the university students groups, environmental groups are the most popular, at least one environmental student group in one university. And our readers, many of them come from such environmental groups. They also concern about civil society in China, not just technical issues. They begin to consider the role of public participation and the civil society.

**What do you think is the role that Chinese civil society or NGOs played among the state and market?**

Firstly I think, we are partners. But to be a partner we need to be qualified in the sense that we need to be powerful enough. The precondition of being a partner is that the power the share of power is to some extent equal. Now Chinese NGOs are very weak, but in particular cases they have very good influences, and in general the influences of Chinese NGOs are increasing. But we should admit we are weak compared to the state and business. Secondly I think the civil society in China should play as an auditor. I think a good society should be that civil society is both partners and auditor of the state and the market.

**What kinds of elements in Chinese culture influence your environmental concerns? Do you think these elements still remain?**

I think definitely we have such concerns and traditions. For example 'Tian Ren He Yi' (human nature in a whole), but the problem is China experienced many political movements and social change such things became less. And as I see they are disappearing, for example the grass land in inner Mongolia, for thousands of years the grass land is good, but influenced by culture from outside and intervened by politics, trying to transform the grass land to farm land, such things like that as I see is something that destroyed our traditions.

When we talk about Chinese traditions, we need to know there are some minority cultures that different from the majority "Han" culture. When the "Han" culture invade to their place sometime we do not respect them enough, some elements that lies in the minority cultures which could be positive to the environment were destroyed or substituted. That might be responsible for the deterioration of the environment in some minority areas; I think some minority scholars would have much more to say about this. Now the majority "Han" culture as it is accepted as I see is what we call Confucianism and Taoism.

**Well Confucianism and Taoism are considered as elite thoughts normally, any common sense in the Chinese mind still works for environmental protection?**

I think they almost disappeared, as I see those traditions restrain people's desires. But in China a country where there are so many population with not so many resources. I think the tension between human and nature is more severe than other countries especially under the conventional way of industrialization and economic development. If other countries dare to say that development first and then take care of the environment, China, we can't say that. I think nowadays in China, in the time of globalization, we are so much influenced by the Western culture, that everyone hope to live like them, to have a car to have more consumption, that is very common.

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**Do you think you are an environmentalist? What kind of personality do you think can be called as an environmentalist in China?**

I think environmentalists are someone who insist their ideas, for example maybe someone insist riding bikes as their transportation, others take public bus instead of buying a car and others when going to the restaurant reject using any one-time-only sticks. Their lifestyle might not be accepted by others, but they are pioneering groups. I think their behavior can not change the majority but they think that it is a kind of believe. However they might bring someone to think about the environment.

**What do you think is the most significant environmental problem in China?**

I think, public participation, maybe it is because I work in this field. That is what China lack historically. Confucianism emphasizes the obedience of power, and a top-down management. So the resource of power is somewhat top-down, in the society there are no such regimes that could facilitate public participation. It is not only in environmental issues I think it is an overwhelming problem.

**What makes you think like that?**

I think the society should have justice, to protect those weak groups.

**Interview with Gao Xuesong (Staff Writer)****How old are you? You looked very young?**

I was born in the late 1970s.

Fu Tao: She is quite young, and she is in our group. But in general environmental concerns of the young is not always good. For example in Chinese universities, environmental group members might concern environment very much while others do not have so much concern. And not all university students are in the environmental group. They are different.

**What makes you work in an NGO?**

I think it has something to do with my education. I once studied in a program of Nanjing University and John Hawpkins University in the China-US culture studies centre. When studied there I learned some liberal ideas, my professor is somewhat radical, and I was influence by him. So I became interested in NGOs and the concept of civil society, I used to be an economic student, but my interesting area was not so clear. I think it is this education made me clear on what I am going to do, because I have seen the functions of NGOs.

**Are you a researcher here?**

Before I think I will be a scholar but now I am not quite sure. Maybe I did not found any opportunity.

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**What is your environmental concern?**

Oh mine is very simple, as a citizen I need to save water, recycle batteries, small things but they are our responsibilities. I have never thought about that I am going to be an environmentalist. I think for me bigger environmental problems are something like desert control and protection of the animals. I like animals; I have been working on this topic for a long time. But the other topics I do not know so much.

**Interview with Friends of Nature**

**Interview with Zhang Jilian and Shen Xiaohui (Directors of the office)**

**The other name of your organization is called Chinese green culture academy so does that imply anything? Are you trying to disseminate green cultures, and concepts?**

Oh you want to know such information; ok I could tell you what I know. And you can tape our talk.

**Yes I would only ask questions like that, could you tell me how you spread such cultures?**

Firstly I should say that, our “position”, our job is environmental education and communication. The method we use and the channels we have are basically as follows: our targets are the public (the society) and the other one is the student. For the students we have different methods, those who live in the cities we could offer education by different media we call it “ambulatory education” the tall gentlemen over there he is in charge of this, later you could interview him. While for students in the rural areas, we have some program in the “hope” schools, in such school we focus on telling them the right attitude of life. Two features in the program in the countryside, one feature is all the program are in the “hope” schools, and they are all voluntarily programs we recruit volunteers to participate in this program. Volunteers apply for this recruitment then we offer training courses for the volunteers, finally we send them to places all over China wherever in need. For the public we have website and we have publications, books, as you see here some of them are written by us. Lectures and seminars of different topics are held normally every month; we aimed to promote public environmental awareness.

**When it comes to lectures, I noticed on the website that Prof. Liang Congjie had some lectures in Beijing University and Tshing Hua University just a few days ago, I planed to go and listened to the lecture but I was too late. Prof Liang thought that the most fundamental environmental problem in China is the huge population. What do you think is the most significant environmental problem in China?**

Yes I strongly agree with him, and I think the most significant problem is the population. There are many environmental problems, if not seen from a political angle, are caused by huge population.

**Is that a consensus here in Friends of Nature?**

I am not sure but at least I think so. I think not only he agree on this, the government also agree upon this. Mr. Liang once said we are doing multiple calculation when we consider environmental problems everything multiplied by this huge population will have significant consequences. While Prime Minister Wen said when we take natural resources into consideration we are doing a division calculation, resources divided by the huge number it comes too limited. I think actually they are talking in a same logic. If Chinese people wanted to live

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like the Americans we would need the resources of four earths to do so.

**Just now you mentioned the Chinese lifestyle, I mean the ways of life in these years, do you think that in modern China, traditions such as some common sense, ancient ideas of life still exist?**

Still exist but it is not a kind of mainstream social “vogue”, medias exaggerate consumption, they would like people to know “what is the best”, for example today I saw an advertisement, on the TV they said a kind of floor board, 2008 (about 250 US Dollar) Yuan for one square meter was not expensive. It is also said that this price is of Global Standard reasonable not expensive.

Then Zhang Jilian talked to Mr. Shen Xiaohui discuss about this price and what the commercial say on TV.

Zhang: He ask me something about lives, I am giving him an example. 2008 yuan per square meter floor board is not expensive said on the TV.

Shen: What? Not expensive? What is it made of? So expensive.

Zhang: Global product, Global price.

She continues as follows:

Such advertisements try to evoke your desires and encourage you to satisfy such material life.

**Are you trying to remind people?**

We are trying to have some influence to people’s lives, and we also require ourselves to behave properly and have a simple life. Prof. Liang rides a bicycle to work every day. Wherever restaurants he goes, he brings his own sticks avoid using one-time-only sticks. Maybe in some people’s eye such behaviors is no big deal, one people do this, ten people do this, there is no use, but what if 50 million people do this, then it is significant enough to make some changes. Did you see our computers here? It is not up to date at all, but our network manager trying to make good use of it. From last year, we start to focus on electronic waste, for us, maybe we can not change the whole situation but just by keep using our old computer, but it represents our attitude.

**Do you think that you are an environmentalist? Just like Prof. Liang?**

I think I am not some kind of an environmentalist it is too big a word. To be an environmentalist must be someone with some qualifications. I am just a normal person, I think to have a simple life is something that I must do. There is something that I think is a sort of common sense, for example saving water in my home.

Zhang: Mr. Shen I do not know how many tons of water you use in your family in one month.

Shen: In order to save water, I got some complain from my own family, I use the water from the washing machine to clean the toilet. I can not use it all at one time so I kept the water for many days.

**What are the reasons for you to work in Friends of nature?**

I think there are so many reasons for this.

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Shen: Which university are you studying in? And what is your program?

**Now I am studying in Aalborg University Denmark, Msc of environmental management.**

Shen: Every one has their own stories; every one who works for environmental protection has their own stories.  
Ms Zhang you please first....

Zhang: Let me introduce Mr Shen to you. Mr. Shen is governmental officer and with a higher rank. He concerned about a lot of things, big problems such as forest protection. So we learned and get support from him, he at the same time is also a writer. For myself, to be honest, I became to work for environmental protection not because I know environment so much, I think it is more because of the people, I think it is because that I have very close relation with them then because of their concern I began to pay attention to the environment. I became love this career more and more, I think that is my experience.

**You mean Prof. Liang influenced you?**

Yes I am influenced by him and Mr. Shen.

**Mr. Shen can you tell me some of your stories?**

I am working for the forestry department. I used to work "at the bottom". I graduate from university just in the Cultural Revolution. I was appointed to a job to work in the forest in northeast China cutting trees. I worked near the Changbai Mountains. When I first went there, the forestry "factory" was just getting started. We live in the camps. And near where we live there is a tiger, and everyday when the sun fell, the tiger cried sorrowfully. I became so interested in this and I asked the older workers there why the tiger cried like this everyday. They said her tiger baby was killed by us. The hunters took away the body and sold it. The mother search for her baby but can not find it so she cried everyday. We introduced mechanical equipment to our working process, in just 2 or 3 years the forest was totally cut down. We build roads toward the inner area, to cut trees from the inside. When I first went there, the place called 'the dew river'; you can imagine how clean the river is. But in just a few years the river became looking like the "yellow river". The animals used to live there disappeared in very short time. I witnessed and felt that the way of industrialization and production destroyed the natural environment to a great extent.

**You think it is the 'industrialized production', do you think it is because of the implementation of the Western science and technology?**

No matter what kind of civilization, the human intervention to the environment is inevitable.

**Do you think that we accepted the concept to treat environment as resources so that we can make use of that? The conventional 'western' idea.**

Yes it is, we are now following the old western way. We are criticizing the USA every day but we have to learn from them. We have to learn their science and technology their economic development theory. Now the advertisement is trying to persuade us to live like the Americans. But this can not be done in China; we have

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very limited resources for 1.3 billion people.

**Sorry to interrupt you, Can you continue your story?**

Ok, then I would like to leave that place, and I want to change a job to protect the forest. I heard that there is a program to protect Changbai Mountain, a natural protection zone. So I would like to work there, then from there I got a job in Beijing.

**From your experience I know that you start to have environmental concerns very early, but at that time not so many people concerned about the environment, what is your motivation? What are the reasons?**

That is a long story; I like reading literature, in my early age I like reading Russian literatures that is translated to Chinese. In those books Russians portrayed the beautiful natural sceneries in Russia and expressed their love of nature. The reason for me to go to Changbai Mountain is to some extent influence by those literatures. In fact I was not appointed to work in Changbai Mountain, I changed with some one, I like to work in the forest but I do not know the job there is to cut trees. In fact at the beginning the pure love of the nature drives me to the work of natural environment protection

**May I know some of your books you have published?**

This is a book about the Chinese environmental movement. In fact environmental movement starts in China in the 1990s. This book is about the actors of this environmental movement, the first book to write about them. Including Mr. Tang Xiyang, do you know him? Liang Congjie, a lot of people, now most of them are quite famous. This book is about that group of people. The book wrote a real story of their journey in Baima Snow Mountain. This book is deemed as a forbidden book in Yunnan province but ironically it was given a prized from the news and publishing department of the central government. This book is about the origin of the Chinese environmental movement.

**I would like to know how you recruit your staff.**

Zhang: For the volunteer program, it depends on the detailed programs normally we need certain kinds of expertise, we will inform the public by different means then from the applications we can pick up the one we need. But the most important requirement is the volunteers need enthusiasm, need to prepared to contribution to the society, this is the basic consideration. From my own experience we do not need an expert, but we do need a person with a 'heart'.

**Is that to say you are trying to bring more people to this environmental movement?**

Yes, you can say that there are many different kinds of people in our members. For example military officer, many people from all domains of the society, as I remember there is a peddler who sells fish in a market. He come to join us, I think such people need more help. And I asked him why he decided to join us. The peddler said he is willing to participate and is concerned about the environment a lot. Normally, the beginners of our members focus on a clean surrounding, maybe sanitation, they think this is their environmental problem. Certainly it is. He cares about his environmental behavior in his own business, but he felt that his power is so weak that people around him did not support him to do so. He joined Friends of nature to get some support and

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some knowledge about environmental protection.

**What is the public impression of Friends of Nature in the society do you know that?**

Oh I think most people know that Friends of Nature is a social environmental organization.

**What do they mean by social environmental organization? In their understanding what are you supposed to do?**

This is a very interesting question. They hold different opinions. Some people think that we are the initiator of certain activities such as tree planting, take care of wild birds. Some one might think oh we are the Chinese 'Green Party'. Such people say so, means they know politics more and they might know some international environmental organizations. Some people even say that they are the Chinese 'Green Peace'.

**But Green Peace has already come to China**

Oh I think here the word 'Green Peace' meant some radical protestors. But we are not Green Peace. We are just a social environmental organization.

**Your president is Professor Liang Congjie, do you think his special identity will give you some priority compared to other environmental NGOs, such as you might have comparatively more resources and maybe you can participate in policy making etc. in the sense that you are more as others said similar to a western NGO.**

Oh we should say we love China, and we are not copying the Western version of environmental NGOs. We work followed by the Chinese rules. Our initial goal as our president said government work on the big things, we help to do some small things but we can not be negative to the government. On this base, we educate the public by having some programs. That is the reason why we can live for 10 years. Now the government gradually recognized our role. Actually Prof. Liang's positions give us advantages.

... .. Disturbed by telephones

When it comes to environmental policy making, we are invited. For example this year when the people's congress discussing the amendment of solid waste treating law we as a group were invited. Before they might only invite Prof. Liang, such experts, but now we are invited as FON this time.

What I can say is that we do not have a settled goal, such as we have to participate in policy making or maybe lobbying. We only focused on substantial environmental protection actions.

**From the many resources of information you are in my mind a real NGO, that is the reason why I would like to know the above questions on your political involvement.**

Shen: yes you are to some extent right, some NGOs in China is organized by the government, staffs were appointed by the government, funds come from the government even office buildings. But we rely on ourselves.

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**So what is your funding resource?**

Shen: one resource is our membership fees, and the other resource is we get some funding support of our programs from some foreign agencies, foundation. 90% from such foreign assistance.

Zhang: Membership fees for each person are 50 rmb per year. That is only a small amount of money so basically we spend the money on members themselves. And you see we have staffs here to manage our daily work.

**How many members you have?**

Ms Zhang: about 2000.

**What do you think of the young Chinese environmental concerns, do you think they are so deeply influence by the Western style of life as you mentioned above that they do not have or have very limited environmental concerns?**

Zhang: From my view, young Chinese have their values but we can not criticize them. We grew up in they year when everything is limited. Compare to us the young people are to some extent wasteful. I think it is a matter attitude. Especially those born after 1985. We experienced a hard life so we kind of have much concern about the future while the young Chinese tend to focus on their present life. I think no matter it is in China or somewhere else the worry about the young generation seems never disappeared. What do you think of this Mr. Shen

Mr. Shen: I think environmental behaviors and attitudes are quite personal, you can not urge people to do so. But you can “move them”, influence them. My daughter from my eyes is spending too much money to wasteful. But she thinks that represents her personal value. I can not persuade her because her friends are doing the same things.

... .. not relevant stories (about what they heard of, not what happened on their members) about 5 minutes

**Do you have any kind of cooperative relationship with other Chinese environmental NGOs? Do you think you have a close relationship with them?**

Yes we have many cooperative programs with them, but you should know that each environmental NGO has their own focuses. We focus on environmental education. GVB focus on community environmental activities. And others might have their own focus. I think NGOs have a consensus on Chinese Environmental issues. I once took part in a meeting organized by American embassy, an American expert came and discussed with us. 2 years ago what we talked about most is that we think government restricted our development. On that meeting the expert from the USA said NGOs in China need to be united and she gave some examples of the advantages of such unity in America.

... .. Disturbed by telephone

In my view, NGOs united as one might not be a good phenomenon. We need diversity at the beginning stage of NGO development so that many issues could be taken care of.

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**Mr Shen I would like to ask you what you think is the most important problem of Chinese environmental issues. Prof. Liang said in his lectures, the fundamentals environmental problem in China is the matter of population.**

I think environmental problems have many aspects not only one single problem. But I think population problem is very important but it is not only a matter of the numerous numbers, it is also a problem of the quality of population (he meant education status etc.) In China we have 1.3 billion population, it is sure to have a heavy burden on the environment.

He gave the example of Japan, to illustrate high population density not necessarily imply bad environmental quality.

From my point of view, the fundamental problem in China that results in a continuous deterioration of environmental quality is that in China we lack public participation in environmental issues. But I should admit the lack of public participation partly derive from the inability of the public. I once went to Yunnan Province; there is an evident lack of public participation in the environmental impact assessment in a dam construction project of the indigenous residents. They lack required abilities to participate.

**What do you mean by “ability” here? Can you specify?**

For example they are even not sure about the rights that are entitled to them by laws: how to ensure their rights can be protected and how to use them. They trust the government, so it makes this problem very complicated.

Now the EIA law regulated that big environmental projects should have public participation in the EIA process. To have public reviews. But this is only rhetoric it needs to be implemented. No public participation, it could be very difficult to say that a decision can be scientific.

**How to promote public participations?**

FON is working on this, no matter we are invited or not, we need to make our voice heard. We have a photo exhibition. We carry out surveys lectures, making people aware of the current situation in China. We influence them. Besides we work closely with the media.

**Do you have media groups in FON?**

Yes we have and that is our advantage. Media has a very close relationship with NGOs.

**I mean the journalist, are they FON staffs? Do you have professional journalists in FON?**

No, they are we have a lot of member who are journalists, and normally Chinese media concern about environmental issues a lot.

**Do you have any relationship with international environmental NGOs?**

Yes we have, we often have meetings together. Normally we get information about projects from them and

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sometimes they help us to get some funds.

**What is the role of media on NGOs work?**

I think they have interests in our work, but in some cases they are restricted by the local government.

**Interview of to Yi Yimin (Editor)**

**How did you get to know FON?**

My husband introduced me here. And I always concern about environmental issues.

**Why do you concern about Environmental issue?**

I am a member of the university environmental group when I was a college student. We have a lot of program on outdoor expenditure etc. I love nature, love the environment. When we go out we have are very concerned about our behaviors. When we left we only left footsteps no other things. But I also saw some phenomenon that damaged the natural surroundings a lot that made me have more concerns.

**What do you think of the most important problems in Chinese environmental issues?**

I think it is a matter of people. I do not have a deep research on that.

**What do you think the relationship between man and nature? Are we a part of nature of separated from nature?**

I think we should be merging with nature.

**What is your major in college?**

I am a student of physics.

**Do you think you that your major have some kind of a relationship with environmental issues?**

I used to be a student in an educational university; I intend to be a teacher, now I am doing environmental education. However learning physics influenced me on my worldview. Scientific attitude.

**Have you ever considered about your income working in FON? Why would you like to work in FON?**

I never considered about income when I decide to work in FON. I like the working atmosphere here. I do not like working in a company.

**What kind of environmental issues do you concerned most?**

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I tend to focus on environmental education. I think to change people's mind and values need some education. Now I am working with communicative agencies and publications, I think I need to merge more elements of environmental education in my work.

**Do you think that in Chinese traditional knowledge there are some elements that could facilitate environmental protection in China?**

Yes, many elements in Chinese traditional philosophy. (She quoted a sentence that I do not know its source and can not translate) no human intervention to the environment and equality of species in ancient Chinese thoughts.

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