

# China on its way to promote ecological civilization

“Clean water and lush mountains are priceless assets.” This philosophy for green development proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping is changing the country.



A growing number of migrating birds stop over on the Chaobai River in spring in recent years in the eastern city of Rizhao in Shandong province. [Photo:dzwww.com]

For the past 5 years, the world’s second largest economy has been trying to repair its environment, once contaminated due to unsustainable development.

The Chaobai River is one of the drinkable water sources of the eastern city of Rizhao in Shandong province. With its fresh air and forests nearby, a wetland park has been built alongside the river.

But several years ago it was a very different scene, with the river filled with rubbish and weeds.

The change came about, thanks to a river cleaning program conducted within the city last year, part of a government plan to carry out systematic ecological control of 61 major rivers over a period of 5 years.

One important step has been the establishment of a system of “river chiefs,” which requires officials at every level of government to take full responsibility for the protection of water resources in regions under their jurisdiction.

Wu Defeng is an official of Rizhao municipal government.

“The river system has been introduced since last year. Officials at the town level were appointed as river chiefs and those at the lower level take responsibility for the protection of different parts of the river. A concerted effort has been made in this way. The system is a good way to get all villagers involved in river protection.”

In December 2016, the central government released a document ordering the system to be established nationwide by the end of 2018.

The river chief system is just one of several major innovations in promoting green development proposed by the government since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012.

During his visit to the city of Nanning in Guangxi province in April, President Xi Jinping reiterated the importance of developing ecological civilization for the country’s overall development.

“Promoting eco-civilization is an important part of China’s overall plan to develop its economy, politics, culture, social progress and ecology. It is also the internal need of China’s modernization construction. The people’s well-being also relies on a beautiful environment. The concept of green development should be embedded in every step of social construction.”

After decades of rapid expansion that has brought smog and contaminated soil, China is swiftly and steadily shifting from GDP obsession to a philosophy of balanced growth.

Environment Minister, Li Ganjie, has vowed to spare no effort in tackling pollution.

“The battle can be divided into three aspects: the fight against air pollution, water pollution and soil pollution. We should strictly prevent and control pollution as well as punish those accountable for it. A strong effort should be made to improve the quality of air, water and soil.”

Last year, over 6,000 officials were held accountable for negligence or malpractice in promoting ecological progress.

China’s efforts to promote green development have earned global recognition. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) decided to promote China’s philosophy of ecological progress in February 2013 and released a report on China’s strategies and practices two years later.

From new energy vehicles to bike-sharing, low-carbon lifestyles have also become popular among Chinese people.

China seems well on its way to achieving a balance between man and nature.