

Erhai Lake vs. garlic: A war between environment and wealth?

In August, the sky was as crystal clear as usual over Erhai Lake of Yunnan Province in southwest China. Yet, the scenic spot once teeming with tourists was far less crowded than before.



When an agricultural product that has made local people rich is found to cause damage to the environment, is there any way to have the best of both worlds?

The highland lake has long suffered from pollution, with several major green algae outbreaks.

The local government has realized the problem and is determined to fix it. According to the Ministry of Finance in Beijing, seven large projects with a total investment of around 13 billion yuan (US\$1.98 billion) have been launched to treat pollutants.

Despite the heavy investment, however, the local government failed to face the crux of the problem, which lies in the abuse of chemical pesticides and fertilizers in rural areas.

Among the seven projects, there was no effective solution to the dominant

rural pollution. Local farmers are used to the traditional farming methods relying heavily on agrochemicals. Without any check on the use of fertilizers and pesticides, it made people wonder if the expensive projects can achieve any real effect.

However, anything involving farmers usually sees local officials shying away from taking harsh actions, because besides treating pollution, poverty reduction is also their major task.

According to statistics, Yunnan Province is home to the largest number of the poorest counties in the country, and most of the 73 counties involved are located around Erhai Lake.

The farmers around the lake have been making money by growing garlic. To raise the yield, they tend to use as many fertilizers as they can, which inevitably causes great damage to the environment.

It seemed the local government was trapped between a rock and a hard place, having to make a difficult choice between the lake and the garlic, which represent the two extremes of environment and wealth.

Yet, is there really no third option?

Japan has offered a positive example in this regard. The city of Toyooka is a major rice production center. Local farmers used to raise rice yield at the expense of the environment, causing the extinction of local white storks.

They then spent 30 years to repair the ecological system. When the environment turned better, they found to their surprise that their income didn't drop, because although the rice yield was lower, the rice quality improved and could be sold at a higher price.

To help farmers around Erhai Lake to learn from this example and choose the third option, Beijing Goldenway Bio-tech rented 51 mu (1 mu= 0.067 hectares) of farm land to carry out experiments.

They adopted two programs to make a comparison with local farmers' current production method. In Program A, the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides was reduced by 30 percent, and organic fertilizers and physical protection approaches were adopted. In Program B, the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides was totally abandoned.

The experiment found that both Program A and B could achieve the target yield amount. Moreover, the amount of garlicin, a nutritious material in the garlic, was raised by 33 percent and 13 percent respectively in Program B and Program A.

In Program B, the discharge of nitrogen and phosphorus was reduced by 78 percent and 74 percent annually, while in Program A, the discharge of the two materials was reduced by 55 percent and 53 percent annually.

The experiment has given hope to Chinese authorities and farmers who want to make money while doing no harm to the ecological system. Maybe there can be a

third option besides wealth and environment alone, and green can turn to gold, too.

[CPC to amend party constitution](#)

The Communist Party of China (CPC) is expected to amend its constitution at the upcoming national congress.

The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee deliberated a draft amendment to the constitution at a meeting which was presided over by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, on Monday.

Amending the constitution at the 19th CPC National Congress on the basis of the new situation and tasks would promote the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics and Party building, said a statement issued after the meeting.

It said the amendments should include the key theories and strategic thoughts presented by a work report to be delivered at the 19th CPC National Congress.

The amended constitution should fully represent the latest sinicization of Marxism, the new governance concepts, thoughts and strategies of the CPC Central Committee since the 18th CPC National Congress, as well as the fresh experiences in adhering to and strengthening Party leadership, and in strict Party governance, according to the statement.

It also noted that the amendment should make the CPC more vigorous, stronger and enable it to keep a close connection with the people.

The draft amendment will be submitted to the seventh plenary meeting of the 18th CPC Central Committee, which will be held on Oct. 11.

The CPC constitution was last amended in 2012.

[Xi's book of anecdotes sells nearly 1.5 million copies](#)

A book of anecdotes as told by Chinese President Xi Jinping has sold nearly 1.5 million copies since it was first published this June.

The book, published by the People's Publishing House, includes over 100

anecdotes taken from hundreds of Xi's speeches and articles, as selected by the People's Daily, the flagship newspaper of the Communist Party of China, and its interpretations of the anecdotes.

"These stories come from history, cultural classics, real life and work," said Kang Zhen, professor of Beijing Normal University. "They demonstrate China's cultural soft power while also offering practical guidance."

The book is not only popular in China, but has also attracted wide attention from overseas media and foreign publishing houses, according to the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television.

Currently, English, Japanese, Russian and Vietnamese versions have been authorized.

Shanghai house in road torn down after 14-year battle

A three-story house that had been standing alone in the middle of an arterial road in Shanghai's suburban Songjiang district was torn down in the early morning on Monday after a 14-year dispute.



Images of North Huting Road in Shanghai before and after the three-story house was demolished. [Cao Lei/For China Daily]

Old residential houses surrounding the building were torn down several years ago to widen North Huting Road to four lanes.

The owners of the house—known as a nailhouse, which describes a building whose owners hold out against developers—didn't reach an agreement for compensation with the relocation authority. So the four lanes, two in each direction, had to be reduced to two lanes to go around the structure.

Zhang Xinguo, the son-in-law of 89-year-old Xu Jun, who owned the house, said the family paid a big price in their everyday lives for standing their ground.

"It's noisy around the clock and particularly late at night when trucks come and go. My mother-in-law died of a heart attack three years ago," said Xu, who lived in the house with his wife, father-in-law, son's family of three and a married daughter.

Despite the noise, dust and safety risks, there was also tremendous psychological pressure, Xu said, adding that the family moved to a rented apartment nearby on Friday before going to relocation homes offered by the government.

"I didn't take pride in being the one to live in the middle of the road," he said. "There have been three traffic accidents because drivers who were not familiar with the road were not able to make a sudden turn to avoid the building."

Xu said the family didn't want to inconvenience the public but remained in the house since 2003 because they didn't agree with the amount of compensation they were offered.

"In the 1950s when the houses were built, my father-in-law held two certificates to show that the family owned two pieces of land for farmers to build residences on. But the relocation authority said one of them had expired," Xu said.

In the end, family members thought they would not be able to get as much compensation as they had wished, so they agreed to be relocated on Aug 21.

Lu Hui, head of the relocation office of the Jiuliting subdistrict, said representatives talked to the family face to face and by phone dozens of times to try to persuade them to consider the safety and convenience of passing vehicles and pedestrians.

The family was awarded four apartments with a total area of around 400 square meters as compensation. The location of the apartments was not revealed.

September 18 remembered as war's start

A bell rang and a siren went off on Monday at the September 18 Incident History Museum in Shenyang, Liaoning province, to remember the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression 86 years ago.

Cui Junguo, who recently retired after serving at the museum for more than two decades, knows virtually every detail of the incident.

Behind the museum is an expressway linking Harbin with Dalian. More than eight decades ago, it was part of the South Manchuria Railway, where the incident occurred.

On Sept 18, 1931, members of the Japanese Kwantung Army stationed in northeast China blew up a section of the railway near Liutiaohu and falsely accused the Chinese military of doing it.

Using the incident as a pretext, the Japanese bombarded Shenyang and launched its invasion of Northeast China. By January 1932, all three provinces in the region were occupied by Japanese troops.

"It's painful when I hear the siren pierce the sky," said Cui, 60. "It's like you suddenly travel back in time."

The bell was rung 14 times, representing the 14 years during which the Chinese people fought the invaders. The period has been referred to as the darkest days of modern China. More than 80 years have passed, but the memory remains.

"No one in Shenyang gets married on Sept 18," Cui said.

People around China hold events every year to mark major incidents in the Japanese invasion, including the Lugouqiao (Marco Polo Bridge) Incident and the Nanjing Massacre.

"The way you treat history defines your future path," said Wang Jianxue, vice-chairman of the Society for the Study of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Historical Materials.

In late August, the documentary film *Twenty Two*, featuring the stories of 22 so-called comfort women – sex slaves for Japanese troops – became an unexpected hit. It is the first Chinese documentary to surpass 100 million yuan at the box office.

Another documentary, *The Truth of Harbin Unit 731*, was released by Japanese public broadcaster NHK. It revealed crimes committed by Unit 731, a covert biological and chemical warfare research and development unit of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II. The film triggered heated discussions among Japanese audiences.

“The history seems far away, but it is always with us. Only by remembering it can we ensure the horrors are never repeated,” said Su Zhiliang, a professor at Shanghai Normal University.

Cui’s daughter became a guide at the museum five years ago.

“It is sort of an inheritance,” Cui said. “Telling that part of history is meaningful, and I believe she can do a good job.”