

The Winners of the Blue Planet Prize

1999

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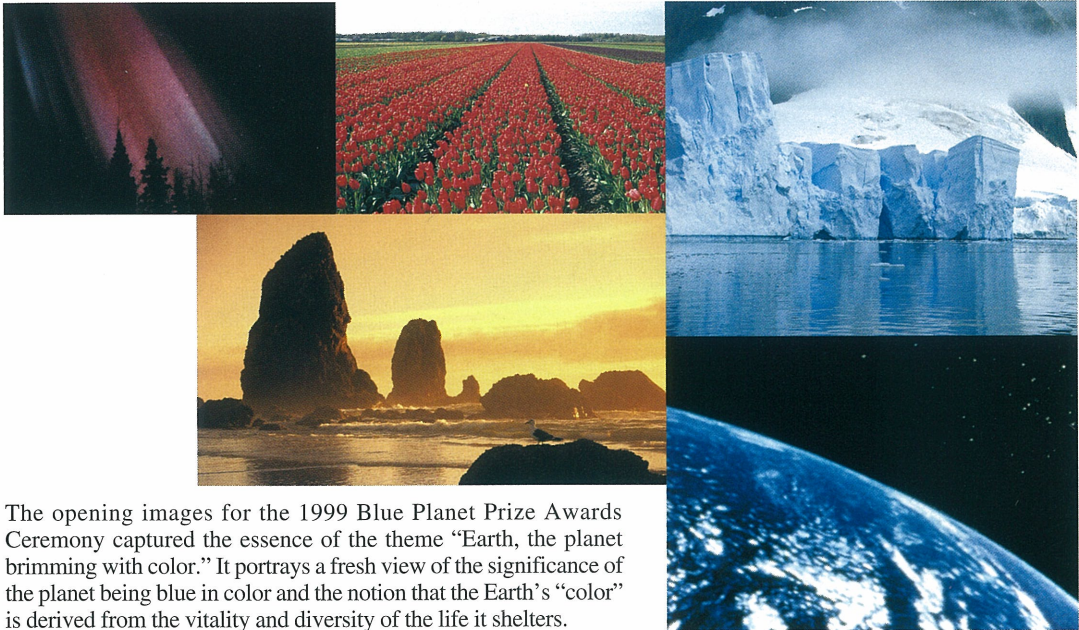
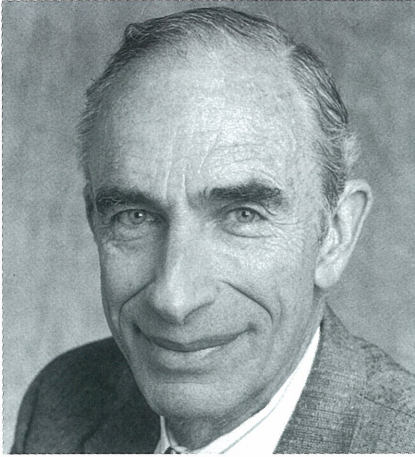
Blue Planet Prize

**Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich
(U.S.A.)**

Director of the Center of Conservation
Biology, Stanford University

**Professor Qu Geping
(P.R.C.)**

Chairman of the Environmental Protection
and Resources Conservation Committee of
the National People's Congress of China



The opening images for the 1999 Blue Planet Prize Awards Ceremony captured the essence of the theme "Earth, the planet brimming with color." It portrays a fresh view of the significance of the planet being blue in color and the notion that the Earth's "color" is derived from the vitality and diversity of the life it shelters.



His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino congratulates the laureates.



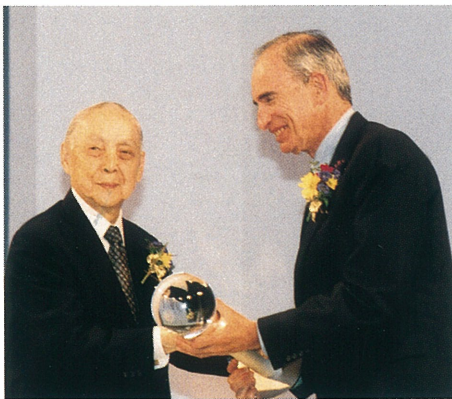
Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino toast the laureates at the Congratulatory Party.



Dr. Jiro Kondo, chairman of the Selection Committee, explains the rationale for the determination of the year's winners.



Thomas S. Foley, Ambassador of the United States to Japan (left), and Chen Jian, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Japan (right), congratulate the laureates.



Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich accepts the 1999 Blue Planet Prize from Foundation Chairman Jiro Furumoto.



Prof. Qu Geping accepting the 1999 Blue Planet Prize.

Profile

Professor Qu Geping

Chairman of the Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of the National People's Congress of China

Education and Academic and Professional Activities

- 1930 Born in June in China.
- 1952 B.A., Shandong University.
- 1957-1961 Director, Baoding Film Factory.
- 1962-1968 Division Chief, Ministry of Chemical Industry.
- 1968-1974 Division Chief, State Planning Commission/Planning Group of the State Council.
- 1972 Member, Chinese Delegation to United Nations Conference on the Human Environment .
- 1975-1976 Chinese Representative, United Nations Environment Programme.
- 1976-1982 Deputy Director, Office of Environmental Protection Leading Group of the State Council.
- 1982-1993 Administrator, National Environmental Protection Agency.
- 1984— Part-Time Professor, Beijing University.
- 1985— Part-Time Professor, Qinghua University.
- 1987 Gold Medal, UNEP.
- 1988 First National Prize for Scientific and Technical Advancement.
- 1989— Part-Time Professor, People's University of China.
- 1990-1996 President, China Environment and Science Association.
- 1992 Deputy Director, Chinese Delegation to the Rio Earth Summit.
- 1992 UNEP Sasakawa Prize.
- 1993— Chairman, Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee, National People's Congress of China; Member, Standing Committee, NPC.
- 1993— President, Environmental Protection Industry Association.
- 1993— President, China Environmental Protection Foundation.

Following his participation in the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm as a member of the Chinese delegation, Professor Qu Geping enthusiastically aided the cause of environmental protection in China. At his initiative, China adopted its first national environmental protection policies based on the three principles of "prevention," "the polluter bears responsibility," and "stronger environmental regulation."

He personally supervised the scientific surveys required to gather up-to-date data on the problems and their solutions to provide a solid basis for regulations. He also promoted the scientific and technological resolution of problems by establishing research institutions to mon-

itor pollution, develop new technologies and teach environmentalism.

China's large population has been a major cause of adverse environmental impacts. He has devoted special attention to the environmental impact and pressure of population growth in his published articles and books. In this way, he contributed to the establishment of successful Chinese family planning programs.

He has used methods to raise the general public's environmental awareness that are unique among socialist nations. For example, he started in 1993 with national environmental press campaigns in which journalists were requested to report the full extent of domestic environmental problems, which had a huge effect on the citizenry.

China faces many environmental issues. Professor Qu, however, asserts that "the environment will improve without fail if we apply these laws and policies effectively. Blue skies and clean water will once again be ours." This is the belief on which he continues to press forward with his conservation activities.

Essay

Let Nature Guide Man and Create a New Civilization for Mankind

Professor Qu Geping

June 2001

Ladies and gentlemen, during the current Mansfield Pacific Retreat successfully hosted by the Maureen & Mike Mansfield Center in cooperation with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, we have had profound and enlightening discussions on the environmental issues from many perspectives, ranging from technology, law and policy to management. Now I would like to share with you some of my views on the future of human civilization in the new century from a cultural perspective.

Standing at the threshold of the new century, what can we say about the future? I cannot predict it for I am neither a futurist scholar, nor a prophet. However, as a veteran fighter for environmental protection, I believe that we will be able to create a better future if mankind works together and reaches a common understanding.

The twentieth century is characterized by industrial civilization. We are living in the civilization and enjoying all the benefits and convenience it has brought us. Information dissemination has become so much better than before that inter-personal communication and understanding of each other are a lot easier. We are surrounded by civilization both physically and mentally. Our thinking as well as our languages all bear its mark. But we have also realized with pain that the industrial civilization has estranged us from nature, from other people and from ourselves. We have even forgotten who we are.

It is high time for us to wake up. Mankind cannot but be alert to where the industrial civilization is leading us. Are we going to build on the planet a lifeless and apathetic world of machines? Will our homes inevitably slip into the bog of pollution? I reckon our children and our children's children, future masters of our planet, would not allow us to do so, and would hate to see such a prospect. In the new century, we and our future generations should rely on our wisdom to create a new civilization and a new homeland on the planet.

What would the new civilization look like? What shall we call it? We may call it "green civilization," "eco-civilization" or something else. Its main features, however, should remain the same: a new alliance between man and nature and between men themselves, and man's recovery of his lost self.

I am not able to give you a full picture of the new civilization here. But I understand that the crux of the value of the civilization would lie in a perfect integration of the ancient and modern civilizations, and of the Eastern and Western civilizations. This would be a brand new

and attractive form of civilization.

The new civilization should readjust three relationships: the relationship between man and nature, between men, and that of man to himself. It is precisely on this point that the new civilization would bring to us an entirely new concept of value, distinguishable from the old industrial civilization.

Now I will try to describe the crux of the value of the new civilization.

Under the new civilization, what would the three relationships of most interest to mankind be like?

Under the new civilization, man's attitude towards nature should be: "Let nature guide man (*Shi Fa Ziran*)," as Lao-Tzu, an ancient Chinese philosopher, taught us in his *Tao Te Ching*. You must know the name Lao-Tzu, who enjoyed the same reputation as Confucius, as one of the founders of Chinese civilization. His simple dialectic thinking has been accepted by the world. For example, the design of the national flag of the Republic of Korea embodies his idea "*Yin plus yang means Tao (the Way)*."

To follow the law of nature does not mean that we should become slaves of nature like our early ancestors, who felt awed and prostrated themselves before the strange phenomena of nature as they knew very little, if not nothing, about its secrets.

Nor does it mean that we should follow in the footsteps of the founders of industrial civilization, who used science and technology to exploit nature for benefits and set their mind on conquering nature and becoming its masters.

Rather than becoming slaves or masters of nature, we should be its friends. To follow the law of nature means to acquire the wisdom of living harmoniously with nature, the most important wisdom to all mankind.

Environmental problems often result from our ignorance or insufficient knowledge of nature. Their ultimate solution does not lie exclusively in science and technology. In fact, we can often find their solution in natural ecosystems.

The ancient Chinese thought has an important concept, which calls for "integration of man and nature (*Tian Ren He Yi*)." It pursues perfect harmony between man and nature. In the eyes of the ancestors of the Chinese people, forests are our hair, rivers our blood, mountains our heads and the earth our chests. Every natural being should be respected for its form of life. The same concept was found in many peoples' early history, such as that of the American Indians and the Mayan people. We should not think it outdated today. It is, on the contrary, what should be valued and carried on. When we come in touch with nature, we should feel grateful to it for our lives and all the happiness that comes with them.

The twenty-first century would be a century to see man forming an alliance with nature. He would find the value and truth of life in nature; and to follow the law of nature and integrate with nature would become the highest principle of mankind in the next century.

The second relationship that the new civilization should readjust is the relationship between men. The attitude of men towards each other should be "to befriend others." The great ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius said "It is harmony that is prized (*He Wei Gui*)," which means that peace and friendship are most important and that hatred and hostility should be discarded. We should not shift our own troubles onto others, nor seclude ourselves from oth-

ers and refuse to communicate. Instead, we should respect, try to understand, learn from and help each other.

Since ancient times, our planet has witnessed countless wars. Whatever the cause, their results have been the same: devastating disasters to both mankind and the environment. Many civilizations even declined as a result of eco-system collapse caused by wars. The Mayan civilization is a typical case in point.

In the next century, should another war break out, there would be no winners but losers. It would be an unprecedented disaster to mankind. Man must learn to handle differences and conflicts between peoples and between states in a rational way. "Burying the hatchet and turning swords into plowshares," seeking common ground while reserving differences through dialogue and consultation, and going for peaceful coexistence should become important concepts of the new civilization in the new century. "Others are not hell." Instead, they are our teachers and helpful friends. Confucius said "Even when walking in a party of no more than three, I can always be certain of learning from those I am with." This is quite true.

The third relationship that the new civilization must readjust is man's attitude toward himself. The attitude should be "to restrain desires and demands." The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates' admonition "to understand yourself" is still applicable today.

What does man need and how much does he need? I remember a Russian fable, which goes like this: One day, a landlord said to his farm hands: "Is it true that you all want land? All right, you start to run from the east to the west when the sun rises tomorrow morning, and return to where you start by sunset. All the land you have covered by then will be yours." The next morning, the farmers started running at sunrise. The fastest runner returned to the original place at sunset and should have expected the largest piece of land. However, he died of exhaustion. The landlord, after burying him in a hole, asked the remaining men: "How much land do you think a man really needs? You have all seen what he needs is only a small piece of no more than two meters long and one meter wide." This is thought-provoking.

If we do not control our desires and demands, I do not think our planet would be able to support the six-billion people today and the nine-billion in the next century. We must find a new point of balance between man's desires and the earth's bearing capacity.

At the age of 70 and as a veteran fighter for environmental protection, I feel that although I'm getting old, my will remains strong. Together with all friends present here today, I am willing to work as an architect for the new civilization, and to contribute all my wisdom and energy to mankind's new homeland.

Lecture

My Dreams and Expectations

—30 Years of Involvement with Environmental Protection

Professor Qu Geping

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great privilege and honor to receive the Blue Planet Prize today in the beautiful city of Tokyo. I am fully aware that this is not only an honor for myself, but also a symbol of the Japanese people's profound friendship and a demonstration of their warm support for China's environmental protection.

Thirty-seven years ago when the planet we inhabited was covered with dark clouds of pollution, a physically weak but spiritually strong woman called for environmental protection with all her wisdom, enthusiasm and courage. Her words shook the world. Cherishing a great love for Mother Earth, this "daughter of nature" wrote an immortal book entitled "Silent Spring," which turned out to be her life's magnum opus. Her call awakened the United States, as well as all other countries, to the fragility of the world in which we live. The seeds of environmental protection sown by her have now taken root among the public. The woman's name was Rachel Carson. Let us remember her here today.

In 1972, the United Nations, conforming to the historical trends of the times, convened an international conference on the human environment in Stockholm. That conference was the first joint action by the global community to express concern for the planet's welfare. It was like a powerful lighthouse, illuminating a path for world environmental protection efforts. I was fortunate to have attended the conference as a member of the Chinese delegation. Although I was deeply worried by the existing situation and the future of the earth described in the conference proceedings, I was greatly encouraged by the awakening of and actions by fellow men and women. As a bright torch, the conference became my beacon of hope for a promising future. It was at that time that I made up my mind to devote my whole life to China's environmental protection efforts.

Come to think of it, almost thirty years have passed since then. In the long historical river, thirty years are merely drops of water. However, it is a very long span of experiences for a man. Confucius, one of China's ancient philosophers, said "At 40, I was no longer perplexed" and "At 70, I follow all my desires and none of them is against the norms." What he meant is that people will feel very clear about what they want when reaching 40 and that they can follow their will at the age of 70. I joined the environmental protection movement at the age of being "no longer perplexed" and am now reaching the age of "following all my desires" with none of them against the norms. I feel especially lucky that my past 30 years of life are closely interwoven with China's environmental protection efforts and that I have made my humble contributions to the noble cause.

These 30 years have seen three stages of development in China's environmental pro-

tection: an embryonic stage between 1970 and 1978, a foundation-laying and growing stage between 1979 and 1991, and a monumental development stage from 1992 to the present.

1. The Embryonic Stages of China's Environmental Protection Activities

Between 1970 and 1972, China weathered the dramatic storm of the "Cultural Revolution," the national economy was on the verge of falling apart and the country was in a state of total chaos. Surprisingly enough, environmental protection, just a tiny seedling at the time, sprouted miraculously from such adverse circumstances. It was Mr. Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier at the time, who cultivated that seedling.

Mr. Zhou Enlai was the pioneer and leader of China's environmental protection movement. With his unique vision and sensitivity as a politician, he accurately pointed out that environmental problems could turn out to be very difficult to surmount on China's future development path. At that time, a number of pollution accidents in Japan had alarmed him. He felt that China would also face similar problems arising from industrialization and that "preparation should be made before it rains" to provide against possible trouble. He authorized the Plan-Drafting Group of the State Council to take charge of pollution prevention and control. It so happened that I was involved in that group. Thanks to my assignment to coordinate with the fuel and chemical industrial departments, which were contributing greatly to pollution, I was given the job to look after work concerning environmental protection. It never occurred to me at that time that this temporary labor assignment would develop into my life-long cause.

Joining environmental protection efforts was a bit accidental. But this fortuitous event was an unexpected "fruit" that arose from seeds planted earlier. I was born in a small village at the foot of Mount Tai in Shandong Province. The village sat next door to the Beishan Mountain, on which a huge fortified mountain village was situated. On top of the mountain and located in the center of the village was a temple for sacrifices to supernatural beings. It seemed as high as the sky and was decorated with curly foggy clouds all year round. Further down the mountain was a Confucian temple named the "Book Airing Temple." The legend goes that Confucius got his books wet while crossing a nearby stream and laid out his books on the mountain stones to dry. Later generations built the temple to commemorate this event. I remember that lots of thousand-year old pines and cypresses clustered around the temple, luxuriously green and astonishingly magnificent. Below the temple was a clear little stream, combing through the area unhurriedly like a jade belt twining around the ancient building. Green mountains, clear water, pines and cypresses, together with the temple, presented a wonderful picture in which human culture and the natural world existed in perfect harmony. Such was my childhood world. This environment stimulated a nascent love for nature in my young heart.

I have always loved literature and this love continues whether I am studying or working. From the Book of Songs 2,600 years ago to the poetry of Chu, the prose of the Han Dynasty, and even to the poems of the later Tang and Song Dynasties, praising nature was an enduring topic. Chinese painting also focuses on natural scenery to express feelings. The beauty of the Chinese art of gardening exists in the combination of buildings and the natural world. When I am immersed in the world of Chinese literature and art, I can not help but feel

that nature is both a treasured wealth and a source of man's aesthetic sensibilities and artistic activities. China's long and splendid culture that regards nature as its basis provides the richest soil for the growth of our efforts to protect the environment.

However, germination of green seedlings requires a suitable climate. This climate finally asserted itself in 1972 when the late Premier Zhou Enlai decided to send a delegation to the United Nation's Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in order to let the Chinese whose "eyes were shut and ears blocked" to go out and see the world. Although our minds were still bound by the Cultural Revolution, the Stockholm Conference was no doubt of far-reaching and enlightening significance, which made us realize for the first time our own persistent environmental problems.

In 1973, China took an essential step toward environmental protection. Under Zhou Enlai's personal care, we convened China's First National Conference on Environmental Protection—the prelude to China's entire environmental protection campaign.

Understanding guides actions. Without sufficient understanding, actions will not manifest. When China was busy with its Cultural Revolution, people were close-minded, unwilling and perhaps not daring to admit that socialist China had pollution—such despoilment was only an incurable disease of Western capitalist countries. He who admitted the existence of pollution in China was no different from a man who plastered unfavorable marks on socialism. How ridiculous was the logic. But at that time no one had the courage to doubt that belief. Under such circumstances, environmental protection was not a topic of conversation.

The wisdom of Zhou Enlai lay in the fact that he never let go of the issue until people understood and recognized it. The First National Conference on Environmental Protection was obviously a key to environmental protection. Chinese people had begun to realize that their country was faced with serious pollution problems. It was only after the conference that China's environmental protection efforts started in spite of all difficulties.

However, when other undertakings languished, it was very difficult to sustain these early efforts. The active guidance and involvement of Zhou Enlai enhanced my understanding and confidence in environmental protection. My colleagues and I were not daunted. Guided by a sense of responsibility and strong belief, we moved forward despite the atmosphere of adversity.

At that time, our job was like that of a fire brigade. Wherever there was a big fire, we responded. We organized our efforts on control and management of a number of the most complained-about problems. Our more significant and effective responses included water pollution management in the Guanting Reservoir of Beijing, the Bai Yangdian Lake of Hebei Province and the Lijiang River of Guilin, and air pollution management in Shenyang and other cities.

I believe that some of the ladies and gentlemen present have been to Guilin for sight-seeing. Its hills and waters are like a painting of intoxicating beauty. There is a widespread saying in China, "the mountains and waters of Guilin are the finest under heaven." We feel proud of having such scenery. But Guilin's Lijiang River suffered from severe pollution in the 1970s. A large number of major polluting factories were built on both sides of the river, and industrial sewage turned the originally clear water to a disgusting dark color. Mr. Deng Xiaoping, who

had just resumed his position at that time, commented that our errors would outweigh our achievements if the pollution of the Lijiang River were not controlled. We carried out resolute management activities: closing down 27 factories that contributed to serious pollution within two years and making the river clear again. Imagine the determination it took to close down so many factories in a small- to medium-sized city at a time when our national economy was lagging behind those of the rest of the world.

The pollution and treatment of the Lijiang River provided us with a useful lesson and experience. We realized that economic development must coordinate with environmental protection and that growth should never be pursued at the expense of the environment. This experience was later used for the management of the Huaihe River Valley and a few other valleys in the 1990s.

Everything is hard in the beginning. Whenever we look back at the pioneering period, I feel some sadness but also happiness. As the great Russian poet Aleksandr Pushkin said in one of his poems, "Everything happens in a twinkling and all is to pass. But what is passed will become fond memories."

2. Growth Springing from the Foundation

China greeted bright sunny days in 1979 when the country began to reform and open to the outside world, and its economy started to rapidly develop. It was also in 1979 that China's environmental protection swept away a dark winter and entered a beautiful spring. The Environmental Protection Law, the first legislation of its kind in Chinese history, was formally promulgated, marking a transitional development from general policy to legislation for environmental protection.

The second period of environmental protection spanned from 1979 to 1991 when theories, policies, legislation and management systems were developed with great achievements, gradually shaping and completing a policy system with Chinese characteristics. At the same time, we conducted large-scale pollution control and management for industries and urban areas, preventing a dramatic worsening of the environment and laying a solid foundation for the future.

As administrator of the National Environmental Protection Agency during that period, I was involved in a series of changes. It was most gratifying to see that environmental protection was made a basic state policy and was gradually known to the whole of society. The fact that China prioritized environmental protection to such an extent when it had just started its modernization demonstrated the far-sightedness of the Chinese government and also reflected the unique situation in the country.

First, China's huge population of 1.2 billion presents great pressure on the environment. All environmental problems, those concerning natural ecology in particular, are direct or indirect results of this pressure. This is different from many other countries in the world. Therefore, we have had to promote family planning policy to reduce pressure on the environment. Secondly, China's environmental pollution and ecological destruction are already outstanding. Without attention to the environment in the process of modernization, serious results would have occurred and modernization would have been greatly hindered.

It is upon such understanding that we proposed that China should not follow the traditional “pollution first and management second” path of developed countries. Instead, we should coordinate economic development and environmental protection. We should develop an economy that facilitates environmental protection and protect the environment to promote the economy. Towards these ends, we started to map out a set of policies and institutional and legislative systems to facilitate the implementation of the basic state policy of environmental protection.

There are three major thoughts behind China’s environmental policies. The first is to make “prevention first” the basic starting point for policies. Environmental protection measures should be carried out together with economic and urban construction, instead of taking remedial actions after construction. The second is to make those who cause pollution take responsibility for the pollution and pay for management. The third is to intensify management, which means formulating plans and necessary policies and regulations and establishing powerful institutions for monitoring and management. These thoughts arise from the consideration that China’s pollution is mainly a result of mismanagement and that limited economic capacity makes it impossible to allocate sufficient financial resources for pollution prevention and control. We must rely on powerful management to prevent the situation from further worsening. These three thoughts behind our policies represent the crystallization of our long-standing practice in the field.

During this time, China also formulated eight regimes. These were the Environmental Impact Assessment Regime, the “Three Synchronizations” Regime (i.e. design, construction and operation of measures for pollution prevention should be carried out at the same time as the major engineering part of the project), the Pollution Fee Regime, the Environmental Objective Responsibility Regime, the Comprehensive Quota Examination Regime for Urban Environmental Management, the Permit Regime, the Time-Limit Management Regime and the Pollution Concentration Control regime. Meanwhile, we also worked out a number of concrete regulations and measures to go with these regimes. All of this formed a relatively complete framework, which changed management from qualitative to quantitative and from fragmented administrative orders to a binding system, laying a solid foundation for our efforts in the field.

During this period, our legislative drafting efforts also made great headway. We successively formulated four laws on pollution control, including the Law on Environmental Protection, the Law on Atmospheric Pollution Prevention and Control, the Law on Water Pollution Prevention and Control, and the Law on Marine Environmental Protection. This number rises to 13 if we include laws on the conservation of natural resources. At the same time, we issued several hundred administrative and local regulations to implement these laws. A preliminary legislative framework for environmental protection had taken shape.

There is an old saying in China: “there won’t be any bounds if there are no rules.” Thanks to the rules which we established gradually in the 1980s, we now have principles to follow and laws to observe, a solid step in exploring the bounds of our path to environmental protection with Chinese characteristics.

In the opening and reforming years of the 1980s, we set up comparatively effective

management institutions in the central and local governments and carried out efficient management in accordance with laws, policies and plans. Under the circumstances of doubled economic growth, environmental problems did not worsen at the same speed and environmental quality remained roughly at the level existing at the beginning of the decade. Certain areas even improved their environment. This shows that China has adopted correct and effective environmental policies, which suit the country's unique conditions.

International friends often ask me about the meaning of "environmental protection with Chinese characteristics." My answer is: to rely solely on developed countries' "Western medicines" would not be able to cure China's persistent environmental ailments. We need to take into consideration the real situation and find out practical and functional "Chinese medicines" to deal with our problems. The three major environmental policies and accompanying management regimes set up in the past 10 years or so have proved to be effective remedies for environmental problems.

3. The Development and Expansion of Environmental Protection Activities

China determined to practice a socialist market economy in 1992. This was another qualitative jump in terms of reform and "open door" policies. It was also in the same year that the United Nations held the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ("UNCED"), beginning a new era in environmental protection. Similarly, China's environmental protection entered a new phase of development.

Twenty years ago, there was almost no environmental protection to speak of in the country. Twenty years later, reform and open-door policies have brought about significant changes. China has opened its eyes to see the world and, likewise, the world community has come to know China. After braving wind and rain in the past 20 years, the seedling of environmental protection in China has finally matured, tall and strong.

In 1992, China sent a large delegation to UNCED, and I attended as deputy-head of the delegation. Before the conference, and in order to coordinate the positions of developing countries, we invited ministers from 41 countries for a Beijing Conference. The resulting document, the "Beijing Manifesto" expounded these countries' positions and viewpoints toward the world environment and development and had an extensive influence. At the Rio meeting, China worked closely with the Group of 77 developing countries (Group 77), and we jointly put forward position documents and draft resolutions in the name of Group 77+1, which became foundation documents for North-South negotiations. When debates stalled and negotiation stopped, China, at the request of various sides, played the role of mediator and promoter. As a large developing country, China made important contributions to the success of UNCED.

UNCED was also of unusual significance to myself, because I was honored with the Sasakawa Award (i.e. the UN Environmental Award) at the conference. I knew very well that this was not only a commendation to myself, but also confirmation from the world community of the value of China's efforts in creating a path of environmental protection with Chinese characteristics during its reform and opening period. My colleagues were especially encouraged by the event. The results of their many years of hard work finally won the recognition of

the world community.

I drafted a policy report entitled “China’s Ten-Point Policy for Environment and Development” right after the conference. In the report, I made it explicitly clear that it was necessary that China follow a sustainable development strategy in its modernization process, which was well accepted by the top leaders of the government. The Party Central Committee and the State Council soon transmitted the report throughout the country. Immediately afterward, a sustainable development strategy became a long-term guiding principle in China’s Agenda 21, which was compiled by concerned departments under the State Council. Later in 1994, at the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the concept was further confirmed as the strategy to follow in China’s future development.

Since 1992, environmental protection in the country has moved from pure pollution control to comprehensive management and ecological construction. In terms of pollution control and management, we have prioritized control and management of big rivers and lakes, such as the Huaihe River, Haihe River, Liaohe River, Taihu Lake, Dianchi Lake and Chaohu Lake, and initiated air-pollution control in Beijing city and marine-pollution control in Bohai Bay. Altogether more than 60,000 enterprises with serious pollution were closed down across the country. Moreover, environmental investment increased to 1% of GDP in 1998, which was unprecedented in China and close to the level of developed countries.

In terms of ecological construction, we have practiced policies such as closing hillsides to facilitate reforestation, returning farmland to forests and returning farmland to lakes and grasslands. We have undertaken natural forest conservation projects and retrained over a million lumbermen to be tree planters. We have carried out enthusiastic soil conservation at the upper Yangtze River and Yellow River valleys. We have fostered protective forest belts in the ecologically fragile northern part of China, building a magnificent green Great Wall that stretches over half of our territory.

In terms of the conservation of natural resources, we have implemented strict protective measures for farmland and followed the policy that whoever uses farmland will need to compensate for the use to guarantee a total land balance. In offshore areas, we have practiced a general rehabilitation system to protect fishery resources. In terms of the conservation of mineral resources, we have closed down a large number of small mines equipped with outdated machines that cause huge damage to resources, and have engaged in effective efforts to comprehensively use solid wastes and recover wastes and worn-out materials.

The ecological environment in China is experiencing a transitional “destruction to recovery” period: We are confident that as long as we work consistently, the environment will change for the better in 20- or 30-year’s time.

In 1993, my job changed from that of a government official to that of a congressman, and I became chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Conservation of the National People’s Congress. Although my role is different from before, my responsibility for the environment remains the same, and I am still working hard for the cause.

Protecting the environment in China depends on management and control. On what does management depend? It depends on legislation. On what does legislation depend? It

depends on science and technology and appropriate investment.

To facilitate legislation has been my most important task since I joined the National People's Congress. Our work over the past few years has predominantly consisted of three things. Firstly, we design and build legislative systems for environmental protection and natural resource conservation. As for pollution control, we have revised and formulated laws on air, water, solid wastes and noise. As for natural resource conservation, we have participated in revising or formulating laws on mineral, water, forest, land and energy resources. Encompassing the Grassland Law, Wildlife Protection Law, Fisheries Law, and Water and Soil Conservation Law, we have generally crafted a legislative framework for the environment and resources. As an enhancement to this framework, there is a provision in our amended Criminal Law addressing the "destruction of environmental resources," which is the first time we have criminalized pollution and resource destruction. This was put into practice without delay, effectively deterring environmental criminals.

Secondly, we monitor law enforcement and implementation. Whether legislation plays any role depends on enforcement and implementation. However nice legislation may be, without enforcement, laws are nothing but mere scraps of paper. Ever since 1993, and in order to encourage implementation of related laws, we have organized law enforcement inspections in 29 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, and examined hundreds of cities and a huge number of factories. To a certain extent, we have changed the situation in which laws are not respected, enforcement is not strict and violation is not dealt with, thus laying the foundation for the rule of law in the protection of the environment and natural resources.

Thirdly, we mobilize public opinion to enhance environmental monitoring. In today's modern society where information is highly developed, the role of the media regarding social behavior is more obvious than ever before. Therefore, media monitoring is of great importance. Since 1993, we have mobilized hundreds of mass media institutions for a campaign called "China's Environmental Protection Activities for the Century." We use newspapers, radio and television to commend organizations upon their good enforcement and to expose and criticize others for weak efforts or destruction of the environment in order to create favorable and powerful public opinion for environmental protection at large in society. For seven years, this activity has covered every corner of the country, attracting over 6,000 reporters who have published nearly 50,000 news articles and reports, touching off strong social responses and meeting with warm public reception. For example, newspaper reports on the serious pollution of the Huaihe River drew the immediate attention of the central government, which lost no time in implementing a river control and management project. The project has by now achieved preliminary results. The coastal area campaign of last year brought an overall inspection of the coast of the country, and provided us with additional ideas on marine pollution control. The theme of this year's campaign is "Love our Yellow River." More than 50 reporters took part in the activity and drove from the source of the river to where it met the sea, covering a distance of 20,000 kilometers. They commended whoever cared for the river and exposed whoever damaged it, achieving great success. Cradle of the Chinese nation, the Yellow River has always been our mother river, which we can never do without. As regards the pollution of the river, we have no other alternatives but setting out for control and management. "China's

Environmental Protection Activities for the Century” has turned out to be an effective media monitoring method for law enforcement.

4. My Dreams and Expectations

There are such words in the Analects of Confucius: “Confucius said while standing by a river that water was running past day and night, and so quickly.” Even Confucius felt that time flew by quickly just like the passing of water in a river. How true it is. Before I knew it, thirty years passed. Although environmental protection in China has endured many hardships, the cause, which is like a ship, has after all broken solid ice, cleared away clouds on its way, hoisted the sails and set out on a journey in fair weather.

Now, we are just about to enter a new century. Every one of us is concerned with the future of our environment in the next century. At this moment, I feel so much and have many dreams and expectations.

I wish that one day my grandchildren will enjoy themselves happily in the clear stream of our hometown, just as I did in my childhood. I wish that green mountains and rivers will decorate their dreams and that golden fields will be full of hopes.

I wish that the sky will always be blue and marked with white clouds, rivers will always be clear with fish playing contentedly, vigorous eagles will always soar to great heights, birds will always be singing happily on top of trees, the polluted habitat will never be polluted any more, and the silent spring will never be silent again.

I wish that one day barren hills will be covered with green vegetation, dry land will be blessed with sweet rains, wild floods will no longer roar with rage and burning hot waves will never wreak havoc.

I wish that one day every valley will blossom with flowers of hope, every brook will dance joyful dances, all wasteland will turn green and all lives will receive concern and love from heaven and kind treatment from mankind.

I like the following words: “today’s sun is different from that of yesterday and the sun tomorrow will be even better than today.” I am confident that as long as we work concertedly, these dreams will finally come true. In conclusion, I would like to put forth for consideration the following advice from a veteran environmental worker to the people of the Earth Village:

“Those who destroy their homeland surrender their future.”

“Those who protect the environment are tomorrow’s champions.”

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Professor Qu Geping

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