

メコン談話室「流域国ゲスト特別講演」

「国際河川のダム開発と中国の市民社会～瀾滄江（メコン河）と怒江（サルウィン川）～」

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松本：今日は嵐の中、どうもありがとうございました。登録の時には30何人いらっしゃいましたが、始めます。今日は中国雲南省でGreen WatershedというNGOの代表をなさっているYu Xiaogangさんにお越しいただきました。昨日、Japan Foundationが主催するJETROの流域管理に関するものについてお話しします。お見せする資料は今、印刷中なので、後でお配りすると思います。通訳はどうしますか？もし難しかったら途中で通訳入れます。

Good evening. Today, I'm very happy. This is the weekend and everybody must want to rush to home but still many people are here. I'd like to introduce my organization and the situation in the upper Mekong, Salween and Yangtze River.

Recently, together with John Dore, who works at IUCN (formerly at Chiang Mai University), did some research on hydropower construction on the three paralleled river, upper Salween River and Mekong River. John Dore is also very active now on trans-boundary issues.

First, introduce organization, Green Watershed, registered in 2002. We use old Naxi pictographs that indicate mountains and rivers. This indicates that Yunnan is along the upstream of international rivers. Our organization is participatory and integrated organization to the management in China. The all work area focus on South West China. You can see there are upstream of international rivers.

Our course values are to promote public participation. How do we work? We research, do advocacy, and communication, incorporate our principles in practice.

How does NGO like Green Watershed work in China? We have growing potential as an NGO in China. We have been able to use independent watershed research to input into alternative watershed management concept to the government. We can promote bottom up participatory. We can connect ecological system with people's livelihood.

The second, small scale experimental participatory management of the watershed can provide learning experiences and the lessons to the government and society.

The third, NGOs can also advocate for good watershed governance and policy. The 4th, we can promote general public and multi-stakeholder participation in democratic and legal way. Five and Last, we are a watchdog role to guarantee the accountability of the government in watershed management projects, such as dams.

Now, I will talk about Yunnan Hydropower expansion. I would like to bring 2 messages to you. First, there is a need for China to revisit energy policy. Especially as part of embracing new and scientific concept of development, which promoted by the Government of China.

Then we also need to improve the energy development governance process. How are dam projects approved? Is the process transparent? Or just decided by a few — government and companies?

Energy sector reform is a major force, to promote more hydropower dams. Later, I will explain how many companies have rushed to Yunnan to occupy the rivers for there future development. There is an intention to double the hydropower capacity by 2010. Yunan is a key area for hydropower growth. So, this is how the energy sector reform has triggered a big development in Yunnan.

This is Yunnan and its international rivers. Yunnan has a population of 43 million people, and 10 million poor, and 10 million minorities. It is the gateway to SE Asia. It include in the Mekong region. It is under rapid industrialization.

The rapid industrialization also means that Yunnan province has taken the major pillar of industrialization.

In Yunnan, there are 600 rivers most of them are tributaries. You can see the Nu and Irrawaddy, Mekong and Yangtze watershed called three paralleled. The Red and Peal rivers go to Vietnam. 24% of China's hydropower potential is in Yunnan. So Yunnan has a very big hydropower potential. However, we also need to recognize that hydropower development does not necessarily contribute to local livelihood. It is still not clear how much hydropower development is useful for local people. Especially in the 3 parallel area, a world heritage site, the ecological value is very high. The biodiversity there is very rich. The river is also a valuable resource to the communities.

People's livelihoods depend on this fresh water ecosystem. Does hydropower really bring prosperity to local people? Or does it bring poverty?

From our observation, hydropower development may cause more poverty to the local community. So we need caution, and we need to consider the upstream and downstream impacts. Now, many experts suggest that in Yunnan, we have some other way to develop, such as eco-tourism.

This is the World Heritage area. This includes the Nu, Lancang, and Jinsha Rivers. In this World Heritage Site is very special. This is special because it contains four criteria of the World Heritage standard, which is very rare Natural heritage area.

What are the driving forces for hydropower expansion? We can say globalization, improved technology, larger economy and shift to market economy. International market integration, WTO, greater international integration. There are more investors looking to China wanting to do business and invest in Yunnan. So, the WTO has brought a lot of business and investment opportunities to Yunnan. But, we also think that more than only shift to the market economy. In Yunnan there is a lot of privatization. The government has given more space to the private sector, and the government is promoting a relationship between public and private partnerships. This partnership has created a good environment for western investment. But at the same time, a lot of the government, public sector is being privatized, so we cannot easily recognize which is public sector and which is private sector, because there are many mixed investments. And this is a driving force of hydropower expansion too.

China needs more energy. There is greater domestic demand, and there is also hydropower export recently to Vietnam, and they are also planning to export Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos in the northern border areas. Also, overall in the whole nation, China would like to secure more energy, as China is facing an energy shortage.

In the last 5 years, China has been facing a big problem of desperation. The Eastern part of China is developing very fast, while the western side is slow. So, the policy is now to bring more development to the western part. But most of this is infrastructure development, such as dams, pipelines to transfer natural gas...from Western to eastern.

By 2020, Yunnan and the western region will supply 4 times the amount of hydropower

to the eastern part of China than it does now. And also western region needs development.

Under this big picture, the hydropower companies planned more than 300 dams for SW China, mostly in Sichuan and Yunnan and also in Guizhou. Why not in Tibet? Because the Tibet is still environment there is not very good...it is very cold for dam construction. So at this moment, very few dams are being considered in the Tibetan area. But under this trend, after Yunnan and Sichuan dam development, Tibetan will also be considered.

As we can see, there are many dams being considered. Here is the Nujiang and the Mekong. First there were 8 dams being planned for the Mekong. Now, there are another 7 is under research and design. So all together on the upstream of the Mekong, there are a total of 15 dams being planned. Also, on the upstream of the Yangze river, there are plans for 8 dams. A little downstream, there are plans for 4 very big dams, upstream of the Three Gorges Dam. These three rivers are the major hydropower bases. As a local NGO, we are very concerned that the river ecosystems and the local livelihoods will be hurt.

The third driving force: China's energy industry is under reform. The first formation of the State Power Corporation was in 1997. It divided the Ministry of Energy into several big companies, such as the SPC (State Power Cooperation) and Sino CHINA petro and China coal Corporation. In 1997, the state ministry of energy was corporatized into companies.

The second phase started in 2002. The State Power Corporation very big company split into 5 big corporations. When it split, it was not to introduce competition, and it made it more flexible to go to different provinces and develop hydropower. So in this reform, the 5 big companies allocated actual and potential assets.

The potential assets means, Nu Jiang now there are no dams. But when they split into five, they also divided the rivers too. This river belongs to you, this river to him, this river to me. So, all the potential hydropower of rivers was distributed among these 5 big companies.

Business competition is not Huaneng, Datand, Huadian, Guodian, China Power

Investment Company, and Three Gorges development group. This has led to very big competition. Because each company would like to competition.

I'd like to introduce these three rivers and the dam plans for these rivers. First is the Nu River, which is the upstream of the Salween River. In history, the Salween has never had a dam on the mainstream. It has high ecological value. But this river cannot escape from hydropower competition. Last year suddenly, there were 13 dams planned in china. Also, in Myanmar and Thailand, there were 5 dams being planned. Especially in Myanmar, one is the Tasang Dam is under preparation. We think that it will start in one or 2 years. But still, none have been built yet and it is still free flowing natural river.

Liu Ku dam may be considered the first dam. It is small (35 meters high) and it will contribute about 180 MW. But if this dam is constructed, then the river will no longer be natural flowing, and it will have a big ecological and social impact. The Huadian company is the main business player for the Nu River. The whole Nu River was allocated to Huadian company.

The Nu River was the first river to be involved in national discussion.

Here is the Nu River dam development plan. You can see some dams, they are very high. For example, Maji dam has 300 meters. Some are small...like the Liu Ku Dam, of only 35 meters high. But some are much larger. Huadian company wants to do this dam first so that it will then become easier to build other dams. The argument now for environmentalists is that the Nu River is one of only 2 rivers in China that keeps it natural flow, and that China should keep 2 natural rivers.

This picture shows the 3 parallel river area within the World Natural Hertiage area. When the 3 parallel river area applied for Natural Heritage, there was no mention at that time of plans for dams in this area by Yunnan. But just after the Natural Heritage was appoved, there was suddenly one month later many dam plans announced.

Here, this is the Mekong river, and under this is the World Heritage area, and there are many plans for dams. The Yangze River in this area too, there are plans for a very high, 300 meters dam. If this dam is built, a large area will be flooded. This area is

considered a “minority cultural protection area” or a “cultural reserve.” This is a Tibetan area, called Shangrila country. It is very high, above 3,000 meters high. This area cannot produce rice and enough food. The food comes from this valley. So if the agricultural land in the valley is lost, the people in the Shangrila area will not be able to support themselves. Food security will no longer be guaranteed in this area.

What is the situation of the upstream of the Lancang River? There are 8 dams proposed in China. 2 have already been built and are operating. These are the Manwan and Dachaoshan. Two are now being constructed, the Xiaowan and the Jinghong. The Xiaowan dam is now the highest dam in China. It is 297 meters high is the highest. The Huaneng Company is the business player. Li Xiao Peng is the chairman of the Huaneng company. He wants to be one of the top ten power producers in the world.

Of course, Mekong dam development is very controversial. It is very hot topic. But this discussion is still at the level of civil society. Most downstream governments are quite silent...except for Thailand. Especially the Thai parliament is arguing whether or not it is suitable for upstream to build so many dams. But other countries, like Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam, are very quiet. They have not yet raised strong opinions against the dams.

However, downstream people, civil society and NGOs, are very worried about if the dams will impact on people’s livelihoods especially on Cambodia. Such as Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia.

This is the dam plan for the Lancang River. It is likely that within the next 5 years, all the 8 dams will be developed. For example, the Nuozhadu dam is a very big one. This dam will contribute about 5,500 MW and it will be the largest dam in the upper Mekong mainstream. And this Nuozhadu dam is already under preparation on the construction. But just to build the roads and the preparation process...road building to the sides, some factories. This has already started.

The Jinghong Dam will close the river next year (sluice gates). The Xiaowan Dam is the highest, and it will close the river this October.

There are 8 plan and 7 dams being designed within the World Heritage area.

How about the Jinsha River (upstream of Yangze)? There are plans for dams upstream of the Three Gorges. Upstream of Jinsha 12 dams proposed in China. 8 dam for the middle reach of Jinsha 4 for lower reach Jinsha by the Three Gorges company. There are still 7 for Huaneng company.

Tiger Leaping Gorge dam is highly controversial. This area has many agriculture and minority people and is very controversial. Including Naxi Tonba culture and Tibetan culture and also like Lisu and Bumi people and many. This is the area with richest and developed agriculture.

This is the Jinsha River, we can see this is Tiger Leap 300 meter high and all this area will be flooded. Now, there is a dam called the Jinanqiao dam. This is the first to be built, and the first large dam to be built by a private company called Huali company. This is the Jinanqiao dam. 2,500 MW. It is twice as large as the Manwan dam. This is before, and this is how it looks now under construction. However, this dam has no feasibility study has not yet been approved by the state counsel, and no environmental impact assessment yet. But still, they started construction already.

There are another two big dams in the lower Jinsha...called Xiluodu dam. 1200 MW, 278 meters high, and 50,000 people will be resettled. The Xiangjiaba dam is 6,000 MW and will resettle even more people. 100,000 people.

I just introduced the situation of dam construction in these three rivers. There are some issues.

I just mentioned that the public sector and the private sector...before there was a clear line. But now the line is not clear. Some private companies have joined government companies. And government companies also have some shares in private companies. One side, this is good for development because they can raise more money to do some development. But on the other hand, we don't know if decisions are being made by private or public. If it is public, then there must be more public participation in society. But in case of private, then companies decide. We don't know if dams are for public interest or private corporate, private owners interest. We call this formal and informal, PPP—public-private partnership.

I don't know the situation in Japan if government decides the privatization...for example, subways and trains here are already privatized. So government is very clearly privatized. But in China, we are still in the process, so it is not clear. Also, the political economy has shifted. The government would like first to empower some state owned power companies and then privatize them. This is in the transformation process. But this is very dangerous. There is unrestrained competition and unclear regulatory roles of the state. The process of privatization is very fast, but the state regulation is very slow. When there are no rules and regulations, then there are suddenly a lot of bad development happening. So we urged the central government to set up rules for this competition.

Of course, when companies privatized, it was easy to get a foreign investment funds. Another issue is that it is very easy to access to rivers. Because there are no river basin commissions, there is no organization to manage the rivers like for the Nu River. The Yangtze and Red rivers have no commissions In upstream. So this is easy to develop without any permission or good process. So who is the watchdog for these rivers? The government has already cooperated with private companies. So civil society in China now has a very important role to protect the rivers for public interest and future generations.

The key questions we raised are:

- 1st that is the development? What is the type of development we prefer? GDP oriented? Or sustainable? Now, central Chinese government promotes the "new scientific concept of development" which is supposed to balance ecology and people. If we follow the central China policy, how should we consider this dam development that destroys local people's livelihood?

- 2nd How are development goals to be achieved? There are various ways. Do we use community-based ways, or monopoly? What kind of way should we privatize everything or keep some public/common assets....use a common way collective way to keep common property. Should be used in

-The 3rd, how are decisions to be made about setting and striving for these goals? When we set goals, we need more civil society to participate. Do we need negotiation among stakeholders? Do we need transparency when we set this goal? What is accountability of this process?

As an NGO, we try to recommend to the central and provincial government. We said

we need to revisit the energy policy. How we can decide, make it? In new light of the proposed switch to New and Scientific Concept of Development, we need to look more at human development. We need more efficient resource use and less pollution. Development that will not destroy natural resources and ecosystems. We also need to check energy development governance process. If the process is just a few people? Or should it be transparent with participation by civil society? We need more debate and more options to consider. We also recommend to the government that Yunnan hydropower development should involve more public participation. The decision making process needs to be adjusted. We need to examine the political, economic, diplomatic relations impacts of this dam development.

For example, there are some people with us now to look at the diplomatic impacts of upstream dam development. This means, if we build this dam, how can we keep good relations with downstream countries.

There are many kinds of impacts. For social/cultural assessments, ecological/natural risk assessments, cumulative/multiplier effect assessment, we need to do this. I heard just before coming to Japan that there were some funds for research, but that the funds are coming from a dam company. So we worry that the results of the research will come from the company side.

www.sea-user.org

We have a website with information on our research.

PART II

I also want to introduce Green Watershed Activities in Nujiang Protection.

In September, the plans for the Nujiang dam plans were publicized. Green Watershed from Oct 1-8, 2003 took a trip to the Nujiang to do the first socio/ecological investigation of the dam. After we knew that the dam was planned in this world heritage area, we decided that we must be involved in this. Green Watershed tries to involve in sustainable development. But if this major river is destroyed by a dam, how can we promote sustainable development? So we decided immediately that our organization cannot ignore the dam construction.

We went to Nujiang Gorge to do the first survey.

On Oct 20-21, 2003, there was a big consultant meeting. Green Watershed attended as an observer with other experts. In this photo, you can see this is the vice-governor...there are two governors. Here, there are Beijing experts, and on this side, Yunnan experts. We could see how they discussed the issues of dams on the Nujiang River.

On November 7, 2003, Green Watershed presented on Nujiang Hydro development at a workshop in Beijing. We raised this issue at the NGO forum in Beijing. We think it is a very big issue, so we called for other NGOs to pay attention to this.

Then, in Nov-Dec 2003, we sent several staff to Beijing to meet NGOs related to environmental protection to persuade them to support us in the efforts to protect the Nujiang River.

In November 14, 2003, we had a first Water Voice Forum in Kunming, where about 80 people came. Most from universities, NGOs, and government organizations. We introduced and set up a forum for people to dialogue on the Nujiang—do we need to develop or protect?

We had many activities in that forum. We even invited Nujiang people to the Forum to sing songs to protect Nujiang. In November, three days later, we went to the SE Asia water forum in Chiang Mai. We raised the issue of the threat to the Nujiang/Salween river. We presented to get international awareness of development on the Nujiang.

On Nov 28, 2003, we were invited by UNDP and SIDA to present about Nujiang river development at a forum there. We introduced the dam plans and tried to consult with international NGOs in Bangkok how they can contribute to the protection of the Nujiang.

Nov 28-Dec 5, at the Rivers for Life Forum, there were several Chinese participants. At this meeting, we made a petition. There are many organizations from 60 countries, so we invited them to sign the petition and to consider how to protect the Nu River. This also helped play a role to temporarily stop the Nujiang dams.

Here in this photo, you can see a famous person. Her name is (?). She is now in the

US, and she won an award for her efforts to stop dam development on the Nujiang. She is a journalist, and she organized many reporters to write about the Nujiang. She went to the US to receive her prize.

This is Jin Jiao Wei (?). He also wrote articles and is very concerned about forest protection. This girl is also famous in China News daily. She is also very active in organizing articles in her newspaper to talk about Nujiang.

This guy is from the China Academy of Social Science. I will introduce that later.

Soon after returning to China, we cooperated with CCTV to make a big program about "The Choices of Nujiang." We tried to go through CCTV to make nation-wide awareness about the need to protect the Nujiang for its ecological value.

This person is a famous CCTV journalist. His program is called the News Probe. This is a program that all people like to watch. This program is very famous. We have two popular programs, one is News Probe, and one is News Focus. Usually, there are only 15 minute segments, but News Probe has 50 minutes, so they can introduce things in more detail.

January 8-9 2004, Green Watershed cooperates with the Chinese Academy of Social Science to do a meeting on Economic, Social and Ecological Impact of Hydropower Development. There are many experts and high ranking officials at this meeting. After this meeting, we wrote a summary and sent it directly to the premier's office. Fortunately, the Premier's Office gave a very positive response, and one month later, Premier wrote something that we need to be more careful to do studies and make decisions based on scientific basis. The plan of the 13 dams for Nujiang was not quite carefully started, not quite scientifically based. So these words told the companies that the company needed to do more work, more studies. This happened because NGOs cooperated with academics and experts to send the summary. We believe that this is a big reason...of course there are other reasons too that stopped the dams on the Nujiang.

On January 16, 2004, there was a big internet conference called "TOM," and we presented the issues of needing to make democratic decisions on the development of Nujiang.

In February, GW worked with political parties to submit proposals to the Yunnan government to encourage precaution on dam construction on the Nujiang. This was also influential. After this meeting, many newspapers covered this and the news went nation-wide.

At this meeting, there are some party leaders and provincial governors. The first picture that Mekong Watch showed (Economic Times), the second woman in the photo was from the Democratic Party.

Then, February 24 (you can see, almost every other day we have some kind of activity). On the 24th, we cooperated with the Environmental Student Club at Yunnan University to hold a workshop called, "Respect the Nature, Protect the River." We invited NGOs and media to participate too. We also organized them to visit the Nujiang.

On Feb 15-23, we organized and facilitated a group of Beijing media people and environmental NGOs to visit and report on the Nujiang dam issues. You can see in this photo that this village is just beside the Nujiang, and they have very good agriculture.

Feb 27, the China Central Radio Station interviewed GW, and our voice went nationwide.

March 14-28, we had big photo exhibition at Carrefour department store. It showed the river and people's livelihood. We called it the "The life of the River". About 10,000 people attended the exhibition.

After the exhibition, we also went to many universities to show students.

May 14, we held another workshop in Yunnan University to give them very detailed plans of the dams on these three rivers.

May 18, GW was invited to Zhong Shan University in Guangzhou. I was appointed to go to Guangzhou, and another went to Shanghai, and someone else to another place...this was a week of dam awareness, and we sent people around to make national awareness about this, to universities and environmental forums to let people know more about dam issues.

Another activity was May 20-28, 2004, we held a debate on dam and development. Nujiang people have kept quite silent about the dams. They do not know. The government says that the dams are the only way to develop and become more wealthy. But NGOs say no, dams are not for you. They are for urban people and companies. So the local people also believe the NGOs, but they have never experienced dam construction, and do not have knowledge, nor the full information about the dams. There are many people giving slogans, but not full information.

In order to give more information, GW decided, because the governor had a chance to visit to see the dams in other places and have more knowledge/information, and they say they are sure that dam revenue to their local government. But we took people from Nujiang to visit Manwan so they can know how dams affect people. Manwan is supposed to be one of the best dams in China. We took 14 Nujiang people to visit Manwan and Xiaowan dams. From the visit, we could see the conversation between Manwan dam people and visitors from Nujiang.

This is the party leader, and he introduced the situation because of the dam. Here, you can see many women depend on collecting rubbish for their livelihood. From the garbage, they can get 1-3 yuan a day to buy some rice. Because they lost their land, they lost their livelihood. So only collecting rubbish is left.

We had 2 days, where Nujiang people talked to Manwan people. After that, they were very open to participate in some discussions. They were shocked by what they saw of the impacts of dam construction. They also went to Kunming workshops to explain that they do not want dams if they have this kind of process. They want transparency and good life...to share the benefits of dams.

June 20-24. We felt people need more knowledge, so GW held a 4-day workshop and trained people about what dams are, what resettlement policies in China, and why we should protect the natural river. We had 4 days and invited people from 3 rivers, and some areas where dams already built, and some where dams are to be built in the future, so people can talk to each other and learn from each others' experiences. This workshop had a very good impact.

These photos are from the workshop. After the workshop, people returned to villages

to run their own workshops.

For example, the affected community organized a self-learning group, and on Aug 27, 2004, they organized their own workshop in Manwan Dam. They talked about resettlement policy, about corruption, and about their lives. They also came out with recommendations for the government to solve their problems. At the meeting, people took notes, and after that, each group of people wrote down their suggestions to the government. All this was watched by the police, and they recorded all this and reported to the provincial government. They reported that GW mobilized people against the dam and against the government.

But it was good that they had the record. GW participated in the workshop, but we did not dominate it. We just observed and gave good suggestions that are not against the government. For example, we said people should give the government suggestions and strategy rather than just say "I am against the government." Because all this was recorded, they cannot say we are working only against the government. The Provincial government recognized that we are working according to the law and helping people to learn the law.

We also have a photo voice project. We have 40 cameras to support to the three river community people. We teach them how to take photos and how to advocate for their good policy, to show to the government and people who are interested. We support them and hope that sometime one picture can move the world. We hope that people will be moved.

This is after the training. Each person got the camera, and it is a pity that this camera is from Kodak and not Fuji. Kodak gave us great support.

After this photo voice, people are using this in their own workshop. When people discuss, they use this.

After this, in Aug 19-27, we did an impact assessment along the river on the Man Wan, Xiaowan and Dachaoshan dam sites. After that, we wrote good reports to the government. That report is very useful to solve the local people's problems. In this assessment, as you can see in the photo, the local people use bamboo to measure sedimentation in the Manwan dam.

When the Manwan dam was built, the depth of the reservoir was about 70 meters. The average depth was about 30 meters. But behind the dam it was 90 meters. But now, in the middle of the dam, it is 2 meters. The sedimentation is very heavy. If there is no Xiaowan dam, then Manwan dam will be done in 10 years because of sedimentation.

This man uses bamboo to measure the degree of sedimentation.

This is the site of the Xiaowan dam construction. This is very destructive to nature. They say they will build the best dam, they have a good EIA, but you can see that the dam is destroying the nature.

We also visited the Manwan dam and helped people to assess their impacts. We visited Xiaowan dam, and worked with the people there to do a participatory social impact assessment. All these women in this photo work as rubbish collectors. They do not have agricultural land any more, like in the Manwan dam. Every day they get 5 yuan (about half a dollar).

This is a photo of the Dachaoshan resettled community. Many people cried to us that their situation is very bad and they are not treated well.

How can NGOs work in China? GW is now treated as a radical NGO because what we do is go to villages, mobilize people, and have an impact on watershed management. The minister of water resources met me, and the environmental leader also met me. And also the ministry of construction (people who take care of World Heritage) met me. They way what I do is good and that I help take care of the river. But the provincial government says we are very bad. We have become very controversial.

So, how should NGOs participate in watershed management? I think now we have better political and legal environment for bottom-up participation in environmental protection. We now have an EIA law, and people have the right to participate.

Now, we have a new policy that guarantees 4 rights of community. One is the right to be fully informed, right of participation, right to make decisions, right to monitoring and evaluation. (2004, July).

At a Communist Party Central Committee conference, this conference also recognized that party and government decision-making must be transparent and represent people's interest.

We think that through the last year, NGOs have great potential to participate in watershed governance. NGOs need to do research and strengthen capacity to advocate. Some NGOs do not have much research capacity. Some do not have projects to practice, but have only slogans and become weak. So, we think GW should keep 3 components—research, practice, and advocacy. We are becoming stronger.

Also, there are more NGOs now interested in watershed and river protection. We are making more networks. We believe that some leading NGOs need to take some risk to push political boundaries, so that there is more space for NGO activities. But, we still need caution. Deng Xiaoping said, “cross the river where your feet can touch the stones.” This means we must try and by trying, we can know our potential.

We need more capacity building and balance.

And of course, we need two connections. One is to the local people. NGOs must be closely related to local people. Also, we need connections to mass media. But mass media is not the end. It is a way to link to nation wide and to the government. The government will understand better, and the society will understand better with use of media.

QUESTION/ANSWER

Q: 1) When you say “watershed,” do you mean river basin as a whole, or the upper part of the river basin?

A) It is a concept. We have some lake-based watershed and river-based watershed. If we say “watershed protection,” it means the whole catchment area, including upstream and downstream. It is an area that catches all the water from the top to the sea. But, here, we say “green watershed” is to use the watershed concept to protect the river and people's watershed.

Q) What do you mean by “new scientific concept of development”?

A) This is a Chinese word. This means “sustainable development.” But this is a new phrase by Chinese government/leaders. They do not say sustainable development. This includes 5 balances, and one center. This means people-centered development. Five are human and nature should be balanced. Urban and rural should be balanced. Domestic and international should be balanced. And that development should be more sustainable. In the party papers and documents, they call this the “new and scientific development.” This means that the concept of development from before is not scientific.

COMMENT: I am a teacher. I tell my students that I specialize in infrastructure, including dams. But I tell my students that infrastructure development shows how democracy works in a society.

Yu) We tell the government that we are not against dams. We want to see good processes. They can make electricity, but at the same time have a process that promotes democracy. But before, as you said, we did not have this democratic process.

COMMENT: I have been working in MRC for 3.5 years, until last May. Your comments, you said 4 countries in the lower Mekong (except Thailand) have been silent. But for 3.5 years, I worked as a consultant under the MRC/JICA project. We constructed a simulation model in the lower Mekong Basin. But we did not get data from China, so we could not simulate the hydrological effects from the series of dams in the upper reaches. But based on the simple assumption, we simulated the hydrological effects on Tonle Sap. Also in the Vietnam delta in dry season. Mekong delta people welcomed dam development in the upper reaches. In the delta, people suffer from salinity of delta in dry season, so they want more river flow in the dry season. But in Tonle Sap, the water will not lower if dams release water in dry season. There are large fish spawning areas in flooded forests near the lake, but the water will not lower to one meter. So in our prediction, the flooded forests will die. This is one biological balance. There is a natural cycle of flooding in Tonle Sap. Cambodian people are worried about the dams in China...maybe this is because of flooding? But Cambodian people also want to introduce flood water into floodplains. So Cambodian people are worried about reduction of floods. But in the Mekong River basin, the flood problem is mostly in Laos. Maybe the MRC should announce to the 6 countries the scientific

information.

Yu) For your info, GW has a project with the MRC that set up a Mekong Information Center in the GW office for Yunnan, or for whole China to get information from the MRC. Our office is like a library now. All publications from MRC are sent to our office, and we are open to the government, NGOs, and experts to understand more about downstream of Mekong countries. We have lots of satellite maps and publications from MRC. This is one way a Chinese NGO is cooperating with an international body.

COMMENT: please ask your government to become a member of MRC. This is the best solution! Otherwise, many people downstream may be antagonized.

Comment: BUT, 4 countries in lower Mekong might not want China to be a member. China very powerful compared to the 4 countries.

Yu) Yes, this is very complex. We have done some research about why China has not joined the MRC. There are some historical reasons, some political-economic reasons. China has not participated as a member for some reasons. But, we believe that in several years, China must join the MRC. Otherwise, we think that there is some risk of diplomatic impact. That is why we do research on not just social and environmental impacts, but also on diplomatic impacts.