

8 文明回眸 | Civilization Glimpse

Nothing Short of a Miracle: The Two Decades' Chinese Restoration of Forests and Grasslands from Farmland

China's restoration of forests and grasslands from farmland is the ecological project with the biggest investment, the strongest policy support, the widest scope and the broadest public participation the world has ever seen. For the past two decades, the Chinese central government has invested 501.48 billion yuan in this ambitious project, restoring more than 500 million mu (333333.33 square kilometers) of forests and grassland and boosting the forest coverage rate of the project area by over 4 percentage points. The investment paid off, yielding millions of ecological values. For instance, the upper- and middle-reaches of both the Yangtze and the Yellow River, which are the mainstay of the project, have returned over 80 million mu (53333.33 square kilometers) of land to forests. The project has adjusted the industrial structure of China's rural areas, transferred the labor surplus and developed eco-economy. Green mountains are also gold mountains, as proved by China's practice. The country's endeavor to green its land and the globe has created a true ecological miracle.

20 特别策划 | Special Focus

Ankang: A Green City beside the Han River

Ankang, a waterfront city of the Han River, historically connected the southern tip of the Qin Kingdom and the northern border of Chu Kingdom. Before the Ming Dynasty, it used to have dense forests. However, reclamation spanning from the early Ming Dynasty to the Republican period has taken a heavy toll on its forests. Fortunately, China initiated the restoration project, prohibiting logging and conserving water in the Han River Region. Such measures have ensured the water quality of the Han River and the ecological security of the middle route of South-to-North Water Transfer Project. As a result, the woeful eco-environment in the Qinba mountainous region and Han River Region like Hanbing District was reversed. On this land of hundreds of years' history, the local people have walked out of poverty by reaping the fruits of a sound ecosystem and green mountains.

Yan'an's Transformation after Two Decades of Green Restoration

Yan'an is among the first pilot cities to return farmlands to forests and is a telling example to show that green mountains are also gold mountains. Thanks to the restoration, its mountains have become green, rivers clear, sky blue, people rich, and villages and towns beautiful. The project has manifested the people-first development concept, answered the call to draw strength from the Yan'an Spirit, and proved the success of the holistic approach of conserving mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes and grasslands.

20 Years' of Restoration of Forests from Farmland in Sichuan

The year 2019 celebrates the 20th anniversary of the national project of returning farmlands to forests. 20 years ago, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu, as the pilot provinces to launch the project, ushered in a new era of green growth, breaking the vicious cycle of reclamation and poverty and starting to heal the nature and improve the ecosystem. Now Sichuan is blanketed with green forests, a far cry from the fragile and infertile sloping farmland 20 years ago. The greener Sichuan acts like a strong fortress that keeps the ecological environment of the upper reaches of the Yangtze from harm.

Unveil the Mysterious Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens

The Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam was established in 1864. As the largest zoo and botanic garden of the country, it is home to more than 2,000 kinds of woody plants, 23 kinds of orchids, 33 kinds of cactuses and 1,000-odd kinds of animals. It also has a moderate-sized bamboo park, close to the temple next to the front gate. Across the park is the Museum of Vietnamese History. The Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens is one of the most popular amusement parks of the city, receiving several million tourists every year.

54 文化采撷 | Cultural Highlights

Why Do the Giant Pandas Prefer Sichuan?

About 8 million years ago, primal pandas (*Ailurarctos lufengensis*), which were bear-like carnivores, gradually switched to a bamboo-based vegetarian diet. They were first discovered in Sichuan and now their progeny has charmed the world. Pandas chose to settle down exclusively in their secluded habitats of Sichuan for a number of solid reasons. First, this is the place where Min Mountains, Qionglai Mountains and Daxiangling Mountains and part of Qinling Mountains are located and thus can hardly see human traces. In addition, local ethnic people as pious worshippers of nature hold the mountains in awe, leaving the giant pandas undisturbed. Panda from China is widely acknowledged as a cultural emblem that bears a message of peace.

66 美丽乡村 | Beautiful Countryside

The Makeover of Chuanyan Village with Forest covered Mountains from Over-Reclamation Induced Poverty

In Chuanyan Village of Yangchang Town, Dafang County, Guizhou Province, 5700 mu (3.8 square kilometers) or 63.3% of the arable land lies on steep slopes of 25 degrees or higher. The rough topographic feature led to heavy reclamation practices, which at one time reached a historic high of over 90%, and severe stony desertification followed. To break the vicious cycle of more reclamation and graver poverty, in 2000, Chuanyan Village started to return their farmland to forests. By the end of 2013, altogether 4432.3 mu (2.95 square kilometers) of land had been restored as forests. Following a development model promoting ecological protection for economic growth and social harmony, by 2018, the village had boasted 12800 mu (8.53 square kilometers) of forests, covering 72.4% of its area and scored an annual per capita income of 9300 yuan, an increase by 45 times since before the restoration.

Xiaozhuang Village, the Hometown of Yao Emperor and the Birthplace of Agricultural Civilization

Xiaozhuang Village in Shanxi Province is the reputed hometown of Yao Emperor and the birthplace of Chinese agricultural civilization. Originally built in the Northern Wei Dynasty, it was a revolutionary base during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. Its nine streets and nine alleys form a T-shaped layout, a typical design of settlement that highlights the unity of nature and human. The village has maintained many traditions of agricultural civilization, such as strong family values and longstanding folk culture. Its governance that respects education, rituals and virtues also follows the sage advice of the ancestors. It is a breathing natural museum of history because of its long-standing tradition of environment protection.

80 理论观点 | Theoretical Views

The Updated Concept of Nature: Historical Developments of French Landscaping and Echoes in Design

Landscaping is an artificial process to respect and elevate nature. The first-level nature is everything natural. The second-level nature is the agricultural views created by human activities. The third-level nature is a more aesthetically refined landscape that has integrated materials and human imitation. The fourth-level nature can be found in a society of highly developed ecological civilization, where people aspire to coexist with nature in harmony and apply eco-restoration to social culture.

Thoughts on Global Civilization and Building a Community of Shared Future

President Xi Jinping's view of lucid waters and lush mountains as invaluable assets is a major revision to the relationship between man and nature. A deep understanding of President Xi's diplomatic concept of a community with a shared future for mankind will reveal how President Xi is exploring ways to bring together the accomplishments of various civilizations and build shared values and shared pursuits, which is a sharp contrast to taking one nation's values as globally shared values. As a great, responsible power, China adheres to a cooperative approach featuring openness, connectivity and mutual benefit, with a mind to bring benefits to people across the globe.