

PROGRAM 3 – SHIFTING NATURE

ANNOUNCER

Major funding for China From the Inside has been provided by the Corporation For Public Broadcasting. Additional funding is provided by the KQED Campaign for the Future Program Venture Fund; individuals, foundations and corporations committed to the production and acquisition of quality programs; by David and Cecilia Lee, and others - a complete list is available from PBS; and by contributions to your PBS station from viewers like you. Thank you.

WU DENGMIN, Environmental activist

People welcomed the factories, because with factories moving in, we could earn some money and prosper. But then once the factories were here, people realised: our water's been polluted - we can't drink it. Our soil's been polluted and grain production has fallen. Our fruit trees have died of pollution. Our pigs have died, our sheep have died, and our people have died too – died of cancer. Then they thought: we don't want development like this, factories like these. At first we wanted money, but now we want quality of life.

NARRATOR

China's people are paying the price for her rapid economic growth. The prosperity touches some – the pollution touches all.

Deputy Minister PAN YUE, Environmental Protection Administration

The environmental challenge isn't just to provide our children with future happiness, but the real question of whether our generation can survive intact.

NARRATOR

This may be China's century. She's growing richer. Growing stronger. And the process is taking her people through momentous upheavals. This television series has had exceptional access to the country, her institutions and people – at a critical time. This is China From the Inside.

Nature in China is becoming a battleground - contested by scientists, environmentalists, government, and ordinary people – - 1.3 billion of them, whose water, air and soil are at stake. Development creates human as well as environmental cost. Giant construction projects involve resettling people in new cities – uprooting millions from land, job and home. There are places in China which remind us what it must all have once been like. When the rivers were at the centre of daily life. When the water was clean enough to wash vegetables in. When the air was pure enough to dry meat safely. When taming nature meant using cormorants to catch fish. Yet the Chinese also have a long history of 'improving' nature. Two and a half thousand years ago they started building the Grand Canal linking rivers and cities. By the 1950s, heavy industrialisation was the priority. Chairman Mao Zedong urged the Chinese people to conquer nature, thereby freeing themselves from it. Half a century later, China opens a new coal-fired power station every week of the year – and emits more greenhouse gases than any country other than the United States.

Professor LEI HENGSHUN, Sustainable development expert

You can't solve the problem of poverty without economic development. But as you speed up economic development, you can't help but destroy the environment. To cultivate more land you have to build roads, chop down forests. You have to do the same to build a factory. And with this kind of economic development, emissions of industrial waste and gases massively increase -- as does human sewage, with the rise in population density and living standards. And so there's more and more pollution.

Deputy Minister PAN YUE, Environmental Protection Administration
Of the world's 10 most polluted cities, five – unfortunately - are in China. Such severe pollution is undoubtedly a grave threat to the physical health of the Chinese people.

NARRATOR

The Huai River flows for over 600 miles across the middle of China, providing water for 150 million people.

HUO DAISHAN, Environmental activist

I was born on the banks of the Huai River. It was in 1987 that I grew worried about the problem of water pollution in the river. I'd gone back to take pictures of the scenery. But there no longer was any scenery; instead I found myself taking photos of people dredging up dead fish.

NARRATOR

Huo Daishan gave up his job as a news photographer to save the Huai. Research took him to its main tributary, the Shaying. Nearly half a million tons of human sewage a day are tipped into it - plus a million tons of untreated waste water from paper mills, tanneries, chemical works. Some use processes banned elsewhere; their effluents include ammonia, cyanide, arsenic.

HUO DAISHAN

The water from this river has flowed through irrigation channels into villages and sunk into the ground. People who drank this polluted groundwater just became ill. The water of this river, the black and stinking water, takes death with it wherever it flows. It really is a river of death. Before the local rate for cancer was 1 in 100,000. Now in some villages, it's 1 in 100. Cancer doesn't differentiate between age or gender. This cancer sufferer is one year old. Her grandfather, grandmother, father and mother have all died from tumours and cancers. She has cancer of the liver, and has had an operation which left a deep scar. This woman had oesophagus cancer and had an operation, followed by chemotherapy. She lost all her hair. When I saw her she was already beyond cure - was preparing for death and had put on her burial clothes. This is an oesophagus cancer sufferer from Huangmengying village. Her name was Zhang Guizhi. The cancer had blocked her whole gullet. Not even a drop of water could get through. Shortly after I took this photo, she died.

WANG CANFA, Environmental lawyer

It's widely reported that because of Huai River pollution there are cancer villages. But if you sue through the courts, the requirements for evidence are very strict. If you don't have this evidence you might lose the case. And where the cause of illness is pollution, it's very difficult to gather evidence. So, say you've got a disease, like stomach cancer or lung cancer, and you say it's caused by polluted water. It's extremely difficult to prove a causal connection between the two.

NARRATOR

Vice-Minister Pan Yue does not need convincing of the link between people's health and their environment.

Deputy Minister PAN YUE, Environmental Protection Administration

2 million of our people die from cancer every year. We don't have accurate figures; we haven't done the sums, but many cancer cases are related to environmental pollution.

NARRATOR

But a booming economy is one of China's priorities, and the Environment Administration has limited power to hinder that.

PAN YUE

Our Environmental Law has tens of sections, but it stipulates that we can only play a supervisory role, and don't have the power to shut down polluting companies. It's surprising that in all these sections, we haven't been granted this authority. We don't have the power. So what are we to do? The fines that can be imposed are tiny. The cost of observing the law is high, but it costs very little to break it. So why would anyone listen to what we have to say and stop polluting? Of course they won't.

NARRATOR

Another problem is the complex web of links between local industry and local government. These range from legitimate common interests - like maintaining employment - to out and out corruption. Some local governments even part-own polluting factories and treating waste eats into profits.

HUO DAISHAN

Local protectionism is everywhere. These big companies are pillars of the economy. They are powerful tax payers. They play an important supportive role for local finance and development.

NARRATOR

Environmental activists like Huo Daishan operate in a grey area. Nationally they can be taken as heroes - fighting for a cleaner, safer China. But locally they can seem more like trouble-makers.

HUO DAISHAN, Environmental activist

I've had anonymous, threatening phone calls, saying, "This isn't any of your business, so keep out of it. Don't stick your nose into matters that don't concern you." That's one thing - but it's not all. I've been beaten up.

NARRATOR

One result of 'local protectionism' is that some officials tip off factory bosses that inspectors are on the way. Then the factories hurriedly treat the waste, making the river flow clear - for a while.

HUO DAISHAN

There's a folk song going around with the words: "Emitting clear water is the sign, that soon it's official inspection time."

NARRATOR

China's official news agency Xinhua has said that around 50,000 people along the Shaying River have been found to have cancer. As for Huangmenying, the original cancer village, local government was shamed by Huo Daishan and his photos into giving the villagers a deep well with safe water – but only after 118 of them had died.

HUO DAISHAN

The situation there is improving. But Huangmengyin Village isn't a special case. It isn't a chance incident. These high cancer rates we're seeing – these cancer villages – are just the tip of the iceberg.

NARRATOR

The scale of the problem is daunting. Almost anywhere there are people, there's pollution, and pollution is easily spread. This river flows from Tibet into India and Bangladesh. A third of the world's population uses water from China. China's acid rain falls on Korea and Japan. Pollution from its factory chimneys lands in Canada. There's little incentive for individuals or industry to take responsibility for waste. Here's a typical scenario: a small factory on the edge of a village. Round the side, an outflow for waste from the industrial process. This is then piped into an irrigation channel - which provides water for farmers' crops. This is called the Clear River, but it's been killed by the waste from a pulp factory. China grades water into 5 categories. Level five being the worst. Over half the country's major river systems are level four or higher and so are unfit for any human use. A third are so polluted they're above level five. One of the few lawyers in China who'll take on pollution cases is Wang Canfa.

WANG CANFA & ASSISTANT LOOKING AT POLLUTION PHOTOS ON
COMPUTER

WANG CANFA (Subtitles)

Let's see the photos from Pinnan.

The pollution there is terrible.

NARRATOR

He's won nearly eighty environmental cases, securing restitution for victims. He helps draft environmental laws and trains judges, but it's hard getting justice in pollution cases.

WANG CANFA (Subtitles)

It used to be bamboo and trees but now it's all dead.

WANG CANFA, Environmental lawyer

According to our system, the courts are financed by local government. So if a court finds a local business in the wrong and orders it to cease production, the local government will stop receiving tax revenues. That's why there's often interference in court cases so you can't get a fair judgement. If we had a lever for forcing local governments to see the protection of the environment as their responsibility, even their mission, then environmental protection would be improved.

NARRATOR

There's no consistent pattern. Some local governments resist environmental protection groups. Others encourage them. The Han River in Hubei Province runs through areas of heavy industrial pollution but it has guardian angels – both in Communist Party offices and along its banks.

FERRYMAN IS HANDED LEAFLET FROM ENVIRONMENTALIST (YUN JIANLI)
YUN JIANLI (Subtitles)

Take this and spread the word. It needs more than us – you see more people than we do.

NARRATOR

Yun Jianli leads the Green Han River group on a campaigning field trip. Their members include teachers, engineers, policemen and businessmen. Senior local Party official Ma Li sees them as allies.

MA LI, Xiangfan Party Committee

The government has always supported these activities. We think that, having such a beautiful mother river, we should treasure it as we do our own eyes. We take pride in the fact that you can drink water straight from the middle reach of the Han River.

NARRATOR

One of the group's main tasks is getting local people to help look after the river.

CAMPAIGNER TALKING TO WOMAN WITH BICYCLE

CAMPAIGNER (Subtitles)

Criminals who pollute the water won't dare if the people are watching. The places where people have cancer didn't protect the water. So we must protect the environment. Some people just want to make money and leave a legacy of gold. But it's better to leave green hills and clear water.

NARRATOR

The group is worried about heavy use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which run off the fields into the river. Yun Jianli preaches green values to a poultry farmer.

YUN JIANLI TALKING TO POULTRY FARMER

YUN JIANLI & FARMER (Subtitles)

Pick up any plastic bags you see.

Put the duck manure on the fields.

We don't throw it in the river.

We should protect our ancestors' river.

NARRATOR

What gives the Green Han River group the freedom to operate is the approval of local officials who put the environment ahead of local commercial interests.

MA LI, Xiangfan Party Committee

There's a fermented soya paste factory in the upper reach of the Han River, and the waste it produced heavily polluted the river. Around a thousand people worked in this factory but we shut it down. We shut it down without any hesitation. And there have been many cases like this: cement factories, paper factories, there's a long list.

Whether it's governmental organisations or NGOs, we pursue the same aim - a better life, a better environment.

NARRATOR

In the north of China, millions of people don't even have dirty water.

MA LI, Ningxia villager

It'd be okay if it rained. The trees would grow in the mountains. We'd have water to drink. The wheat would grow, so we'd have food to eat. The problem is, it doesn't rain.

NARRATOR

China is trying to feed 20% of the world's population on just 7% of the world's arable land. Over a quarter of China is sand. And an awful lot of that sand is in Ningxia – a partly Muslim region in Northern China. The terraced fields have been ploughed, waiting for rain that doesn't come. This village is even called 'Crying out for Water'. The people of Ningxia are among the poorest in China. Some, like Ma Li, follow tradition by making their homes in caves.

MA LI

We have nothing. You see there's nothing here. We don't wash much. No water, no washing. Water costs money. No money, no water.

NARRATOR

Ningxia's main source of water is the Yellow River. It's also been Ningxia's barrier against the Gobi Desert to the north. But people have chopped down the trees which once lined and protected its banks. Forest has given way to sand, pushing up silt levels in the river. The Gobi Desert is now spreading into Ningxia. Some people have over-ploughed and over-grazed - turning grasslands to desert. Add climate change, and the result is sandstorms, hunger, poverty. But not for all.

MA ZANLIN, Director, Resettlement Project

Hongsipu was virtually part of the Gobi desert. It really was a desert with one sand dune after another. But now it's been turned into an oasis.

NARRATOR

The Chinese have created fertile farmland in the desert – at a cost of 350 million dollars. Pumping stations and canals bring precious water up from the Yellow River twenty miles away. 150 square miles of desert is now producing crops. Millions of trees have been planted to strengthen embankments and act as wind-breaks. And with the hydraulic engineering, goes social engineering. 400,000 people have been resettled here from the driest parts of Ningxia.

MA ZANLIN

They see it as their right to survival and development. Our country, among others, now advocates human rights. But if people don't even have subsistence rights, how can you talk about their rights to development? So as long as the state can afford it, we should try our best to move people up here from the south.

NARRATOR

The first house in this new village was built by Ma Yingzhong.

MA YINGZHONG, Resettled farmer

People are very happy to come here. It's not like we don't want to. Even if you didn't want to move, what could you do without rain? There was no way of surviving. The wind was slight yesterday, and didn't blow away the sand – big improvement! Wherever there's water, things are good. That's why we have a summer harvest on the land here.

NARRATOR

But they can't afford to move everyone. 1.7 million people will have to remain in the arid areas.

MA LI, Ningxia villager

I want to go. And I'd take mum, dad and everyone with me. Who doesn't want to move? But we're not being moved. We have to stay here. The other day, I said to a government official 'If you won't move us, can you at least give us running water?' 'Running water?' he said. 'That'd be a bit tricky.' You see we're too far, and too high. They can't get the water up here.

NARRATOR

Drought and the Gobi Desert are creeping across Northern China. The Gobi is just a hundred miles from the Beijing. Her 10 million people rely for their water on Miyun Reservoir, fifty miles from the capital. But the level has dropped to a third of its capacity. The water's edge has receded so far that farmers now cultivate the land.

LIU ZIHUI

The mayor of Beijing would be very nervous if there weren't enough water in the reservoir. If the water supply stopped, it would be a disaster for Beijing. A crisis like that would affect the stability of people's lives, the stability of our society.

NARRATOR

200 million people across the north of China face the real possibility that – one day – the water will run out. To head off this catastrophe, their leaders plan to spend 56 billion dollars diverting water from the south of China to the north. Three new canals will be created, each hundreds of miles long. It's the biggest hydraulic project in the history of the world. Professor Liu is responsible for this – the middle canal.

LIU ZIHUI

You could describe this project as extremely big. Its total length will be 900 miles. We're talking in effect about building a new river. A rather large, man-made river running from the south to the north.

NARRATOR

All three waterways involve mighty feats of engineering. At Danjankou Reservoir they'll have to raise the height of the dam by fifty feet to increase water capacity. Here, Professor Liu's canal will burrow under the Yellow River itself. The eastern line will commandeer the ancient Grand Canal, studding it with pumping stations - forcing the water uphill to Beijing. But the most challenging – and uncertain - route requires tunnelling for 160 miles through the mountains of the Tibetan Plateau. The whole project will take perhaps 50 years to complete.

Professor LIU ZIHUI, Hydraulic engineer

I don't feel we are conquering nature. We think nature itself isn't very fair. God isn't fair. Why's that? He's given southern China so much water but given the north so little. It's good land, nice, flat land up there, but it's got so little water. So we say, as God isn't fair, we are trying to balance out God's unfairness.

NARRATOR

But there's no point in balancing it out with dirty water. The Grand Canal is so polluted that the northern city of Tianjin, with low reserves and 10 million people, is reluctant to accept water from it. And what effect will the South-North diversion itself have on China's environment?

Minister ZHANG JIYAO, South-North Water Diversion Project

We'll assess the ecological impact during the process of project implementation. That's precisely why we've divided the project into several stages. According to our current assessment, the South-North Water Diversion will not have much effect on China's ecology.

NARRATOR

But all that water going north has to come from somewhere, and the less water there is in a river, the higher the proportion of pollution.

Professor LEI HENGSHUN, Sustainable development expert

We've been forced into the south-north diversion because of China's particular situation. Of course a lot of experts are against it. The most crucial thing is to guarantee the quality of water. If it's dirty water being diverted over thousands of miles, then the losses will outweigh the gains.

NARRATOR

The Han River flows into the Yangtze at Wuhan. This booming city has realised that water pollution now threatens its very character, but for once rivers aren't the problem. A suction pipe blows a geyser of black mud into the sky. Dead fish bob at the edge of water too dangerous to paddle in. A drain has backed up, sending raw sewage into another of the city's ornamental lakes. Wuhan was once famed for its hundred beautiful lakes, but as the city's grown it's used them as dumps for industrial waste and raw sewage. Now the people who go boating on Lotus Lake take, not picnics, but funnels, filters, sample bottles. Professor Wu Zhenbin is an expert on water and the environment. He's running an experimental project over three years to try and clean up just six of Wuhan's lakes.

Professor WU ZHENBIN, Institute of Hydrobiology

They're collecting samples to analyse the water quality and its biological composition. We collect samples four times a week. The water may look all right but its quality is actually very poor. If you touch it, it's bad for you. And just standing near it, you can tell it stinks. So it's no good for people's health. 30 years ago, people used to be able to swim in the water. Not any more - but we really want to use the lakes.

NARRATOR

The clean-up has already begun, using natural methods. Water is pumped up from the lake and passed through rows of plants which absorb and break down pollutants. It then seeps through a bed of earth which acts as a second filter.

WU ZHENBIN

Having gone through two levels of treatment in this experimental system the water comes out over there having been nicely purified. That's how the water in this small lake is being improved.

NARRATOR

Professor Wu plans to re-open connections between the lakes and flush them through with water drawn from the Han River via this new channel. Cities around China are watching to see if his solutions will work for them.

Professor WU ZHENBIN, Institute of Hydrobiology

It looks like what we're doing is changing things. Actually, what we're doing is recovering things. We're trying our best to get everything back to its original state. Our work benefits the environment as well as the quality of people's lives. That's how I see it. We don't think we're changing nature. We're trying to get back closer to nature, to how things used to be.

NARRATOR

Some of the rarest mammals on the planet live in the Wuhan area – here too, scientists are working to recover a desperate situation.

Professor WANG DING, Institute of Hydrobiology

The porpoises living in the Yangtze River are the only fresh water porpoise in the world. You can't find them anywhere else. And they're different from the ones living in the sea. That's why they're unique. They're very special.

NARRATOR

The porpoises are rarer than pandas. And the pandas' environment can be protected, whereas the porpoises have to take their chances in the busy waters of the Yangtze. Pollution is only part of their problem. The South-North Water Diversion will reduce levels in the Yangtze, increasing underwater noise from ship's engines and propellers.

Professor WANG DING, Institute of Hydrobiology

The porpoises use the sonar system of echo location to survive and communicate. But the noises greatly disrupt their sonar system. Sometimes, especially during the low-water season along the narrow channels, we find them killed by propellers.

NARRATOR

This female porpoise is pregnant; Professor Wang will release her and her young with the others into a protected back-water of the Yangtze.

WANG DING

China is the most populous country in the world. Given this, competition for resources is inevitable between man and animals, as well as other living beings. Humans are always on top. But as they develop, they mustn't damage the environment too much. Because in the end, humanity as a whole will have to face the consequences.

NARRATOR

According to official Chinese figures, 116 million people in China's cities breathe air considered very dangerous to health. 400,000 of them die prematurely from air pollution every year, mostly from lung and heart-related diseases. Environmental activist Dai Qing puts herself into the mind of a corrupt official who protects polluters rather than their victims.

DAI QING, Journalist and activist

Whatever I can grab, I grab. Hang the rest. Whether others live or die, the environment, air quality – I don't care. If there's money, I'll take it. And then? My country's got no clean water or air, so I'll emigrate. Sneak my money away and live a quiet life. But what if everyone in China did this?

WANG CANFA, Environmental lawyer

Environment protection departments should emphasise law enforcement. And they can't just rely on one or two operations here and there to deal with companies that break the law, but should enforce the law on a daily basis. They must build strong mechanisms to enforce environmental laws. They've got to be ready at any time to arrest those who don't abide by environmental laws – and punish them.

NARRATOR

Chongqing on the Yangtze River is Western China's industrial power-house.

WU DENGMIN, Environmental activist

The main pollutant being pumped out is sulphur dioxide. This comes from Chongqing's high-sulphur coal. The coal used in our power stations hasn't had the sulphur taken out. Now the state is gradually introducing requirements for sulphur removal. But in order to cut costs, the power stations just emit the sulphur dioxide anyway.

NARRATOR

The mountainous cost of cleaning up all this environmental damage would effectively cancel out China's remarkable growth rate of around 8% a year.

Deputy Minister PAN YUE, Environmental Protection Administration

I think it's reasonable to say that the loss to our economy caused by the environment is 15% of our GDP. I want all Chinese officials to understand the linkage between the economy and protecting the environment. Economic growth alone can't solve the increasingly serious problems of overpopulation, of shortage of resources, and of environmental pollution.

NARRATOR

Human costs in China are not just about pollution, as the Three Gorges Dam shows. Its purpose is to generate electricity and control flooding on the Yangtze River. But there've long been serious concerns about its environmental impact and the plight of the one million people forced to relocate. At the National People's Congress in 1992 two delegates protested as only supporters of the dam were allowed to speak. With a third of delegates abstaining or voting against the project, Professor Lei and others pushed through a key amendment, giving them the right to monitor the project and highlight problems.

Professor LEI HENGSHUN, Chongqing University

I think this was an historic achievement. It provided the legal basis for people like me to carry out research in this area. Through this resolution, the state acknowledged that any problems discovered should be further investigated, and solved accordingly. So after taking part in the 1992 National Peoples' Congress, I turned the focus of my scientific research towards the Three Gorges Dam reservoir area.

NARRATOR

Almost every year since then, Professor Lei has made field trips into the area of the dam.

LEI HENGSHUN

I'm an academic. I can't just trot out what other people say. I have to do research in person.

NARRATOR

First stop is a tree-planting scheme about fifty miles upstream of the dam. But even though the professor has won the right to ask straight questions about progress on the dam, he has no guarantee of straight answers.

PROF. LEI & XIONG TONGFU TALKING ABOUT TREE-PLANTING SCHEME
(Subtitles)

How big is your test area?

What test area?

This green area.

Er...what we've already...

What are your targets?

Let me think.

How much have you planted?

Er...over fifty acres.

How many trees per acre?

Er...I'm not sure.

What?

I'm not in charge of that. That's one for the Reservoir Planting Department.

So what's your department?

Propaganda.

So no one here today knows the exact area...or how many trees have been planted?

Do you have the figures? What? You didn't bring the plans? We sent you some stuff and said we'd look at the planting...and you said no need.

No I didn't.

NARRATOR

Professor Lei strikes out on his own to talk directly to the tree-planters.

PROF. LEI & TREE PLANTERS (Subtitles)

You're working hard!

It's not too bad.

NARRATOR

The reason he's so interested in the tree-planting, is because after the valley is flooded it'll be the trees that will help stabilise the upper slopes.

PROF. LEI & TREE PLANTERS (Subtitles)

You've got to dig that deep!

NARRATOR

The Professor finally gets the answer he wants.

PROF. LEI & TREE PLANTER (Subtitles)

We plant 1200 trees an acre.

PROFESSOR LEI & OFFICIAL (Subtitles)

Let's go!

NARRATOR

Professor Lei is followed down the hill by yet another propaganda department official. The Three Gorges Dam is a sensitive subject. As well as the world-famous gorges, whole cities, towns, villages, and fertile farmland will be submerged for four hundred miles. And how clean will all this water be? Xiong Tongfu, local Director of Propaganda, is adamant.

XIONG TONGFU (Subtitles)

The Yangtze River water is very, very clean. We protect our mother river and the reservoir area. Everyone, young and old is protecting the environment.

NARRATOR

But Xinhua news agency admits that the city of Chongqing alone tips over a billion tons of untreated waste into the Yangtze every year. Professor Lei now visits Yunyang - a new town being built for over 100,000 people whose homes are to be flooded by the Three Gorges Dam. Here, the propaganda officials agreed to stand back and let the locals talk freely. As in Ningxia, if your previous life was harsh, you welcome resettlement.

WOMAN

If we hadn't been moved because of the dam, we'd still be in our old town where things were a lot worse. We're quite happy now.

MAN

Since moving here our living conditions have gotten a lot better.

WIFE

It's like heaven.

MAN

We never thought we'd be able to move to a house like this. It's been good for us.

NARRATOR

But eleven cities are being submerged. People have lost jobs as well as homes. Many farmers have been moved off land they've worked for generations. Modest compensation payments are soon spent, and what's a farmer to do in an apartment complex?

Professor LEI HENGSHUN

It's not enough for a person just to have a house to live in. How can they make a living? No job, no income. The housing is great. For peasants, they're mansions. But there's no safety net. They're slipping into poverty. People say they're beggars. Beggars living in mansions. That's what ordinary people say – it's a vivid image. And it lays bare the nature of the problem.

NARRATOR

It's a long day for Professor Lei, but he's still curious to learn more about life after resettlement. He comes upon a group of people with new homes in Yunyang, but no jobs.

PROFESSOR LEI (Subtitles)

Ah, they're playing chess.

NARRATOR

They become increasingly relieved that someone is interested in their problems.

PROF LEI & UNEMPLOYED MAN (Subtitles)

Hello, I'm from Chongqing University. I see you're playing chess. I just wanted a chat. What jobs do you do?

We've been laid off.

So now what?

I'm looking for a solution.

Do you have any plans?

Not really.

How many people in your family?

Four or five.

How many have been laid off?

Everyone.

PROF. LEI & 2ND MAN (Subtitles)

We're so deprived. I can't afford my child's school fees. We need help from privileged people like you. I don't want to have to sell my home to pay school fees.

WOMAN (Subtitles)

If we could only pay last year's school fees on time...

NARRATOR

Finally the Professor is taken aside by a man who hints at even darker local problems.

INFORMANT (Subtitles)

The police can't do anything.. We need the county government to act. Resettled people are having serious problems. It's affecting at least 12,000 of us. You're from Chongqing University so could you help us? Tell the city government about us. Tell them to send someone down to the riverside. That's where the poorest of the poor live.

Professor LEI HENGSHUN

In my opinion, because of China's particular situation, there are things being done today which aren't ideal, but get done anyway. That's my personal opinion. Not necessarily ideal, but they still have to be done. Why? Because the problems of survival and development of China's billion-odd people have become a real headache. Firstly, we don't have enough economic power. Secondly our science and technology aren't very advanced. Also, most of our people are not very sophisticated. Given these circumstances, which can't be altered in the short term, all we can do is to balance advantages and disadvantages. As long as the disadvantages don't outweigh the advantages, we can do it. But it might not be the best plan. I think it's a choice born of helplessness.

NARRATOR

The South-North Water Diversion scheme will dwarf the Three Gorges Dam. And its advantages won't be felt for decades, and won't ever be felt by those who have to make sacrifices for it. Because raising the height at Danjankou Dam will raise the water level of the reservoir and the rivers feeding it...People living along hundreds of miles of fertile banks will have to move out.

LIU ZIHUI

Our government is relocating 300,000 people in order to maintain long-term security and stable lives for 200 to 300 million people. So the advantages from water diversion outweigh the disadvantages of relocating people.

Professor LIU ZIHUI, Hydraulic engineer

Our bottom line is to make sure that living standards after resettlement will be noticeably improved.

NARRATOR

Fu Anyin and his wife Ai Wanying have lived, farmed and raised their family on the upper Han River for over thirty years. On the hill opposite is Long Bi tower – an ancient shrine said to protect the area from flooding – but it's no match for the South-North Water Diversion.

AI WANYING, Farmer, Wife

It's policy from the top. If the authorities tell you to go, you have to go. You can't stay. The people in Beijing will be drinking this water. In 2008, the water will go there. We all know that. In 2007 we'll all leave.

FU ANYIN, Farmer, Husband

People who've been here a long time believe it's better for a village to be poor than uprooted. But people our age are more understanding. I'll move if the Party asks us to, for the sake of the country's construction. Individuals can't stand in the way. It's for the good of the majority.

AI WANYING

It's easy fishing here.

FU ANYIN

The fish here taste good. They're shallow water fish.

AI WANYING

We don't want to leave here. Our life's all right. We earn enough to eat and get by. If we move, we're too old to start again. All we can hope for is to be moved to a good place. If the new place isn't as good as here, we don't want to move. We have orange trees. We grow them to sell. The oranges are this big. If you come up to my home, I'll give you some to taste. There are some at home. Come and try them.

END

ANNOUNCER

China From the Inside is available on DVD. To order this four-part program call PBS Home Video at 1-800-PLAY-PBS.

END CREDITS

JONATHAN LEWIS

Writer, Producer, Director

CHRIS RODMELL

Film Editor

DENNIS KOSTYK

Production Consultant

NAOMI JIEHUA LI

ANXI JIANG

Assistant Producers

LIN GU

XINGPING ZHOU

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN

Researchers

JULIE STONER

Production Manager

YANG ZHAO

Production Co-ordinator, China

PAUL COX

Director of Photography

GILES MALLARD

Camera Assistant

PETER EASON
Sound Recordist

ORLANDO GOUGH
Music Composer

LAURENCE ASTON
Music Consultant

MICHAEL SANDERS
Colorist

DOMINIC McMAHON
On-Line Editor, UK

TOM CORBETT
Dubbing Editor

ANDREW SEARS
Dubbing Mixer

MORGAN SENDALL
Graphic Designer

ALISON McALLAN
Film Researcher

CAROLINE WHITE
Production Accountant

CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL MOVIE-TV CENTER
Production Facilities, China

Academic Consultants
Dr ROBERT BARNETT
Professor ELISABETH CROLL
Dr HILDEGARD DIEMBERGER
Dr MICHAEL DILLON
Professor PETER HO
Professor JUDITH SHAPIRO
Professor VIVIENNE SHUE

ADDITIONAL FOOTAGE BY
Huo Daishan
AP Archive
BBC Motion Gallery
China Central News Documentary Film Studio
ITN/Reuters Archive
TVB, Hong Kong

With thanks to
LEE BOYLE
Dr RED CHAN
MICHAEL STONER

LUCY HETHERINGTON
Executive Producer for the BBC

RICHARD CLEMMOW
Executive Producer

For KQED San Francisco:

SUZANNE ROMAINE
Production Unit Manager

ROBERT O'GEEN
On-Line Editor

TBA
YOONHYUNG LEE
Publicity

ELAINE SHEN
Education Outreach

JOHN BOLAND
Executive in Charge of Production

A KQED Public Television and Granada Production for PBS, Granada International
and the BBC, in association with Kostyk Communications

© 2006 Granada/PBS/CPB