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Mellon Foundation Area and International Studies Fellowships for Incoming Graduate Students

Submitted: September 10, 2015

During the past summer, I spent a month in China to do field research in China. I have focused specifically on environmental issues in China, which is instrumental in shaping me a nuanced understanding of the environmental humanities.

During the first week, I visited many parts of Beijing to conduct field research on urban environments. For instance, I visited Dinghushi, an area which is three miles from Tiananmen Square. The people there were not accessible to the clean restroom. Children had to go to the bed of the river to answer nature's call. The rubbish zone was close to the migrant workers. Then, I visited the controversial Three Gorges Dam on Yichang, Hubei Province. I found that the local residents were still not rich and lack of colorful cultural development. However, the national government usually praised the grand development of that region. When tourists came to visit that area, they rarely came to the local residents who were heavily influenced by the region.

After visiting Hubei Province, I came to Dujiang Dam, Sichuan Province. The dam was built in 256 BC during the Warring States period of China by the State of Qin. It was the very early effort for the Chinese to alter the physical environment. The trip to Tibet is particularly intriguing. The clean water, blue sky, and the local Tibetans are a sharp contrast to those in Sichuan Province. I have noticed that when Tibetans celebrated their own environment, they burnt the local plants but such fire produces heavy smoke at the same time. In this regard, the human impact on the environment is multi-layered.

Getting back from Tibet, I came to visit Xining, Qinghai Province. I took the plateau railway to travel. On the train, the restroom is designed not to harm the local environment. However, the local people in the rural region are not rich. The use of water in Xining is paradoxically ironic. On the one side the bridge, the water of the river is clean and employed to be shown to the visitors. Interestingly, the water is dirty on the other side the bridge. Water is managed to show the nationalist progress, but, in fact, it is not the reality.

Yellow River could probably show the great impact of the Anthropocene in China. I came to Wuhai, Inner Mongolia. Wuhai is a newly emerging industrial city in western part of China. The dam built on that river has made the water clean, but has greatly reduced the water flow. The local residents told me that the river had undergone great changes after the construction of the dam. The local environment in Wuhai is complex when the local residents tell me the air become clean these years after the coal mine are shut down by the government. It indicates the complex situation in the Anthropocene in Wuhai, China.

I visited Tianjin where a dramatic blast took place on August 12. More than 160 people lost their lives. I came to the explosive region. Unexpectedly, the migrant workers were asked to continue handle the damaged buildings. The smelly smoke continued to appear, and the region was closely controlled by the soldiers. This visit prompts me to reconsider the environmental justice in China. The local residents are actually very rich who could afford the apartment around the sea. However, they are left to be homeless overnight. The environmental justice in China might not necessarily on the environmentalism of the poor, but includes the environmentalism of the middle class as well.

The above areas that I visited help me to contextualize the environmental degradation in China and offer historical and practical foundation when I analyze the fictional and non-fictional texts and perceive the rhetorical discourse on environmental discourse in daily lives. In particular, this first-hand information boosts my research on the environmental injustice in contemporary China. Without such generous Mellon funding, I could hardly make it. I want to express my sincere gratitude for this support.