

WAKING THE GREEN TIGER

78 min

This program includes close captions and English subtitles.

01:00:04:12

DAVID HEWLETT (V/O):

In the winter of 2004, in a remote region of southern China, a small group of environmental activists and journalists set out on a journey to save one of the last wild rivers in China. It wouldn't be easy. Ever since the time of Chairman Mao, protecting nature had not been a priority. Mao had declared that nature should be attacked and conquered, in the name of progress. Millions of people were mobilized to carry out his plans.

01:00:52:00

HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D):

There was little room for dissent during Mao's time or in the years that followed. Then, in 2004, something changed. The activists believed that the time had come to speak out, to challenge the government, to save a river. Against the odds, in the months that followed, they ignited a national debate, and they awakened a new kind of green activism that could transform China.

01:01:26:15

TITLE:

WAKING the GREEN TIGER

01:01:31:01

TITLE:

A film by
Gary Marcuse

01:01:32:22

TITLE:

Produced by
Betsy Carson

01:01:36:02

TITLE:

inspired by
Mao's War Against Nature
by Judith Shapiro

01:01:39:27

TITLE:

Narrated by
David Hewlett

01:01:45:03

WANG YONGCHEN:

(SUBTITLE) In February 2004 we organized a trip to the Nu River for journalists and activists. We traveled for 10 days along the Nu River.

01:01:59:24

JOURNALISTS & ACTIVISTS
(SINGING):

(SUBTITLE) Under the curved moon is the curved river
by the curved river is our home

01:02:06:03

SUPER:

JOURNALIST
WANG YONGCHEN

01:02:06:20
HEWLETT (V/O):

Wang Yongchen is a senior environmental reporter at China's National Public Radio. She's also one of China's earliest green activists. She's been organizing nature walks and nature talks for years, but this time, she was hoping to save an entire river. There are three great rivers in China that flow down from the Tibetan plateau into Yunnan Province-- the Nu, the Mekong, and the Yangtze. Yunnan province is China's storehouse of biodiversity and natural beauty. More than half of China's plant and animal species are found here.

01:02:49:20
HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D):

These rare golden monkeys live on the high mountain ridges, which are part of a vast national park. The valleys have been farmed for centuries.

01:03:01:06
FARMERS:

(CHATTING)

01:03:04:05
HEWLETT (V/O):

The farmers here belong to some of 25 ethnic minorities who live in Yunnan. Many of them, like the Naxi people, have a long tradition of caring for the land. Tourists flock to the province for a glimpse of nature and to escape heavily polluted cities back home.

01:03:40:20
HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D):

But Yunnan province also holds a quarter of China's untapped hydro power, so it wasn't entirely a surprise when plans were announced for 21 big dams on Yunnan's rivers. The dams would be built and owned by two of China's big new power corporations. Stirring up a debate about protecting the river was difficult. In the past, thousands of dams had been built with very little opposition, and censors routinely blocked stories.

01:04:14:24
YONGCHEN:

(SUBTITLE) Since September 2003 most mass media were told not to run any reports about the Nu river dams. I wrote an article for Southern Weekend newspaper about the biodiversity and traditional culture in the Nu valley. But it was placed in the Geography section of the paper and any mention of dam construction was deleted.

01:04:42:11
HEWLETT (V/O):

In order to get the word out, the activists were relying on a brand-new environmental law, recently passed but not yet tested.

01:04:52:22
MA JUN (V/O):

That year...

01:04:53:17
JUN (CONT'D):

...we have the first ever law in our history which requires public participation in the decision-making process, in the government's decision-making process. That was an environmental law called the "Environmental Impact Assessment Law."

01:05:07:27
SUPER: JOURNALIST
MA JUN

01:05:08:25
HEWLETT (V/O): Ma Jun is a journalist who runs an environmental website in Beijing.

01:05:13:05
JUN: The new law got implemented and the NGOs could use this as a basis for arguing that there needs to be a public participation.

01:05:23:12
SHI LIHONG (V/O): We travelled there for several days and talked to many local people.

01:05:29:27
LIHONG (CONT'D): There was a lot of debate about whether the dam should be built on that river.

01:05:34:28
SUPER: FILMMAKER
SHI LIHONG

01:05:36:10
HEWLETT (V/O): Shi Lihong is a former journalist who turned to filmmaking.

01:05:40:01
LIHONG: So I think I want to make the film about the local people...

01:05:42:25
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): ...to see how their life really is, and what are their true thoughts.

01:05:50:02
YONGCHEN: (SUBTITLE) Many criticized us that we only went to the Nu Valley to enjoy the scenery. They said that we were a group of pseudo-environmental protectionists and that we didn't care about the well-being of the local people. But we're not only concerned with the protection of the environment here. We are also very concerned about the livelihood of these people. They will lose their paddy fields, their backyards, their animals. Without these things how can they survive? When we arrived at the first bend of the Nu River we all went quiet. Would this be the last time we saw this? The dam would quickly flood this paradise.

01:07:16:05
HEWLETT (V/O): For seven days, the journalists filed reports from the river. On the last day before returning to Beijing, they discovered their stories had been heard.

01:07:29:00
Man # 1 (SUBTITLE) Important news! Premier Wen Jiabao has given personal instructions that the Nu River project should be given very cautious consideration.

01:07:47:26
MAN #2

(SUBTITLE) 'Caution'. That means we can relax a little.

01:07:53:05
YONGCHEN:

(SUBTITLE) That call was from a friend who works at the State Environmental Protection Agency. He said: Wang Yongchen, I have good news. Premier Wen Jiabao has instructed that because the Nu River is important and because there are different views on the project the project should be approached cautiously.

01:08:17:15
HEWLETT (V/O):

The Premier's call for more discussion opened the door for in-depth stories by the national media. And they were watched by tens of millions of people.

01:08:27:13
NEWS REPORTER:

(SUBTITLE) Will the river be protected? Will the dams be built or not? Will the ecosystem of the river be passed to future generations or will it be developed to reduce poverty? The debate continues.

01:08:41:15
HEWLETT (V/O):

A public debate about whether to build a dam or protect nature. This was something new in China. Ever since the first days of the People's Republic, development had always been the first priority, eventually lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. In the early years, prosperity was still a long way off. 500 million people had just experienced two decades of war. Images from that time captured a longing for ordinary life after many years of deprivation.

01:08:44:22
SUBTITLE:

Tiananmen Square
Beijing

01:09:22:15
QU GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) The whole nation had the same feeling: "How can we get rich fast?" "We must hurry up and recover, we can't fall behind."

01:09:33:17
SUPER:

INSIDER
QU GEPING
Former Director
Environmental Protection Agency

01:09:35:15
HEWLETT (V/O):

Qu Geping is known as the father of environmental protection in China. In the 1950s, he had just graduated from university, where he'd studied literature. He'd been a member of the Communist Party since he was 17. In 1958, Qu was an eyewitness to "The Great Leap Forward." Mao launched this campaign under the banner "Man Must Conquer Nature." Agriculture and industry would be transformed.

01:10:10:24
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) But there was a problem. During the early years of the People's Republic the Party had to learn how to shift from war to peace from smashing to constructing. The Party had little experience of building a new society. And so they made mistakes.

01:10:35:05
HEWLETT (V/O): In order to rebuild, China needed steel, far more steel than the big foundries could provide. Mao had an idea. Small kilns could be used to melt down iron ore and scrap metal. If enough of them were built, China could catch up with other countries almost overnight.

01:10:57:11
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) In war, he turned everybody into soldiers and he tried to use the same approach to make steel.

01:11:09:08
NEWSCASTER #1: (SUBTITLE) Building the furnaces, we'll also need a large amount of fuel. We are mobilizing the masses to gather fuel for the furnaces.

01:11:21:08
LIANG YAOJUN: (SUBTITLE) In 1958 all the trees were cut down. When we were young, there was a big forest here, with huge trees. As kids we could hear the wolves howling so we were afraid to go in there.

01:11:45:01
SUPER: LIANG YAOJUN
Farmer

01:11:48:25
HEWLETT (V/O): A hundred million people took part in the campaign. All over China, forests were cleared. In Yunnan province alone, 35,000 square kilometres of trees were cut down.

01:12:02:18
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) Do you think Chairman Mao had a bad motivation? Of course not. Nowadays it looks a childish thing, something crazy. But he was so full of enthusiasm back then.

01:12:19:00
FILM NARRATOR (V/O): (SUBTITLE) The rainstorm cannot extinguish the fire in our hearts. We won't waste firewood or allow the storm to prevent the steel from flowing. Seeing the melting steel splash out like flowers makes our hearts blossom with joy.

01:12:36:25
HEWLETT (V/O): But the wood-fired kilns weren't hot enough, and the steel they produced was useless. Most of it was thrown away. At that time, Qu Geping witnessed another campaign initiated by Mao that also set out to conquer nature.

01:12:59:11
SHANG DAINJUN: (SUBTITLE) When I was in grade 5 in elementary school, we were told to eliminate the four pests. It was a mass movement. Flies, mosquitoes, mice, and sparrows were the pests. I heard it was because they eat grain. We were shown reports about how much grain was wasted because of them.

01:13:42:10 (PEOPLE BANGING POTS AND PANS, SHOUTING, MAN BLASTING TRUMPET)

01:13:53:15
SHANG DAINJUN (SUBTITLE) We used dustpans, bowls, lunch boxes, anything to make noise. We shook them to scare up the sparrows. They had to fly around, they couldn't land. We put strips of red cloth on bamboo poles and waved them around like this. There were people everywhere.

01:14:03:19
SUPER: XU YANLUN / SHANG DAINJUN

01:14:33:02
YANLIN: (SUBTITLE) I don't know what the sparrows did to piss off Chairman Mao.

XU YANLIN & SHANG DAINJUN: (LAUGH)

01:14:45:10
XU YANLIN: (SUBTITLE) It was all very exciting.

01:14:49:22
SHANG DAINJUN (SUBTITLE) He was excited, but I was sad. Bang, bang, bang, We made so much noise. The sparrows were exhausted. They just fell from the sky. There was only one place they could land, and that was a trap. That's where they put out the poison. They bled from their beaks and died. I didn't care much about flies, mosquitoes and mice. But sparrows... I felt so sorry for them.

01:15:40:19
XU YANLIN: (SUBTITLE) Killing sparrows was supposed to protect grain, but it did the opposite.

01:15:46:13
HEWLETT (V/O): Sparrows eat insects as well as grain. With the sparrows gone, swarms of locusts and other insects attacked the crops.

01:15:57:01
XU YANLIN: (SUBTITLE) All over China, the harvest failed. Food was scarce. Many people died of famine. It was a time of madness. Man was supposed to conquer nature so there could be a Great Leap Forward.

01:16:30:00
HEWLETT (V/O): The death of the sparrows contributed to the famine. More than 30 million people died. For years afterwards, food was scarce.

01:16:41:11
QU GEPING: (SUBTITLE) We have to say that back then our Party was good at winning wars but not as good at development. There was a serious lack of knowledge and experience and there was poor leadership. If one person controls everything, it's okay when he's right. But what if he's wrong? Who can change it?

01:17:07:08
HEWLETT (V/O): 40 years later, in 2004, ordinary people gained the right to discuss and question the decisions of their leaders, with the passage of the New Environmental Impact Assessment Law.

01:17:19:09
SUPER: China Central
Television

01:17:20:00
HEWLETT (V/O): On the Nu River, the activists and the media seized this opportunity to investigate and publicize the impact of the dams on the environment, and on the local people.

01:17:30:04
NEWS REPORTER: (SUBTITLE) Who would benefit from development? Would the people of the Nu river be released from poverty? Our reporter investigates.

01:17:37:17
ZHANG DEJUN: (SUBTITLE) When the plan for the dams was passed by the province I said that the day the dams are built on the Nu River will be the day that the people will be free of poverty.

01:17:41:07
SUPER: ZHANG DEJUN
Vice Director
Nu River District

01:17:58:26
SUPER: DR. YU XIAOGANG
Social Scientist

01:17:59:19
YU XIAOGANG: There's no direct connection between building dams and helping the poor. So before the dams are built we need to know how the dams would reduce poverty and what would happen to the people who are moved.

01:18:16:29
NEWS REPORTER: (SUBTITLE) But the dams are about to be built.

01:18:19:16
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) You're right. They are.

01:18:21:11
SUPER: ORGANIZER
YU XIAOGANG
Director of Green Watershed

01:18:22:26
HEWLETT (V/O): Yu Xiaogang is one of China's leading green activists. He works with farmers in Yunnan province, giving workshops on community organizing and people's rights. He also helps farm families to acquire green technology like solar hot water heaters and methane gas generators that provide fuel for cooking. Yu is also an expert on the social impact of dams. He had studied what happened to farmers on the Mekong River who were moved to make way for the Manwan Dam. When the dam was built in the 1980s, 7,500 people lost their land.

01:19:06:01
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) We should let the people of the Nu valley know how the building of the hydropower dams might affect their lives. They shouldn't just listen to some nice stories. They should know the truth.

01:19:24:13
LIHONG: I heard from him that he will lead a group of villagers...

01:19:25:09
SUPER: SHI LIHONG
Filmmaker

01:19:28:14
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): ...from the Nu River to visit people from the Manwan Dam. So the villagers...

01:19:36:14
LIHONG (CONT'D): ...they will see how life of the farmers on the Mekong River, how their lives have been affected by the dam...

01:19:44:10
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): ...and I decided to make a film about this.

01:19:56:05
LIHONG (V/O CONT'D): This land is probably the best land along the Nu River Valley because the productivity here is very high. They can grow rice here...

01:20:06:01
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) Are you going to move away from here?

01:20:08:24
VILLAGE WOMAN #1: (SUBTITLE) No, why?

01:20:09:27
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) Because of the dam.

01:20:11:12
VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) I don't know anything about moving.

01:20:14:26

XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) Do you think hydropower is a good idea?

01:20:17:10
VILLAGE WOMAN #2: (SUBTITLE) If it's good for our country, then it's good for us.

01:20:21:04
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) So if the country does well, then you do well?

01:20:23:09
VILLAGE WOMAN #2: (SUBTITLE) Yes, if our country doesn't do well, our lives won't improve.

01:20:30:06
LIHONG (V/O): So we spent our first three days in Xiaoshaba village just trying to get the trust of the local people. The villagers were very suspicious because there are very few outsiders, you know, to this village.

01:20:31:29
SUPER: Xiaoshaba village
Nu River valley

01:20:50:09
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) We told them we would provide transportation and cover the expenses for the three day trip so that they could find out how the dam would affect their lives. They agreed and said: Let's go and take a look.

01:21:24:20
LIHONG (V/O): For most of the villagers, actually, they had never left their home, so it's really an adventure for them, especially for the women, because most of the women they have never left their land.

01:21:44:01
LIHONG (V/O CONT'D): People from the two rivers, they have never met each other before, and they have no idea what the other's life is like.

01:22:03:24
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) The village we're going to is called Tianba village. When the dam was built, the village was moved up the mountain. The villagers lost all their land. These are the people from Tianba. The ones that are sorting through the garbage.

01:22:59:27
LIHONG: (SUBTITLE) Which village are you from?

01:23:02:10
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) We're from Tianba.

01:23:06:27
LIHONG: (SUBTITLE) What are you picking up?

01:23:10:28
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) Anything and everything... water bottles...

01:23:14:26
LIHONG: (SUBTITLE) What do you do with them?

01:23:19:24

TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) Some of it we take for recycling.

01:23:23:00
VISITING FARMERS (SUBTITLE) So you can make some money?
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) -That's right.

01:23:29:13
VISITING FARMERS: (SUBTITLE) Do you still have land?

01:23:32:07
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) Our land was taken and our house was taken.

01:23:34:26
VISITING FARMERS: (SUBTITLE) So where is your land?

01:23:36:10
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) Under water. Submerged by the dam.

01:23:39:13
VISITING FARMERS: (SUBTITLE) So is your life better now or before?

01:23:45:20
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) How can you even ask that? Of course our life was better before! We had four and a half mu of farmland and we could produce 2500 kilos of rice every year. Now we have nothing. No land, nothing.

01:24:04:20
VISITING FARMERS: (SUBTITLE) What about the compensation?

01:24:07:21
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (SUBTITLE) We had to use it to buy food.

01:24:23:14
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN #2: (SUBTITLE) The government said it was just temporary but now it's permanent.

01:24:34:27
LIHONG: (SUBTITLE) Really? They said it was temporary?

01:24:38:24
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN #2: (SUBTITLE) They got us to move by saying it was just for three years. Now it's been 20 years and we don't have anything.

01:24:52:00
LIHONG (V/O): We asked whether we can go to your home, and she just said, "I'm too embarrassed to show you our lives." You know, "Our life is so poor." So we went further up to another village. This guy is the village head, so he called, you know, his villagers to come down.

01:25:32:06
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) We've come from a village in the Nu valley where there are plans to build 13 dams. We want to see your situation and learn from it.

01:25:50:05
LIHONG (V/O): So this was the old village head. So he was the one who agreed, you know, who signed on the agreement for the whole village.

01:26:00:15
OLD VILLAGE HEAD: (SUBTITLE) We were displaced by the building of the reservoir. We had to move higher up the mountain. We made 64 mu of land into farmland. But there wasn't enough water to irrigate it. People's lives are miserable. We don't have enough to eat.

01:26:33:21
VISITING FARMER #1: (SUBTITLE) Our village is going to be submerged, just like yours was. Today we came to see what lessons we could learn from you. We don't want to end up like you.

01:26:56:19
SUPER: Manwan Dam
Mekong River

01:27:16:25
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) When we go back in the bus it's quiet. Silence. No words. No singing songs. Very quiet. And when we arrive in their village, these emotions erupt just like the volcano erupts.

01:27:41:13
VILLAGE MAN #1: (SUBTITLE) If they want to build a dam they can go build it somewhere else!

01:27:50:29
VILLAGE WOMAN #3: (SUBTITLE) We're farmers. We depend on our land. Without our land, how can we make a living?

01:28:06:21
VILLAGE WOMAN #4: (SUBTITLE) We won't agree! We'd rather die. We don't want to live like that.

01:28:15:21
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) We hope to come back here in the future to find out what is going on. We're an environmental group and we'd like to help you.

01:28:35:25
LIHONG (V/O): The film is called Voice of an Angry River.

01:28:39:25
LIHONG (CONT'D): It's just so important that, you know, Dr. Yu Xiaogang's work and the local villagers, someone should be there to record all this.

01:28:49:02
XIAOGANG: (SUBTITLE) We can use this film to inform people. If we give it to all the people on the Nu River then they can see how the dams will affect their lives.

01:29:01:04
LIHONG: We made, like, 200 copies of this film and give them to the local people, but some copies must have been obtained by the police, because I went back to this village, and then there is police in plainclothes, and he came, and he knew my name. He asked whether you are Mrs. Shi, you know, and he want me to show him my I.D. card, and he, you know, asks "Why you are here?", you know, so... Uh, yeah.

01:29:34:28
HEWLETT (V/O): Yu Xiaogang was also questioned, and his visits to dam sites were restricted, but he was still able to circulate Shi Lihong's film. The pressure brought against the activists was a reminder that speaking out against big projects, even if it was made easier by the new environmental law, might still be met with suspicion.

01:29:57:20
MA JUN: For thousands of years, this country was ruled top-down. You know, it was... public participation was not something, you know, a tradition. There's no tradition for that in this country.

01:30:01:04
SUPER: MA JUN
Journalist

01:30:11:00
HEWLETT (V/O): The pressure to conform and to not ask questions was at its height during the Cultural Revolution.

01:30:16:17
CROWD: (CHEERING)

01:30:17:29
HEWLETT (V/O): At that time, Qu Geping was an economic planner, working for the government in Beijing.

01:30:22:26
CROWD: (CHANTING AND CHEERING)

01:30:28:11
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) In the early 70s, during the Cultural Revolution, everything was in chaos. Schools suspended classes, government departments stopped working, factories closed down, all workers went to join the Revolution. Chaos struck all of China.

01:30:33:07
SUPER: QU GEPING
Former EPA Director

01:31:00:06

HEWLETT (V/O): In this atmosphere, Mao ordered a new campaign to end food shortages once and for all. Millions of people were mobilized in another national campaign to conquer nature. In Mao's vision, the countryside would be transformed into an agricultural paradise. Urban youth were sent out to turn wasteland into farmland.

01:31:30:21
LIANG XIAOYAN: (SUBTITLE) During all the years I was growing up I was taught: "Man must conquer nature". Conquering nature was considered to be heroic. This heroism saw the limits imposed by nature as obstacles to be fought and overcome. Man and nature were opposites and nature had to be defeated. It was as if this thought was carved into our bones.

01:31:34:15
SUPER: LIANG XIAOYAN
Director
Friends of Nature

01:32:15:13
ARCHIVAL FILM NARRATOR: (SUBTITLE) Long live the victory of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line!

01:32:19:20
HEWLETT (V/O): Mao's campaign affected all of China. It reached Yunnan Province and the capital city of Kunming in the spring of 1970. Creating farmland was now a test of loyalty to the revolution.

01:32:33:00
CROWD: (SUBTITLE) Long live Chairman Mao!

01:32:39:08
HEWLETT (V/O): When the party leaders in Kunming tried to fill their quota, they had a problem. Flat land is scarce in Yunnan, but parts of Lake Dianchi nearby were shallow, and could be filled in.

01:32:53:28
ARCHIVAL FILM NARRATOR : (SUBTITLE) In order to answer the great call of Chairman Mao, "Prepare for war, prepare for famine", Kunming Revolutionary Committee is determined to mobilize the masses to reclaim land and demand grain from lake Dianchi.

01:33:11:13
ZENG BINQUAN: (SUBTITLE) During the Cultural Revolution, no one dared to criticize. You would be labeled a counter-revolutionary. That would be your reputation. Nobody dared to say no. Things were not democratic.

01:33:19:01
SUPER: ZENG BINQUAN
College Administrator

01:33:40:13
BINQUAN: (SUBTITLE) We inherited Dianchi from our ancestors. It was a rare and precious lake. How could we demand grain from Dianchi?

01:33:56:21
WANG HUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) It was wrong and it would have huge consequences later on but we were afraid to say so publicly.

01:33:59:29
SUPER: WANG HUANXIAO
Ecologist

01:34:08:10
ARCHIVAL FILM NARRATOR #3: (SUBTITLE) Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line the masses can finally realize their dream of reclaiming land from the lake.

01:34:21:06
XU SHUKE: (SUBTITLE) I was really happy. We were about 13 years old. Going there every day was better than sitting in a classroom.

01:34:31:25
JIN XIAOMIN: (SUBTITLE) We had been taught to contribute to our motherland and to dedicate ourselves to it with a red heart. So we were excited and joined in.

01:34:33:27
SUPER: JIN XIAOMIN

01:34:51:16
SHUKE: (SUBTITLE) The red flags were waving, the loud speakers were on, trucks were lined up and moving in a row. We never saw anything like it when we were young. We thought we were lucky to be taking part.

01:34:52:05
SUPER: XU SHUKE

01:35:14:17
HUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) All of us at the university moved out to the lake for a month.

01:35:30:00
HUANXIAO (CONT'D): (SUBTITLE) We would dig earth from the side of the mountain and load it onto boats. It was taken to the other side of the lake and thrown overboard.

01:35:48:03
BINQUAN: (SUBTITLE) The scene was spectacular, like something from a film. Seeing the land being reclaimed was like seeing an enemy being attacked.

01:36:04:11
WOMAN ON ARCHIVAL FILM: (SUBTITLE) Comrades, come on! Be determined, fear no sacrifice!
Overcome every difficulty and claim victory!

01:36:18:10
CROWD: (CHEERING)

01:36:24:15
HUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) When I told my granddaughter about this, she was
amazed. Did it really happen? How was it possible?

01:36:33:15
CROWD: (CHEERING)

01:36:42:15
HUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) It wasn't only Yunnan province that was reclaiming land
from water, it was being done all over the country. The idea was to
grow more grain but in reality it didn't work. Not only did it destroy the
lake's ecosystem but there was also only a small increase in
production because the rice crop was flooded.

01:37:15:23
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) When Mao invented the slogan "Make grain the priority"
and grasslands and forests were destroyed to grow rice, many
experts opposed it straight away. They said: "No, how can this
destruction help?" "The forests and grasslands are needed." "If you
cut them down, the soil will be exposed." "The land will become arid."
Agriculture, grasslands and forestry were all damaged. We checked
the records and only a few people supported him. Yet still his ideas
were carried out. It was just like the old emperors.

01:38:19:20
HEWLETT (V/O): Mao remained unconcerned about the growing damage to China's
environment. Industry and progress were one and the same, and
according to theory, there would never be a problem with pollution..

01:38:37:24
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) The extreme minds on the left had a theory. They said:
environmental problems are a feature of capitalism. China is a
socialist country, so we don't have these problems. Nobody dared to
oppose that back then. Once that was declared anyone who said
otherwise would be labeled a rebel.

01:39:09:29
HEWLETT (V/O): It fell to China's popular Premier, Zhou Enlai, to start dealing with the
problem. Zhou sent Qu Geping, as part of a large delegation, to the
first United Nations conference on the Environment.

01:39:20:01
SUPER: Stockholm 1972

01:39:24:24

GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) The Chinese delegation learned a lot from the meeting. So when we came back, we made a report for Premier Zhou. We said we were completely in the dark as to how to protect the environment. But we now realised we have a huge problem. We have to take it seriously.

01:39:48:27

HEWLETT (V/O):

Qu Geping became China's Environmental Ambassador to the United Nations. After the deaths of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1976, Qu Geping continued his work under Deng Xiaoping. Deng promoted a new philosophy that embraced wealth and private industry. As China's Economic Miracle was beginning to unfold, Qu Geping was visiting other countries. He was cautioned about the problems that China would face.

01:40:22:06

GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) They said: "Don't follow the same path we did." They said: "To pollute first and to recover later means to make the country rich first and then try and control pollution. This is not the way to go". We said we shouldn't follow the same path. But we did.

01:41:09:10

HEWLETT (V/O):

In the summer of 2004, Shi Lihong's film about the farmers on the Nu River began to circulate among the villages in Yunnan Province that would be affected by the dams. Along the Nu River, the response was muted, but along the Upper Yangtze, the reaction was much stronger. Here, 100,000 people would have to move to make way for the dams. A plea for help came from the son of a local farmer.

01:41:46:03

XIAO LIANGZHONG:

(SUBTITLE) The people here have good lives and the areas that would be flooded have good land. You can't find anywhere else like it. China doesn't have enough agricultural land and there's nowhere for these people to move to.

01:42:01:01

SUPER:

LOCAL ACTIVIST
XIAO LIANGZHONG

01:42:04:00

LIHONG (V/O):

He was very passionate...

01:42:05:15

LIHONG (CONT'D):

...and he tried to tell everyone he'd meet, you know, how-how beautiful his hometown is, and how important to preserve this place.

01:42:08:07

SUPER:

SHI LIHONG
Filmmaker

01:42:18:01
LIU JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) Often in China, when people move to the city they forget about their old hometown. But he was the opposite. He loved his hometown so much.

01:42:27:29
SUPER: JOURNALIST
LIU JIANQIANG

01:42:29:08
HEWLETT (V/O): Liu Jianqiang is an investigative journalist based in Beijing.

01:42:33:22
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) He brought in many journalists and encouraged them to write about the dam.

01:42:41:00
HEWLETT (V/O): Of all the 21 dams proposed for Yunnan Province, the biggest one would be on the Upper Yangtze River, at Tiger Leaping Gorge, a famous landmark in China. The dam would flood the gorge in the Yangtze Valley above it. The reservoir for the dam would stretch far upstream, covering farms and villages for 265 kilometres above the dam.

01:43:09:26
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) I wasn't an environmentalist at the time. I only knew that Tiger Leaping Gorge was the most important gorge in China. I just wanted to see what it looked like.

01:43:47:05
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) I hadn't realized the dams would affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. When I came here and saw how rich these villages are and how beautiful these places are I was stunned. I realized this place should belong to everybody in the world.

01:44:28:14
(HUM OF BUSY CROWD)

01:44:51:05
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) So I published an article with very exact data to show people that because of the dams we are losing something very important. And also that the dams are illegal because they do not have environmental permits.

01:45:09:00
LIHONG (V/O): So that article was a front-page story on Southern Weekend...

01:45:14:12
LIHONG (CONT'D): ...and that's the most influential national newspaper, so all of a sudden, the Tiger Leaping Gorge dam issue became, like, a national hotline.

01:45:25:06
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) I heard that Premier Wen Jiabao asked NRDC the National Reform and Development Committee to do some investigation and so the illegal dam project, the Jinanqiao project, was postponed.

01:45:43:07
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) After hearing the voice of the public the premier looked into this himself. That was remarkable. It showed the impact of the law and it showed that our leaders are dealing with matters in a democratic way. These are signs of progress.

01:46:01:18
JUN: Of course, it's not a moment of total vindication. It's just a... a... You know, there's a sigh of relief, but we understand that was not the ending of the whole thing.

01:46:12:00
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) I also got pressure from my editor. He told me not to write this sort of thing again. I asked him: "Were you put under pressure?" And he said: "Yes." I did continue to write articles like this and he found an excuse to fire me.

01:46:45:14
LIHONG: It was December 4, 2004, that Xiao Liangzhong took me to this area.

01:46:52:03
SUPER: XIAO LIANGZHONG
Local Activist

01:46:52:15
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): This is where Xiao Liangzhong grew up. When I first met Xiao Liangzhong, he told me he saw my film, and so he was very happy that we finally met. Actually, he made many copies of that film and gave them to his villagers just in this area. I met so many people. In three days, we talked to maybe 20 different people. A teacher took me to...

01:47:25:12
LIHONG (CONT'D): ...his house, and they already put a mark...

01:47:29:00
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): ...on his house.

01:47:33:26
TEACHER: (SUBTITLE) Here's the mark. The figure shows the altitude. Lots of houses have got these marks. The water is going to reach the top of this hill. They said: "You should be happy. You'll be rich." "Your lives will be improved by the dam."

01:48:00:22
GE QUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) The best way to protect nature and the environment is to keep us here.

01:48:09:19

SUPER: LOCAL LEADER
GE QUANXIAO

01:48:11:26
LIHONG (V/O): Ge Quanzhao, he's a very unique farmer. He's like a leader in that region.

01:48:19:19
QUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) The people will protect the natural heritage, the animals and the ecosystem. The people are the key.

01:48:34:20
LIHONG (V/O): We cross a river to another town, and it was a market day.

01:48:43:06
MEN: (CHATTING WARMLY)

01:48:46:00
LIHONG (V/O): Very soon, a group of people just came in. I think they were also concerned about the dam. They heard something, but they were really not very clear, and then they started to show my film.

01:49:07:00 (DVD PLAYS LOUDLY ON TV)

01:49:15:15
LIHONG (V/O): It's the first time, actually, I saw people watching my film. This film is about people just like them. There's no officials, you know, it's not happening in a remote area. It just happened just next to them. People just look exactly like themselves and they speak the same language, so they can perfectly understand.

01:49:45:08
TIANBA VILLAGE WOMAN: (BEING INTERVIEWED BY VISITING FARMERS ON DVD)

01:49:53:25
SHI LIHONG (V/O): And I saw that a woman cried when she saw the woman in the film cry, and I was very touched by that moment.

01:50:03:23
VILLAGERS: (ALL TALKING AT ONCE)

01:50:08:19
XIAO LIANGZHONG: (SUBTITLE) China Youth newspaper reported that 16 million people have been relocated and for all of them their lives have worsened. We have rights. To be informed, the right to participate, the right to monitor and to make decisions. The central government has been emphasizing these rights. But the dam developers don't mention them because these rights would get in their way.

01:50:36:08
GE QUANXIAO

(SUBTITLE) It would be like committing a crime against future generations. Places like ours are hard to find. Our responsibility is not just for our own survival but also to protect this piece of land. We should make sure it isn't flooded. It isn't only for us, but also for our nation and for the world. We have to protect this world heritage.

01:51:15:10
VILLAGE WOMAN #5:

(SUBTITLE) If we hadn't seen the film, we wouldn't have known anything. No, we're not going to move now. Among 10,000 people, there isn't a single one who would want to move.

01:51:32:02
VILLAGE MAN #5:

(SUBTITLE) I'm going back to mobilize people and make sure everybody knows about this.

01:51:45:12
VILLAGE WOMAN #6:

(SUBTITLE) I'm going back to mobilize people against the dam. We would suffer if we have to move. It would be as bad as the famine of 1958 and '59.

01:52:05:11
VILLAGE WOMAN #7:

(SUBTITLE) They want us to move higher up the mountain. What do they want us to eat? Wind?

01:52:29:10
LIHONG (V/O):

We actually, Xiao Liangzhong, we climbed all the way to the top of the mountain, because I want to see the whole valley, and he pointed out to me, you know, where the water will come to.

01:52:43:01
LIANGZHONG:

(CHATTING QUIETLY)

01:52:48:10
LIHONG (V/O):

So all the villages...

01:52:49:22
LIHONG (CONT'D):

...all the villages along this river will be underwater.

01:52:56:04
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O):

I came here with Xiao Liangzhong in December 2004. Very soon, I went home, I went back to Beijing, and then on the morning of January 5th...

01:53:06:29
LIHONG (CONT'D):

...I suddenly... You know, a friend of Xiao Liangzhong called me, and she said, "Xiao Liangzhong passed away." I-I just couldn't... believe my ears. I mean, just like five days ago, you know, we still had dinner together.

01:53:27:29
JIANQIANG: (SUBTITLE) During the three months before his death he was bringing journalists and NGOs to report about this place, non-stop. At night he wrote articles and barely slept. He was exhausted, both mentally and physically.

01:53:57:27
LIHONG (V/O): So we learned that, actually, he died of a heart attack. We accompanied Xiao Liangzhong's ash back to his home, and we had the funeral.

01:54:15:12
SUPER: WELCOME THE HERO'S SPIRIT
BACK TO HIS HOMETOWN

01:54:34:08
LIHONG (V/O CONT'D): People here called him the "Son of the Jinsha River." People respect him. Lots of local people, they were so inspired by Xiao Liangzhong, they said, "Xiao Liangzhong had died for us."

01:54:56:22
MAN ADDRESSING CROWD (SUBTITLE) Comrade Liang made me realize we must defend our rights. The people have the right to be informed. He was a fighter and a flag. His flag has fallen, but I hope more will rise all along the river.

01:55:19:18
QUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) He used up his heart and breath and gave away his life in order to protect the world heritage and to make it possible for different groups to live and work together in Shangri-la in peace and happiness, in this small part of China.

01:55:43:23
LIHONG: (SUBTITLE) Today, we bid farewell to him with his fellow villagers. Our grief over his early death will make us carry on his unfinished work.

01:55:57:22
LIHONG (V/O): We realized, you know...

01:55:59:11
LIHONG (CONT'D): ...we have to do something. You can't just feel sad, just feel angry. That doesn't help. It doesn't make any changes.

01:56:09:25
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): We feel we must do something.

01:56:14:06
LIHONG: (SUBTITLE) They can find as many experts as they like who will tell you that hydro electricity is good and that there won't be any problems but you can tell them that if you decide against the project they won't be allowed to go ahead with the dam.

01:56:50:10
LIHONG (V/O): I think for two months we have been discussing what we can do, what we should do. We wanted to organize some kind of training workshop to empower the local people...

01:57:04:18
LIHONG (CONT'D): ...but later on, we gave it up, because we realized that, at that time, you know, a gathering of local people will really cause the attention of the police...

01:57:16:10
LIHONG (CONT'D V/O): ...so we decided, the best thing is, we compiled a book. The book has all the information that we think are important to educate the local people.

01:57:30:29
(HUM OF CONVERSATION)

01:57:34:15
LIHONG (V/O): I think we made a thousand copies of that compilation of all the different articles, also a lot of articles about Xiao Liangzhong, because his spirit really inspired people to take actions. People really used it to protect their own rights, people really read it.

01:57:59:15
ALL: (CHATTING ENTHUSIASTICALLY)

01:58:09:14
HEWLETT (V/O): Villagers, activists and journalists working together to defend the environment and protest against development. This was something new in China, and it was result of years of efforts by Qu Geping. His work inside the government laid the foundation for environmental protection in China. In the early 1990s, when he realized that the existing laws against pollution weren't working, he made his first breakthrough.

01:58:39:03
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) I felt our laws needed some help. Of course, we were making some progress but I was thinking if we can bring in the mass media we could give the legislation and the inspectors a push. So we challenged the reporters: "Who will report the first story?"

01:58:42:10
SUPER: QU GEPING
Former EPA Director

01:59:08:28
NEWS REPORTER #2: (SUBTITLE) Hello viewers. I am standing in Shangcai county in Henan province. The river behind me is the Hehe or Black River. Just like its name, the river is completely black.

01:59:22:05
FACTORY OWNER: (SUBTITLE) I have offended against the people. Every year tons of dangerous waste have been dumped into the river.

01:59:30:00
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) When officials are criticized by their superiors they don't

really care. But if they're criticized in the media, they will take action straight away because people have seen them on the television news.

01:59:47:25
FACTORY OWNER:

(SUBTITLE) I am now too ashamed to go back to my home village. I am determined to deal with the pollution so that I can face my fellow villagers.

01:59:58:22
GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) So we understood that our society needed to be supervised from bottom to top because everybody was scared of being exposed.

02:00:08:00
SUPER:

ENVIRONMENTAL STORIES
1993 - 2008
1 (counts up to 220,000)

02:00:18:03
GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) So as someone said: "a green hurricane is cleaning up China." It had a huge influence. It was almost inconceivable.

02:00:29:12
HEWLETT (V/O):

The next step was to allow the public to form organizations to defend the environment. The first was founded in 1994, and their numbers multiplied quickly.

02:00:31:18
SUPER:

FRIENDS OF NATURE
Founded 1994

02:00:40:05
SUPER:

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS
2008
1 (counts up to 3,500)

02:00:46:23
GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) I always have a positive opinion about these organizations. The government needs them. I think they are going to be another arm for the government to manage the country.

02:00:58:20
HEWLETT (V/O):

Environmental issues, like the protection of endangered species, could now be raised. By the late 1990s, independent filmmakers could become national heroes by speaking out to protect China's wildlife.

02:01:21:20
HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D):

Shi Lihong and her husband, Xi Zhinong, became famous in China in the fight to save the snub-nosed monkey in Yunnan Province.

02:01:32:26
XI ZHINONG: (SUBTITLE) What I didn't expect when I started making this film was that I would only see them twice in the first three years of filming. What I also didn't expect to find was that their habitat was going to be logged.

02:01:35:25
SUPER: XI ZHINONG

02:02:02:23
ZHINONG: (SUBTITLE) When people saw their unique faces, their red lips they couldn't help saying "Wow, what beautiful animals." And how could we let them lose their home? The logging was stopped. The media played an important role and they relied on my pictures and film. That's when I started to realize the power of images in promoting conservation. That image of the mother and baby became almost an icon of the early grass roots environmental movement.

02:03:04:08
HEWLETT (V/O): Environmental awareness in China was increasing, but Qu Geping wanted to go much further. He proposed a law that would force big projects to submit to an environmental assessment before they were built, and the public would have the right to participate.

02:03:23:23
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) In the first five years that I was in the People's Congress it couldn't get passed. People treated it like a pipe dream, a fantasy. A year later, I said: "I can't close my eyes and die without the law being passed." We talked with the State Council again and again to convince them that this law was extremely important. Maybe some of it was ahead of its time, but, all in all, it should be passed. Finally it got through.

02:04:04:14
HEWLETT (V/O): Qu Geping's efforts helped to give the farmers of the Yangtze Valley the freedom to speak out, and they gave the media greater licence to cover the story. But, as CCTV discovered in the spring of 2005, the villagers and the dam developers were on a collision course.

02:04:11:01
SUPER: China Central Television

02:04:27:05
NEWS REPORTER: (SUBTITLE) The central government has made it clear: until the projects are approved they should not begin construction. But our investigation shows that many projects that were ordered to stop, are still at work.

02:04:44:14
NEWS REPORTER #3: (SUBTITLE) You can find scenes like this all along the Upper Yangtze river. Although high ranking officials have stated that we should be cautious with hydropower development and make decisions based on science the hydropower developers are pushing ahead while the local people are trying to protect their homeland.

02:05:07:04

SUPER: Yangtze River
2006

02:05:06:29
HEWLETT (V/O): Early in 2006, matters came to a head. The developers started work on the big dam at Tiger Leaping Gorge, the same dam that the Premier had said should be approached with caution. Helicopters appeared in the sky. Surveyors appeared on the ground. Tensions were rising. There were no media present when farmers clashed with surveyors on March 21, 2006, but Liu Jianqiang returned to the valley to find out what happened.

02:05:40:20
HEWLETT (V/O): He talked with Ge Quanxiao, a farmer who emerged as a leader during the fight against the dam. His neighbours came to complain when they found evidence that surveyors had been in their fields.

02:05:56:01
QUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) At daybreak the villagers would find markers on their land that had been placed during the night and they would dig them up again. This went on for a month and I didn't know what to do about it.

02:05:59:11
SUPER: GE QUANXIAO
Local Leader

02:06:17:20
HEWLETT (V/O): Then, one morning, tempers flared, and the farmers seized a group of surveyors. They were taken to a nearby town and held hostage, up the street from this government building. Word spread, and 10,000 people poured in from nearby towns.

02:06:35:17
QUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) They demanded that the surveyors show them that they had permits for their work. The villagers were being perfectly reasonable. It wasn't a reckless act.

02:06:46:09
HEWLETT (V/O): The crowd grew angry. They invaded the government offices and windows were broken, but the local police refused to fight back, saying they couldn't fight their own parents.

02:06:58:10
QUANXIAO: (SUBTITLE) Some officials wanted to call in the army but the villagers firmly asked them not to.

02:07:09:08
JIANQIANG:

(SUBTITLE) Farmers told me they took rocks and metal poles from their homes and they surrounded the government building and said: "If you send the army here, we'll get guns." And so I asked the farmers: "Would you really do this?" And they said: "Yes, when our homes are about to be destroyed we have nothing to fear."

02:07:41:20
HEWLETT (V/O):

Local leaders thought they still had a chance to negotiate with officials and save their movement if tempers cooled down. Each of the leaders went out to talk to their friends and neighbours. Overnight, the crowd of 10,000 melted away. The next day, this strategy paid off.

02:08:04:06
QUANXIAO:

(SUBTITLE) The party secretary came to tell me that the governor had issued a statement. Surveying and construction of the dam would stop immediately. Also, in future, no matter where a dam is proposed, the government will not allow it if a majority of the local people are against it.

02:08:43:00
HEWLETT (V/O):

The farmers immediately wrote down all of the concessions, and put up posters in every village. It was a turning point for the environmental movement.

02:08:52:29
LIHONG:

So many dams have been built in China, you know, without real opposition, and so, here, we feel, maybe, you know, Tiger Leaping Gorge dam can be the first dam that's, you know, not be built because of opposition of local people.

02:09:12:22
JIANQIANG:

(SUBTITLE) Now people are making an effort to protect their homeland. 30 years ago this was impossible. Back then the government would not have tolerated this. Now the government's attitude towards people's rights is changing. This is encouraging.

02:09:35:11
VILLAGE WOMAN #7:

(SUBTITLE) Many people told us: "You people along the river did a wonderful thing." "Now things should be quiet for a while." I replied that we have to be united, just like it said in the book. Unity is power and power is like steel. A bundle of chopsticks is hard to break, but a single chopstick can easily be broken. We must remain united.

02:10:15:10
HEWLETT (V/O):

The farmers remained united. 18 months later, the dam at Tiger Leaping Gorge was officially cancelled. The campaign to stop the dam and save the valley had repercussions across the province.

02:10:29:24
SUPER:

MANWAN

02:10:30:28
HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D): After Shi Lihong's film drew attention to the plight of the farmers on the Mekong River, the villagers received an additional 70 million Yuan, \$10 million, in compensation for the loss of their land 20 years earlier.

02:10:45:19
SUPER: XIAOSHABA VILLAGE

02:10:46:15
HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D): In the Nu River Valley, where Shi Lihong shot her first film, the number of proposed dams was scaled back from 13 to four after the Premier called for caution and more study. The future is still uncertain, but the mood among the villagers had changed, as Shi Lihong discovered when she returned to Xiaoshaba Village.

02:11:07:12
LIHONG: (LAUGHING IN DELIGHT) (SUBTITLE) Do you remember me? We went to Manwan. I remember you. You looked younger before.

02:11:20:08
HEWLETT (V/O): Thanks to the activists, the villagers are at least in a better position to negotiate compensation if they do have to move.

02:11:28:18
XIAOSHABA FARMER: I will definitely make a reasonable request. We don't want to make things difficult for the government as long as they would resolve the problems and give us a peaceful living. That would be good enough for us. We don't know if the dam project is going ahead or not so the farmers are still planting. The land is still ours.

02:11:58:00
HEWLETT (V/O): The government's more cautious approach to development has severely limited dam construction on the Nu River since 2005. Dam proponents call it "Five Lost Years," and they blame the Environmental Protection Agency for the delays.

02:12:16:18
GEPING: (SUBTITLE) Nowadays everybody's saying that this environmental protection enforcement is going too far. I said: "It's just getting started in China. Many parts of the law aren't enforced yet. Once they are, you can complain some more."

02:12:19:29
SUPER: QU GEPING
Former EPA Director

02:12:43:15
HEWLETT (V/O): Environmental protection and environmental restoration are gaining strength as the war against nature fades. Lake Dianchi was badly damaged in the 1970s, when the marshlands were destroyed. The lake reached a low point in the early 1990s when the water was a toxic soup of algae and sewage. But after a billion dollars of improvements, the lake is slowly recovering.

02:13:16:18

BINQUAN: (SUBTITLE) The government is determined to improve the environment so we put our hope in that effort. Our generation may never see clear water again but hopefully the next generation will.

02:13:25:21
SUPER:

ZENG BINQUAN
College Administrator

02:13:38:20
HEWLETT (V/O):

There's more evidence that the war against nature is ending and the rebuilding has begun on the Loess Plateau in central China. Long ago, this area was a forest, but it was stripped bare by centuries of farming and over-grazing. The farmers have been called out again, but this time, instead of attacking nature, they are being paid to restore it. By working with nature and restoring ecosystems, entire valleys have been brought back to life.

02:14:26:12
HEWLETT (V/O CONT'D):

Working with nature is also reducing China's dependence on dams and coal-fired power plants. China is adding wind turbines at the rate of one every hour. Scientists in Beijing say that wind power alone could satisfy all of the country's electricity needs for the next 20 years.

02:14:49:22
JUN (V/O):

People still feel a lot more things need to be done...

02:14:54:04
JUN (CONT'D)

...but if we put it into a historic perspective, China has made some progress. We witnessed the opening up of our country and society. It's not just always, you know, straightforward. It's sometimes one step forward and a half-step back. We take that as normal.

02:14:59:00
SUPER:

MA JUN
Journalist

02:15:14:25
SUPER:

Yangtze River
Tiger Leaping Gorge
2010

02:15:18:29
HEWLETT (V/O):

The farmers and the activists in Yunnan Province didn't stop all 21 dams. Some are going ahead, others are still being debated, but they did stop the biggest dam of all at Tiger Leaping Gorge. Today, there are thousands of environmental groups in China, pursuing everything from tree planting to pollution control. They've gained strength from the Tiger Leaping Gorge movement. It showed what can be accomplished when local people and green activists work together, with the support of the media and the law. This is the beginning of an environmental movement that could transform China.

02:16:00:17
JIANQIANG:

(SUBTITLE) I believe the Tiger Leaping Gorge movement is about more than the environment itself. It's about China's democracy. Because the people in this movement especially the local people they realize that they have rights to protect their home, to protect their land. And they can negotiate with the government, the local government and the hydro company. I think this is the beginning of democracy.

02:16:41:21
GEPING:

(SUBTITLE) Within all the different sectors of law in China we are the only one that has clear and transparent standards and we're the only one that has a democratic process. That is why environmental law has an important role to play in the development of democracy in China.

THE END