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Welcome to Environment: Asia

A Resource for Teachers and Students Presented by the [Center for East Asians Studies](#), University of Kansas

This website is devoted to providing information about environmental developments, policy and conditions in China, Japan and Korea. Based on input from a teacher focus group, we have designed the website to work on two levels: as a point of inspiration for teachers teaching about this subject and as an information zone for students studying this subject.

[China Environment Forum](#)

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Agriculture and Food

Agriculture is the most enduring topic in world history. Modernization and industrialization have caused East Asian countries to undergo dramatic transformations of their historic agricultural practices. Along with the advent of industrial agriculture, deforestation and desertification caused by over farming, chemical pollution through pesticide and chemical-fertilizer use, and degradation of the land have also accelerated. What's more, population growth has intensified the global food crisis.

In the news:

- [Japan Boosts N Korea Food Aid](#)
BBC News, 6 Oct. 2000.

"The Japanese government says it has approved 500,000 tonnes of rice aid to help alleviate severe food shortages in North Korea."

- [Koreas Agree 500,000 Ton Food Loan](#)
BBC News, Sept. 28, 2000.

"The South Korean Government has announced that it will provide 500,000 tons of food grain in the form of a long-term loan to impoverished North Korea."

- [North Korea Faces 'Looming' Food Crisis](#)
BBC News, Apr. 10, 2002.

"Famine-hit North Korea will run out of food in three month's time unless more international donations arrive immediately, the United Nations food agency has warned."

- [Who Will Feed the North Koreans?](#)
MSNBC Mar. 4, 2005

"Lost in the clamor over Pyongyang's apparent nuclear ambitions, a second crisis is escalating - a worsening food shortage in the nation of 22 million people. So broken is North Korea's economy that the nation now relies on foreign donors for as much as one-third of its food. But the government has alienated some of the biggest donors - most notably the United States - and it is increasingly clear that its people will suffer for it."

- [China Gives Priority to Sustainable Agricultural Development](#)
People's Daily On-Line.

By applying agricultural tax exemption, Chinese government is trying to promote the development of Chinese agriculture.

- [A Seaside Archology for Southern China](#)

Frick, Francis. Published by City Farmer, Canada's Office of Agrlculture.

On the Web:

- [China Profile: Agriculture](#)

This sites gives statistics showing the rank of Chinese agriculture in the world.



Climate

One of the most dramatic environmental changes in the 20th century was global warming. This tendency has not been mitigated in this new century. If we say that there are no national boundaries among environmental problems, then, there requires global attention and cooperation in global warming particularly. Along with the accelerated development of industrialization and modernization, the effect of greenhouse has had more impact on eastern Asian countries. Because of the density of population along coast line in these countries, eastern Asian countries would be the biggest victim of the outcome of global warming.

On the web:

- [Global Warming Links](#)

This is a hub for valuable web links. The page above gives lots of web links about global warming.

- [Global Climate Changes](#)

This is a good website for common knowledge about global climate. It's particularly interesting because it is a publication of the American Petroleum Institute. Older students might be asked to analyze its content and compare same with the WWF website to see if there's a slant.



Consumer Society, Market, and Sustainability in Eastern Asian Countries

Will the appetite of this expanding consumer society ever be satiable? Following Japan, South Korea and China paced into consumer societies successively. In 2005, China replaced the United States as the world leading consumer. Consumer society brings new pressure and challenge to natural environment. Market, combined with consumer society in the 21st century, maintains and strengthens its lasting influence on environment. But at the same time, driven by the pursuit of "the quality of life," more and more government and non-government organizations participate the camp of environmentalism. Especially in Japan, common consumers' environmental consciousness is growing rapidly. "Sustainable development" should not serve as a fashionable slogan, which instead requires more concern and activities to protect our nature.

China

In the news:

- [Country Analysis Briefs: China](#), *Energy Information Administration*, August, 2005

"The People's Republic of China (China) is the world's most populous country and the second largest energy consumer (after the United States). Production and consumption of coal, its dominant fuel, is the highest in the world. Rising oil demand and imports have made China a significant factor in world oil markets. China also surpassed Japan as the world's second-largest petroleum consumer in 2003."

- [China Replacing the United States as World's Leading Consumer](#), by Lester Brown, *Earth Policy Institute*, Feb. 16, 2005.

"Among the five basic food, energy, and industrial commodities-grain and meat, oil and coal, and steel-consumption in China has already eclipsed that of the United States in all but oil."

Japan

In the news:

- [Japan's Eco Market Takes Root](#), *Japan Economic Monthly*, September, 2005.

"The creation of a sustainable society depends on the development of mechanisms by which resources can be recycled efficiently. For this to happen, however, environmental businesses must take root and flourish. According to the Ministry of the Environment 2004 Environmental White Paper, Japan's environment market is forecast to grow about 60 percent between 2000 and 2010, from 29.94 trillion yen to 47.23 trillion yen."

- [Green Business Practices in Japan](#), compiled by Hari Srinivas, The Global Development Research Center.

"Green business practices that maintain and sustain good environmental quality are increasingly becoming a vital component of economic competitiveness. Consumer awareness of detrimental effects of products on the environment, both direct and indirect, have promoted many companies to incorporate environmental measures in the manufacturing, administration, purchase, sale and other stages. Measures have concentrated on an expanded and inspired version of the original 3Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle."

On the web:

- [The 2005 World Exposition held in Aichi, Japan](#)

This is the website for The 2005 World Exposition held in Aichi, Japan whose theme is "Nature's Wisdom."

"EXPO 2005 AICHI JAPAN emphasized the close links binding humanity to nature in the 21st century through its theme of "Nature's Wisdom."

The EXPO gave visitors a chance to experience at first-hand the leading-edge technologies, new social systems and future lifestyles that may provide solutions to the many serious issues now facing the entire world."



Desertification

The on-going over-plowing, over-grazing, denudation, and abuse of water resources in the last century have caused dramatic consequences in northwest of China and Mongolia. Desertification has accelerated forming a Chinese "dust bowl" which is sweeping most regions in Northern China as well as across national boundaries threatening Korea and Japan. Facing the advancing desert and rolling sand storm, how will the Chinese government resolve this environmental predicament?

On the web:

- <http://www.din.net.cn/>
China desertification information network
- <http://www.gm-unccd.org/English/About/index.htm>

The **Global Mechanism (GM) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** was established as an instrument to facilitate the rationalisation of resource allocation and the mobilisation of additional resources to combat land degradation and poverty. There are a lot of information how Eastern Asian countries have dealt with desertification.

In the news:

- [China Losing War with Advancing Desert](#)
Brown, Lester

An interesting essay published in earth policy institute website describes the current situation of desertification, analyzes the causes, and does some fascinating comparison between China and the United States.

- [Grapes of Wrath in Inner Mongolia](#)
A May 2001 report from U.S. Embassy Beijing.
- [Beijing's Desert Storm](#)
Gluckman, Ron

"The desert is sweeping into China's valleys, choking rivers and consuming precious farm land. Beijing has responded with massive tree-planting campaigns, but the Great Green Walls may not be able to buffer the sand, which could cover the capital in a few years."

- [The Desertification and Desert land Areas in China Shrink for the First Time](#)

People's Daily Online, June 15, 2005.

- [Desertification in China, Mongolia a problem for Japan](#)

The Japan Times, Sept 29, 2005.

"The spreading desertification in China and Mongolia is no longer just someone else's concern; it's posing a health risk in this country and affecting Japanese businesses, a senior U.N. official in charge of efforts to curb the problem said Wednesday."

- [China's Growing Deserts Are Suffocating Korea](#)

French, Howard, *New York Times*, Apr. 12, 2002.

- [China Crisis: threat to the global environment](#)

McCarthy, Michael from *The Independent*



Eco-tourism

Ecotourism has begun to attract more and more attention from governments and common people. This is both good and bad: Good because, on the one hand, ecotourism arouses public ecological consciousness; bad because, on the other hand, increasing tourism increases the burden on environment. How to balance commercialization and the protection of nature? That is the critical issue policy-makers face today.

In the news:

- [Ecotourism and Beyond in China](#)
City Weekend, Dec. 7, 2004.

This essay briefly examines the problems and the achievement China have had in her management of World Heritage of nature.

- [Pandas Spur Eco-Tourism Chinese Style](#)
Doole, Claire, [Peopleandplanet.net](#)

This essay narrates the story the rise of eco-tourism around giant panda in Sichuan, China. It repeats the lasting paradox of development and protection.

On the web:

- [Nature Products. NETwork](#)

This is a very interesting and colorful website of nature and culture in Mekong Region, China and South East Asia. It introduces diverse plant and animal species, and indigenous culture in this region.

Note: We are in no way affiliated with this website. We receive no monetary compensation in any way. The linking of this site from ours is strictly for educational purposes only.



Environmental Disasters

Tsunami in 2004 left traumatic memory to the world especially to south eastern Asian countries. Natural disasters have visited these eastern Asian countries very frequently throughout their history, floods, earthquakes, natural fire, dust storm, tsunami, typhoon, and so on. When people are blaming all guilt on nature, it is time for the world to think over their own responsibilities in these "natural disasters."

In the news:

- ["Green GDP" Reflects Shifting Priorities](#), by Antoaneta Bezlova, *Asia Times Online*, Nov. 3 2005.

"Increasingly aware of the deteriorating state of China's environment, the Chinese leadership has decided that it wants the national economy to not only grow fast, but grow green. They have asked state planners to develop a new indicator to measure the country's growth, a "green GDP", which would account for the costs of environmental impact and resource consumption."

- [Wrangle over Green GDP](#), by Yan Hua, *Asia Times online*, Mar. 16, 2005.

"State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) Vice President Pan Yue told a press conference on February 28 that SEPA and the National Bureau of Statistics would enforce a pilot green GDP accounting system in 10 provinces and municipalities in Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei. This would mark China's first step to evaluate the tremendous cost of environmental pollution in the course of its breathtaking economic progress."



Environmental Policies

World politicians have reached an agreement that environmental policies need global and regional cooperation. Japan has been an advocate of this global environmental cooperation, and China is joining this team. The participation of non-government organization would solidify this cooperation. There will be many conflicts between countriesâ€™ interest, but the future is promising.

In the news:

- ["Green GDP" Reflects Shifting Priorities](#), by Antoaneta Bezlova, *Asia Times Online*, Nov. 3 2005.

"Increasingly aware of the deteriorating state of China's environment, the Chinese leadership has decided that it wants the national economy to not only grow fast, but grow green. They have asked state planners to develop a new indicator to measure the country's growth, a "green GDP", which would account for the costs of environmental impact and resource consumption."

- [Wrangle over Green GDP](#), by Yan Hua, *Asia Times online*, Mar. 16, 2005.

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Eastern Asian Environmental Issues and Globalization

The globalization of environmental problems has been an unavoidable trend since last century. As the consequence of this globalization, human's exploitation of nature is more thorough and penetrating. Along with their economic development, Eastern Asian countries have promoted their ecological influence in the world too. Japan plays an active role in promoting world environmentalism.

For Teachers:

- www.globalenvision.org/forteachers/13/855/

A unit for teachers on globalization and environment. There is some information on Chinese environmental issues.

- [China's Environment in a Globalizing World](#), by Jianguo Liu and Jared Diamond, *Nature: International Weekly Journal of Science*, 30 June 2005.

China's environmental problems are growing along with the development of her economy. At the same time, these environmental problems have had more and more impacts on other countries in the world.

- [Global Environmentalism Hits China](#), by Guobin Yang, *YaleGlobal*, 4 Feb., 2004.

This article analyzes the influences of global environmentalism on Chinese environmental consciousness and policy, briefly discussing the growth of Chinese environmentalism and environmental organizations, and arguing that this emerging environmentalism would be integrated with traditional Chinese philosophy of nature in Daoism and Buddhism.

- [A hunger eating up the world](#), by Jonathan Watts, *Guardian Unlimited*, Nov. 10, 2005.

"China's insatiable demand for proteins as well as oil is turning Brazil into the takeaway for the workforce of the world. In the second part of our series, we reveal how the soya trade is creating a gold rush which is deforesting the Amazon."

- [China's Timber Demand Threatens Crisis - WWF](#), *GreenConsumerGuide. Com*, 9 March, 2005.

"The increasing volume of timber imports into China could lead to devastating impacts on some of the world's most sensitive forest regions unless major changes are made to the country's purchasing policies, according to a new report from conservation group WWF."



Intellectuals and Public Opinion

In China, most intellectuals and public ignored environmental problems before the 1990s because modernization and industrialization started relatively later. Also, because of the special political institutions in China, the discussion of environmental problems is basically manipulated by government. But it is also worthy noticing that there has been more and more voice from individual intellectuals and non-government organizations discussing this issue and influencing policy making in China. In Japan, scholars, media, and non-government organizations started paying attention to environmental issues earlier than in China. But compared to the United States and European countries, how to deal with environmental problems basically is still a government behavior.

In the news:

- Kotler, Mindy L. and Ian T. Hillman, "[Japanese Nuclear Energy Policy and Public Opinion](#)," prepared in conjunction with an energy study sponsored by the Center for International Political Economy and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University - May 2000.

"This paper examines these political and social trends through the prism of the debate over Japan's nuclear energy policy. The debate over nuclear power represents one of the first test cases of new institutional frameworks for political expression in Japan and for the evolving relationship between local and central government."

On the web:

- [Friends of Nature](#)

A Chinese environmental NGO, formally registered in March 1994 as the Academy for Green Culture, an affiliate to the non-governmental Academy for Chinese Culture. FON is a nonprofit, public welfare organization funded by membership fees and public support.



Pollution

Pollution is one of the biggest byproduct brought by industrialization. Japan, South Korea, China, and later North Korea have completed or are completing industrialization in succession. Pollution has permeated into every layer of nature and society, air, water, cities, and countries. In the two developed countries, Japan and South Korea, pollution has been better controlled. But in China, pollution is a rising problem. What should these developing countries do? A paradox between development and environment again.

In the news:

- [China's Threatening Environment](#), by Nathan Nankivell, *Asia Times online*, Jan. 6 2006.

This article briefly analyzes the increasing environmental crisis China is facing. Being further industrialized, China has severe problems of pollution and environmental degradation. It warns policy makers in China to pay attention to environment while they are fascinated with the growth of economy.

- [Chinese Chemical Threat to Rivers](#), *BBC News*, Jan. 24, 2006.

"More than 100 chemical plants beside China's rivers pose safety threats, the country's environment chief has warned."



Water Management

The shortage of water is one of the most urgent environmental problems the whole globe is facing. Thus, how to utilize limited water resources to meet increasingly growing demands while maintain the ecological balance is not only the issue of one country, but also the issue shared by the world. When the project of Three Gorges Dam in China has aroused vehement controversy, water management in cities and countries becomes a hot spot again.

On the web:

- **Global Web Service on Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management, Japan session.**
[China site](#)
[Japan site](#)
[Korea site](#)

In the news:

- **Becker, Jasper, "The Ruined Land: China's Water Crisis," *Asia Times online*, Aug. 26, 27, 28, 29, 2003.**

This long articles includes four parts: "The Death of China's Rivers," "Peasants Bear Brunt of China's Energy Plans," "China is an Energy Quandary," and "China Awakens to Its Devastated Environment." In these articles, Becker discusses the cause of flood, building of dams, and policy making, associating these issues with another sensitive issue in China: human right.

1. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/EH26Ad01.html>
2. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/EH27Ad01.html>
3. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/EH28Ad01.html>
4. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/EH29Ad01.html>



Wildlife

Maintaining bio-diversity is one of the major issues for environmentalism. Eastern Asian countries have rich fauna and flora in their territory. Facing the extinction of more and more species, these countries' governments have implemented many acts and laws to protect their wildlife. But all kinds of crime against nature still exist in these countries.

China

- [Animals in China](#)

Pictures and descriptions of the giant panda, South Chinese tiger, Chinese alligator and the golden lion tamarin.



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