SHAN SHUI Conservation Center
2015 Annual Report
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Message from the Executive Director

As a local Chinese NGO focused on nature conservation, Shanshui Conservation Center not only aims to take action to protect the environment, but also actively seeks for a new balance between China’s environment, economy, culture and society. Since the establishment of Shanshui, China’s public sector has made huge progress; new organizations are constantly created, the influence of civil society groups on public debate and policy is increasing by the day, and public interest and participation in the public sector are also growing rapidly. Moreover, the expectations donors have of civil groups is becoming more sophisticated, particularly in their demands of the output and social impact of these groups.

At the civil level, the number of volunteer groups devoted to plants, insects, fishes, birds and even mammals is quickly growing. Their work on their respective issues and geographical areas has contributed to a rapid explosion of knowledge concerning biodiversity that has surpassed all the scientific knowledge accumulated over the last century. The rise in civil participation in environmental issues has also created an increased public awareness in biodiversity conservation. If we say that civil-led conservation efforts a decade ago constituted a tiny ray of hope, then through advanced and highly accessible dialogue and exchange platforms, it has already set many hearts ablaze with passion and conviction to make a difference. Coupled with the rise of the enthusiasm of civil society is the central government’s efforts in environmental and biodiversity conservation. The central government’s emphasis on and investments in biodiversity conservation have been growing significantly, and various policies aimed at conservation have continually and rapidly been introduced.

As both civil and government participation in conservation increase, we have to address issues regarding top-down and bottom-up conservation models, how to plan and execute programmes, as well as how to assess the impact of our efforts. These issues create an opportunity for civil conservation groups, especially Shanshui, to actively participate in environment management.

Thanks to the work of our founder, Professor Lu Zhi of Peking University, in collecting close to three decades of experience and data, as well as Shanshui’s own accumulation of close to a decade worth of conservation experience, Shanshui will be able to better understand the change in trends of China’s wildlife. With this research, we hope to influence policy-making on different levels, and try to develop solutions to some wildlife problems that we are currently facing in China.

Shanshui has been proactive in the translating increased public interest in nature conservation into an increased participation in actual conservation efforts. For instance, in the project Nature Watch Map (http://nhnature.cn), we used the data created by volunteers to fill up gaps in our knowledge of China’s biodiversity. In another project, we cooperated with various enterprises to conduct biodiversity surveys, and encouraged the vendors and customers of these enterprises to participate in the surveys too. This year, we also helped conservation foundations to form their conservation funding strategies, in addition to providing training and evaluation to help them improve.

In 2015, we repackaged our organization, core values, and projects so that our projects are more easily understood by the public. Still, in performing their work, our staff continue to find opportunities to develop themselves, and the team has kept its optimism, enthusiasm, and passion for work. At the start of 2015, our team released the China Nature Watch Report, which provided an independent voice to the public and policymakers on the prospects of biodiversity changes in China. In July 2015, we held the inaugural ‘Yushu International Snow Leopards Forum’ which helped to push forth the establishment of the China Civil Snow Leopard Conservation Alliance (Snow Leopard China). In the 14 Qinghai and 32 Yunnan conservation projects funded by the Lancang River Conservation Fund, we continue to see development; through offering financial and technological assistance, we encourage local organisations, communities, and the public to participate in nature conservation. In September 2015, with the approval of the Sichuan Forestry Administration, the Guanbaogen Basin People’s Conservancy Area became one of the trial nature conservations sites in the region. The success of Guanbaogen projects provides a new model for exploring social participation in conservation.

In the future, Shanshui will continue to conduct scientific research and provide fieldwork based solutions to specific issues in conservation. We will work with the media and various levels of government to search for solutions, participate in conservation planning work at national, provincial and county levels. We will also keep up with publishing reports, as well as share data and develop data-driven products with complementary organisations to help support other conservation groups upstream and downstream. Using the tripartite synergy model between research institutes, field practice, value creation, and building on our historic role as the developer of China’s biodiversity database, Shanshui hopes that the results of our actions and work will encourage the development of the environment conservation sector and contribute to the glooming of industry talents.

Conservation work is slow and demands much persistence. In the past 9 years we have walked this path, we have depended on the support and recognition of our partners who include you. As we continue to venture forward and face bigger challenges, we look forward to your continual support and encouragement.
Highlights 2015

- China Nature Watch 2014
  On Biodiversity Day (May 22nd), we published China Nature Watch 2014. The publication provides an independent voice to the public and policy makers on the topic of the changes in China’s ecology in the last decade.

- Organized the International Snow Leopard Forum
  Organized China’s first international forum on Snow Leopards, the Yushu International Snow Leopard Forum 2015. The event was attended by more than 30 organizations, and provided momentum for the establishment of the China Civil Snow Leopard Conservation Alliance (Snow Leopard China).

- Our work at Sanjiangyuan
  We worked with the local government and communities of 15 villages and communities in Yushu, Zaduo, Zhiduo, and Nangqen to develop programs based on local needs and conservation threats. The programs we created include anti-poaching patrols, waste management, insurance for human-animal conflict, anti-bear barriers, and conservation studies of the Cordyceps. Our projects covered 10,000 km², and in five communities covering 3000km² each, we trained more than 80 patrol personnel and installed more than 100 infrared cameras. In the total accumulated workdays of 20,000 days, we managed to take 300,000 infrared camera photos, thereby contributing to the Sanjiangyuan Biodiversity database.

- Our work at Southwestern Mountainous Areas
  In four community conservation areas in Sichuan and Gansu Province, we conserved 116km² of water conservation forest and provided support to 54 patrol staff. 650 households in the area benefited from the project as the project reduced the possibility of natural disasters, and ensured the reliability of water supply. The project also aided the establishment of a Community Development Fund which seeks to resolve any public issues in the area, as well as provide technical training to local people. We collected 150 photos from infrared camera and trained 700 people in our community training.

- Alliance of Conservators
  The Lancang River Conservation fund continues to support 14 conservation projects in Qinghai and 32 in Yunnan.

  In April, we launched the opening conference for the Lancang River project in Qinghai Yushu, and Yunan Dai, thereby creating the Lancang River Conservation Alliance.

- Focus on Climate Change
  Organized and launched the “Assessment of the Potential of the Sichuan Forestry Industry to conduct a Reforestation Carbon Sink Project”

  We also participated and spoken at the COP21 Paris Climate Change Conference. At the conference we presented our efforts to combat climate change, and emphasized the need for climate change work to focus on and invest in ecology protection and adapting to the local community.

- Land-Trust Conservation Station
  In the Tangjiahe region, we conducted patrols in the surrounding area of Shanshu Baixiongqing Conservation Station, and launched several activities concerning scientific research and environmental education. We cooperated with the Tangjiahe Nature Reserve to complete the Tangjiahe National-level Nature Conservation Research Monitoring Plan.

- Nature School
  We conducted a Nature experiential activity 11 times which was attended by 352 people. We also organized sharing session four times, and drew a total of 270 participants. In November, we organized attended the Second National Ecological Education Forum held at Hangzhou. We also organized two Nature School Online Discussions between Chengdu and Beijing students, and launched a plan to train professionals and environment education leaders that will directly impact 700 persons.

- Panda Honey
  In the community area where we are participating in the conservation of Giant Panda habitats, there are 19 households (totaling 60 people) who raise bees. There are also 18 patrol members who have made 216 patrols of the area to date. We have also provided environment education training that has impacted 1,215 people in the local communities or who are conservation staff.

- Sanjiangyuan Expedition Exhibition
  On June 5th we held an exhibition titled “Looking for the Wilderness: the Sanjiangyuan Expedition Exhibition” at Peking University’s Life Science Biology College. Through lectures and films, we shared with hundreds of viewers our research and main findings of a 2013-2014 research project of the Yangtze River, Yellow River, and the headstream of Lancang River.
China Nature Watch

In the past year, following the publishing of China Nature Watch 2014, Shanshui has been engaged in various conservation projects around the country. We have continued to make the best of the findings obtained from our research; we have compiled them and made them available in Chinese and English, and we have also published them as four journal articles in the September issue of the journal Biodiversity Science. With funding from HSBC bank and Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), we launched the Shanshui-HSBC Watch Project, and an information platform project with CEPF. With our work with HSBC and CEPF, we can continually build and improve our database platform, Nature Watch (http://nature.cn), which is also available as the smartphone app ‘Nature Watch’. We also recruited partners for our Nature Watch Initiative. Working with Chinese Bird Watching Societies Network, Chinese Felid Conservation Alliance (CFCA), Wild Xinjiang and other citizen science groups, we established a database for China’s endangered species.

Following the principles set down by the Shanshui research institution’s China Nature Watch 2014, Shanshui will continue to analyze data on China’s ecology and biodiversity, initiate grassland remote sensing analysis experiments, and increase our analysis of the distribution of endangered animals in China. Through our cooperation with the Research Center of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, we will attempt to access the role of social organization in ecological protection. In addition, we will actively support the teams in Sanjiangyuan and Southwestern Mountainous Areas by aiding them with designing projects that include teaching scientific thinking to local people, and the proper way to assess project results.

Our Conservation Research

Our research teams conduct research from both ecology and sociology perspectives. We have been conducting long-term research on several topics, such as the relationship between different groups of snow leopards, the relationship between snow leopards and Blue Sheep which are main prey for snow leopards, and the relationship between snow leopard conservation and religion. We use scientific data and real-time information to conduct the conservation of snow leopards in the Sanjiangyuan region.

Research I

In order to estimate the population numbers, home ranges and lineage group structure of snow leopards, as well as to determine if the Sanjiangyuan group of snow leopards are experiencing habitat fragmentation and genetic isolation, the Shanshui Snow Leopard Project headed by Dr. Cheng Chen has already undertaken ten wildlife expeditions between 2009-2015. At 13 locations in the Sanjiangyuan region, we collected 1,150 fecal samples of snow leopards. In 2014-2015, we collected 150 samples during another expedition in the three key Snow Leopard distribution areas of Shuleinan Mountain, Kunlun Mountain, and the Ganzi region of Sichuan province. In 2015 we commenced the genealogical analysis on snow leopards using fecal samples. We have extracted the DNA from 400 fecal samples, and have identified the DNAs that belong to snow leopards. We will conduct further analysis on these DNA.

Research II

In 2015 we completed a 3-year long wildlife data collection as part of a quantitative research project about the relationship between Snow Leopards and Blue Sheep. The project was led by our Science consultant, Dr. Xiao Lingyun. The projects aims to analyze the impact of environmental factors and livestock grazing on the distribution of Blue Sheep, and to estimate the distribution of Blue Sheep in the Larger Sanjiangyuan area. Based on these studies we will be able to analyze the impact of the Blue Goat distribution on the distribution and population intensity of Snow Leopards.

To carry out the research, we selected seven research spots, and set up 57 infrared cameras. Every season we recorded the positions of the Blue Sheep and livestock, their numbers and age composition. We also obtained socioeconomic information through numerous interviews with the local people. From these data we were able to determine the impact of livestock on the numbers of Blue Sheep, and the Blue Sheep’s choice of grazing ground. We are conducting more analysis.

Research III

In Tibetan Buddhism, a Sacred Mountains receive special veneration from people of the surrounding area and is guarded by cultural and religious taboos. It is also under the watchful eyes of the local monasteries and community. Since a Sacred Mountain covers a considerable amount of living areas for wildlife, it has an important role to play in wildlife conservation. In order to research on the significance of the Sanjiangyuan Holy Mountain culture to Snow Leopard Conservation, our Science consultant, Zhu Ziyun organized a research project. In 2015 we conducted Interviews with 16 monasteries in the Yushu region which contains many Snow Leopard living areas, and also interviewed 34 other monasteries in the region of the Sacred Mountain. Through this we collected information
on the position and situation of all the monasteries in the
Sanjiangyuan region. We discovered that the monasteries
had a great impact on protecting the living areas of
wildlife, and ensured that these areas were far better than
any other areas in the region.

In September 2015 we set up infrared cameras at
37 spots in 5 Sacred Mountain areas. We have already
taken 173 photos of 28 individual Snow Leopards. The
large number of leopards identified indicates that Snow
Leopards and other wildlife use the area frequently. During
the course of the research, the local monks decided to
work with us to help conserve Snow Leopards. Currently,
the monks of Luolongga Monastery, Riwaoba Monastery,
and Riwaodu Monastery participate in local supervision
of the area, and they are responsible for maintaining some
of the infrared cameras.

Research IV
This was a research concerning Snow Leopards in the
Sichuan East Region. From February 28th 2015 to March
25th 2015, the Sichuan Forestry Department, Shanshui
Conservation Center, Panthera Foundation, Gongga
Nature Reserve, formed a research team that carried
out a comprehensive investigation on the situation
of Snow Leopard in seven counties (Kangding, Luohu, Shiqu,
Ganzi, Batang, Dege, Yaijiang) and nine conservation areas.
This is the first comprehensive Snow Leopard research
in Sichuan’s history. The research team travelled over
3,000 km, and collected Snow Leopard fecal samples,
footprints and burrows in 43 spots. The evidence
collected clearly tells us that all seven counties are
home to Snow Leopards.

Research V
This was a Carnivorous animal
conservation project and research

by the Baixiongping Conservation Station of the Sichuan
Tangjiahe Nature Reserve. The research used 20 infrared
cameras to obtain 9,729 photos and 805 video clips.
Through these images we collected important research
data regarding the habitat of Giant Pandas and ecological
environment. In addition, part of the images collected
showed us the carnivorous animals that passed by the area
for food. They include: Asian Black Bears, Leopard Cats,
Alpine Weasels, Yellow-throated Martens, Masked Palm
Civets, and Badgers. These are the first footages of these
animals in the area. We also managed to capture images of
carnivorous birds: crows, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Magpie,
Tawny Fish Owl, Golden Vulture, and Cinereous Vulture.
Of these, this is the first time that Tawny Fish Owl has
been caught during its nocturnal activities by an infrared
camera.
**Stories from the Mating Season of Snow Leopards**

*By Zhao Xiang, SHAN SHUI Conservation Center*

1. How do we know that these Snow Leopards are mating?

Adult female Leopards generally get into heat every alternate year during the December – February period. At about this time their previous offspring would be about 20 months old, and would be able to independently look for new territories to roam. This group of photos which we are showing were taken with infrared cameras on January 29th 2016, and so coincides with the mating season of snow leopards. Gauging from the intimate distance and positions of the two adult leopards, the leopards should be in the process of copulation, or as Professor Lu puts it, “We caught them at a particular phase.”

2. What else have we got besides mating?

Thanks to the 16 herdsmen who are heading the biodiversity monitoring, as well as the over 1,500 infrared camera working days, we were able to capture 126 photos of snow leopards, and 8 photos of leopards (Panthera pardus). Through preliminary analysis we are able to determine that these are 13 individual leopards and 3 individual leopards. This is the first time evidence has been presented to show that the Snow Leopards of the Tibetan Plateau East Area have a habitat overlap with leopards. Besides leopards, our infrared cameras captured images of Lynxes, Brown Bears, White-tipped Deer, Otters, Blue Sheep, Wolves, Red Foxes and other wild beasts.

3. So what does this prove?

Although we had previously seen one case where the habitat of Snow Leopards and leopard overlap in Sichuan’s Gongga and Xinlong, but this is considered the first time where we have prove that the territories of Snow Leopards and leopard do overlap. The simultaneous appearance of two top-of-the-food-chain carnivorous animals in one area indicates that the Lancang River Source Area continues to have an excellent ecosystem, and also that the herbivorous animals (hoofed) continue to be in a healthy condition.

Additionally, with the change in temperatures and the treatment of the Tibetan, Tibet, and the gradual increase of animals that live at lower sea levels moving up the mountain, a long-term study of the Snow Leopards and leopard will help deepen our understanding of the ecology of the area.

Of course, this investigation once again proves to us that in the Sanjiangyuan region, local herdsmen play the most important role in ecological conservation. By training local herdsmen, we allow them to integrate their local knowledge with scientific ones so that they are able to gather far more accurate information that enable them to protect their homeland.

4. What are we going to do in the future?

Since 2013, various people’s government of the Yushu Region have worked with Shanshi Conservation Center to launch long-term research and conservation work aimed at the ecosystem of the Lancang River Source Area. Currently three communities have established a conservation model centered on herdsmen. They have trained 60 herdsmen as Monitoring Officers, and have a long-term monitoring network of 1,400km, achieving a high level of conservation. In the future both parties will continue working on the basis of previous work and push for the establishment of the Sanjiangyuan National Park in the Lancang River Source Area.

Last, in the Tibetan tradition, Snow Leopards are called ‘Sa’, while leopards are called ‘Zei’. There however exists another leopard called ‘Sa Ma Zei’. We do not know what that leopard is, but perhaps in our next infrared camera data collection we will be able to find the answer.
PRACTICES | Community-based Conservation

Conserving the Natural Home in Sanjiangyuan

In 2015, the Sanjiangyuan team continued to focus on and develop community-based wildlife conservation and community monitoring programs. In Yushu, Zaduo, Zhiduo, Ranzen and 15 other villages, we initiated various programs such as anti-poaching patrols, garbage management, and human-wildlife conflict insurance fund for people hurt by wild animals, anti-bear barriers, and caterpillar fungus sustainable management. These projects were created based on local needs and conservation problems, and were possible through cooperation with the local government and community. Our work spanned 10,000km², and in five communities that comprised a total of 3,000km², we trained more than 80 community monitoring team members and distributed 100 infrared cameras to them. The total annual infrared cameras working days is 20,000 days. With this data we are gradually creating a Sanjiangyuan wildlife biodiversity database.

In addition, we organized China's first Snow Leopard Forum, the Yushu International Snow Leopard Forum 2015 which led to the establishment of the China Civil Alliance on Snow Leopard Conservation (Snow Leopard China). The alliance realizes our vision for citizen scientists and conservation led by local communities. Through our participation in the planning of Yushu Prefecture Wildlife National Park, and through our efforts for policy recommendation, we hope to find the balance between natural conservation and community development.

Conserving the Natural Home in Sanjiangyuan

Southwestern Mountainous Areas Community Conservation

Believe in the Power of Perseverance

Forests, Water & Climate Change
By Gao Xiangyu
SHAN SHUI Conservation Center

We made advancements in the HSBC-Shanshui Preserve Upper Yangtze River Watershed Forest Conservation Project, and started the Southwestern Mountainous Areas Conservation Stewardship Program, Cangri Watershed Forest Conservation Project, New World Low Carbon Village Project and a Carbon Reduction Project with the French Embassy. The total funding was RMB 4 million. In Sichuan and Gansu Provinces, we constructed 186 carbon-reducing facilities in three counties, two conservation areas and eight communities. Through this project, we reduced the annual firewood usage by two-thirds (approx 1153.2 tons), directly impacted 5,000 people, and helped secured the supply of safe drinking water for 1 million Chengdu City residents.

We implemented rules and optimized the collective forest management for Lixian County in Sichuan Province and Baishuijiang National Nature Reserve in Gansu Province. Our work included clarifying the rights, responsibilities, and benefits of each party, establishing the rewards and punishment mechanism, ensuring compensation is based on conservation efforts, and organizing training workshops to teach collective forest management. These activities are an efficient use of the 25 million RMB of the Payment for Ecosystem Services Fund (PES) because through these activities 19,370 hectares of watershed forest is protected.

Our other achievements in the Southwestern Mountainous Area include:
- Co-sponsored five Community Conservation Development funds to support Community Conservation, public affairs and alternative livelihood.
- Established 66 forest plots and 42 catchment areas for monitoring in order to study the relationship between the forest and water source.
- Trained 700 people from partner organizations and local communities, thereby raising the leadership capabilities of local communities, and the management capabilities of partner organizations.
- Received an official response from the Sichuan Forestry Department on the test spot in the Pingwu county Guanbagou Basin Watershed people conserved area.

We need to raise awareness of the dependence of our lives on the environment, and the importance of ecosystem services. We need to build a national network of social leaders to help with the effective conservation of the environment.

Believe in the Power of Perseverance

By Gao Xiangyu
SHAN SHUI Conservation Center

It is noon at a small hotel next to Chengdu Jinguji Road. Sitting at a table near the door and with beads of perspiration on his forehead, Fengjie eats his lunch of steaming fried rice quickly. He is in a hurry to leave for Guanba Village located in Mianyang City, Pingwu County. Gulping down his last mouthful of rice with a cup of tea, he pulls up the zip of is black windbreaker. “Let’s go,” he says.

Fengjie is on his way to participate in the opening ceremony of the establishment Guanbagou Basin Watershed People Conserved Area (PCA: established, managed and protected by local people, interested groups (NGOs, enterprises or citizen groups) and individuals). The PCA is the result of his six years of dedication and hard work. A return trip to and fro Guanba Village is a 10 hour drive, with part of the journey leading through dangerous mountain roads. Ever since six years ago Fengjie has lost count of how many times he has walked on such mountain roads. As the Community Conservation Project Manager of the Shanshui Conservation Center, he has to spend about one-third of his year going down to various villages to work, often running from Liziba village in the Baishuijiang National Nature Reserve of Gansu to the Xiong'er village of Lixian County. Fengjie himself jokingly refers to his work as a “marathon of project-sites”.

Fengjie drives himself to the project sites. His car is barely two years old but already it is starting to make strange vibrating sounds.

“This is all due to the jolting when driving on mountain roads!” he chuckles, “But I’m better at driving on mountain roads than normal roads.”

In 2008, Fengjie was still a Masters student studying Rural Economy and Development. During an ecology field trip, his teacher introduced him to some cases
Shanshui was working on. Realizing that the projects aligned with his interests, he began to follow Shanshui’s various projects closely.

During the period of reconstruction of the Sichuan Earthquake that happened that year, Shanshui was supporting Wolong Nature Reserve and built the Ecological Tent Cultural Centre. Shanshui donated television sets and batteries to help relieve the feelings of panic experienced by the local people. Fengjie participated in one of the working teams sent to help people in the area. A year later, he officially joined Shanshui. “Shanshui was looking for a person who could create an operation manual that aided conservation efforts, so I joined,” Fengjie explains. From his first assignment of writing a manual, Fengjie began his journey of community-based conservation.

Fengjie grew up in Hebei Handan, and so never had a chance to walk on mountainous roads. After he joined Shanshui, there was once when he was leading some experts around the Haoping of Pingwu County to pick project sites. On the way down he continuously fell 18 times. “It was as if I was falling with every step I took,” he says with a laugh. However, it was the same trip when he first saw a pack of wild Snub-nosed Monkeys. “About 150m away from us there was an alpha male monkey, female monkeys and baby ones,” he says recalling the sight. For Fengjie, that encounter with nature and the beauty of wildlife was a wonderful experience. Through this ‘initiation’, Fengjie’s determination to engage in conservation work grew stronger.

Community Conservation is a broad concept. In Fengjie’s view it at least comprises of two levels of meanings: One, it means carrying out conservation work at the social level. For instance, one could work with governments, enterprises or external organizations etc. on projects involving environment education, reforestation, and a variety of skills development. Two, community conservation could be providing funds and technical assistance to support a community as it engages in conservation work. This is the approach Shanshui is working on. As Fengjie puts it, “the organization does not do the work personally. Rather, it supports villagers who engage in conservation themselves.” In Fengjie’s project, “community” refers to “those in the village”, and when he brings teams into the community he terms it “entering the village”.

Ever since a long time ago, the villagers have led a life heavily dependent on extracting resources from Nature. The villagers rely on the mountain for resources and eat mountain goats for meals. For those villagers living at the periphery of the conservation area, agriculture, chopping trees for firewood, and hunting bind them even closer to the natural world for a living. Yet, these places are often also the homes of wild animals. In a Nature Reserve famous for its Giant Pandas, conflicts between humans and wildlife are particularly jarring. Community Conservation seeks a solution between these conflicts that allows the conservation of the natural environment of wildlife while ensuring that human inhabitants of the area can continue to develop. “One who creates trouble should be responsible of resolving the trouble. Environmental threats were created by humans, so the solution should also be found by humans,” Fengjie says.

Still, how do you pick Community Conservation projects sites? Fengjie and his team undertook a scientific and meticulous selection process. First, Fengjie has to ascertain if the area has any conservation value. Taking Guanba as an example, there was research indicating that 5-7 wild Giant Pandas lived in the Guanba living and work Area. Moreover, Guanba is a crucial passage illegal poachers use to enter Tangjiahe and Laohegou.

In addition to accessing the conservation value of a place, Fengjie and his team needed to determine if selected areas have the desire and ability for conservation. After researching and accessing almost twenty possible conservation sites, it was decided that Guanba would be the site of the community conservation project, with Liziba and five other smaller areas as the main project sites. As an outsider to the region, if Fengjie wanted to initiate projects in the local area and make the projects more impactful on the ground, working with the managers who control local resources was an inevitable thing to do. In order to work with the local forestry administration, and in order to get the approval and continual support of sponsors, having good interpersonal relationships skills are crucial.

The night before the opening ceremony of the establishment of the PCA, Fengjie and his partners shared a hearty meal over rounds of rowdy drinking. When I asked him how he felt, Fengjie said he was fine, “I feel like I’ve unlocked a new level of achievement!”

Nevertheless, establishing good relationships with people is not always a smooth-sailing task. Often, changes in a partner’s appointment can wipe out all of Fengjie’s previous efforts, and send the team back to square one. From a larger perspective, the place of Community Conservation is largely dependent on fate as there are many factors that could affect its success. For example, when protecting an area three to five years’ worth of conservation might not even be enough to produce any significant result. Yet, when an area develops its economy and allows the ecology to be harmed, one month is enough to destroy everything. It’s extremely heartbreaking.” Despite this, Fengjie continues to choose to persevere, “In the past we found lime in the Baihuixue, but through the communication between the nature reserve and Sichuan Forestry Department, in the end the ores were stopped.”

In the summer of 2014 when Fengjie was departing from Pingwu county, he discovered that the huge trunk in front his car was swaying back and forth, and wondered to himself if the driver was drunk. When the trunk stopped and his car overtook the truck, he discovered the front of the truck had been so smashed the glass was scattered. Later he learnt that ten minutes ago a falling rock smashed the truck on its top. “If I had driven faster, it could have been us who were smashed,” he recalls. The ability of a normal car and a commercial truck to withstand a powerful force is hugely different, so it was a blessing that Fengjie’s car was not hit by the rock.

In the current era of information
explosions and fast-paced living, pursuing a career in community conservation is an unconventional choice. In the field of community conservation, a period of one to two years is absolutely not enough to see any significant results for a project. “From the perspective of community conservation, one has to carry out a project in an area for a period of at least five years,” Fengjie states. “This year, the Liziba project is entering its tenth year, while Guanba is in its seventh year.”

“Perhaps after two or three years the results of your project are not clear to you, let alone others. What have you done? It doesn’t seem clear or easy to explain,” Fengjie says. Yet changes in social awareness and social organization management are not things that are easily quantifiable. These are processes that are more gradual and demand a long-term outlook.

Fengjie says his project is not like a water purification process where dirty water flows in from one end and clean water out the other. “This is more difficult than that.”

Even though it is difficult to use hard data to explain, there are still some statistics that show us the change. Fengjie and his colleagues have made. During the time when Sichuan was rebuilding itself after the quake, Fengjie participated in a project that aimed to change the way Liziba villagers used firewood. Local people use firewood to roast tea and cook, so trees are inevitably chopped. Initially the villagers would burn the wood in pits, so the energy efficiency was low. The wood stove that Fengjie and his colleagues promoted significantly raised the energy efficiency of burning wood. At the same time, Fengjie and his colleagues introduced gas stoves to replace fire pits, and electric tea roasting machines to replace wooden ones. Thanks to the change in available technology and a new awareness of the local people to their energy usage practices, in that year the village reduced its fuelwood consumption by 20 million kilograms, greatly reducing the need to chop down trees for human consumption.

Further, the project supported local villages in engaging in conservation work such as patrols around the conservation area and inspecting data of the local area. The flagship animal of the local area, the Giant Panda, has been inching its living area closer to the village. Its fecal samples and other traces indicating its presence are also increasing. These evidences compile to indicate that the habitat area for animals is expanding, and that the crashes between human and wildlife will likely lessen.

For conservators, seven to eight years is not a short span of time. Under Fengjie’s planning, our organization should gradually withdraw for operations and shift to technical assistance. “With a few more years of hard work, the community members will have a stronger consciousness of wanting to conserve. Supported by favorable changes in the environmental policy and the increase in the country’s investment in the environment, these areas should have enough ability to effectively use the funds to undo the damage and reform the present.” When that time arrives, Fengjie’s goals of community conservation will finally be successful.

“You can’t not do something just because the change in what you do may not be visible. There will always be change.”

Forests, Water & Climate Change

This year we were involved in many projects. We restored 46.7 hectares of vegetation in the Sichuan Yele Nature Reserve. In another project, the “Audi” Multiple Benefits of Forest Restoration and Carbon Sink Afforestation in the Habitat of the Giant Pandas of Sichuan project, passed through the CCER standard online publicity and validation.

We also completed the project design document (PDD) of the Green Earth Forestry Carbon Sink Afforestation Project. The project covers 6570.7 hectares and is expected to produce 2.964 million tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent during project period.

Further, we have been active in producing important documents. We finished writing two reports: the “Regional Evaluation of Priority Development of Forestry Carbon Sink Afforestation of Sichuan” and the “Regional Planning of Forest Carbon Sink in the Habitat of the Giant Panda of Sichuan.”

We drafted a guide for low carbon villages, and completed a survey and report for Liziba low-carbon village, as well as completed a draft copy translation of the CCER Standards Third Edition.

The Forest Carbon Sink Potential Assessment and Preferential Development of Regional Planning of Qinghai Project which we completed previously is one of the best in China due to the high quality of scientific and technological achievements.

In addition, in cooperation with the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences we complete the Low-carbon Community Pilot Construction Implementation Plan of the Sansheng subdistrict office in Jinjiang District, Chengdu.

We participated in the 21th United Nations Climate Change Convention (COP21) and organized two sharing sessions about climate change in Beijing and Chengdu.

We also organized a seminar about the development method of the CCER Forestry Carbon Sink Project.
NETWORK | Guardians alliance

The Lancang River Conservation Fund
You can do that with Spy Technology?
The Land-Trust Conservation Station
Never forget why you started
Nature School
On Nature’s Journey

© Scenery in Zhaoping Township, the source area of the Upper Mekong (Lancang) River / photo by Peng Liansheng
The Lancang River Conservation Fund

In the past year the Shanshui Lancang River conservation team completed the assessment of the Lancang River Project. We received 120 project applications. Of these, 46 were successful, 14 of them are from the Qinghai region, while 32 are from Yunnan. There were 16 large scale projects (RMB 50,000 to 200,000), and 30 small scale ones (RMB 50,000 or less). After the confirmation of the project grants, we organized an opening ceremony at Qinghai’s Yushu, and Yunnan’s Dali where we invited the people in charge of the successful projects to share their experiences and learn from each other.

After the commencement of the project, the Shanshui Lancang River Conservation Team conducted field studies of the projects conducted at Yunnan (Kuxiangbanna, Pu'er, Dali, and Shangri-La), and Qinghai (Nangqen, Zaduo and other counties). Some of these projects have achieved clearer results at this stage than others.

For instance, the North Yunnan Watershed Artificial Wetland Functions Evaluation Project successfully accomplished artificial wetland and natural wetland water quality monitoring and wildlife monitoring. The Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Watershed Forest in minorities of the Lancang Watershed project has enabled four ethnic minority groups (Tibetans, Lisu people, Bai, Dai People) to diversify the wildlife in their communities, but also to research into traditional local knowledge about the ecology of the local area. In several Zaduo Sinaian communities waste management projects were carried out. These projects successfully reduced the amount of rubbish in the Tibetan Plateau, and enabled local people to try and innovate new ways to reuse and recycle rubbish.

As a show of our continual support and commitment to the conservation network, we started our second round of grant giving in October 2014.
The Asian Elephant is classified by China as an I-level endangered animal needing intensive conservation. It has also been identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as an endangered species.

You can do **that** with Spy Technology?

The Lancang River Conservation Center of Shanshui Conservation Center helped fund the Asian Elephant Human Conflict Community Warning System Project. Asian Elephants pose a danger to local residents because the elephants may hurt people or destroy farmland. In order to warn local residents of an elephant’s approach, the project uses motion sensors and infrared cameras to create a kind of outdoor spy technology system that can alert local residents when it detects approaching elephants. With this technology, residents can make sufficient preparations to minimize any potential damage from the elephant encounter. The project was tested in Jinghong city’s Guanping Village.

Through this project we recorded 63 times of elephant activity and 923 photos. In total we generated 48 alerts and 70 pieces of individual messages. Of these, 84.29% of the information could be sent within 20 minutes to the staff of the Nature Reserve as well as the Management Committee of the local village. The information is also simultaneously sent to the alert system in the nearby villages to warn them about the presence of elephants.

The Land-Trust Conservation Station

In 2015 the Baixiongping Conservation Station completed the installation of a basic patrol and surveillance infrastructure in the area. We will proceed to develop other capabilities like research and providing environmental education to the local people.

We worked with the frontline staff of the conservation site to conduct four rounds of seasonal patrols on the 11 patrol routes that cover up to 57km2 of the land. We conducted normal patrols every 10 days on the conservation area’s five normal patrol routes. We also conducted fortnightly patrols in the Liangmen Community of Luoyigou Village Area which surrounds the conservation site. For the entire year the conservation area experienced neither forest fires nor illegal poaching.

On top of fulfilling patrol duties, we also started a series of research work. First, we worked with Peking University to complete China’s first research study of the area. The article is titled ‘Tangjiahe National Nature Reserve Research and Assessment Plan’; and successfully passed through peer review. Second, we conducted a series of research pertaining to scientific questions that are directly related to conservation work. The content of research included risk assessments of raising Asian Honey Bees in the nature reserve, the transmission of diseases between domestic and wild animals, the changes in the Asian Black Bear’s ecology in the last 30 years, and a study of the carnivorous animals in the nature reserve etc.

To help us with the patrols, we recruited a huge amount of volunteers from the public who provided us with more than 400 working days of patrols. Through recruiting volunteers to help us with our work and through O2O engagement, we were also able to build a stronger public image.
Never forget why you started
An interview with Diao Kunpeng
Shanshui’s Baixiongping Conservation Station Master

By Gao Xiangyu
SHAN SHUI Conservation Center

"Station Master, you’re so young! Which year in the 70s were you born in?"
Some time ago when the staff of the Qiandashan Nature Reserve met Diao, they asked him this question with faces of surprise. What they did not know was that our Diao was born after 1980.

Every time we talk Diao, he likes to use this anecdote to make fun of himself, saying that he always looks older than he really is. But in my eyes, Diao alludes a sense of cool charm.

Diao Kunpeng is the Station Master of the SHAN SHUI Conservation Center at the Baixiongping Conservation Station. He has the affectionate nickname of ‘Station Master Diao’. In 2014, he came to the Baixiongping Conservation Station and transformed from a Masters student whose sole role was to engage in scientific research to a frontline conservationist. His work and changing responsibilities at Shanshui are quietly changing his life.

Shanshui SS & Diao Kunpeng DK

SS: I heard that you have a nickname called “Vulture sitting on a Mountain”. How did the name come about?
DK: In this entire nature reserve Baixiongping’s altitude is the highest, and in a 5km radius there’s only me who has the surname Diao. During my free time, I like to play with Chinese martial arts weapons. People in the nature reserve have easy-going personalities and like to drink. When you hang out with them it’s difficult not to be a little tough and tough. So, word got around about me, and the name “Vulture sitting on a Mountain” came about.

SS: Did you have an interest in animals since you were a child?
DK: Yes, in my family I’m the youngest, and when I was a kid I had a weak body. As a result, there were times when the older children didn’t like to play with me, and so I didn’t have a choice but to play with lizards, grass, cats, and dogs.

SS: When did you come to Baixiongping?
DK: It was the summer of 2014. Initially I came as part of my studies in Animal Ecology, staying in a place that had no public roads, no internet, and no electricity in winter for almost half a year. I did research on wild Giant Pandas with the hope that I could finish my Masters and go to a PhD. I finished my PhD and start research as a way to do conservation.

In the three years of my Masters program, I travelled across rural areas to big cities, and came into contact with all sorts of people doing conservation and their stories. That summer, I graduated from the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Ecology. Reflecting on my journey, I felt that my current situation was the result of those people who helped me throughout my Masters studies. Thus, I decided not to continue the purely academic route, I wanted to jump out and head to the frontlines of conservation work. I wanted to see the things and actual needs at the forefront, and then come back and think long and hard about my ideas about “using problems for conservation”. After something I would recommend, I wanted to do a PhD. When I was thinking which areas of studies would be beneficial to conservation, Shanshui and Tangjialing were coincidentally looking for a person to fill a position at Baixiongping. I felt that this was an opportunity to realize my aspirations, so I came.

SS: How is life in Baixiongping different from life outside?
DK: There are so many things that are different. Over
here the scenery is especially beautiful. In the spring, the view in front of the house is a mountain full of cherry blossoms. In the summer, you can see all sorts of fruit trees: wild strawberries, raspberries, August melons that could make any gluton feel bloated. In autumn, the entire forest is dyed into a million colors by oak, David’s maple, painted maple and spindle trees. In the winter, the air becomes cold and the land freezes, the world becomes white, and the pine trees caked in snow seem especially elegant and peaceful.

Actually, this place is filled with danger, you have to work hard to survive. At Baixi, one often encounters Asian Black Bears, Takins, and dangerous snakes. Occasionally you meet leopards. Every one of them could kill an unsuspecting person at any moment. At the worst, you could be spiced to death by Sichuan cuisine or even just die of hunger. In the mountains, you have to depend on yourself for everything, from finding drinking water, cooking meals, fixing the power generator. The time you spend on survival in the mountains greatly exceeds the time you need to do it in the city.

Human interaction is also really complicated and ever-changing. You’ll meet all sorts of weird stories and people. Once you meet them, you can’t escape. You need to solve it bit by bit.

55: Are there many things that you can’t get accustomed to or feel is especially difficult?

DK: Yes. There are things I can’t get used to or find difficult. Food, the environment, working culture, all these are different.

Over here the humidity is really high, there are many wild animals, and food is unbelievably spicy. For a northerner like me who doesn’t eat spicy food, this is a huge challenge. When I came here I got sick from wet ailments (here DK is referring to Chinese traditional medical concepts), and in two months I lost 10kg. At night when I tried to sleep, I’d hear the sound of rats squeaking on the wooden wall on top of my bed, and it’d keep me up all night. You’ll try to tap on the wooden wall, but the rats wouldn’t care about you at all.

Over here you’ll talk to all sorts of people: from the ground level staff of the nature reserve to the top people, people from different tiers of the government, the police, tourists, student research groups, villagers, even poachers with ill intentions... Since everyone comes from all over, everyone has a different background and character. When we first came together we lacked a common trust, so even the most unintentional gesture could offend someone. To become a bonded group was an incredibly difficult task. When I first came I spent huge amounts of energy to communicate with others. I even went as far to socialize that I once spat blood out after some intensive drinking. But finally I was able to break the ice and get started on work.

55: What do you think is the most difficult thing to bear?

DK: It’s issues with electricity. With the exception of poisonous snakes, we can predict the habits of all other animals and safely avoid them. The most painful issue is electricity. Our current conservation work is extremely dependent on electricity and the internet. Once the electricity is cut off, we are unable to use any device. We wouldn’t even have signal for our phones.

We use a small hydroelectric power station of 60,000 watts to generate electricity. The small river gets blocked by falling leaves every day. During the raining season and during the time when snow starts to melt, the small river might get blocked several times a day, so we have to send two people every day across 1000m of mountain roads to clear the leaves at the hydroelectric station.

Once tree branches get into the water wheel, everyone at the station has to go to the power station to take out the wheel and fix it. During midsummer this might happen every two weeks. Then in deep autumn the water volume becomes small, power shortages become inevitable and there’ll be no gas stove to keep warm. When you can’t get light, you’ll have to use candles, but when it gets dark you’re afraid that you might set the wooden cabin on fire by accident and burn everything to ashes. Without the telephone, you’ll have to go do to the conservation station 7km away to report the status of your conservation work and tell your family that you’re safe. When you’re there, every second’s worth of signal feels particularly precious.

55: How is the progress on the work of the conservation station?

DK: At Baixi, we did huge amounts of work. We developed a patrol inspection system, scientific research, and environment education. We also started research on Black bears, carnivorous animals, Asian Honey bees, domesticated dogs, and the impact of tourism on the local area.

For instance, in order to estimate the health levels of the entire nature reserve, we did a comprehensive research on the species and population numbers of carnivorous animals, and we received massive precious information and data. At the same time we attracted the attention of members of the public to our daily work, and were able to share our frontline experiences with them. As of current count, we’ve had 560 days of social outreach work.

55: Most people may never have the chance to interact with wild animals. Are these wild animals different from the animals that we see on television or the internet?

DK: Yep they are, what you see in real life and what is on camera is totally different. In the wild, animals will not give you a perfect picture as they are shown on

© The Young Conservation Practitioners join the daily patrols with the staff of the Tawgi Nature Reserve

In autumn, the entire forest is dyed into a million colors. In the winter, the sky becomes cold and the land freezes, the world becomes white, and the pine trees caked in snow seem especially elegant and peaceful.
In China, not many people research on the behavior of Asian Black Bears, but from what old hunters say, their behavior are very special, they’re many stories that no one knows.

Sometimes you can see wild boars eating the carcasses of other wild boars. The Takin that is hyper aggressive to humans can coexist peacefully with the Chinese Muntjac and Golden Pheasant. Takins, with their rough fur and thick bodies, rub against trees to smooth their itchiness. Once they start, they usually take an hour.

**SS:** Which animal do you think is the most interesting? Why?

**DK:** If you’re going to ask which animal, you might as well ask which species. Besides feeling a particularly strong affection for dogs, the wildlife that I feel most interested about are carnivorous animals. They’re intelligent, robust, beautiful, and stand at the top of the ecosystem. They reflect the health of the ecosystem to a high degree.

The carnivorous animals commonly seen in this nature reserve are Asian Black Bears, Asian Golden cats, Leopard cats, Yellow-throated Martens, Masked Palm Civets and a variety of weasels. Of these, the one I pay attention to most is the Asian Black Bear. It’s a little fateful. When I was small I had a fantasy of living in a forest where Asian Black Bears also lived. In China, not many people research on the behavior of Asian Black Bears, but from what old hunters say, their behavior are very special, they’re many stories that no one knows.

**SS:** The Young Conservation Practitioners researching at Baxilongping are already into their second year here. What do they usually do?

**DK:** The usually do all sorts of work. From daily patrols, making meals, generating electricity, cleaning up the living quarters, they have to take part in all these. On top of the various work they have to do at the conservation station, they have to complete the various research duties such as going up the mountain to collect infrared data, modeling, maintaining the research facilities, organizing volunteer groups etc. We are able to raise part of the funds to support them in their work and enable them to complete small projects that they feel interested in.

**SS:** When the Young Conservation Practitioners first arrived, did they have many troubles settling in? How did you help them solve these issues?

**DK:** Yes. The main issues were language difficulties and differences in living habits. The first batch of Young Conservation Practitioners all spoke the Sichuan dialect, so communication with them was easy. The second batch of Young Conservation Practitioners faced more difficulties; they even had problems understanding the local dialect. Some of the new batch of Young Conservation Practitioners don’t eat spicy food, so they find the spicy-based Sichuan cuisine very difficult to accept. Through communication, when we make dishes as much as possible we try to minimize the spiciness, and the Young Conservation Practitioners were finally able to just accept the food.

As for language problems, if they listen more, talk more, they’ll slowly be able to understand large parts of the dialect. When the Young Conservation Practitioners just arrived, due to their communication problems with the staff at the nature reserve, they might offend each other over the smallest things. In our group we tried to communicate as much as possible, and though that we were able to close the social distance a lot.

**SS:** Are there often accidents at the station? It seems that you were stung by bees on the face?

**DK:** Yes. During one of our research projects concerning Asian Bees, we tried to rear some bees, but the end result was that I got stung all over my head by bees. The worst part was that the bees had stung directly at my temple, so the poison could enter into a major blood vessel and spread far into my body. My whole face swelled up, and I experienced a severe headache and nausea.

Then there was a Young Conservation Practitioner who went up the mountain and lost his way, only coming back down when it became dark. That frightened everyone. After the incident, we set down an important safety rule that “A person cannot go up the mountain unaccompanied”.

**SS:** A few days ago your knee also became swollen?

**DK:** On a morning a few days ago, before we went up the mountain, idiot me said, “Warm up your knees everyone, or else you’ll definitely fall on your way up the mountain”. And then I proceeded to trip over a huge rock on the way down the mountain, and my knee directly hit the sharp tip of the rock. From then on I deeply understood the truth of the ancient local saying, “Those who say inauspicious things in the morning cannot go up the mountain that day.”

**SS:** What are the results from the two stations for the last two years?

**DK:** The conservation performance of the station is relatively good. We just had a debriefing meeting for the establishment of the station. During that meeting we received the high praise and recognition from the leaders of the conservation’s various stations, and also the Sichuan Provincial Forestry Department.

Through our hard work, the Conservation station did not experience any illegal trespassing or poaching. We wrote 29 outstanding research reports for the Nature Reserve titled, “Tangjiahe Nature Reserve Research and Supervision Plan”, initiating a series of research aimed at conserving ecology health and updating the information of endangered animals. Through this we were able to obtain large amounts of precious first-hand information and organize large-scale volunteer activities that allowed us to build a platform for public participation and scientific research. Currently we already have 560 volunteers in manpower.

**SS:** Say a few words about the station’s future plans.

**DK:** We conducted detailed division of labor. Building on the basis of doing patrol work well, in the future we will invest more in scientific research, environment education and public outreach. We will focus on efforts on embarking on more research projects that are able to contribute more to conservation, and which produce practical results. We will also continue to work with the public and local people to further the research and conservation work of Baxilongping. We hope to spread the mountain stories to further places so that people in the cities can easily come, see, and experience the things that happen at the frontline of conservation.
Nature School

One of the main thrusts of Shanshui’s work is organizing Environmental Education activities for the public, building the foundation for and promoting the development of Environmental Education. In 2015, Shanshui organized 11 experiential Nature learning activities and 4 lectures. We reached out to 352 people and 270 people through each activity respectively. We are also working with the Wanglang, Baisuihe, and Tangjiabao Nature Reserves to carry out Environmental Education planning. In addition we attended the Second National Environmental Education Forum held at Hangzhou in November as one of the organizers, and we further organized two Nature School Online Discussions between Chengdu and Beijing students. We also developed a plan to train Environmental Education leaders that directly impacted 700 people.

On Nature’s Journey

Interview with a Wanglang Summer Camp Volunteer

By Zheng Qing

Grade 10, Beijing Changping New Oriental Foreign Language School

From ancient times, the relationship between men and nature has been a topic of scientific enquiry. Humans belong to nature, and are a part of nature. Yet at the same time, humans continuously use their abilities to reshape their environment. In this era of rapid technological growth, humans have departed from their initial exploration of nature to an intentional or unintentional destruction of nature. We are unable to determine if such actions are right or wrong. After 15 days of volunteering with Shanshui and some personal reflections, I would like to share some of my thoughts on this matter.

At Chengdu’s Giant Panda Breeding research site, we learnt about raising Giant Panda cubs from their human caregivers. At this point a question popped into my head: Is raising Giant Panda cubs by human caregivers the right thing to do? In order to conserve Giant Pandas and maximize their numbers, humans raise the originally wild Pandas in an indoor compound. When we raise Pandas this way, we unintentionally destroy the Giant Panda’s true nature. No matter how well we create a comfortable environment that is as close to the Giant Panda’s original habitat as possible, there are still differences between the man-made environment and the natural one. Yet if we allow the number of Giant Pandas to dwindle, one day the Pandas will disappear from the face of this earth. What’s more, the cause of the dwindling number of Great Pandas is closely related to the blatant exploitation of nature by humans. If we continue to destroy the natural habitats of Giant Pandas, then why are we conserving them? In my opinion, what we humans should do is to minimize our damage to the natural environment. Doing this is the most meaningful in Great Panda conservation. If we wish to protect all wild animals, we have to also protect nature.

I hope that in the near future, we can use the most appropriate method to carry out an all-rounded conservation of Giant Panda. This way, we can strike a balance between the needs of human development and the development needs of nature.

The following ten days at the Wanglang Nature Reserve left a deep impression on me. In the area there was picturesque scenery and mysterious virgin forests. Still, what I remember deep in my heart is the staff who work at the Nature Reserve. In a slightly remote but unbelievably beautiful place like the site, there were such friendly people with such a strong passion for the environment. They devote all their energies to every blade of grass and every tree in the Nature Reserve. And what do they ask for in return? Initially, I did not understand. They were talented, energetic people with such earnestness. Why didn’t they choose a better place to make a name for themselves?

After interacting with them, I slowly discovered the answer. I noticed that they started the day brimming with energy. I noticed their joyful laughter when they gathered together to discuss about nature conservation, noticed their sparkling eyes when they talk about a forest that made them proud... I could see it clearly on their faces that they were really willing and happy to do what they were doing, and I also saw their deep love for nature. This was what touched me most on this travel journey. They let themselves truly become one with the forest and Nature. For them, their biggest reward is achieving harmony between humans and Nature. Because of them I have faith and hope. With the quiet contribution of people like them, the leadership of those who see nature as a treasure, and with everyone’s continual hard work, one day we will achieve a win-win situation between human development and nature.

These 15 days gave me a lot more things than what I have reflected on. Perhaps what I learnt and realized over the past days is more than what I can cover. This experience with nature has touched my heart deeply, and has changed the way I think and act. I will do what I can to contribute to nature conservation, and to make the balance between humans and nature a reality.
On the Right Path
An Interview with the Conservationist George Schaller

By Gao Xiangyu
SHAN SHUI Conservation Center

Widely regarded as one of the most outstanding wildlife research academics of the current generation, George Beals Schaller inspires awe and respect in both conservation professionals and amateurs alike. Born in 1933, Schaller has always devoted his life to wildlife conversation and research, and has travelled widely across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In China alone he has been conducting wildlife research for over 30 years. Not only does he possess an extensive knowledge about China’s beloved Giant Pandas, Tibetan Antelope and other precious wildlife, Schaller has made crucial contributions to China’s wildlife conservation. Given his tireless passion and deep knowledge of China’s conservation, we speak to him about his thoughts on China’s current conservation scene.

Shanshui SS & George Beals Schaller Dr.S

SS: I know several months ago, you went to Kunlun Shan with my colleagues Dr. Liu Yanlin and He Bing, is there any discovery result of this expedition?

Dr.S: In November 2015 our team spent a month in the Kunlun Shan of Qinghai. We had the kind of team that I prefer. Dedicated and interested persons from three non-governmental organizations cooperated in the field—Panthers, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Shan Shui—together with those of the Qinghai Forestry Department and of local counties. The main purpose of a survey such as ours is to ascertain the status of wildlife and its habitat, and note any problems such as poaching, and then provide suggestions to the departments concerned of how best to manage the area sustainably as a resource for the benefit of all living beings including the local communities. We had an enjoyable and productive trip, tallying many blue sheep and Tibetan Gazelle, some kiang, wild yaks and Tibetan argali sheep, several wolves, but much less snow leopard spoor than expected.

SS: Which place are you willing to go where you have never been before in China? Why?

Dr.S: China has been extremely generous and helpful to me that every year since 1980 I have been able to cooperate with Chinese colleagues in doing wildlife research over much of the northern and western parts of the country, the regions which still have so much wonderful nature. I am partial to mountains, so have focused on the Tibetan Plateau with its diverse and unique wildlife and habitats, and I hope to be able to continue to contribute to the conservation of these regions.

SS: From a global perspective, is there a unique or special feature for wildlife conservation in China?

Dr.S: China is a huge and beautiful country with one of the greatest diversity of animals and plants on the planet. The basic problems are the same in every country: a rapidly growing human population using ever more resources, careless development and exploitation, pollution, poor resource management, governments for which conservation remains of relatively low priority, and so forth. Added to that is climate change with rapid impact on some areas such as the Tibetan Plateau.

SS: You have worked on investigation and research of wild animals in China for over 30 years, in your point of view, is there any change on the wildlife conservation in China in recently few decades?

Dr.S: There have been many important changes and much progress in conservation during the past decades. When I first came, there were only about 15 protected
areas but now there are some 2000 coving 15% of the
country. Most of the reserves are underfunded, many
have no staff and little protection, and people live in
most of them growing crops, herding livestock, hunting
illegally, and other activities. Ideally each reserve should
have a fully protected core area with little or no human
activities where animals and plants can live in peace
surrounded by carefully managed habitat. A big change
in China has been an awareness of nature and the need
to protect and manage it. When I first came and talked to
local officials about conservation they often wondered
what I was talking about; now they give me valuable
examples of what they are doing to protect to preserve
the environment. The public, too, now is involved, taking
trips to places of scenic beauty, setting up conservation
associations and nature clubs, going on social media
to express opinions. Peking University and it Center for
Nature and Society and Shan Shui Conservation Center,
established through the vision of Lu Zhi, is a glowing
example of what every university in China should emulate
in doing field research and training generations of
students for the country’s future environmental needs.
For example, in 1980, Pan Wenshi of Peking University
participated in our giant panda project. Later he continued
the giant panda work with Lu Zhi, then a student, who in
turn trained many more students, such as Wang Hao, who
in turn is now working with the new generation. If all this
had happened several generations earlier there would
perhaps not be so few giant pandas, tigers, Yangtze River
dolphins and Chinese alligators left in the wild.

SS: Are things getting worse?

Dr.S: Unlike many countries, China still has options.
It could work toward an innovative, flexible system of
natural resource management designed to maintain
the wildlife, habitats, and livelihood of people in an
area. This needs the proper regulations, laws, goals, and
policies that suit a local area. Too often top-down land-
use initiatives by government have resulted in serious
unintended consequences that have led, for example,
to wide-spread rangeland deterioration. Why are pikas,
these small relatives of rabbits, still being mass-poisoned
on the Tibetan Plateau even though China’s scientists
have shown that pikas have an important positive role
in the ecosystem. Why were several hundred thousand
Tibetan antelopes allowed to killed illegally for the export
of their fine wool during the late 1980s and 1990s without
effective anti-poaching efforts. Problems and solutions to
problems are known—every country has been making the
same mistakes—but these are often ignored and there is
little effort to learn from the mistakes of other countries,
and so the degradation of our planet continues unabated.
Will our most beautiful parts of the world survive only
as small fenced fragments as reminders of a better past?
Will lions in Africa survive mainly in zoos and enclosures,
wild ones poisoned because they sometimes kill livestock,
their heads hanging on the walls of trophy hunters, their
savannas converted to fields?

SS: And anything getting better?

Dr.S: I am basically an optimist—within reason.
One can point to many positive efforts on behalf of
conservation. China’s government is contributing much
money to the management of the Sanjiangyuan Nature
Reserve to protect the headwaters of the Yellow, Yangtze,
and Mekong rivers to prevent an acute water shortage
as glaciers melt with climate change. The Shan Shui
Conservation Center is importantly involved in this project
by working with local communities and doing wildlife
surveys for snow leopards and other species.

SS: What is the difference between the young
generation of wildlife researchers/protectors and your
generation?

Dr.S: When I began field work in the early 1950s, I and
others did mainly descriptive natural history, describing
behavior and habitat. This remains the basis even today.
We were, of course, aware of the need to protect what we
studied, and in fact considered it a moral responsibility
to assure the survival of the animals we enjoyed watching.
But conservation often had somewhat less urgency because pressure on the land was not as great as at present. Then research became more quantitative. Statistics are essential, but it then researchers became so enamored with complicated equations that it tended to obscure reality, especially if data were skimpy or biased. Now researchers, including myself, are fully aware that research leading to conservation must involve society as a whole and especially the local communities. No matter how good the laws, conservation goals can not be achieved without the goodwill, knowledge and involvement of the local people. Are there victories in conservation? What with population growth, climate change, and other issues, one can never think that something is forever secure. If a country treasures something, it must remain forever alert, protecting and managing it, as China learned with the giant panda.

SS: With the past, we come to talk about the future. After 26 years, the Wildlife conservation law of China finally has been amended. In your opinion, how would be the wildlife conservation’s future in China? Is it walking on the right way?

Dr.S: China has made great progress in conservation during recent decades. But it also has ever-increasing challenges such as lack of fresh water and serious pollution, to mention just two. The solutions are known. There is general awareness. Now what is needed is a national will to solve the problems, something that will take proper long-term policies and shifting of priorities, including the nation’s budget. I feel that China is walking in the right direction but now needs to take larger, faster strides to assure every citizen and every species of animal and plant a healthy environment.

SS: How do you evaluate the works of Shanshui Conservation Center during these years?

Dr.S: Shan Shui is a young and small organization which has done a superb job in initiating valuable, focused conservation projects and training graduate students in field research. Its impact is already evident at the national level. I am proud of my association with Shanshui.

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### About Shanshui

#### Board Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Brief Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Lu Zhi</td>
<td>Founder of Conservation Biology at Peking University. Executive Director of the Peking University Research Center for Nature and Society, and founder of Shanshui Conservation Center. Professor Lu is also a member of the Standing Committee of the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST), a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and a member of the world economic forum, the Global Agenda Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Marjorie Yang</td>
<td>Chairperson of the international textiles manufacturing group, the Esquel group. Yang is also a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, and Vice President of the Seoul International Business Advisory Council (SIRAC). Yang is also an independent Non-Executive Director of HSBC and the Swire Group. Yang obtained her Bachelor Degree at MIT, and her Masters at the Harvard Business School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Xu Zhirong</td>
<td>Chief Consultant of the World Academy of Sciences. Xu was also the Dean of Peking University from November 1999 to November 2008. Xu is the current Chairperson of China’s UNESCO Committee, and the Director of the Ethics Committee of CAS. He has been researching on Plant Development Biology, Plant Cell Culture and Genetics, and Plant Biological Engineering for a long time, and has made significant contributions in promoting the development of the field of Plant Biology in China, as well as nature conservation areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Zheng Yisheng</td>
<td>Acting Director. Research fellow and the Vice Director of the Environment and Development Center at the Chinese Academy of Social Science, Institute of Quantitative &amp; Technical Economics. Prof. Zheng is devoted to research in sustainable development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Financial Report

#### Revenue & Expenditure (RMB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>14,917,700</td>
<td>14,923,800</td>
<td>-6,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>14,339,900</td>
<td>14,346,800</td>
<td>-6,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Change in Net Asset Value (RMB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Start of Year</th>
<th>End of Year</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>10,779,200</td>
<td>11,685,800</td>
<td>906,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>11,685,800</td>
<td>14,071,500</td>
<td>2,385,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Our Team

Since December 2013, Shanshui has a total of 29 members, of which 13 are Masters or PhD graduates. Of the 24 long-term external consultants engaged by the organization, 10 are researchers, 6 are research support personnel, and 8 are general support personnel.

This is the third year Shanshui has been awarded the China’s Social Organization Evaluation grade of "A Social Organization" (effective period from January 2013 to January 2018).

We are also proud to announce that with the experiences they have gained at Shanshui, several ex-Shanshui staff have moved on to found their own NGOs. The NGOs are: Yunnan ‘From Our Eyes’ Public Welfare Image Program (registered March 16th 2015) and Gangri Neichog (Registered August 1st 2014).

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![Image](image_url)
We acknowledge the concerted efforts from the following partners
(In alphabetic order)

AIYUD Foundation
ARC'TERYX Outdoors
Ambassade de France en Chine
Beijing Haodian District government
Beijing Shun Shui Partners Cultural Development Co., Ltd
BMW China / CCF-BMW Warm-Heart Fund
Bridgestone (China) Investment Co., Ltd
Cai Jin Media Co., Ltd
Chengdu Ai Ai Marketization Consulting Co., Ltd
Chengdu Institute of Biology, CAS
Chengdu Urban Rivers Research Institute
China Agricultural University
China Green Foundation
China Youth Development Foundation
China Birdwatching Association
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
Chinese Felid Conservation Alliance
Coca Cola Shanghai
Cargill China
Conservation International (CI)
County-level Forestry Administrations in Sichuan, Incl. Liexin, Maxian, Qingchuan, Yingtan, Beichuan, Leibo, Yuesi, Ganxian, Meigu, and Zhaojiu
Critical Ecosystem Partner Fund
Dr. George Schaller
Esquef Yang Yuanlong Education Foundation
FWW-VW/Audi
Ford China
Forest Public Security Bureau in Tianjun County, Qinghai
From Our Eyes Public Welfare Image Program
Gansu Baijiujiang National Nature Reserve Administration
Gansu Provincial Forestry Administration
Global Environment Facility Small Grants Project
Haixen & Partners Law Firm
HSBC China
Huayi Brothers Foundation
Images Biodiversity Expedition (IBE)
Institute of Agricultural Research, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences
L’Oreal China Kiehl’s
Lanzhou University Center for Community and Biodiversity
Legal Affairs Office, Qinghai government
Liangshan Prefecture Green Earth Agricultural and Forestry Development Co., Ltd
MacArthur Foundation
Marong Tongge Eco-tourism Cooperative in Aba County, Sichuan
Meiros/bowwe Shanghai
Mr Shi Yuzhu and Giant Investment Group
Ms. Wu Huimin, Ms. Lu Yinghua and Prof. Xu Jiandao
Ms. Wang Jing and Torread Outdoor Products Co., Ltd
Ms. Weng Ling
Ms. Mayronie Yang
Narada Foundation
National Geographic Air and Water Conservation Fund
National Plateau Wetlands Research Center
National Research Centre for the Studies of the Ethnic Groups of China’s South-Western Borderlands, Yunnan University
New World Group
Novartis
One Foundation
Panthers Corporation
Peking University
Peking University Center for Nature and Society (PUCNS)
Qinghai CPC School
Qinghai Department of Environmental Protection
Qinghai Forestry/Inventory and Planning Institute
Qinghai Normal University
Qinghai Sanjiangyuan Conservation Society
Qinshui Academy of Social Sciences
Qinshui Apiculture Management Station
Qinshui Baicaopo Provincial Nature Reserve Administration
Qinshui Baishuihe National Nature Reserve Administration
Qinshui Dadu River Forestation Bureau
Qinshui Forestry Inventory and Planning Institute
Qinshui Forestry Research Institute
Qinshui Gagong Mountain
Qinshui National Nature Reserve Administration
Qinshui Gesigou National Nature Reserve Administration
Qinshui Giant Panda Conservation Fund
Qinshui Malan Mountain
Qinshui Mamize
Qinshui Provincial Nature Reserve Administration
Qinshui Provincial Forestry Administration
Qinghai Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve Administration
Qinghai, Diqang County Forestry Administration
Research Center for Baiha Mountain Culture, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences
Sanjiangyuan Office, Qinghai Development and Reform Commission
SEE Foundation
Shaanxi Changqing National Nature Reserve Administration
Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences
Sichuan Apiculture Management Station
Sichuan Baicaopo Provincial Nature Reserve Administration
Sichuan Baishuihe National Nature Reserve Administration
Sichuan Dadu River Forestation Bureau
Sichuan Forestry Inventory and Planning Institute
Sichuan Forestry Research Institute
Sichuan Gagong Mountain
Sichuan National Nature Reserve Administration
Sichuan Gesigou National Nature Reserve Administration
Sichuan Giant Panda Conservation Fund
Sichuan Malan Mountain
Sichuan Provincial Nature Reserve Administration
Sichuan Provincial Forestry Administration
It is the brightest
Sunshine looks like gold
Dancing on the dense branches
Shadowing strings of
Matted prints of kisses
It is the clearest
The murmuring stream
Towards the soughing of wind in the pines
Singing the most touching love ballads
It is in the corner
The mushrooms and bamboo shoots who raise their heads
Are giving thanks to the moist given by the rain
It is early in the morning
Willow warblers are twittering sweetly and sprightly
They are calling their friends and pals
To joining the grandest party of flowers
It is the transparent and sparkling raindrop
Tears with laughter
Sealed into a stretch of green paint that was quivering in the heart
Is it the dew of which flower that wet out whose hair?
Is whose sleeve that acquired the smell of asparagus?
Whose eyes were stabbed by the sunlight?
In a trance she closed her eyes
It was the refreshing breeze that came by
Safely flicking away all the briefly
Left in the air
It is only the fragrance of earth
Who gave his youth to the years hidden in the growth rings?
Who delivered his time to the shadow of trees that even sunlight
couldn't touch?

Who secretly best his pain to the smile played on his lips
And regarded his sweat as free gifts?
Under the big trees
In the bush
Near the stoves
They clench their fists
They love their places

Who stole the time?
Making us go further and further in haste
Who blocked our hearts with firewalls?
We waved our hands
Making our smiles stay at the same angle
Things we could carry off
Were buried deep in hearths
The wandering footsteps
So inauth to depart that we turned round again and again
It is in the dream
It is in the heart
It is just here
We showed kindly
"Goodbye!"
Tears understood
It was not "goodbye"
It was actually "see you again!"

Handpainting by Feng Yanqiu

By Cui Xingyi
Grade 11, Beijing Changping New Oriental Foreign Language School
Founded in 2007, SHAN SHUI Conservation Center is a Chinese NGO dedicated to conservation practices. Together with our partners: communities, academics institutions, governments, companies and media, we support local initiatives to defend the land we depend on. We focus our work on the areas of most abundant biodiversity: Sanjiangyuan, Southwestern Mountainous Areas and Lancang-Mekong River Basin.

**Our Vision:** Eco-equality, a sustainable balance between nature and humans, traditional and modern culture, and the bottom-up versus and top-down decisions.

**Our mission:** To fulfill ecological ideals through science and culture, to empower nature guardians through actions.

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**BEIJING OFFICE**

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We are grateful to all the friends for supporting SHAN SHUI in the growth process, and hoping more people to join us and support the guardians of the nature home.

☆ This print uses eco-friendly paper