



Hello Dear Friends,

Betsy and Brock have been in Chengdu for 5 days and 2 hours. We will board a train tonight to begin our adventure into the mountains. Tomorrow morning we will be met by two jeeps and we will stock up, register at the police station and go forth! (Brock Dolman is the Director of the Water Institute at Occidental Arts and Ecology Center and he and Betsy are working together to document the sacred water sites in Tibet. For more info go to our website under Water News, www.KeepersoftheWaters.org).

The past five days in urban Chengdu have seen us in so many meetings, and have organized so much, it seems like we have been here for three weeks. On our first day, our collaborators, Lacuo & Lamu, enthusiastically greeted us. This trip is a collaboration with Lacuo who will be our primary guide in the mountainous area that is her home. With the help of a translator, we planned our trip and studied maps while we were being poured bottomless cups of tea. With major assistance from Betsy's son's company, Blue Sheep Travel, within 48 hours we were fully outfitted and equipped with tents, sleeping bags, pads and warm gear.

In between, Betsy made numerous contacts with several old friends of leading NGO's and government officials. Immediately Brock and Betsy were invited to give a public talk with PowerPoint at the Living Water Garden as part of the World Environment Day being celebrated in Chengdu. We had the privilege of speaking to the indispensable core group of Chinese collaborators that Betsy has known and worked with for 14 years. Over 60 enthusiastic young activists and leaders were also in the audience.

We also went to visit the Model Village, which is about to expand from five households to 100 (each household has between 10 to 15 people). At the moment we arrived we participated in an auspicious meeting between 70 farmers, with Chengdu Urban River Association staff, funders and local government officials. We heard a lengthy presentation about their "Ecological Urine Diverting Dry Toilet".

Brock's one tourist moment was a visit to the world famous 2500-year-old irrigation project called Dujiangyan. Quite the amazing work and we much appreciated the historic bamboo rolled rock gabion structures.

We have found it quite delightful to be traveling with each other, as we are both afflicted with water on the brain. Betsy's Mandarin has been critically important and Brock's abounding enthusiasm for adventure is great! Betsy to witness the mundane marvels of this place through Brock's new eyes is reaffirming and supporting her experience of having planted her heart here for so many years. Betsy found it very heartening that ten years after the completion of the Living Water Garden, many people are beginning to grasp the importance of living systems design and the significant and inextricable relationship between water quality and health.

A very exciting bit of news is that Sichuan Province will be featuring the Living Water Garden at the Shanghai World's Fair.

We will be reporting back after the journey in the mountain in about four weeks. Many blessing and thank you to everyone's trust and generosity!

Love, Betsy and Brock

