

## Collaboration between Pesticides Eco-Alternatives Centre (Yunnan Province) and the Ecocentre de Villarceaux (France)

### *A workshop with multiple results and an analysis of the problems*



It was with great pleasure that I accepted Pr Kuang Rongping's invitation to travel to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan's Province, May 28 to June 3. The aim was to make progress in the organization of the 'biodiversity and agriculture' workshop for the third biennial show of the China - Europe Forum, and also to explore the environment and Yunnan's agriculture. These visits gave us the opportunity to exchange ideas about the new problems with the workshop, which are clearer now, and which should focus on interactions between biodiversity and agriculture: How does the environment condition the agriculture and the other way round?

The team of Pesticide Eco-Alternatives Centre welcomed me with a fantastic reception and took time to show me in, detail, the agriculture around Kunming, the lake Fuxian of Shilin (the famous Forest of Stones) and Dali's former city. So much diversity cannot easily be summarized in words. Here are some of my printings...

In China, 70 % of the active population is employed in agriculture. The size of the agricultural workings is much smaller than in Europe (0,7 to 1,5 ha approximately) and the productivity there is much stronger. Depending on the region, the crops are very diverse:

- Around Kunming, much market gardening and tobacco,
- Around Shilin, planting on terraces as well as zones where the agro forestry is common practice,
- Around Dali, big rice growers but the most developed practice is bovine dairy ranching.



Whatever the geographical area visited what catches your attention is the diversity of the planting, and of the environment, as well as the optimization of the agricultural areas: up to the grass boundaries between the plots it is valued as forage for animals! On returning to France, I consider with a more critical eye where areas of grass and banks are cut and will never be used...

Nevertheless, the erosion of the soil in the mountain areas and the increasing reliance on chemical products raises problems for the environment. These two highly publicised problems in Europe prompt collaborative discussions and analysis with our partners.

The diversity of the minorities in Yunnan's Province also is one of the victories of this region. In Dali, for example, Bai preserves its skills and traditions, visible in the native clothing of its people, the architecture and also in the traditional crafts and products. In connection with this cultural diversity, I certainly remember with fondness, Yunnan's extraordinary and culinary wealth ... a real delight!

Besides the organisation of the 'biodiversity and agriculture' workshop, that is scheduled to take place in

Dali in July 2009, we foresee several joint ventures for next year:

- work on the evaluation of the permanence of the agriculture in Yunnan in connection with Agrocampus of Reindeer,
- a pupils' study trip of the secondary school in the Parisian region related to the nourishing world challenge, to the biodiversity and the appraisal of the minority cultures.

Finally, I wish to extend my warm gratitude to Pr Kuang and the whole team of PEAC that accompanied me during my stay and helped me discover their magnificent region. The Ecocentre de Villarceaux would happily wish to receive them again and put in place everything necessary to develop future exchanges.



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