

# China Trip Report

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At the California Resource Recovery Conference in Los Angeles/05, the environmental advisor to the Governor of California challenged the opening session crowd to make this a day that you will remember, by committing to lead California to zero waste by 2025. The next day at the CRRA member's luncheon a TV personality declared that his appearance at CRRA in Pasadena a few years before caused him to change his show format and title from "California Gold" to "California Green".

The R'05 conference in Beijing this September 25 -29 opened my eyes to a global reality, China. R'05 was an international gathering of scientists called together to discuss recycling, recovery and reintegration. Sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Processing Engineers there were presentations of hard science as well as planning and social issues. There were hundreds of papers by Western and Asian experts looking at scientific solutions and the beginnings of an international discussion.

My paper on Jobs and Sustainability ([www.richardanthonyassociates.com](http://www.richardanthonyassociates.com)) which places all resources in twelve categories was the keynote for the green chemistry section. I described my thinking as a green process. There were good questions. One question came up about burning for energy, (I thought that doing that was a waste of resources); and another on how to get the people to separate discards, (I recommended required source separation).

The Social Scientists in China organized a discussion entitled the "closed circle economy". They appeared to use the "cradle to cradle" analysis that allows you to conclude that the item should not have been made in the first place. There were several mainstream speeches on the "closed circle economy".

Our workshop dealt with the barriers and solutions to international recycling and came up with conclusions. Using a format first tried out in Los Angeles by the California Resource Management Training Institute ([www.crmti.org](http://www.crmti.org)) and replicated through out California, we had professional facilitators and an international audience of resource management experts and students. The result was the same. We need an international University with a library and training programs. It could be on the Internet. The amazing thing about this workshop was the diversity in the community and professional class that participated and the similarity of the complaints and solutions. It was agreed that the zero waste international alliance [www.zwia.org](http://www.zwia.org), could be the link.

The next part of this China Experience was the desire to see more than Beijing and the Great Wall, which itself was terrific. So along with everybody else in China (It was Chinese independence week where one billion people go on

vacation at one time), we booked a trip down the Yangtze River, a five day tour that ended just beyond the new dam. We were just about the only westerners on the boat.

This is the last act of the great Three Gorges area as the dam is filling with water and the river will rise nearly two hundred meters. About one third of China lives near the river and all the low lying cities are being deconstructed and new cities are being built on the higher ground. You realize the work force in China when you see these buildings being deconstructed brick by brick, timber by timber and metal by metal. Most of this is taken to the new construction sites for incorporation in to the new city.

The dam will provide energy for millions of people. The Chinese defend this project as a means to stop the annual deaths caused by the flooding of the river, the ability transport goods and materials to central China via the river and a clean power source in an air challenged coal fired environment.

The trip was a great adventure as was the food in this part of China (hot and spicy). The cities were foggy and with smoke from the growing industry, but most disconcerting to me was the lack of clean water. You could buy drinking water but you were challenged when it came to wash yourself. As for solid resources they are captured as fast as they are generated. We even witnessed villagers in boats skimming through tourist trash in the river for resalable plastic.

The farther we got from Beijing the more curious the people became. Westerners are rare outside Beijing.

I am back now and focusing on our project in the Waveney District of Suffolk County England where we are preparing a feasibility study and conceptual design of a zero waste centre, a reuse park for commercial, c and d and self hauled discards. This project should provide the markets for proper collection and disposal of discards for the area and create new jobs and businesses.

An important element in project will be to create a training program that is both at the University but at the park as well. A real chance to create some of the global training and technical transfer so desperately wanted in the world today as we reach out for zero waste by 2025.

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