

May 2006

Dear Friends in America:

This is the letter I wrote to Tsinghua students who will participate in the Inaugural Summer Service and Learning Program in China. There were over 650 applicants and we accepted only 450 for the 2006 July-August program. I am grateful to their enthusiasm and willingness to serve. I am certain that you would like to know this great news. Do have a great summer!

With my best,

Peter C. C. Wang

Dear friends in Beijing and my dear students at Tsinghua:

Since I'll be back to California tomorrow and won't be able to write to you individually with a proper good bye. So I decide to send you this and sharing with you this story since we are all working together under the Poverty Alleviation through Education Project seeking a better tomorrow for those who had been left behind. Keep in touch we must!

Allow me to start with a question. What kind of Sea are you?

Twenty-five centuries ago, Lao-zhi, a Chinese sage, offered this profound insight;

"The reason why rivers and seas receives the homage of a hundred mountain streams is that they keep below them. Thus they are able to reign over all the mountain streams. So the sage wishing to be above men place himself below them; wishing to be before them, place himself behind them. Thus, though his place be above men, they do not feel his weight; though his place before them, they do not count it as stress and injury."

So it is with humankind. Those who wish to yield the greatest influence will unselfishly position themselves below others, so as to serve them better.

A parable of two seas in Palestine was told by someone expounds on the wisdom of Lao-zhi. One sea is fresh. Fish live in it. Trees and bushes grow near it. Children splash and play in it. The river Jordan flows into this sea with sparkling water from the hills. People build their homes near it. Every kind of life is happier because it is there. The same river Jordan flows south into another sea. Here there are no fish, no green things, no children playing, no homes or buildings. Stale air hangs above its waters, and neither man nor beast will drink of it. What makes the difference between these neighbor seas? Not the Jordan River. It empties the same good water into both. Nor is the soil or the countryside.

The difference is that the Sea of Galilee receives water but does not keep it. For every drop that flows in, another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure. The other sea hoards its income. Every drop it gets it keeps. The Sea of Galilee lives and lives. The other sea gives nothing. It is called the Dead Sea.

There are also two kinds of leaders in this world---those Dead Sea leader who take without giving back, and the givers who remain fresh and vibrant by freely sharing of themselves.

I am confident and certain that all of you are like the Sea of Galilee! My young and smart Tsinghua students by your active participation in this coming Summer Service and Learning Program, I am touched by your action and good deed. Hence sending this to you and wishing you a wonderful day.

With my very best to the future leaders of China.

Peter C. C. Wang