

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 3rd Prize]

Back To Nature

(Original)

Zhou Xiangfei

(Age 19, China)

Zhongnan University of Economics and Law

Thursday May 30, 2030 Fine

Rural mornings never need any alarm clock. When sparrows' chirping mixed with the first ray of sunlight jumps into my room, I lift down the kitten that crept into my bed at night and open the curtains to start a new day.

I have been a college-graduate village official for 8 years since 2022. This small village, located in Hunan province, though closed and undeveloped, was full of attraction and challenges for me, as I thought it needs educated youngsters to make it better. So I gave up the offer from a big company in Beijing and returned to my hometown. Beijing is a modern city with plenty of ambitious dreamers. They try to keep up with its pace without realizing that they are becoming a contributing factor individually. It sounds a bit like a vicious circle. On the contrary, life in the countryside can be leisurely as there is no sense of urgency caused by the elapse of hours and minutes. People work at sunrise and rest at sunset, closely following the steps of nature.

Breakfast matters to a day so I never slack off. Newly picked dewy cabbages and other vegetable from my garden are always my first choice to prepare breakfast for my family. Then with a pair of cloth shoes and a suit of casual clothes I leave for the village office center to begin work. No traffic jams, no crowded subways, only the sounds of greeting with children who are late for class and old people who exercise in the park help awake the sleeping countryside. Every time I walk on the road that I united the villagers together to built 6 years ago, the most proud thing to see is the peach trees on the hills on either side. It is the end of spring when peaches should be picked and packaged to deliver to the outside world. The fruit tree planting project was introduced a few years ago as I found that the climate here matched the trees' growth requirements perfectly. After experimenting

with my villagers, we made it. Now I am in charge of external liaison and sales, which became an important economic source of the village. Villas have replaced those shabby country-houses for families lived here. And all have changed even at a rate that can be seen by the naked eyes over the past eight years. The future here is full of infinite possibilities as nature brings us endless treasures. We built by the mountains, and live by the water, willing to be integrated with them.

The night here is cool, together with gentle moonlight and pleasant chirping. The elderly may leisurely sit under trees in the rocking-chair, resting to attain mental composure; children run around the tree, chasing each other happily though sweating heavily; some women and I sit there, talking a few words of daily life. I look down the path at the end of the village, which not only leads to distance but also to the future. Noisy cities never lack ambitious youth, but the small closed and undeveloped village here needs the young to stay and open the way to the outside. And I am willing to put down roots here all the time, for my villagers, and for my hometown.

Although the moonlight, the stars and the fireflies along the road are enough to light the way home, I will soon put up street lamps for my villagers, as they are more like lamps of hope and prosperity, directing us to the better. Before I go to sleep, I write this diary to record my feelings and what I experienced today, fold it carefully and put it into a bottle which tomorrow I will put into a river that flows to the past, about ten years ago, namely, in 2020. When I myself receive the letter and see what will be like ten years later, I will not regret the decision that I will make two years later. After all, that is the life I desire.

Tomorrow, the beginning of summer, all are to start a new round of busyness, except this small village.