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**Old Land, New Nature: The Journey of the Ideas and Practices of Nature Conservation from the United States to Modern China**

This project is both a comparative study and a study of American-Chinese intellectual communication. It aims to explore the difference between the American and Chinese ideas and practices of “nature conservation,” and how these ideas have been translated, received, practiced, and changed to adapt to the Chinese cultural and natural landscape since the late nineteenth century. “Nature conservation,” in contrast to “resource conservation,” focuses on saving whole places in their natural state—the natural flora and fauna, the beauty of landscapes, and the ecological patterns that exist where humans have made minimal impact. Its central aim is not prudent economic development, but moral, aesthetic, and ecological protection.

The final product of this project will be a book comprising five chapters and an introduction and conclusion. Chapter One will trace the origin and development of nature conservation in the United States. Chapter Two will go back to the traditional Chinese vision of nature and discuss why such a concept as nature conservation did not emerge in a country with such strong appreciation of its nature and beauty throughout its history. Chapter Three will focus on the social and intellectual background for the importation of nature conservation into China since the late nineteenth century. Chapter Four will investigate the history of the establishment of nature reserves in China, with a special focus on two important places, the Dinghu Mountain nature reserve in Guangdong Province and the Yellow River Mouth nature reserve in Shandong province. Chapter Five will discuss the introduction, translation, and acceptance of American nature conservation writers and their works over the last sixty years in China.

During my stay in Munich, I will be working on the fifth chapter. I will try to discover what Chinese intellectuals have seen, found interesting, and missed in reading the works of American nature conservation writers. I will use Thoreau’s *Walden*, Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*, and Carson’s *Silent Spring* as case studies. These three books are the most widely read American nature conservation works in China; each has gone through more than three editions by different publishers and has different translated versions. Chinese reading and understanding of these three books express the uniqueness of Chinese traditional perception of nature. Most of the essays and articles on these works have expressed great sympathy for natural beauty, eco-holism, a land ethics, and other major themes. Yet, however frequently ecology appears in these articles and essays, Chinese writers almost completely neglected the scientific side of American writers. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that along with the social, economic, and environmental transformations within and outside the country, Chinese intellectual reception of the ideas of nature conservation has also experienced some changes.