

# VIFF mini-review: Waking the Green Tiger

---

September 28, 2011. 4:30 pm

B.C. doc-maker Gary Marcuse heads to China, where that country's burgeoning environmental movement is taking halting steps towards reversing Chairman Mao's decades-old exhortation to conquer a nature he saw as the enemy. Modern-day plans to build dams on several Chinese rivers were put on hold after activists teamed up with journalists and filmmakers to fight back. The grass-roots movement is aided by technology — digital copying meant easy distribution for a film that detailed the miseries of one village displaced decades earlier by another dam project. Meanwhile, among China's leaders there was a growing realization that Chairman Mao might have been wrong about nature. Marcuse talks to a retired Communist party official who worked from the inside to change pollution laws, and newly unearthed archival footage includes mind-boggling scenes of the Chinese rural masses being mobilized to exterminate the country's sparrows, using pots and pans to exhaust the birds before poisoning them. Mao thought the sparrows were eating grain crops; it turns out they were eating the insects that ate the crops. The loss of the sparrows caused a nationwide famine.



 Powered by **WordPress.com** VIP

☺