通識新世代

第164期

放眼天下



飲水要思源 用水須節約

區政府昨日向立法會提交與廣東省當局簽訂的東江水供港新協議

爲此,本港明年用於購買東江水的預算撥款,需要由原先的二十四億 九千四百萬追加至二十九億五千九百萬。有關數字二〇一〇年爲三十億四 千六百萬,二〇一一年爲三十三億四千四百萬

從市民大衆角度來說,一聞「加」字,無不色變,特別是當前困難的 經濟環境,如果水費上調一成八,市民生活負擔和中小企、酒樓食肆的水 費、排污費等經營開支勢必百上加斤。不過,好在「財爺」曾俊華今年中 已宣布凍結本港水費至二〇一〇年,因此東江水提價暫不會對民生經濟構

然而,長遠來說,本港的食水供應和市民用水狀況都存在頗大隱憂, 亟需注意和加以改善。

首先,廣東省當局此次的提價,實屬無可厚非。事實擺在眼前,過去 三年,人民幣對港幣匯價實際累積增幅已達百分之十四,加上兩地每年平 均百分之三的通脹,加價幅度定在百分之十八,只能說是「收回成本」或 「減少補貼」而已。

而更重要的一個事實是,由於有了東江水廉價、穩定的源源不絕供應 ,本港實際上存在着極爲嚴重的浪費食水現象,而且,浪費現象廣泛存在 於市民用水、政府「買水」以及供水設施等三個層面,浪費程度是相當驚

首先,在用水方面,一家國際著名水務工程顧問公司本月初一項調查 顯示,本港市民平均每人每日用水量爲二百一十九公升,包括一百二十八 公升食水和九十二公升沖廁海水,用量較同類型城市悉尼、新加坡、馬德 里爲高,究其原因,是因爲水費便宜,香港每立方米水價是零點五三美元 ,較上述城市爲低,水費不能成爲市民節約用水的誘因

該公司顧問並且指出,供水問題正嚴重影響全世界的已發展城市,管 理用水已成爲一個突出問題,香港過度依賴東江水及濫用食水的現象必須 改變

另一方面的浪費,來自老化的地下水管設施。據水務署評估,目前本 港有百分之二十三的水管,包括巨大的東江水輸港水管,已開始出現老化 ,滲漏問題嚴重,去年本港耗用的十億立方米食水當中,估計逾兩成即二



東江水雖然廉價、源源不絕供應,但市民亦應珍惜水資源;圖為東 江水供港工程其中一段

億立方米的水是經由水管裂縫「滲」走了的,數量足夠一百五十萬人全年 使用、七億元公帑也就這樣「滲」走了。

而在供應方面,近年東江水供港量大於實際需求,每年有逾億立方米 值三億元的東江水被「倒落鹹水海」,旣浪費公帑,亦嚴重暴殄珍貴的 水資源。飲水要思源,一些人就此對廣東省方面作出的指責是不公的,東 江水並非「唯港獨用」,廣州及深圳、東莞、惠州、河源、韶關、梅州等 市均亦需使用,故此存在一個「分水」的問題,省當局必須預先作出規劃 ,才能確保供應及長遠發展。對此,特區政府有責對本港總用水量作出更 詳盡、準確的評估,與粵省達成更合理、更具彈性的購水協議

2008/10/23 大公報社評



Economising water consumption

The SAR Government vesterday submitted to the Legislative Council (Legco) the new agreement signed with the Guangdong Provincial Government on supply of Dongjiang water. In the next three years, the annual supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong will be 1.1 billion cubic metres, with a price rise of 18%.

Because of this, next year Hong Kong will have to increase its budget for buying Dongjiang water to \$2.959 billion from the original \$2.494 billion. And the budget will be \$3.046 billion for 2010, and \$3.344 billion for 2011.

Nowadays, Hong Kong citizens in general are unnerved by any talk about "price rise". In particular, the current economic environment is so tough that an 18% rise of water charges will further increase the burden on people's lives and operation costs for small and medium-sized enterprises and restaurants such as water tariffs and sewage charges. Fortunately, Financial Secretary John Tsang Chun-wah already announced in the middle of this year to freeze water tariffs and sewage charges until 2010. Therefore, for the time being, Dongjiang water price hikes will not affect people's lives and the economy.

Nevertheless, from a long-run perspective, there are hidden problems with Hong Kong's fresh water supply and citizens' water-consumption habits. The problems must be addressed and improvement be made.

In the first place, it is not altogether inexcusable for Guangdong authorities to raise the water price this time. The truth of the matter is that in its accumulated revaluation, renminbi (RMB) or the yuan has gained some 14% against the Hong Kong dollar. In addition, inflation in both places has risen 3% on average annually. So the 18% increase in Dongjiang water price is just (for Guangdong) to recover cost or to reduce "subsidy".

An even more important fact is that, with the stable, uninterrupted supply of low-price Dongjiang water, waste of fresh water in fact now runs rampant in Hong Kong. And waste of fresh water runs rampant in citizens' water consumption, government's procurement of water and water supply facilities.

With regard to citizens' water consumption, a survey released early this month by an internationally-renowned water supply engineering consultant firm shows that per capita use of water in Hong Kong is 219 litres, including 128 litres of fresh water and 92 litres of seawater for toilet flushing, which is more than in other cities such as Sydney, Singapore and Madrid. The major reason is because in Hong Kong water charges are just US\$0.53 per cubic metre, much cheaper than in these cities. With such low charges, there is little incentive for citizens to save water.

The consultant firm also points out that the water supply poses a serious

threat to developed cities in the world, and water management becomes an acute problem. Thus Hong Kong must reduce its reliance on Dongjiang water and change its habits of wasting fresh water.

Another way of wasting water is due to the aging underground water supply facilities. According to the Water Supplies Department, 23% of water pipes including the big-calibre Dongjiang water supply pipes already begin to age, resulting in serious leakage. Of the one billion cubic metres of fresh water Hong Kong consumed last year, some 20% or 200 million cubic metres leaked away from cracks of the pipes. The amount is enough for one year's consumption of 1.5 million people. And in this way, some \$700 million of public money "leaked away".

With regard to supplies, the supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong in recent years has been more than the actual need. Each year, over 100 million cubic metres of Dongjiang water, worth \$300 million, have been "poured" into the sea. This is not only a waste of public funds but also a reckless waste of valuable water resources. "He who drinks water must not forget where it comes from." It is thus unfair for some people to accuse Guangdong for the waste. Dongjiang water is not exclusively reserved for Hong Kong. Cities like Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Huizhou, Heyuan, Shaoguan and Meizhou all need it. Therefore there is a problem of "water distribution". Guangdong authorities must make planning in advance so as to ensure supplies and long-term development. On this, the SAR Government has the responsibility to make more detailed and accurate estimates of the amount of water Hong Kong actually needs, so as to strike a more reasonable and more flexible water purchase agreement with Guangdong.

23 October 2008

Idiom:

With/in regard to sth/sb - Concerning something/somebody.

1) The company's policy in regard to overtime is made clear in your

- employment contract.
- 2) I am writing to you with regard to your letter date 1 October. 3) What shall we do in regard to planning the dinner?
- 4) With regard to Tom, I think he is working too hard.
- 5) The government issued a statement with regard to the incident.

港年耗24億購東江水

香港現時主要有兩大水源,除了降雨外,主要是由廣東省供應東江水。東 江水解決了香港食水不足的問題,1960年11月,港英政府與廣東省寶安縣達成 協議,香港每年向廣東購買2300萬立方米的水,每年供應增加1000萬立方米 的水以應付人口增長的需要。

中國在1960年代發生「文化大革命」,與英國關係變差。港英政府不敢過 於依賴中國東江水,所以曾考慮以海水化淡的方法來取得淡水。香港第一座海 水化淡廠「樂安排海水化淡廠」,於1975年建成。但後來因爲運行成本過高及 來自東江的供水日趨穩定,海水化淡廠在1982年關閉及停用,並在1992年以 爆破方式拆卸。

現時,估計本港每年的食水消耗量達11億立方米,在每年的香港政府財政 預算案中預留24億元作購買東江水之用,佔香港1.3萬億元本地生產總值的 0.15%,確保香港經濟不因缺乏食水而停滯不前。

由於香港人口增長較預期少,近年東江供水有過量的趨勢。基於合約規定 ,現時香港每年必須購買最少約8億立方米東江水,耗香港政府公帑逾24億元 。但因爲香港水塘因此而變得水頭充足,竟出現水塘滿溢的情況,在1998年至 2003年期間已把約值30億港元的東江水排入大海,引發傳媒大幅報道,稱此舉 爲「倒錢下海」。



宋代婦女不用守節

十月四日,香港電台一個節目, 主持人認爲中國婦女地位,自宋代開 始低落,要講貞節,證據是程頤一句 話:「餓死事小,失節事大」。我認 爲,這是冤枉了宋代婦女,且看我列 舉一些重要事例。

宰相薛居正的兒子薛惟吉死了, 其妻柴氏揚言改嫁,即有兩個名士爭 着要娶她爲妻,結果張齊賢勝利,向 敏中失敗;但張、向二人先後做了宰 相。由此可見, 夫死再嫁, 對柴氏和 他的男朋友之名譽絲毫無損

范仲淹幼年喪父,其母帶着他改 嫁,這對母子的名譽也絲毫無損,後 來,范仲淹做到副相,其子范純仁更 做了宰相,足以證明。

程頣反對婦女再婚,是在王安石 變法時期。王安石不主張婦女守節,

兒子王雱患了精神病,覺得兒媳龐氏 可憐,安排她改嫁給一戶好人家,讓 她得到婚姻幸福。程頣就在此時向門 人說了「餓死事極小,失節事極大」 的話,但只是掛在嘴邊,不曾寫成文 章,外間知之者少;直到程頣死後百 年,才由他的第四傳弟子朱熹加以公 開,但對當時也影響不大。

由北宋到南宋,婦女離婚改嫁或 夫死再嫁是普遍的,也不受社會歧視 。只要認真研究宋史,自然明白。

自宋以後,隔了一個元代,到朱 元璋建立明朝,才規定寡婦三十歲以 前不得改嫁,五十歲以後不改嫁就 「旌表門閭, 免除本家差役」, 用威 迫利誘手段令寡婦守節,貞節之風才

容若





把句子化繁為簡

很多學生都怕複雜的英文句子, 所以課堂上其中一個遊戲是叫學生化 繁爲簡,找出長句中最重要或者最基 本的部分。在10月22日英國廣播公 司 (BBC) 的報道 "Fears drags down European markets"裡,有一句適合用 作上述遊戲的句子:"In the short term, the comments made by Mervyn King highlighting the fact that the economic environment has deteriorated quite rapidly over the past year have sent a shudder through the foreign exchange and equity markets," said Henk Potts, an equity strategist at Barclavs Wealth.

一個叫 Henk Potts 的人說了一句 話,這句話裡面引述了另一個叫 Mervyn King 的人的 comments, 而 Mervyn King的comments引致了一個 結果: the comments made by Mervyn King have sent a shudder through the

這篇報道的作者很細心,在 markets 前加了 "foreign exchange and equity",說明是金融市場,不是 supermarket 或其他市場

什麼評語會引致金融市場shudder ? 因評語"highlighting the fact",也就

是重點提到一個事實,就是"the economic environment has deteriorated" ,原來是經濟情況差了,不僅是差了 ,而且是急劇轉壞, "has deteriorated quite rapidly"

是一星期前開始轉壞還是一個月 前開始轉壞?原來是一年前開始, "over the past year"

句子開始是"In the short term", 也是有關時間的資料,這是 in the long term的相反

可以說,句子裡有密密麻麻的信 息,一口氣說了很多內容。這樣的敘 事方法有好處也有壞處,好處是精簡 、節省字數,壞處是對這問題沒有認 識或以英語爲第二語言的人可能有難 以消化的感覺。

但不少英美人士會說這樣的句式 很 friendly, 例如說話的人是誰: Henk Potts,後面就有解釋,不但指 出他的專長,還指出他在哪裡工作, "an equity strategist at Barclays Wealth" 。 爲什麼不提另一個人 Mervyn King 的身份呢?因爲說話的人 Henk Potts 認為人人都知道 Mervyn King 是誰。 他到底是誰?請查一查!

(金融危機裡的英語・中)



堅持開放 前路寬廣

中國推行改革開放30年,從農地 改革到對外開放,從加入世界貿易組 織到經濟開放理念;無不是爲了讓企 業的營商條件與國際接軌,讓國家的 商業環境跟歐美各國經濟體系一脈相 承,爲未來國家在全球的經濟影響力

近年,國家制定不少規條及訂立 法案,務求讓內地企業以及外資企業 漸趨平等,不存在優惠,令國家商業 活動具成熟條件,成爲新經濟底下兼 具國際經濟體系的典範

經濟發展,除了有規劃的大方向 外,總離不開人才、技術和資本。國 家在改革開放的人才培訓表現上獲得 肯定,無論是中央、省政府的管治能 力或企業的專業領域範疇,皆有長足

進步,否則歐美龐大外資也不輕言踏 足中國市場。至於技術則得靠與海外 先進科技合作研發

30年前,中國的進出口總額爲 200餘億美元,利用外資幾是零;30 年後,進出口總額升至21,700億美元 ,增長百倍,而外資直接投資是7600

國家生產總值在30年間以平均 9.8%的幅度增長,速度冠絕全球。去 年國家生產總值爲32,801億美元,外 匯儲備達15,282億美元,居世界第一 位,資金不成問題

中國經濟未來將踏進優化結構階 段,只要堅持開放改革便成。

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