

Water release from Dujiangyan Irrigation System for spring ploughing season

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China's Dujiangyan Water-Releasing Festival kicks off in Chengdu, the capital of Southwest Sichuan province, to commemorate the founders of the Dujiangyan Irrigation System.

The irrigation system waters 755,000 hectares of farmlands in 40 counties within the West Sichuan Plain and fulfils the water needs of tens of millions of people for living, farming and ecological and environmental protection purposes.

The Dujiangyan Irrigation System was built on the upper reaches of the Minjiang River 2,279 years ago by Li Bing, the Sichuan governor and is still in use today. It has prevented the Chengdu Plain from floods and droughts since its completion.

Since ancient times, workers have used rafts to block the course of the Minjiang River each winter to maintain the riverbeds and reinforce the dikes during the dry season. In the spring, they would tear the rafts away to release water and irrigate the farmlands in the plain.

It gradually became a tradition to hold a water-releasing ceremony for the irrigation system on Qingming Festival, which marks the beginning of a busy spring ploughing season. This tradition has evolved into a grand event – the Dujiangyan Water-Releasing Festival.

More than 1,000 guests from all over the world attended the event, wearing traditional hanfu. They include the ambassadors of Ecuador, Thailand and Malta, the minister of the Ethiopian Embassy in China, as well as more than 30 consul generals and consular officials from 17 countries such as Poland, Chile and Spain.

A grand ceremony was held for the Dujiangyan Irrigation System in Chengdu, during Qingming Festival.

The Dujiangyan Water-Releasing Festival is one of the most solemn and grand folk culture activities in western Sichuan and was listed in the first batch of National Intangible Heritages. The Dujiangyan Irrigation System, together with the nearby Qingcheng Mountain, was listed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site.