

During man's brief existence on this Earth, the beauty of the natural environment has inspired, and continues to inspire, creative people across all walks of life – writers, artists, philosophers, musicians.

Businessmen and politicians too. Well, some. Here's the Romantic English poet, Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

And Beethoven. "How happy I am to wander among bushes and herbs, under trees and over rocks. Nature is a glorious school for the heart."

Here's Lao Tzu in the Taoist bible "Dao De Jing": "Great indeed is the sublimity of nature, to which we owe our beginnings," and "When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty, there arises the recognition of ugliness."

And here's Mao Ze Dong: "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom."

Seriously, here's my point: Why is the EPD planning to build a gigantic incinerator in South Lantau, one of the few remaining beauty spots of Hong Kong, an area earmarked by the government, and I quote, "for natural conservation and sustainable recreational uses?" How many of you have walked along Chang Sha Beach, the longest stretch of white

sand in Hong Kong; our best (according to the Hong Kong Tourism Board website)? I do not ask this as a rhetorical question. Hands up! Because if you have, I bet you won't be voting for a monstrous incinerator that will tower so high that the enjoyment of all outdoor activities for miles around - hiking, swimming, boating, biking, barbecuing, romancing - will be forever ruined.

The Economist Intelligence Unit has recently declared Hong Kong as the most liveable city in the world. Why? Quote: "Hong Kong is a very compact city but the government has managed to create a dense network of green spaces." I wonder what the Economist Intelligence Unit would think of EPD's plans for Shek Kwu Chau.

Ladies and gentlemen, I personally acknowledge the urgent need for incineration in this wasteful, overpopulated corner of China. But I ask you to reconsider the location. Here's a definition of beauty – "the perceptual experience of pleasure or satisfaction." Here's another: "a feeling of balance and harmony with nature, which leads to a sense of emotional well-being." As Hong Kong continues to get gobbled up by

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her motherland in every sense of the verb, how about we set an example to the PRC about protection of the natural environment? Check out the tourist guides on the most beautiful beaches in China. You can list them on one hand: Sanya, Qingdao, Xiamen, Beihai. I've been to them all and if you haven't, I can tell you now, they're dirty and they stink.

Shek Kwu Chau. It's a beautiful island overlooking probably the finest beach in the whole of China, surrounded by glorious mountains, fringed by the South China Sea. Preserve its ecology. Protect our natural environment, its extraordinary beauty. For your own future creativity, health and sense of well-being.