

*Professor Dr-Ing. Holger Magel**

Summary
of the Sino-German Symposium
Land Consolidation and Rural Development
18 – 20 May 2009
in Qingdao and Qingzhou

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to draw up a résumé of this conference which scientifically has been of the greatest value and organisationally absolutely splendid.

But first of all I should like once more to emphasise that this conference, arranged and carried through by four organising bodies, represents in my China experience of over 20 years the peak of a well based expert cooperation which has at the same time always been characterised by openness and trust.

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Against this background I stand before you as the happy Senior Advisor of the MLR and at the same time as the expert advisor for land development of the Hanns Seidel Foundation. And I am confident that all four organising bodies are equally happy and satisfied with the last three days, which have created extraordinary expert stimuli, and indeed a break through to a new phase in work for rural areas, particularly in China.

It is now a matter of implementing in daily practice the perceptions which have been won here. It is very much to be welcomed that Mr Lu Xinshe, the responsible Vice-Minister and a recognised expert for Geodesy and Land Management, came to the conference and gave crucial political direction. It is equally to be welcomed that Mr Wu Haiyang, the new Chief of the Centre of Land Consolidation and Land Rehabilitation in Peking, was present throughout the entire conference, including the village visit, and took an active part in the presentations and discussions.

What then were the main points of the conference from the perspective of those Germans who have some “Chinese” experience, whether here, or in Germany at the TU Munich in contacts with Chinese master degree students, doctoral candidates and numerous high ranking delegations from all parts of China? There are **seven** aspects:

1. China now seeks integrated concepts and solutions developed with the broad participation of citizens and has left behind it one dimensional sector perspectives and approaches. Integrated means first of all spatially, because we are concerned with land consolidation **and** village renewal. But integrated also means that it is a matter of the integration and interdisciplinary cross-linking of all relevant disciplines

and authorities which are necessary for an integrated, or, in other words, for an overall concept. Finally, integrated also means that, in order to achieve the aim of creating conditions of living as equal as possible or, expressed more modestly, to improve the quality of life in the countryside, it is necessary to undertake a balancing and weighing up of all aspects and expectations. Only in this way can and will concepts and planning be developed that are capable of meeting future challenges.

2. Closely connected with No. 1 is the question which is partly political, partly technical but always closely associated with social expectations: in what direction and how should villages and landscapes develop? Connected with this is the need to draw up models and functions for settlements and landscapes. In this field an intensified discussion between Germany and China e.g. in the universities would make sense. There are clearly divergent views about the future and the role of Chinese villages in comparison with German views and strategies on village renewal. On the other hand the example of Nan Zhang Lou shows that the threatened migration of the younger population can be resisted by forward looking structural changes and by the transformation from a purely “farming village” to a village which also has other occupations. The so-called “concentration” of villages by the demolition of houses and procurement of new land requires for the German experts further discussion and understanding of additional information.
3. This information must also cover the difficult **balancing act** which our Chinese partners have to perform between the **highly political national**

aim of procuring new land for agriculture on the hand **and** on the other hand the striving for intensified **environmental and nature protection** in both the national and global interest. This balancing act is rendered more difficult by the need for residential building and infrastructure measures which swallow up an enormous amount of land. Here also an intensified discussion at the academic level and comparison with European “land compensation” provisions would seem to be very profitable.

4. Even when it must seem absurd, or at least of low priority, for land development colleagues in China in view of the gigantic backlog requirement, it must nevertheless be said, in the light of painful professional experience, that **prevention is better** (and above all cheaper) **than cure**. There is a risk that an ever better situated and demanding urban population (and with it the media and politics) will in a few years point to landscaping “sins”, e.g. to cleaned up agricultural land without a tree or bush and complain about the new picture presented by the landscape, as was the case in Europe in the 70s and 80s. China must avoid this as far as possible. That is why landscape planning must be an obligatory part of every land consolidation, as is practised in an exemplary manner in Bake, Zitong Community / Chongqing Province.
5. The overriding statements and functional stipulations of the **Regional Land Use Plan and of the so-called “Regional” Development Plans** are of decisive importance for village and landscape concepts as a basis for land consolidation and village renewal both in China and Germany. The land consolidation authorities must therefore concern themselves

from the beginning with this overriding planning level (and particularly so now that village renewal belongs to their new field of competence!). They must do this (more) fundamentally and they must also obtain these overriding planning and function statements for their work, where they do not already have them. The further development of Nan Zhang Lou as a “small centre” for regional development from originally 20 then to 40 villages shows on the one hand the high dynamic in rural areas and on the other hand the need for overriding spatial and regional development concepts.

6. In order to achieve all this, **new thinking and a fundamental change of approach** are necessary! New thinking and open mindedness for what is new must be encouraged for engineers, mayors and planners in local authorities, in administration and in private practice. New thinking and relevant careful information must be provided and promoted centrally for citizens and farmers. Model projects such as Nan Zhang Lou are just as suitable for this as excursions to Bavaria or to other provinces. It is a fact, that without the **promotion of broad information and opportunities for dialogue, interactive citizen participation will not work**. We come therefore to the important

7. Perception: “It’s all about Education and Training”. Without education and training of engineers and mayors at universities, at the BFL in Qingzhou or in the provinces, without training for village population and farmers in modern agriculture, and indeed in new occupations, without common learning processes in citizen participation and interdisciplinary planning, integrated land development will in the end

remain only a dream. The MLR should like its sister administration in Bavaria lay the **greatest importance on training and education**.

I should like finally as co-organiser to thank above all the MLR and here particularly Frau Xu Xuelin for the splendid organisation of the conference. The idea for the symposium was borne in joint discussions during my visit in Peking last September. Now that Frau Xu Xuelin is assuming new responsibilities and is leaving the Centre for Land Consolidation, I should like to thank her for a long, trustful and highly successful cooperation. She has indeed served the rural areas of China and their peoples well!

I also express my deep felt thanks to the Hanns Seidel Foundation, and here above all Herr Numberger, who for some years with his tenacity and innovativeness has become a highly respected contact person and partner for Chinese and German colleagues in land development. He also has served China well, and China has already properly thanked him.

I hope, that this, the fifth Sino-German conference on land development will have a successor in the near future.