

Biodynamic Agriculture in China

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A brief review of the Biodynamic agriculture history in China

Year	BD Event	Resource People	BD Literature
1990	<p>Mr. Erik Sohl, a businessman from Sweden started a project cultivating biodynamic cotton in Xiaoshan. Mr. Peter Proctor from New Zealand was invited to give BD-training. However, the project didn't work out as the time was not ready yet.</p> 	Mr. Peter Proctor	
1996	<p>Sichuan Alkena Textile Co. Ltd in Chengdu was founded, www.alkena.com.cn a joint venture company would like to supply upscale customers with organic silk in developed countries. Demeter Advisor, Dr. Julius Obermaier from Germany, and Stephan Andrae from Spain were invited to do the consultancy work there. Since 1998, Sichuan Alkena successfully developed SABA, Zitong, Shitou and Zishui biodynamic projects.</p> 	Dr. Julius Obermaier and Mr. Stephan Andrae	A book on Biodynamic agriculture by Willy Schilthuis and a booklet, The Biodynamic Spray and Compost Preparations Production Methods has been translated into Chinese for their own use.
2002-			Biodynamic agriculture was introduced by several Chinese people in their books on organic agriculture, Waldorf education or health living since 2002.
2003	Mr. Tadeu Caldas was invited by the Chinese Organics Industry Association for a BD course and Demeter certification inspectors related course in Beijing.	Mr. Tadeu Caldas	A brief history of BD, Demeter, quality test and research on the BD preparations (offered by the Demeter Association in Germany) was translated and published as a journal of the COIA.

<p>2005-2007</p>	<p>Firstly supported by Mr. Erik Sohl, Mr. C. Jayakaran (Jakes) from India came to China to give two BD instruction courses in May 2005, one at Chengdu Waldorf School, and another in Beijing. From then on to 2007, with invitation from the Hong Kong Greenfield Foundation, Mr.C. Jayakaran had conducted 12 BD training programs of in different parts of China.</p>	<p>Mr. C. Jayakaran</p>	<p>A Basic Course Study Material on Biodynamic Agriculture, which it's used in the training in India, was translated into Chinese for the future BD training in China with support from a NGO, Partnership for Community Development.</p>	
<p>2006</p>	<p>Tian Zhen Garden near Beijing, a center founded by a Tai Chi master with its main aim to educate people about Tai Chi and tradition Chinese culture, started doing Biodynamic. www.tianzhenyuan.com</p>	<p>Mr. C. Jayakaran</p>		
<p>2007</p>	<p>Phoenix Hills Commune farm in Beijing which own by a lady who owns several Chinese tea houses and health care centers using tradition Chinese medicine treatments started doing Biodynamic, and the farm was accepted by Demeter International as Biodynamic farm in conversion in April 2010. www.phoenixcommune.com</p>	<p>Mr. C. Jayakaran</p>		
<p>2007</p>	<p>In October, a one week training programme on Biodynamic farming was given at Tian Zhen Garden by Mr. C. Jayakaran and Mr. Jaison J. Jerome from India.</p>		<p>Mr. C. Jayakaran and Mr. Jaison J. Jerome</p>	<p>A film with Chinese subtitle was produced out of the course. http://biodynamic-farming.tv/</p>
<p>2008</p>	<p>Mr. Hans Mulder from New Zealand gave a workshop on Biodynamic agriculture in Guangzhou organized by the Waldorf initiatives there.</p>		<p>Mr. Hans Mulder</p>	

2008	 	As the Biodynamic wine is incredibly popular throughout the world, many news articles about Biodynamic wine and Biodynamic agriculture have appeared in newspapers and magazines in China.
2009		A biodynamic documentary, One Man, One Cow, One Planet, featuring Mr. Peter Proctor's work in India was shown on CCTV-10. CCTV-10 is the science and education focused channel of the China Central Television Network.
2009	<p>Huayu Consortium, a highway investment company, would love to build a world-class ecological base for health care in Bama County, Guangxi Province started doing Biodynamic. Mr.C. Jayakaran was employed by the company for advisory work, and he is visiting China more often now. www.shenzhenhuayu.com</p> 	Mr.C. Jayakaran
2010	<p>After Mr. Thomas Lüthi's two visit to China in 2009, Thomas Lüthi and some other people from the BD circle were invited to talk about Biodynamic agriculture at the 3rd International LOHAS forum of China. www.chinalohas.org</p>  	Some information about Demeter certification in Chinese was available at the website of Demeter-International. www.demeter.net

The time has come for Biodynamic agriculture to expand in China

Organic development in China was mostly export oriented. As many food scares happened in recent years, and the living standard has improved, and consequently the consciousness of health and environmental protection among the Chinese have also increased, the organic domestic market is growing.

Biodynamic agriculture in China is not well-known. However, as the Waldorf and LOHAS movement grow in China, the idea of Biodynamic agriculture is spreading. People who are demanding higher quality food and searching for deeper meaning for agriculture come to Biodynamic agriculture. It seems the time has come for Biodynamic agriculture to expand in China.

Waldorf education is booming in China



The first Waldorf School in China is founded in Chengdu in 2004. Since then, Waldorf education has grown incredibly fast during the last 6 years in China. There are more than 25 Waldorf kindergarten initiatives in cities all over the country. Another two Waldorf schools have developed two years ago, one in Guangzhou and one in Beijing. Many parents and teachers are not happy with the public education system, those who find Waldorf embrace it with a devotion and a hunger to learn more. Chengdu Waldorf School is acting as a center for teacher training. When other initiatives grow, they act as a center in their area as well, there is tremendous energy. Many experienced Waldorf teachers from abroad were invited for teacher training and mentoring.



Nutrition, organic food, Biodynamic agriculture were always introduced as well as other subjects in the trainings or workshops. The Waldorf teachers and parents are buying organic food as much as they could for their families. CSA farms and organic food-coop are the main suppliers. The gardens at Waldorf schools or kindergartens are acting as a place promoting organic, Biodynamic agriculture and a way of healthy living. Some workshops on Biodynamic agriculture were organized, Waldorf initiatives are doing a very good job spreading the idea of Biodynamic agriculture. Once there are Biodynamic products available, they are the people would buy them and support the farm. Some people within the Waldorf circle in Chengdu and Beijing had got some lands to start Biodynamic farms, and school community farms might be developed.

The Popularization of LOHAS in China

LOHAS, Lifestyles Of Health And Sustainability is rapidly growing in popularity all over the world. LOHAS is translated into "乐活" in Chinese, which means "happy life". Since its first introduction to China in 2005, LOHAS as a new life-style trend has enjoyed fast growth within the country among the upscale and well-educated population. Sharing a similar philosophy with Chinese culture, particularly the concepts of healthy life, emotional well-being, sustainability and eco-friendliness, LOHAS has been applied by Chinese people in various areas including daily life, investment preferences, production and consumption.

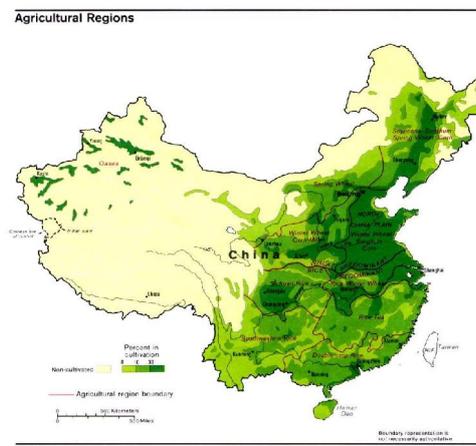
International LOHAS Forum in China is held annually since 2008, where LOHAS business owners and industry leaders from around the world meet to discuss industry trends, share ideas and learn how to run a successful LOHAS business. As some individuals and businesses in the LOHAS circle are keen to develop Biodynamic agriculture as the best organic standard in China, people like Thomas Lüthi, Chairman of Demeter International, and other people from the Biodynamic circle were invited

to talk about Biodynamic agriculture at the LOHAS Forum. That has aroused many people's interest in Biodynamic agriculture. Now LOHAS companies that practice "responsible capitalism" has become a strong force driving the development of Biodynamic agriculture in China, they are doing a very good work.

The general agriculture situation in China

China with 7% of the world's arable land is feeding 1.3 billion people, 21% of the world's population. There is much less meat and dairy produce in Chinese traditional diet, but unfortunately this is changing. China is a country on the move. A little over a decade ago China was home to 800 million farmers. They made up about 65 percent of the population. Now about 38 percent of China's labor force is in agriculture. Chinese farmer are hard working, and every piece of arable land are well looked after and cultivated.

The use of chemicals was encouraged by Chinese government since 1970s, as a mean to squeeze the highest yields from limited farm land. Vast quantities of chemical pesticides and fertilizers are used every year, and the genetically engineered crop industry is expanding its influence in China.



In recent years, intensive chemical farming has caused many problems. It is making our drinking water toxic, and killing wildlife, plants, and even livestock and people. More and more people come to realize that intensive chemical farming is not the future. Ecological agriculture which does not harm the environment, produces clean, healthful food is encouraged by the government and by various of environment protection NGOs.

Chinese organic production was promoted by global trade since 1990. Now China has become the second largest in the world with more than 2 million hectares arable organic land in total, but the average organic food consumption in China accounts for 0.1% of the conventional food. The domestic market in China was developed late in 2000. Now more and more supermarkets are offering organic products, and more organic food stores have been opened in the big cities. But trust and price are the two major challenges that stand in the way for organic growth in China. The organic products are not well trusted in China and the price can be 2-5 times higher than comparable product. More work on organic regulations, research and education is urgently needed.

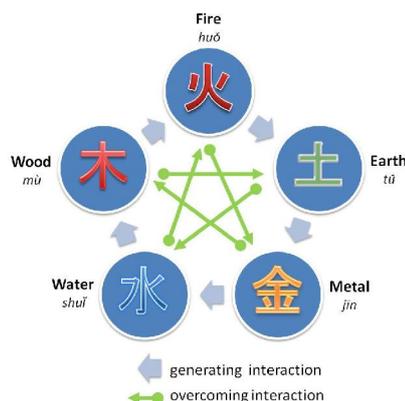
A small but growing number of people are starting or joining organic farms that abide by the community supported agriculture (CSA) model. Many small CSA farms would not necessary pay to get an official organic certificate, as the cost is lower, and consumers and farmers are building good relationships support and help each other. CSA will have a bright future in China.



A CSA farm in Beijing, some volunteers are getting the vegetable boxes ready for delivery.

Biodynamic agriculture fits well into the traditional Chinese philosophy

The ancient Chinese believe that heaven and earth coexist with me, and the myriad things in the universe and I are an integrated unity, and it's wise to correlate human activities to the movements of the sun, moon, planet and stars. Influence from the cosmos were recorded in many ancient Chinese books.



The Chinese calendar is lunisolar, it is based on exact astronomical observations of the sun's longitude and the moon's phases. Special theories of the working of Eight Trigrams were added to the calendar, Each day of the calendar is allotted one of the five elements. The Chinese calendar is widely used to identify traditional holidays, festivals, and to determine auspicious days for important events, like weddings, opening of a building. The Biodynamic planting calendar makes lots of sense for Chinese people, people can comprehend and embrace the calendar very easily.

Vitality, life ether, force or energy are familiar for the Chinese as well, we call it Chi. The Yin and Yang, inner and outer, the physical and non-physical realms, much traditional knowledge about living beings and the world could be found in many ancient Chinese literature.



In Chinese traditional medicine, many plants, animal parts and minerals in which different forces are embedded, are used for medicines, for variety of disorders and to improve the immune system function and virility. It's very interesting that the processing of some Chinese traditional medicine could be as strange as making the Biodynamic preparations. Chinese traditional medicine is in some degree sharing the same problem with Biodynamic agriculture, as it's hard to explain how it works by conventional science.

Chinese people are very practical, as long as people see the benefits of the medicine for the earth, Biodynamic preparations, and people would definitely go for it.

Some ideas for Biodynamic agriculture to develop further in China

1. The best advertisement for a Biodynamic farm is the farm itself working actively and creatively to build a wider social outreach network, building the farm as a beautiful, interesting healing place to meet the social needs of China nowadays, whilst also producing higher quality Biodynamic food. Such as working with schools, craft-makers, artist, and health care therapist etc. The more people who come to the farm, the more support the farm would get for its growth.
2. It would be nice that the current Biodynamic farms in China could work as successful demonstration farms, more support for them is needed as well. Cooperation between Biodynamic farms is needed, maybe a meeting for Biodynamic farmers in China should be held.
3. More literature on Biodynamic agriculture in Chinese should be available soonest. Visits to Biodynamic farms in other countries, to experience the worldwide Biodynamic movement for more Chinese would be very meaningful.
4. It would be nice to get some agricultural universities or research institutes in China to do the research on the benefits of the Biodynamic methods. Some positive outcome would be very helpful for the Biodynamic promotion work in China in the future.
5. As there are more interests in Biodynamics, farm based Biodynamic training would be very good for people who would like to put Biodynamics into practice. It would be nice if an apprentice training program could be developed as well, in cooperation with Biodynamic farms abroad, so that the apprentices could spend some time in a Biodynamic farm in China and some time in a Biodynamic farm abroad.

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