

## The 2011 Right Livelihood Awards

Speech by

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5 December 2011

### **Who am I?**

A warm thank you to everyone for your great kindness. The Right Livelihood Award, with its focus on environmental issues and sustainable development, represents the global green trends of the future. I feel deeply honoured to be invited here, and to receive the award together with GRAIN, Mrs Gaskin and Ms Moudeina.

Just last month the seven billionth citizen of the world was born. Thirtythree years ago, my teacher at China University of Petroleum, Professor Chen Ruheng, told us that “China's oil reserves will only last for fifty years of extraction.” At that time I was thinking that in fifty years I would be retired. But later on, when I had my baby daughter, I realized that in a couple of decades when the oil runs out I will leave this world, but my daughter will have to face a world of cold homes and a polluted environment. Will she then one day point at my gravestone and say “It is all because you used up all the oil”? I was afraid the next generation would put the blame on us, and that is why in 1995 I turned to engaging in the solar energy business, and established the Himin Solar Energy company. Ever since then our vision and effort has been to bring about a world with blue skies and white clouds for our children and grandchildren, through the global transition to renewable energy.

When I first started my business, not many people in China knew about solar water heaters. In 1996, we launched the “Popular Science Magazine on Solar Energy”, which has today been distributed in about 300 million copies. In 1997, we initiated several activities to make solar energy widely known in China, like the information campaigns for a “popular scientific approach to solar energy”, “service on solar energy equipment”, “environmental protection in hundred cities” and so on. We drove around the large and middle sized cities of China with a banner saying “For the blue skies and white clouds of our children and grandchildren – even if you don't use the products of Himin – you should use solar energy.”

Through the efforts of my partners and myself, the Himin Solar Energy Corporation has, during a ten year period, turned more than 200 million Chinese into solar energy consumers, 40 % of them in rural areas. In total, we have distributed 20 million square meters of solar energy collectors, the total amount of saved energy being equivalent to more than 46 million tons of coal, which corresponds to the

amount of coal being produced in ten medium sized Chinese coal mines in one year, and it has reduced the pollution emissions with more than 40 million tons.

China has already become the largest global producer and user of solar energy water heating. Solar energy photo-thermal utilization is also the only renewable energy industry in China with independent intellectual property rights. In 2010, the production of solar energy water heaters in China was 49 million square meters, which constituted about 80% of the world total. The annual growth rate of 168 million square meters constitutes about 70% of the world total, and has led to an annual decrease of pollution emissions corresponding to more than 336 million tons. But even with those positive figures the global transition to renewable energy is still an extremely urgent issue.

China currently has an urban population of more than 600 million, and within the near future an additional 200-400 million people from the countryside will move into the cities, thereby causing an immense pressure of growth on the cities. If people in developing countries will adopt the same lifestyle as people in the US and in Europe, the energy supply can not be sustained, and the problem can not be solved solely by solar energy water heaters – heating, refrigeration and desalination and so on, all need to replace the energy used with solar energy, and in all these fields we already have mature technologies.

In 2006, when the China Renewable Energy Law, for which I had led the work in putting forward the motion, was officially launched and implemented, China got a legal basis for the promotion of renewable energy. In 2009, when I was invited to take part in the COP15 in Copenhagen, I launched the concepts of “micro-emission” and “global micro-emission strategies” as a way of facing the increasingly serious challenges facing humanity in the fields of environment, climate and energy. To promote these concepts to the whole world, we founded the “China Solar Valley” in Dezhou, Shandong Province, as a showcase for a micro-emission city, which can be realized in the whole world 50 years from now. The city of Weilai, which was founded through the investment by the Himin group, could become a role model for a micro-emission community globally within 30 years. The nine big centers of the China Solar Valley which integrate production and research could become a role model for industries in the next 100 years!

This year we are further elaborating on the concept of micro emissions, launching Me PAD (Micro Emission Packaged Design), Me Port PAD, Me Camps PAD, Me Farm PAD, Me Hotel PAD, Me Plaza PAD, Me Town PAD and Me Corp PAD. It is an entire set of solutions for a plan to obtain micro emissions, integrating all mature technologies available in clean energy. At the same time, it provides a smart platform for clean energy management of facilities like homes, hotels, parks, factories as well as

cities which may manage and increase the usage of clean energy, reaching levels close to zero for energy consumption and emissions, for users in their daily lives as well as in production. This is a completely new way of living for the future, like the example of Weilai city shows, as a model for the “Me Pad for Home”. This model makes integrated use of clean energy and networking technologies with a focus on solar energy, giving citizens greener, smarter and more comfortable lives.

There is an old Chinese legend called “Kua Fu chasing the sun”. The main character of the story, Kua Fu, is chasing the sun to protect his family from being burnt by the sunrays, but in the end he dies of thirst. I wouldn't dare to compare myself with Kua Fu, and I also don't believe that I only by myself could save a desperate crisis, so I have made partnerships in Chinese Dezhou; partners, who share the same dream. Dezhou – a minor city which has become a showcase for the entire world, through which we can make our concepts and methods known. We hope we can change people's thoughts, and that the micro-emission concept will be more widely acknowledged. If micro-emission would be implemented in the whole world – what would be left of the energy crisis?

China Solar Valley welcomes everyone of you to come and visit. Thank you everybody!