

# The Influence of Building a new socialist countryside on Traditional Cultural Villages in China

Yi WANG

World Heritage, Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences,  
University of Tsukuba

## ABSTRACT

Building a new-typed rural area, an original word in China, created in early 1950. and 50 years later, became the main program for China government from 2005 to 2015.

This program aims to balance economic and social development between urban and rural areas in six ways. However, as an especial brand in China traditional villages whose cultural authenticity and integrity had persevered pretty well, was badly influenced by this program.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Building a New socialist countryside is the main mission for Chinese government from 2005 to 2015. It is through six methods comprehensively improve the level of rural development : developing modern agriculture, increasing farmer's income, improving the appearance of the countryside, nurturing the new farmers, increasing investment in agriculture and rural area and deepening rural reform.

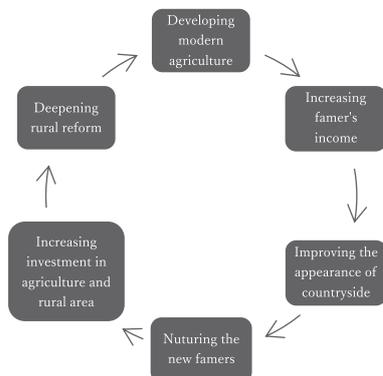


Figure1: The methods of Building a New socialist countryside

The development of modern agricultural technology can promote the income of farmers. When farmers have money, they can change the rural appearance. After that, the infrastructure in rural areas will be further improved, it will be more conducive to the development of education. New farmers with good coaching can help the rural areas to develop reforms further. Agricultural science and technology will continue to improve in the reform. The whole program is an ideal virtuous circle. If realized, rural development will get a qualitative leap. It is an indispensable step for China to realize a well-off society fully. But it is hard to say it will be a good plan for traditional villages.

Traditional village is a particular band in China. The village which selected into the list of “traditional village” illustrates that the village not only kept quite well at least in terms of architecture, village layout, and intangible cultural heritage but also have high historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social and economic values<sup>1)</sup>, like ZengCong- a ethnic minority traditional villages in Guizhou, China. But it is not a legal concept, that is to say, the village that receives this title is admitted administratively but not protected by law. Although different cities have developed their management and protection measures for traditional villages, this is not at the national level, the legal effect is low, and few cities have established management measures. Thus, brought a terrible conflict after Building a new socialist countryside program began.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Reviewing the change from 2005-2015

So far, the Chinese government has made inspections four times and has admitted 4,153 villages in traditional villages directory. However, it is just a drop of the ocean. Based on the report of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China(MOHURD), the total number of Natural villages is 2.61 million, traditional villages' evaluation still has a long way to go. Unfortunately, from 2005 to 2016 the decreasing speed of natural village became more and more fast. In the year when the Building a new socialist countryside began, the natural village plummeted 400,000.

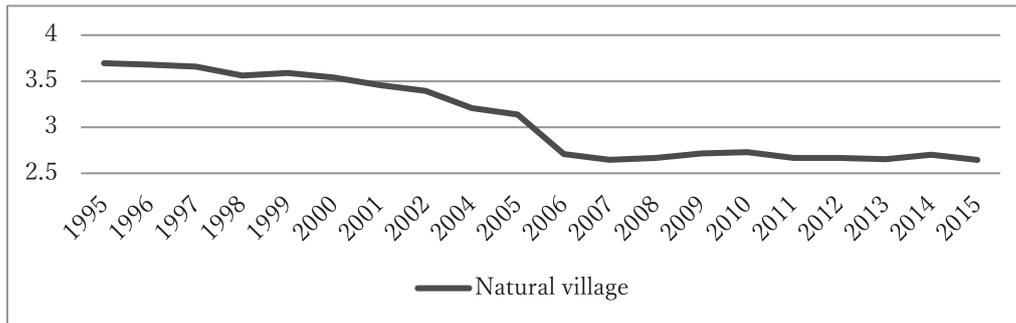


Figure 2: The Number of Natural villages from 1995-2015(million)

After Building a new socialist countryside program finished, the rural transportation, informatization and market circulation systems have undergone varying degrees of change. 99.7% of the administrative village had built roads, and 89% of them are asphalt (cement) road. Over 4,500 countryside and 90,000 villages are influenced by developing leisure-sightseeing agriculture, ecological villages and so on<sup>2)</sup>. In some area, villages construction has separated from the rural realities. Just copy the city model, engaging in large-scale demolition and construction, destroyed rural natural landscapes, pastoral scenery, and cultural characteristics.

### 2.2 Comparing the Law protection between traditional village and historic village

Historic village is another band of Chinese villages. The evaluation criteria are basically the same as traditional villages, but they are more demanding than traditional villages. In order to improve the protection of historical villages, separate legal regulations have been established.

Conversely, traditional village protection can only rely on local regulations. However, except for Jiangsu Province, Jiangxi Province, Fujian Province, Guizhou Province and Xinyang City, there are no specific protection regulations in other areas. The other statements such as guidance or management methods are not legally binding.

Also, the specific requirements are different in remain local regulations too. Take the definition of a traditional village for each regulation as an example. The definition of the traditional village in Jiangxi and Xinyang is same. They think the traditional village should 1) formed very early; 2) having tangible and intangible cultural heritage; 3) having a high historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social, and economic value.

But the Xinyang's regulations emphasize whether the village is included in the national, provincial or municipal traditional villages list as determined by the national or provincial

traditional villages assessment departments or the municipal government. Jiangsu's regulation did not mention intangible cultural heritage, but it think the layout of the traditional village and whether it is a natural village is crucial for the traditional village. Comparing with Guizhou's regulation did not define what a traditional village is, but they admit every village that is in the national traditional village list and Guizhou province traditional village list. Whereas, Fujian province's regulation did not explant what is traditional villages at all.

*Table 1: The different between Traditional village and historic village*

Requirement	traditional village	historic village
Well preserved	○	○
A certain amount of scale	△	○ *Existing historical traditions area should over 2,500 square meters
Intangible cultural heritage	○	×
Effective management methods	×	○
Significant historical impact or can reflect the characteristics of the region	△	○
Legal protection	×	○

○····· Essential element      △····· Non-essential element      ×····· No need

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the research, the program building a new traditional countryside led to a significant reduction in traditional villages directly. Indeed, this program huge increased the income and changed the production method in rural, the whole it did not consider enough for a traditional village, only 12% of the Chinese provinces have a legally binding protection policy. Most province governments are using the traditional village as a band to develop tourism.

Since the mid-1950s, to achieve rapid industrialization of the country and accelerate the pace of urbanization, and preventing excessive rural population into the cities to cause the operation and management problems of cities, the Chinese government was to strengthen the management and control of the rural area. This control has made the difference between rural areas and cities more and more apparent, and the rural people began longed for cities. Noticed the issue, the government decided to give some compensation to rural residents. After the early 1980s to 1990s, the reform of rural area began. The government started to encourage the agricultural population to enter the urban to work, which led a large number of young people in rural areas flooded into cities.

The phenomenon causes two new problems for the rural area. First, the women, children and the elderly have been left in the rural. And the second issue is once the young people make a living in urban; they don't want to back to rural again. The irreversible population migratory has led to an even more significant gap between urban and rural areas. Building a New socialist countryside program is being decided to solve those problems. But in fact, it not only did not solve those problems but also made traditional villages even worst.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The development of the country should not be at the expense of the abandonment of history. The decade is not enough to solve the problems of hundred years village. It should be patient. Besides, why we are set up the list of the traditional village, I think this question worth to think again. When I review the relevant guidance and statements about traditional village protection, developing is the main purpose.

In contrast, the regulations with legal effect only convey the spirit of traditional villages need protection but have no substance method. The existing program of Building a new socialist countryside is a good fantasy of rural development which lacks link with reality. Even the decade of building a new socialist countryside was finished, and the primary mission for China development was change to innovation-driven. However, the reform of countryside did not over. It will not be too late, establishing specific protection regulations is the best first step.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### NOTES

1) Define from *Traditional Village Evaluation and Identification Index System (Trial)* statements, 2012. [www.mohurd.gov.cn/wjfb/201208/W020120831052523.doc](http://www.mohurd.gov.cn/wjfb/201208/W020120831052523.doc)

2) Data come from *2016 urban-rural development Statistical Yearbook*.

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*Address: Wang Yi, World Heritage, Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba  
1-1-1 Tennodai, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, 305-8574, JAPAN  
E-mails: s1821595@s.tsukuba.ac.jp*