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Study on New Socialist Countryside Construction from the Perspective of Humanism

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Abstract On the basis of research data of many scholars, we analyzed implication of new countryside and the construction of new socialist countryside. The new socialist countryside construction is a systematic project, involving rural political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological, sanitation, social security, ecological environment, and people's livelihood. We discussed successful experience of new socialist countryside construction, and presented relevant construction models, namely different models of eastern developed regions and central and western less developed regions. Finally, we put forward countermeasures for new socialist countryside construction, including ensuring implementation of planning for new socialist countryside construction and improving livelihood of rural people and supply of public goods.

Key words Humanism, Status difference, Equality, System design

With deep-level transformation of contemporary China, issues concerning agriculture, rural areas and farmers have become a bottleneck of the overall development of China's characteristic socialist cause, and even slowed down the national development. The *Proposal for Formulating the 11th Five-Year Program for China's Economic and Social Development* and *Several Opinions of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Promoting the Construction of New Socialist Countryside* determines the new socialist countryside construction as strategic programme changing dual urban and rural structure and narrowing urban and rural gap. At the historical stage of putting forward the objective of common prosperity and narrowing the urban and rural gap, it is necessary to reflect on researches about the new socialist countryside construction, which is an essential preparation for deep social transformation.

1 Implication of "new socialist countryside" and "new socialist countryside construction"

The new socialist countryside is not a new concept. As early as the 1950s, China had introduced the concept in the Second Five-Year Plan and the Third Five-Year Plan. After the reform and opening up, No. 1 central document presented the same formulation consecutively in 1982 to 1984. Every time occurrence of the new countryside is an important exploration of rural development at different historic background. However, as to how to understand the implication of this concept, there are different opinions.

1.1 Relevant researches On the basis of extensive survey, Guo Jiezhong thinks that the new socialist countryside is a civilized status of certain period of rural society with economic development as basis and all-round social progress as mark in socialist condition or socialist system^[1]. He also stated that the construction of new socialist countryside is an indispensable part of the socialist modernization drive. Han Jun believes that the new socialist countryside is a comprehensive concept with integration of political, economic, cultural and social construction^[2]. In the opinion of Wu Jixue, socialism is the nature determination of new socialist countryside construction, and it sets nature and direction of the construction^[3]. Cao Liquan stresses that it is required to understand the implication of new socialist countryside from "socialism" and "new countryside"^[4]. Chen Xiwen expounds the new points of new socialist countryside, including new style, new industry, new life, and new organization, and further stresses that the construction of new socialist countryside is a programmatic concept^[5].

Some scholars explain the concept of new socialist countryside from the dynamic process of construction. Wen Tiejun considers that the construction of new socialist countryside construction is a new all-round and comprehensive formulation dominating overall situations of rural works^[6]. Compared with the "Mass Education Movement" carried out in rural areas in the 1920s, the construction of new socialist countryside is neither a return of "rural construction movement" in old China, nor the reproduction of all previous countryside constructions, but a great event that has new implication, power and prospect^[7]. The present new socialist countryside construction is only an extension of the past 100 years of China's rural construction at the new historic stage, so it is natural that it has special implication^[8]. The difference between the new socialist countryside construction and the past rural construction lies in the organic connection and integration of urban and rural areas through the national consolidation, which is also a distinctive feature of new socialist countryside^[9].

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1.2 Analysis of implication As to the concept, the new socialist countryside is not a simple new countryside, but non-countryside that has the attribute of socialism. Thus, the new socialist countryside construction has essential distinction in contents, path and subjects compared with rural construction in the past.

1.2.1 There is no change of essence of countryside. For both the new socialist countryside construction and previous rural construction, the logical start is countryside, and basis and achievement of construction also exist in rural areas. In essence, the new aspects of new countryside are not designed for non-countryside. The construction of new countryside is to change the backward situations of rural areas. Nevertheless, at the background of rural surplus labor making huge contribution to China's urban development and reform, it is required to observe rural areas from a static point of view, and to build the countryside with the urban awareness of unwilling to eliminate rural areas. Finally, no matter how the construction of new socialist countryside conforms to its goal, it is still in rural areas.

1.2.2 The old hidden trouble of urban and rural separation still exists. The development objective of urban and rural integration contains the development strategy of urban and rural integration, breaking the urban and rural barrier, coordinated development of urban and rural areas, and design principle and conception of overall promotion of new socialist countryside construction. However, the internal conflicts are evident. The integration of urban and rural areas is not to turn rural areas into cities, or turn cities into rural areas. In fact, the construction of new socialist countryside through integration of rural and urban areas is similar to the thought stated in previous paragraph. Specifically, the objective of integrating urban and rural areas is not to turn rural areas into cities, but the result is still keeping the rural areas.

Once some priority becomes precondition of rural construction, the status discrimination naturally becomes an unremovable factor. This will certainly lead to field of vision of construction subjects always being limited within the frame of urban and rural dual structure. Then, the understanding of new socialist countryside will be colored with prejudice. At the same time, the way of construction of new socialist countryside will be tinted with "opponent thinking" or complex of favor or charity.

2 Impact of foreign experience on China's new socialist countryside construction

The new countryside construction is an inevitable path for any country evolving from traditional agricultural society to modern society. Many countries in the world have similar experience, but take different measures due to different geographical conditions, population structure, cultural tradition, and foundation of modernization. The New Village Movement in South Korea is worthy of China's learning. Since the middle of the 1990s, there has been more and more introduction and researches about South Korea's New Village Movement. To formulate the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, some departments concerned once visited South Korea in May 2005 and reached common

understanding that it is able to avoid the widening of gap between urban and rural residents' income and between urban and rural development during the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization. The *Survey Report on New Village Movement of South Korea* made by the visiting team provided important reference for central government making appropriate policies and decisions.

Scholars agree that the New Village Movement of South Korea, as a systematic project led by government, has wide social and political foundation. Some scholars present their opinions from the negative effect brought about by economic construction. In the course of the New Village Movement, there are problems of being anxious for success, administrative compulsion, exhausting the people and draining the treasury, and practicing fraud, *etc.*^[10]. Even if the experience of South Korea in new countryside construction is effective, it should also treat the problem seriously^[11]. The individualized experience of South Korea should not be taken as a universal theory guiding the construction of new socialist countryside in China. Instead, at the time of learning from its experience, it is required to make proper rejection and innovation^[12].

Building the new socialist countryside is a historic mission of utmost significance in the modernization drive. As to how to find out a characteristic path of new socialist countryside construction, scholars have different viewpoints. The new socialist countryside construction should focus on increasing farmers' income and rural economic development^[13], stress the overall construction of villages^[14], show the idea of "low consumption and high welfare" and leading role of rural organizations^[15], manifest guiding ideology of "local modernization road of China", and rethink logical basis of the theory from all aspects of rural situations^[16]. However, there is still basic conflict of small production and large market in rural areas. Therefore, new socialist countryside construction should take the collectivization road^[17]. When rural areas realize industrialization, urbanization and modernization, the establishment of public policy system^[18] should become a key measure. The establishment of this system may not be realized without substantial progress in adjusting policy of distribution of national income, making equal employment policy and cultivating and strengthening industrial organizations^[19].

The new socialist countryside construction is a systematic project involving rural political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological, education, health, social security, ecological environment, and people's living, *etc.* Therefore, it is extremely necessary to set indicator system and standard for evaluating new socialist countryside construction, so as to comprehensively, scientifically and systematically observe progress and construction objective of this cause. From the principle to basis, all need a clear and overall consideration, especially the limiting value of well-off criterion. With the aid of this systematic indicator and criterion, it is able to make a preliminary estimation of current overall development level of the new socialist countryside construction^[20].

For every Chinese, how to build new socialist countryside

is a brand-new project. In the design of blueprint of new socialist countryside construction, it is required to take into account standpoint of consumers of new countryside. The ultimate goal of new socialist countryside construction is not only change of mode of living, but also change of life style, even transformation of old customs and habits. On the one hand, from the point of Public Administration, the new socialist countryside construction can be deemed as allocation of public goods. However, it is a question of whether farmers are willing to contribute or share costs for new socialist countryside construction. Even if the state pays all costs, when there is cold current of consumption market, the significance of new socialist countryside construction will be little. On the other hand, it is extremely easy to realize physical modernization of rural areas, but the setup of spirit of modernization will be a long process.

The dual structure of urban and rural areas in form is not fearful, and the frightening thing is dual structure in ideology. The new socialist countryside construction can solve formal backward problems, but can not remove mental backward problems. The elimination of education difference resulted from status may be the best method and measure for construction of the new socialist countryside.

3 Experience in the construction of new socialist countryside

Lin Yifu believes that government should take proactive fiscal policies to support the construction of new socialist countryside^[21]. *The Opinions of the Central Committee and State Council on Formulating the Outline of the Eleventh Five-year Plan* issued at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Party clearly states that the construction of new socialist countryside is a significant historical mission in China's modernization drive. It is required to stably push drive the construction of new socialist countryside in accordance with requirements of "developed production, well-off living, civilized village culture, clean village environment, and democratic management". From 2005 to the present, all parts of the country have launched many activities of construction of new socialist countryside. And all regions have made certain achievements and accumulated much practical experience in the new socialist countryside construction.

3.1 Experience of eastern developed regions in the construction of new socialist countryside In the course of new socialist countryside construction, eastern coastal regions remain in the leading position due to powerful economic strength. As a typical city in eastern coastal regions, Dongguan City has gained experience of four transformations from agriculture to industry, countryside to city, farmers to citizens, and village organizations to communities^[22]. In Shandong and Zhejiang, the construction of new socialist countryside gradually transforms from administrative promotion to legislative driving^[23], while speeding up construction of rural social cause is successful experience of Dongying City in Shandong City^[24].

From pilot projects of new socialist countryside construction in Guangdong Province, it can be seen that they have

formed innovative and practical thinking of development, established proper working mechanism with government as leader, farmers as subjects, and cadres services and social participation, and taken the step of scientific planning, classified guiding, and overall planning of points and surfaces^[25]. Southern Jiangsu Province gradually promotes centralized living of farmers in the course of overall construction of well-off society^[26]. Ganyu County of Lianyungang City in Jiangsu Province made active progress in integrating rural economic development and social cause and bringing into play the functions of county-level government^[27].

3.2 Experience of central and western less developed regions in the construction of new socialist countryside

Compared with eastern coastal regions, central and western regions are backward in economic development, but they still find their experience in the construction of new socialist countryside. For example, Ganzhou City of Jiangxi Province initiated the experience of new socialist countryside construction with "five new aspects and one good aspect" as main contents; Baiguo Village in Yong'an Township of Shuangliu County in Sichuan Province realized excellent effect through taking improving mechanism as key point, building new style and feature of village as carrier, developing rural new industries as support, cultivating contemporary farmers as fundamental points, and exploring democratic management method as guarantee.

Sun Youmin summed up new socialist countryside construction into 6 basic models: resource type, industrial type, ecological type, urban type, grange or village type, and the tertiary industry service type new countryside^[27]. Also on the basis of long-term survey of Chinese villages, some scholars summed up 8 types of models: industrial enterprise driving, characteristic industry driving, animal husbandry driving, recreation industry driving, commercial circulation driving, tourism industry driving, cooperative organization driving, and service economy driving^[28].

No matter in developed regions or less developed regions, the new socialist countryside construction has made considerable achievements. However, the successful experience can not be copied. In the course of new socialist countryside construction, it seems that villages become new, but it also clearly shows that there is lack of humanistic caring. When one-storey house becomes a building, it is extremely important for whether it considers thinking, life style and the consuming capacity of several generations of farmers. The so-called experience and model are experience and model of new countryside builders, rather than of farmers. Due to vacancy of rural subjects, such experience or model is just their own thinking, but no participation of others. Thus, the wider of popularization of such experience and model, the more fully it will manifest shortage of farmers who should be subjects of new socialist countryside construction.

Whether the construction of new socialist countryside can make achievements and whether farmers can have new life, only farmers can have real voice. If builders take no consideration of farmers' real thinking, their experience and model may

be only comfort of self-anxiety. Undoubtedly, the starting point of new socialist countryside construction is for vital interests of farmers. Thus, if the construction of new socialist countryside takes vital interests of farmers as the road sign, it will make more achievements than present ones.

4 Countermeasures for construction of new socialist countryside

The Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Party laid down magnificent objective of new socialist countryside construction, which is also a significant measure for integrating urban and rural development and overall construction of well-off society. *The Opinions on the Outline of the Eleventh Five-year Plan* also states that it is required to push forward the new socialist countryside construction in accordance with requirements of developed production, well-off living, civilized village culture, clean village environment, and democratic management. How to correctly grasp problems and difficulties in the construction of new socialist countryside and probe into road and countermeasure are important problem that theoretic circle and government sectors should carefully study.

4.1 Adhering to combination of improvement in system and mechanism and continuity in implementation of plans

Urban development is faster than rural construction. Thus, to avoid reoccurrence of opposition of urban and rural dual structure in the construction of new socialist countryside and make proper planning by high standards, adopting measures in the light of the realities of specific regions is a basic method for solving various problems, such as formalism, simplism, eagerness for quick success, single solution for diverse problems, *etc.*^[29]. Adhering to combination of improvement in system and mechanism and continuity in implementation of plans is an important section for ensuring actual effect of planning of the new socialist countryside construction^[30].

4.2 Improving social security system and realizing effective guarantee of farmers' rights and interests The ultimate purpose of new socialist countryside construction is to improve rural people's livelihood, so the construction process will certainly touch rights and interests of farmers. Therefore, it should improve social security system and realize effective guarantee of farmers' rights and interests^[31]. New socialist countryside construction must strengthen service awareness and create favorable social participation environment following the humanism principle^[32]. Guaranteeing equal political participation of farmers is an important approach for expression of farmers' benefits^[33].

4.3 Strengthening supply of rural public goods At present, there is no real public good in rural areas. However, along with deepening of new socialist countryside construction, the establishment of expression mechanism for demand of rural public goods is of great significance to balance of urban and rural economic and social development^[34]. This requires increasing economic strength of rural areas, while how to improve logistic ability and quality is a significant measure for speeding up agricultural product and capital transaction^[35]. Therefore,

building perfect rural financial service system^[36] and standardizing non-governmental financial circulation mechanism^[37] will play great role in promoting development of modern rural economy.

4.4 Strengthening rural ecological construction Apart from structure, quality, and mobility becoming increasingly outstanding, the population safety gets more close connection with ecological construction^[38]. Bringing into play ecological and environmental benefits and creating a favorable investment environment for rural areas will play a great role in promoting realization of strategic objective of comprehensively building well-off society^[39]. Therefore, it is proposed to implement "top-down" fund-raising mechanism of rural environmental management and pollution control and "bottom-up" decision-making mechanism, energetically develop circular economy, and actively guide farmers to strengthen their environmental protection awareness^[40].

5 Conclusions

In the course of new socialist countryside construction, there are many problems to be solved, including poverty, mechanism, left-behind women, undertaking of migrant workers who have returned hometown, adult education, as well as low cultural consuming capacity^[41-46]. The existence of these problems indicates that difficulty of new socialist countryside construction is not a partial or local phenomenon but a universal problem. Essentially, the difficulty of new socialist countryside construction is not the result of rural areas, but an inevitable situation due to dual structure and gap between urban and rural areas. Therefore, without solving status difference between urban and rural areas and without thinking standpoint of farmers, the new socialist countryside construction will only bring about urban and rural contradiction and wider gap.

In the course of construction of new socialist countryside, the largest difficulty is system design and the greatest obstacle is status difference. Without solving status problem and discriminatory treatment resulted therefrom, the new socialist countryside construction may only solve superficial problems in rural areas, and fundamental or deep problems of rural areas will still exist. Finally, the urban and rural difference becomes minor only on the surface, while the substantial difference will still exist. Evidently, it is rational to systematically design new socialist countryside construction from the perspective of basic equal rights of people.

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