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# Experience in New Socialist Countryside Planning and Construction and Recommendations: A Case Study of Haotang Village in Xinyang City of Henan Province

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**Abstract** Taking Haotang Village in Xinyang City of Henan Province as an example, this paper analyzed experience of this village in development of new socialist countryside construction. The new socialist countryside planning and construction should attach importance to research on original spatial pattern of villages, really respect and bring into play subject function of farmers, and deeply explore rural financial services. It is expected to provide reference for future new socialist countryside planning and construction.

**Key words** New socialist countryside planning and construction, Experience, Haotang Village

In October 2005, the *Opinions of the Central Committee and State Council on Formulating the Outline of the Eleventh Five-year Guideline* issued at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the CPC clearly pushed forward the historic mission of building new socialist countryside. It summarizes the overall objective of new socialist countryside to be "developed production, well-off living, civilized village culture, clean village environment, and democratic management"<sup>[1-2]</sup>. From then on, all areas have made extensive exploration in new socialist countryside planning and construction. However, the planning and design often neglect actual situations of rural areas, or just copy other rural areas and imitate urban areas. In consequence, some rural areas waste much manpower, financial resources and materials in rural planning and construction, and lose rural traditional culture<sup>[3-5]</sup>. The 2013 number one document of central government firstly proposed the objective of building beautiful countryside, further strengthening rural ecological construction, environmental protection, and integrated regulation and control<sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, it is required to firstly solve the problem of how to come up with scientific and reasonable village planning and design mode in accordance with rural characteristics, development trend and objective laws, guide rural social, economic and cultural undertakings to develop in a healthy and orderly fashion, and realize sustainable development of rural areas.

## 1 General situation of Haotang Village

Haotang Village is situated in southeast suburb of Pingqiao District of Xinyang City. With G4 Beijing – Zhuhai Expressway, Shiji-azhuang – Wuhan High – Speed Railway, Xi'an – Hefei Section of Nanjing – Xi'an Railway crossing periphery, Haotang Village has excellent traffic condition (Fig. 1). Haotang Village has a total

area of 20.7 km<sup>2</sup>, 18 villager groups, a total population of 3 200, 127 hm<sup>2</sup> paddy field, and 1 333 hm<sup>2</sup> tea garden and Chinese chestnut garden (the per capita mountain forest is 1 hm<sup>2</sup>). In 2013, the total economic income of Haotang Village reached 17 million yuan, the per capita income of farmers reached 7500 yuan, and the leading industries are mainly rice, tea, Chinese chestnut, and catering (agri-entertainment).



Fig. 1 Location map of Haotang Village

Haotang Village adheres to the principle of keeping farmers' subject position and respecting civilization cultivation. In the architectural style, it reflects characteristics of central China plain and focuses on residential style of southern Henan Province. In planning structure and road network system, it uses original road network as much as possible, and it implements ecological and environmental protection and rehabilitation through strengthening construction of public service facilities and infrastructure, and im-

proves sewage discharge system, to provide excellent livable environment for the village. In 2013, Haotang Village was included into the list of first beautiful and livable national model villages.

## 2 Planning distribution and construction characteristics of the village

### 2.1 Keeping original spatial pattern and coordinating the old and new buildings

In the new socialist countryside planning and construction, Haotang Village kept original spatial pattern, reflected the harmony between village buildings and nature and ecology, farmers' living and production integrating with mountains and rivers, forming unique rural spatial pattern (Fig. 2). In the construction of new socialist countryside, on the basis of original houses, it did not damage original ecological environment, kept original buildings, renovated outer surface of original buildings, and decorated those not suitable for the overall style. Besides, on the basis of keeping original pattern, it designed many public service facilities, such as hotels, agri-entertainment, kindergartens, schools, nursing homes, health stations, public toilets, sewage treatment stations, and libraries, realized coordination and integration of the overall environment.



Fig. 2 Rendering drawing for new socialist countryside planning of Haotang Village (selected from website)

### 2.2 Respecting willingness of villagers and stimulating farmers' participation enthusiasm

In the construction of new socialist countryside, Haotang Village fully respected willingness of villagers. Design organization designed novel and distinctive original ecological houses in accordance with housing characteristics of each household. Design drawing of each house would be approved by the owner. Before construction of houses, detailed discussion and negotiation would be carried out. Without approval and signature of the owner, the construction would not be done. For unified transformation of houses, the village provided proper amount of subsidy. With condition permits, it removed and transformed some unauthorized buildings and livestock sheds, reinforced housing structure, and improved infrastructure (Fig. 3). For new houses, it provided three types of houses with unified appearance. At the same time of promoting active participation of farmers, it also created more coordinated, sanitary and beautiful village environment (Fig. 4).

### 2.3 Laying stress on building of village environment and promoting sustainable development of ecology



Fig. 3 Transformed houses



Fig. 4 Newly built houses

tion of Haotang Village was carried out on the precondition of protecting local natural environment, respecting local history and culture; village planning and construction laid stress on building of overall environment and detailed natural and cultural parts (Fig. 5 – 6). In the central part, the village planned a green space to strengthen building of green landscape in open space for public activity center. Creation of village environment starts from environmental sanitation. Village committee distributes dustbin to villagers. Villagers clean up daily and ask children to judge their sanitation condition, so as to improve environmental sanitation of Haotang Village through propaganda, education and guidance. In the transformation of houses, villagers changed toilets, kitchens, and pens, and established 20 family artificial wetland sewage treatment systems, changed toilets for 450 households, and built 120 households of family marsh gas. Wastes are collected through buried pipeline and finally flow to preplanned lotus pond, to restore natural wetland system and build centralized power-free wetland sewage treatment system (Fig. 7). It reduces pollution of rural water to the maximum extent in a economic and convenient way, realize low energy consumption, zero emission, free of pollution, and promote sustainable development of ecology.

### 2.4 Building Haotang grand primary school to demonstrate rural modern citizen education

Haotang Village planned to build a grand primary school and kindergarten with an area of 2.7 hm<sup>2</sup> and holding 300 students. The school would be built in accordance with the concept of natural harmony, ecological and environmental protection, art and humanity, and sustainable educa-

tion development. It includes a teaching building, staff quarter, kindergarten, and a urine directing toilet designed by designer from Taiwan. With the support of Pingqiao District government in Xinyang City and the Research Center for Citizenship Education of Zhengzhou University, Haotang Village compiled General Knowledge Textbook of Citizen, to make children have cognition of "cit-

izen right" from childhood, face squarely their citizenship, and know they are equal as urban residents, and establish future expectation. In addition, the school also provides education of various life skills, civilized etiquette, and environmental protection and energy conservation, and cultivates their good life customs and modern awareness of the obligations of citizens.



Fig. 5 Creation of the overall environment



Fig. 6 Building of cultural parts



Fig. 7 Ecological purifying pond

## 2.5 Setting village internal finance and explore deepened service of rural finance

In line with problems of difficult financing and anemia of rural finance in external finance of commercial banks and small amount credit companies, Haotang Village developed a new way to carry out experiment of rural internal finance. With more than four years of exploration, Haotang Village developed the villager community internal fund cooperative organization, which manifests internal circulation of farmers' land property right, realizes cash value of internal credit of the village, and alleviates the problem of farmers' difficulty in financing. The village collective established the endowment cooperative. 7 local villagers sponsored 20 000 yuan separately. The cooperative absorbed 15 old people to become the cooperative member and each member paid 2 000 yuan for joining the cooperative. By the first half of 2013, the total fund amount of the cooperative had reached 3.4 million yuan. In the whole Haotang Village, more than 170 old people (older than 60 years of age) joined the cooperative with the percentage of entry reaching 80%. The old people who joined the cooperative at the earliest time have received dividends for consecutive 4 years. The cooperative has granted loan for more than 5 million yuan, which greatly promotes production development of farmers.

## 3 Experience reference and recommendations

### 3.1 Experience reference

**3.1.1** The new socialist countryside planning and construction should attach importance to studies on original village spatial pattern. By now, in both theoretical research and practical exploration, Chinese scholars and experts have made extensive researches. Especially, 2013 number one document of central government firstly proposed the objective of building beautiful countryside, further strengthening rural ecological construction, environmental protection, and integrated regulation and control, to create excellent ecological environment, energetically increase economic income of rural areas, and promote increase of agricultural effi-

ciency and farmers' income. It is required to make overall arrangement for coordinated development of urban and rural areas, and practically raise sense of happiness and satisfaction of numerous rural residents. Therefore, Haotang Village abandoned large area of village movement and land vacation in new socialist countryside planning and construction, kept original pattern, and integrated public infrastructure into the village.

**3.1.2** The new socialist countryside planning and construction should really respect and bring into play subject function of farmers. Since 2006, the new socialist countryside construction launched in China has been advanced mainly by the government and has made significant achievements, but there are also some problems. As real subjects of new socialist countryside construction, farmers seem to fail to bring into play their role. Some local government even distorts policies and transforms rural areas in the disguise of building new socialist countryside construction. They demolish villages and merge villages, and force farmers to live in high buildings. Farmers are forced to change their life style. By comparison, Haotang Village placed villagers at the subject position, kept farmers' original houses, and fully respected farmers' willingness. Householders discussed about the house functions with designers. Designers designed drawings for each house. Only with approval of farmers, construction may be started. Such way fully respects farmers and brings into full play subject role of farmers, thus it is worth learning.

**3.1.3** The new socialist countryside planning and construction should make deep exploration of rural financial service. The new socialist countryside planning and construction is not solely change of farmers' environment and houses, but also fundamental change of farmers' living conditions. However, at present, the rural economic development level is still very low in the overall pattern of the national economy. The dual economic structure is prominent, and fund shortage is still the largest factor restricting agricultural and rural economic development. Although rural land has completed right confirmation and policy documents supporting rural fi-

nance have been formulated, the cost and benefit of agricultural input are not in proportion; agricultural information is not symmetrical and risks are difficult to control; land collateral is difficult to realize cash value; bank institutions still lack real enthusiasm. Haotang Village established fund cooperative in the new socialist countryside planning and construction, which provides a new idea for solving difficulty in rural fund. This innovative method is worth learning.

### 3.2 Recommendations of case studies

**3.2.1** The new socialist countryside planning and construction should further strengthen development of rural industries. The new socialist countryside construction is a long and arduous work and a systematic project, so the difficulty and problem are inevitable. At present, the important areas of Haotang Village new socialist countryside construction lie in transformation of the village and creation of overall environment. The 20 000 mu tea garden and Chinese chestnut garden are not brought into full play. Farmers earn money mainly through migration work and agricultural income only accounts for 30% of their family income. The industrial development lags behind, agricultural industrialization level is low, and agricultural products are sold in primary form and not deeply processed. It is difficult to invite outside investment and industrial development seriously lags behind, and the ability of industries promoting agriculture is weak. Therefore, in the future new socialist countryside construction, it is recommended to place the rural industrial development at the level of strategic development, to increase farmers' income and promote implementation of new socialist countryside planning and construction relying on industrial development.

**3.2.2** The new socialist countryside construction should further improve farmers' organizational level. At present, with the gradual advance of agricultural modernization, operating rural land at moderate scale and improving farmers' organizational level are essential tasks of new socialist countryside construction. Haotang Village set up endowment fund, planting, live pig, and tea specialized cooperatives. However, few farmer households joined the cooperatives, majority of farmers are still individual operation. Due to low organizational level and insufficient family labor, the annual picking volume of tea is less than one third of the total tea available for picking. Besides, the agricultural industrial chain is still not established added value of agricultural products is not fully explored, and organization leadership of agriculture from primary industry to tertiary industry is not established. Therefore, in the planning and construction of new socialist countryside, it is recommended to guide farmers to unite together voluntarily on the basis of separate family operation, develop specialized cooperative economic organization, and guide these cooperatives to combine production and sales and even the rural tourism together, so as to gradually realize industrialized, intensive and large-scale operation.

**3.2.3** The new socialist countryside construction should further strengthen cultivation of new farmers. Farmers' quality education

and skill training are constant force promoting development of new countryside. At present, rural population is gradually aging, young generation is unwilling to engage in agricultural production, so it is badly needed to cultivate new farmers. In the survey of Haotang Village, we found that old generation farmers are no longer engaged in direct agricultural production, while young generation is not good at agricultural production skills and unwilling to participate in agricultural production. With implementation of new socialist countryside planning and construction, Haotang Village has set up more than 30 agri-entertainments and teahouses and more than 100 migrant workers returned hometown to engage in rural tourism services. Nevertheless, most farmers are low in educational level. The village lack skillful farming people, agricultural industrial economic men, and intelligent creative farmers, and young generation farmers do not know how to participate in the new socialist countryside construction. Therefore, in the planning and construction of new socialist countryside, it is recommended to further strengthen cultivation of new farmers, establish and perfect new professional farmer education and training system, to adapt to demand of agricultural modernization and new socialist countryside construction.

**3.3 Discussion about whether Haotang mode can be imitated** Haotang mode can be learned in planning concept, fitting with existing national policies, and farmers' participation. But since Haotang Village focuses on village transformation and its major fund comes from government, bureau of education, water conservancy bureau and agricultural development and poverty alleviation office, it is necessary to study whether Haotang mode can be imitated. From analysis, we can conclude that it is able to effectively solve this problem in integrating government funds, developing industrial economy at village level, extend industrial chain, increase added value of products, expand tourism functions of agriculture, and promote rural planning and construction through industrial promoting agricultural development. However, in the industrial support, it still needs in-depth studies in future work and researches.

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