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# Implications of Japanese Culture for Cultural Construction of Chinese Agricultural Enterprises

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**Abstract** The cultural construction in agricultural enterprises in China is not so optimistic especially compared with developed countries. In 2015, as the Party Central Committee in China put forward strategy of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, it is necessary for Chinese agricultural enterprise to gain implications for cultural construction by studying Japanese culture. Japanese culture features "group spirit, interpersonal relation, absorbing advanced culture and rational spirit" as its quintessence and with "lifetime employment, annual merits, decision making on application, cooperative management". Chinese agricultural enterprises should find ways for cultural construction which is beneficial for enhancing staff awareness and management from quintessence and outward manifestation of Japanese culture. By doing so, it will promote the cultural construction of Chinese agricultural enterprises and lift the core-competitiveness.

**Key words** Japanese culture, Cultural construction in agricultural enterprises, Implications, China

The agriculture is the foundation of national economy for a country or a region. Chinese agriculture servicing for 1.3 billion people is definitely the foundation for national and even global economy. In 2015, the Party Central Committee in China put forward strategy of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, which will not come true without agricultural modernization. Agricultural modernization is realized with the agricultural enterprise development, while enterprises development is influenced by advanced enterprise cultural construction. Similarly, also belonging to Asia, Japan agriculture and even national economy has developed rapidly and thereby ranked as a developed country under the pushing power from Japanese culture, with overcoming the devastating blow from the Second World War. Under the background of the integration of the world economy, it is necessary for Chinese agriculture enterprise to study from advanced culture, especially the quintessence of culture from neighboring country, Japan. With the help of Japanese culture, the cultural construction of Chinese agricultural enterprise is improved, so as to help realization of the strategy of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects.

## 1 Quintessence and outward manifestation of Japanese culture

**1.1 Brief introduction of Japan** Japan is an island country with a long distance away from continent. It consists of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu and many small islands. Japan is one of the most densely populated countries, occupies 377 800 km<sup>2</sup> and has 130 million people. Among Japanese, mostly is yamato, and they speak Japanese. Japanese believed in Shinto and Buddhism. As a single nation in Japan, Japanese tends to be similar to each other, especially on the mental features, mood and

taste, behavior characteristics, strong sense of self-consciousness and national consciousness. At present, Japan has ranked as a developed country in the world. Its gross industrial production and GDP are at the top of the list. In addition, its agricultural mechanization has been well achieved.

**1.2 The quintessence of Japanese culture** (i) Team spirit featured by emphasizing cooperation. Although Japanese advocate the personal development and improving the personal ability, all of these are under the principle of obeying the group. Therefore, the entrepreneurial class has formed who can compete with the man in the same class from Europe and America. The team spirit includes Samurai moral, team spirit featured by emphasizing cooperation. The Japanese enterprises will be beneficial from the mixture of these two spirits.

(ii) Japanese culture also pays attention to interpersonal relationship, family consciousness and hierarchy sense. The family sense in the Japan is formed from culture, is featured by the property bond rather than blood ties. As a result, it can be easily accepted by employees.

(iii) The capacity on absorbing advanced culture. For example, Japan absorbs the Confucian culture from China, believing in "unity is important" and meanwhile revises the content partially, emphasizing loyalty than benevolence. During the middle of nineteenth Century, Japan was bombarded by American and was forced to open the doors for invaders. Through "Overthrowing Shogunate Movement", Japan paved the path for learning European countries and American overall and regarded "learning anything advanced from any country" as vital principle for vitalizing country. After 100 years, Japan also absorbed the advanced management thoughts, such as X theory, Y theory, super-Y theory, modern scientific management theory.

(iv) Strong sense of rational spirit. The rational spirit reflected in management consist of survival ration, crisis ration and humanity ration, resulted in Japanese enterprise tend to find advan-

tage factors in adversity and carried out the useful and different measures on managing.

**1.3 The outward manifestation of Japanese culture** (i) Lifetime employment. Lifetime employment is a distinctive characteristic of Japan's postwar labor system. Although there is no written contract guaranteeing lifetime employment, both employer and employee understand their mutual obligations under this system. The employee is to serve the company loyally and not try to leave for a better position. The employer will not dismiss or lay off the employee even in severe economic conditions. In addition, strong labor laws protect workers from being dismissed. Lifetime employment system also means that large firms train and promote their own employees to fill higher managerial positions, rather than hiring specialists or senior managers from outside the company. This system worked well during Japan's long period of postwar economic growth with a young, energetic work force. In the 1990s, during a prolonged economic recession and with an aging workforce, the lifetime employment system has begun to break down. Japanese enterprise emphasizes the professional education for employees with huge investment and insists on "people oriented" principle. Because of lifetime employment, employees naturally are loyal to the enterprise. Employees combined the personal gain and loss with the development of the company, thereby the dedicating spirit come forth. As owning these dedicated employees, the team spirit appears everywhere in the company. The belonging, faithfulness and responsibility consciousness from employees make promise for the top quality of goods.

(ii) The seniority-wage system. The seniority-wage system is a Japanese system of promoting an employee in order of his or her proximity to retirement. The advantage of the system is that it allows older employees to achieve a higher salary level before retirement and that it usually brings more experience to the executive ranks. The disadvantage of the system is that it does not allow new talent to be merged with the experience and those with specialized skills cannot be promoted to the already crowded executive ranks. It also does not guarantee or even attempt to bring the right person for the right job. It is a wage system which fixes the wage based on employees' educational background, length of service, ability and working efficiency. Namely, it mixes the "longevity wage" with "ability wage". Under the system, it avoids the cut-throat competition between the employees and at the same time, makes sure the employees' value rise with the time for servicing the company.

(iii) Ringi decision-making system. Ringi decision-making system reflects the making decision procedure in Japanese enterprises. It refers to the final decision made by the senior manager is checked carefully according to the objects by every level of manager and in the process of from lower level to high level gradually.

(iv) Labor union in enterprises. Labor union in enterprise refers to setting labor union principle on the foundation of actual situation of an enterprise. Japanese enterprises carried out "labor union" principle with the hope of relieving the strained relations between the employer and employees.

(v) Cooperative style management. Cooperative style management in Japanese enterprises was developed gradually from reading Chinese classic literature work "*The Art of War by Sun Tzu*". Japanese managers positively apply "*The Art of War by Sun Tzu*" to modern enterprise management and thereby achieved great success. Many enterprise managers even regard the "*The Art of War by Sun Tzu*" as obligatory course for managers in every departments and trained them in turn.

## 2 The comparison between Japanese culture and Chinese agricultural enterprises cultural construction

**2.1 Cultural construction status in Chinese agricultural enterprises** The cultural construction in agricultural enterprises in China is not so optimistic especially compared with developed countries. Enterprise culture is a concept integration based on enterprise production and management. It includes management idea, mission, developing strategies, objective, employees' trait, professional ethics, operative norm, style, etiquette celebration, social image, reputation and etc. At present, cultural construction situation in agricultural enterprise can be divided into three groups, the enterprise in the first level own their features on culture such as China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corporation (COFCO), Hope Group and Dabeinong Group. The enterprises in the second level are large-scale enterprises which have already paid attention to cultural construction. The enterprises in the third level should change their idea about the function of cultural construction, which is prevailing in some rural and small town agricultural enterprises and middle or small-scale enterprises.

**2.2 The comparison between Japanese culture and Chinese agricultural enterprise cultural construction** The quintessence of Japanese culture is reflected in team spirit, emphasizing interpersonal relationship, absorbing advanced culture, strong sense of rational spirit. In addition, it is shown in the outward manifestations, such as lifetime employment, annual merits, decision making on application, Cooperative management. Comparatively, cultural construction of Chinese agricultural enterprises lags behind, not meeting the demand of economic development. Many enterprises abroad think highly of enterprise cultural construction, especially in Japan, America and Germany. Take Japanese enterprises as an example, they played irreplaceable roles in international market due to their advanced enterprise culture. Obviously, the cultural development in agricultural enterprise in China is not suitable for the trend of times. After China entered WTO, some Chinese agricultural enterprises felt unable in the face of international competition. As we known, many pieces of news, such as preferring foreign brand milk powder, various kinds of crop seeds, animal source and etc have suggested that agricultural enterprises in China faced many challenges from foreign enterprises. The highest level of competition exists in the enterprise culture. Any enterprise without unique and advanced culture will not survive for a long time. Therefore, Chinese agricultural enterprises should empha-

size the cultural construction to form advanced and characteristic culture with the purpose of enhancing the core-competitiveness guaranteed the winning position.

### **3 The experiences from Japanese culture imposing on Chinese agricultural enterprise construction**

#### **3.1 The inspiration from Japanese culture on improving employees' thinking level**

**3.1.1** Making sure the values held by each employee are in common. The cultural construction in every enterprise should pursue scientific value orientation, namely form the shared belief for employees. And what's more, these should be carried out in action and practice. Enterprise cultural construction under the Chinese characteristics socialism system should form traits as sacrifice, innovation, competition, reformation rather than nothing accomplishing and fussing over. The foothold for sparking culture put on training employees' ideal, belief and character. Through continuous endeavor, they will hold high-quality staff supporting development mentally and fostering core-competitiveness. Besides, we should insist on strengthening employees' enterprise consciousness. Enterprise consciousness namely refers to not talking personal benefits without the group, enhance employees' belonging sense, honor sense, self-importance sense and thereby increase the whole power for enterprise. Enterprise consciousness must come from the actual life and obtain social approval.

(i) It is recommended to display the enterprise spirit from the enterprise managing strategies. In the same way, employees will understand the value and objective deeply through actual producing process.

(ii) It is recommended to strengthen the bond of staff and enterprise from the perspective of economic benefits.

(iii) It is recommended to emphasize the democracy construction. We should regard the staff as the owner of enterprise and make them holding sense of "Entering enterprise like entering home".

(iv) It is recommended to create harmonious producing and living environment. We offer the chance for working happily and arousing belonging sense and bonding sense.

(v) Leaders in enterprise should respect, trust and care the employees to enhance the employees' emotion.

**3.1.2** Agriculture enterprise tend to absorb the quintessence of foreign culture, especially Japanese culture. Firstly, we should put modern enterprise spirit rooted in excellent Chinese culture. Enterprise spirit, as a cultural phenomenon, grows up gradually in special national culture surroundings. Chinese culture also has its disadvantages, such as lacking of competition, not willing to run risk and government - owned standard way. However, there are some advantages, such as hardworking and plain, caring for the fate of his nation, mutual help and modestly decline, working selflessly for the public interest, morality emphasized, pursuing self-cultivation and harmonious interpersonal relationship and etc. All of these cultural advantages can be developed with times, and

made these become the precious wealth for modern enterprise. Secondly, we should expand our eyesight, absorb the quintessence of advanced modern culture no matter where it comes from. With the advent of information age, the connections on culture between different parties become closer and closer. Therefore we should absorb all cultural constructing fruits both in China and foreign countries and continuously construct our own unique agriculture enterprise culture with the principle "self-importance, learning widely, combination and refining, developing our own style" rather than constructing culture conservatively.

#### **3.2 Chinese agriculture enterprises gaining experience on managing from Japanese culture outward manifestation**

**3.2.1** Making the enterprise popular in the world by learning from Japanese culture. Every well-achieved enterprise owns its special culture which helps to exhibit its special character and public image. Sony regarded "Being pioneer, not mocking others but endeavoring on impossible things" as purpose, and finally became the successful consumer electronics enterprise with most advanced technology in the world. Ogilvy, CEO from Ogilvy & Mathe believed that culture is a mixture combined with myths, ceremonies, customs, heroes, characters and value concept. Ogilvy & Mathe offer the better business environment and meanwhile create the culture as "mastership, full-imagination, self-discipline, objectiveness and exciting force". IBM, a famous company in the world, is called as "holding personification company" for its special management. IBM emphasized three principles which mirrored the philosophy of Watson. These codes of conduct are requested to be memorized by from CEO to ordinary employee even in post room. First code, they should respect others. The managing level should respect the ordinary employees and every employee should respect the customers and peers. Second code, they should offer the best service for customers. The CEO, Watson said the service offered by IBM should rank top in the whole world, that is to say, no matter question customer met, IBM employee will solve it in 24 hours, otherwise, give a satisfactory reply. Third code, they should pursue excellent work performance. "Excellence" is the basic demand in IBM. Employee should do everything with spirit of pursuing perfect. Chinese agriculture enterprises should learn a lesson from these successful enterprises, for example, IBM. That is enterprise culture decided its feature, enterprise feature decided its public image, and enterprise feature and image decided its core-competitiveness altogether. As a result, the fate of an enterprise is decided by its core-competitiveness.

**3.2.2** Setting up a new objective for Chinese agriculture enterprises by learning Japanese culture and deepening cultural construction. Culture became the golden rule for modern enterprise management, the objective leading the enterprise to the success, the base for well achieved in management of modern enterprise. China's Huawei in Shenzhen city established "Basic Law" and continuously make innovation in order to realize the dream of being top-one equipment suppliers in the world. There are four codes in the law. Specifically, they are "people oriented, emphasizing spe-

cial character, group endeavoring, regarding the talents as fortune of company but not too yielding to talents, developing the core technology system cooperatively and creatively based on self-contained, broadcasting innovation and professionalism, holding enthusiasm to country, people, business and life, not letting fine employees lost, forming the interest community between customers, employees and cooperator ". Because of recording culture in the law, Huawei enhance its core-competitiveness by continuous innovation and development. Chinese agriculture enterprises should not copy the constructing experience in advanced non-agriculture enterprises. Namely, we should create more value for customers and more self-developing chance for employees and higher profits for society. In this way, employees in agriculture enterprises will manage the fortune of the company like in their homes, treat their work as their own life. This will contribute to forming strong and perpetual developing power and updating it in time in Chinese agriculture enterprises.

#### 4 Conclusions

Japanese culture is featured by its group-first team spirit, emphasizing interpersonal relationship, absorbing advanced foreign culture and strong rational spirit and some outward manifestations, such as "lifetime employment, annual merits, decision making on

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of urbanization can well absorb rural surplus labor force, and the improvement of social security system can better make farmers shift into the urban population, thus contributing to increasing farmers' income.

**3.2.2** Expanding channels for farmers' income growth. It is necessary to focus on promoting farmers' wage income and property income growth, actively develop vocational education in rural areas, and increase technical training for farmers, in order to improve the employability of farmers and increase the wage income of farmers; improve the rural land property rights system, and promote the reasonable and lawful rural land transfer, in order to increase farmers' property income.

**3.2.3** Expanding the employment effects of urbanization development. It is necessary to actively formulate the fiscal and monetary policy that can promote the development of labor-intensive industries; increase investment in human capital, and vigorously develop urban and rural vocational education and training; increase investment in higher education and achieve the urbanization of rural youth population through higher education; increase policy support to help the migrant workers to return home to start up an undertaking.

**3.2.4** Effectively protecting the interests of farmers during urbanization. It is necessary to continue to improve urban and rural residents' income distribution system, increase support and protection for agriculture, and establish a sound and effective farmers' interests protection mechanism to promote urbanization

application, cooperative management." The cultural construction in agricultural enterprise in China isn't so optimistic especially compared with developed countries. In 2015, as the Party Central Committee in China put forward strategy of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, it is necessary for Chinese agricultural enterprise gain implications for cultural construction by studying Japanese culture. Chinese agriculture enterprise should imitate the quintessence of Japanese culture "establishing coincident value concept, absorbing advanced culture wildly " to improve the employees' recognition. Advanced enterprise culture constructing experience, such as "exhibiting character and public image by culture, influencing belief and objective " enhancing core-competitiveness and forming strong and perpetual developing and innovating power for Chinese agriculture enterprises.

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and farmers' income growth; try to avoid the negative impact arising from "polarization effects" and "enclosure movement" in the process of urbanization development.

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