

# Historical Investigation and Contemporary Enlightenment of Country Squires and Contemporary Rural Revitalization Strategy

## ——Centering on Jinan Area in Qing Dynasty

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### Abstract

The farming and reading mode, which takes thrift as the basis for running a family, filial piety as the style of family transmission, and poetry and calligraphy as the starting point, is the development path of Shandong country squires and the only way for farmers to enter the official career. Country squires not only practiced what he preached, but also cultivated his family and influenced his family. He also paid close attention to the education of farmers and local culture in the impoverished villages of the township. No matter staying at home, being an official, being in a village or doing scholarly research, they can all be regarded as the pride of the village and play an important role in influencing one party. Their nature is pure filial piety, their conduct is well-behaved, their good quality of governing a family well, their zeal for clan affairs, their building of shrines and covenants, their giving aid to their neighbors, and their care for the orphans and the weak.

### Keywords

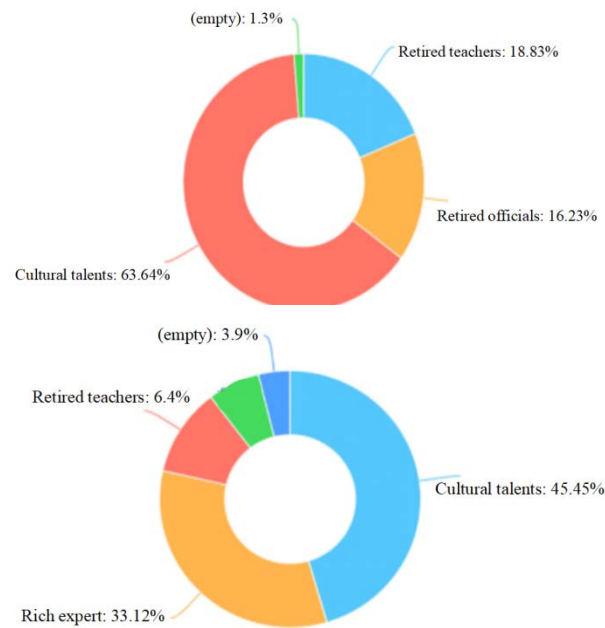
Country squire, Education of farmers, Rural revitalization.

## 1. Introduction

Shandong is a country of sages and sages, with many country squires, including the Qing Dynasty, standing side by side with Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and it is an important town in the north. The teachers and elders in these villages teach by word and deed, which is filial piety and modesty. They use genealogy to condense blood ties, select poor families and guide farmers to be good. This is not only the expression of the official ideology at that time, but also the conscious moral pursuit of the intellectuals, and it is also the result of the influence of Shandong regional culture. Based on the Republic of China's "Shandong Tongzhi" and Daoguang's "Jinan Fuzhi", this paper investigates the practices of more than 90 country squires from 17 counties under the jurisdiction of Jinan in the Qing Dynasty in revitalizing local culture and farmer education, with a view to promoting local cultural traditions and contributing to today's rural revitalization.

## 2. Organization of the Text

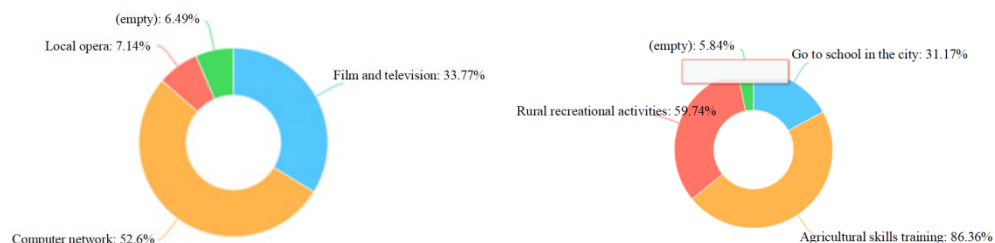
The author once conducted a survey on the "relationship between country squires and peasant education" among people aged 20-60 years old and above junior high school in Shandong, and a total of 154 valid questionnaires were collected. The groups that play a role in rural public affairs and farmer education are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Presiding over rural public affairs and farmer education

It can be seen from Figure 1 that the cultural competent person gets 45.45% of the votes in presiding over public affairs and 63.63% in the close relationship with farmers' education. This shows that people generally agree with the important influence of cultural talents in rural areas.

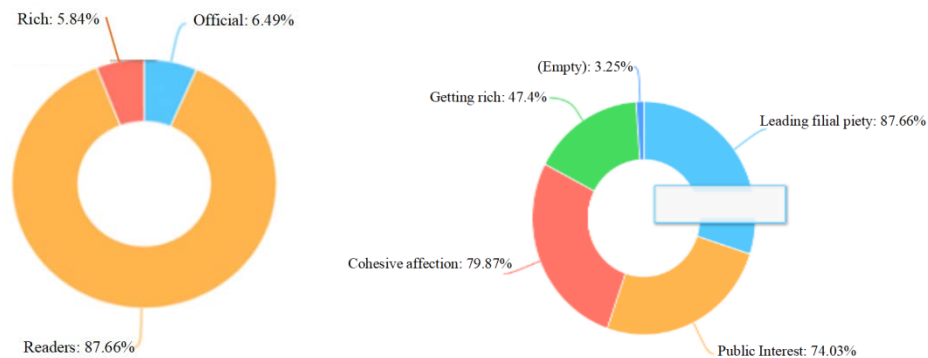
At the same time, the author also investigated the methods of farmers' education and the ways to improve their quality, and got Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Approaches to Farmers' Education and Ways to Improve Their Quality

As can be seen from Figure 2, it is agreed that the main way to improve the education level of farmers is "rural skills training", up to 86.36%. The way to improve the quality of farmers is focused on the computer network, while most people choose to ignore operas with local characteristics.

As for country squares and the construction of new countryside, the basic question is "How many country squares shrines are there in your area?" "How do you know about the local country squares?" . The answers to these two questions are surprising, with 65 people (42.41%) believing that the country squares Temple in their area is zero. Among the ways to understand the local country squares, the "folk tales" (39.61%) and the "local newspapers" (24.03%) account for a higher proportion. As for the understanding of local country squares through genealogy and movies and TV, the total is less than 30%. Returning to the core question of this survey, "What kind of people do you think country squares Temple should serve?" "What do you think country squares is good for the rural atmosphere? (Multiple selections are allowed) "to get Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** the candidates for entering country squire temple and the role of country squire in the rural atmosphere

As can be seen from Figure 3, the masses generally believe that the country squire shrine should be dedicated to scholars (87.66%), while the country squire's influence on the rural ethos includes leading filial piety, being enthusiastic about public welfare, and uniting family ties, etc.

According to the above statistical analysis, on the issue of country squire and farmer education, we have to face the problems of country squire temple protection, country squire writing and inheriting the cultural lifeblood. We also need to see that people recognize the key role of intellectuals and cultural talents in rural public affairs, farmer education and filial piety. Therefore, the traditional country squire culture not only needs to be protected and vigorously publicized and written, but also needs to continue to play its role of cohesion of blood ties.

### 3. Literature References Town

In April 2019, Shandong Province held the first high-end forum on cultural creativity and rural revitalization, with experts from political, business, academic and media circles. At the meeting, most of the experts recognized "the leading position of culture in the Rural Revitalization", and also saw that the Rural Revitalization needs to face "the problem of the transformation of the national character of farmers in China" [1]. Therefore, traditional country squire culture is still an important resource for moral demonstration, cultural guidance and farmer education in Rural Revitalization.

#### 3.1. Strengthen the Protection of Country Squires Temple.

The author has made a simple statistic on the figures worshipping country squire in Qing Dynasty recorded in Sun Baotian's Shandong Tongzhi. There are about 107 people in Yanzhou, Yizhou, Caozhou, Dongchang, Qingzhou, Dengzhou, Laizhou, Taian, Wuding, Jinan, Linqing, Jining, Jiaozhou and other ten Zhili states under Shandong's jurisdiction, involving famous officials, Confucian scholars, mavericks, Wen Yuan and other different types. In addition, the number of people entering country squire Shrine recorded in local county annals is very large, with Jinan alone involving 76 people. With the historical turning point after Ganlong in the Qing Dynasty, the election of country squire and the establishment of country squire Temple appeared intermittent. This paper makes a rough statistics of country squire worshiped by Jinan government in Xuanton's Shandong Tongzhi (see Table 1)

**Table 1.** "Shangdong Tongzi" Jinan country squires Chart

Name	Area	Major life years	Major writings
Ai Yuanzheng	Jiyang	Shunzhi	"Yijing Huitong", "Shujing Huitong", etc
Yi Yan	Metro	Kangxi	-----
Yuan Shouchu	Long mountain	Qianlong	-----
Li Yunzhen	Texas	Shunzhi	-----
Li Xuan	Long mountain	Shunzhi	-----
Zhang Qitai	Long mountain	Shunzhi	-----
Li Zhen	Texas	Shunzhi	-----
Zhu Changtai	De ping	Shunzhi	"Xiuzhen Jieyao Qifang"
Shi tingzhu	Changqin g	Shunzhi	-----
Gu Zisheng	Ling county	Shunzhi	-----
Wang Ji	Long mountain	Kangxi	-----
Lu Daoyue	Texas	Kangxi	-----
Zhang Xi	Zou ping	Kangxi	-----
Pan Mingzuo	Qi river	Kangxi	-----
Sun Menggui (with his grandson Sun Zhiheng)	Qi river	Kangxi	-----
Tian Wen	Texas	Shunzhi	The book of songs
Jiao Yuqing	Zhang Qiu	Shunzhi	-----
Zhao Yunzhen	Qi river	Shunzhi	-----
Li Dunye	Qi dong	Light	-----
Wang and Shao	Metro	Shunzhi	-----
Hao Ji Jing	Zhang Qiu	Early Qing Dynasty	-----
Zhao Yu	Long mountain	Shunzhi	-----
Zhao Wei	Ping Yuan	Kangxi	"Sheng Yue Yuan Yin" and "ceremony ceremony ceremony outline"
Wang Fujing	Ling county	Jia Qing	-----
Tian Shili	Texas	Kangxi	-----
Li Zhanye	Qi dong	Tongzhi	-----

It can be seen from the above chart that the worship country squires were concentrated in the reign of Shunzhi and Kangxi, accounting for 88%, and Qianlong, Jiaqing and Tongzhi each

accounted for one person. As for the reasons, one or two can be obtained from the records in the book *Ten People's Chronicles of Country Squires*, which was compiled by Zhao Xiangjun and Zhang Yuanjun and compiled by Cao Mengjiu (Republic of China) in the book of the renewal of plain county *Chronicles*: "the old chronicles, seventeen country squires, are all worshipped, and country squires temple are not biographies. Since Qianlong's reign, there has been no invitation for a long time, so there is no one to continue the worship. However, in ancient times, it was said that the village officials could sacrifice to the community. Is it true that they are firm in virtue, profound in learning, and always admired and begged by the villagers? Zong didn't invite Zudou to be in Zhunzong. Gujiushu was typical of Zhunze. He suggested that if people want to send Fanggui from afar, they can continue country squires."

After the Republic of China, country squires's biography and country squires Temple also have the regret of lacking records. Li Yonghui's record of "Wang Xiantang's Writings" was edited by the Shandong Provincial Civil Affairs Department and the Provincial Education Department. Wang Xiantang, Qi Yunpu, Ding Jiamin and others also participated in the compilation of "Shandong country squires's Chronicles". About 40 people were selected, mainly heroes from Shandong during the Ming and Qing dynasties to the Republic of China, but unfortunately the manuscript was not found [2]. As for many places during this period, some people who made contributions were petitioned to enter country squires Temple. For example, in the 12th year of the Republic of China (1923), the academic and business circles in Changyi donated money to repair the grave garden for Huang Yuanyu, the Changyi doctor, and petitioned to enter country squires Temple for memorial. However, most local behaviors have not become a fad.

In November 2018, the Shandong Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage issued a "Reply on the Survey and Design Plan for the Protection and Renovation Project of the Dacheng Hall, Wenchangge Hall and country squires Temple in Pingyin County" (Lu Wenxu [2018] No.194), sending a signal that the protection of country squires Temple has been paid attention to.

### **3.2. Various Means to Spread Country Squires's Words and Deeds in Serving the Villages and States**

As a symbol of regional culture and a link to maintain local sentiment, country squires culture plays an important role in the inheritance of Shandong's cultural lifeblood. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify publicity. According to the author's investigation, most farmers know nothing about country squires, a representative figure of local cultural tradition. Therefore, country squires can be spread by means that are popular with farmers, such as documentaries and TV plays. For "how to start the cultural brand of country squires" [3] CCTV China International Channel's "Remember nostalgia" column has made a successful attempt. In the third episode of the fifth season, "Jinan Quancheng Old Street-Qingquan weeping willow, gentleman's wind", the main deeds of country squires figures such as Wang Xiantang and Qu Wanli, who donated Pu Songling's manuscripts and preserved the culture of the township, were slowly recounted in Ding Dong's spring water. As a high-yield unit of Shandong opera, Shanying Group has become a prominent feature of "Shandong stories, national significance and major themes". From the already broadcasted "Dye House" and "Yang KO" with Shandong Zhoucun and Shandong Haiyang as the background of the story, "Past events in Qingdao" from Shandong Weixian to Shandong Qingdao, the upcoming broadcasted "Grand Canal" and "Big Confucius Mansion" and other stories with strong Shandong regional characteristics spread Shandong country squires's traditional virtues of valuing righteousness and forgetting profits and revitalizing the country. For new farmers whose education level has generally improved, the characters in movies and TV plays may not satisfy their pride in their hometown. The "Overview of Shandong Regional Culture" series edited by Wang Zhimin provides knowledge

of Shandong's historical celebrities, which will provide readers with a sense of presence and closeness and stimulate their love for their hometown. In 2018, Zhonghua Book Company and Qilu Book Company jointly published a series of popular Chinese excellent traditional culture books entitled "Traditional Culture and Community (Village) Civilization Reader" edited by Yan Binggang. One of them, "Good Rules to Be Observed Together-A Biography of Township Rules and People's Contracts", introduces the contribution of traditional country squires in rural governance and also attempts to combine country squires with farmer education in a beneficial way.

In the era of financial media, besides traditional means of paper media and film and television communication, it is also necessary to establish microblogs and WeChat public numbers and hold special folk activities. For example, Shixia Village in Jinan has a "half-year" folk culture festival, which promotes the form of "hometown feeling and rhyme" and enriches rural cultural life.

### **3.3. Revising and Perfecting Genealogy, Seamlessly Connecting Farmers' Education and Community Education**

With the development of contemporary urbanization, a new community of new farmers has emerged. They have to face a series of psychological imbalance and educational problems. Some scholars have obtained that 68.9% of the peasants who went upstairs still think that their object of interpersonal communication is the original village people through a questionnaire survey in Shandong Dezhou and other regions. [4] However, after the new farmers are transformed into residents of villages and towns, due to the lack of subject consciousness and the weakening of service functions of autonomous organizations, the subjects participating in community education lack interaction. However, if interactive mechanisms such as dialogue, trust, negotiation and sharing are established, the current predicament can be greatly changed. The revision of genealogy and genealogy plays a role in condensing blood relationship and geography and can promote the effective development of this work. The local chronicle offices in Shandong have organized the genealogy of the famous country squires to some extent, such as Tian Wen's family's "andetian genealogy" (photocopy and publication of Dezhou city). In addition, most of country squires's descendants have microblogs and WeChat groups to carry on family traditions and educate their children, such as the introduction of Zou Ping Jiao Qiao Yuan Family (Yuan Shoudong, etc.) by Sina microblog "Yuan Clan Culture" and Jiyang Ai Clan WeChat platform.

## **4. Summary**

Today's dilution of regional concepts, frequent population movements, narrowing of urban-rural differences and the development of rural urbanization make it impossible to take the traditional birthplace as the coordinate of country squires. Therefore, the national 13th five-year plan outline (draft) puts forward the concept of "new country squire", which is more inclusive than the selection of famous officials and country squire in Ming and Qing dynasties. No matter the official country squire, fu country squire, de country squire, Wen country squire, all "advanced figures who are willing to offer suggestions and contributions to the development and construction of their hometown" can be included in the list. New country squires has a decisive influence on rural governance, agricultural production technology reform, rural e-commerce, and promoting coordinated development between urban and rural areas.



#### **4.1. Make Full Use of New Country Squires, a Place Born and Raised in Singapore**

Among the "model of Qilu era", "model of Shandong morality" and "good people in Shandong" successively launched by Shandong province are both government officials, entrepreneurs, experts and scholars, frontline teachers and ordinary villagers. As moral models serving their hometown, most of them were born in the new country squires where they grew up. For example, Gao Shuzhen, Sanjianxi Village, Zhangqiu District, Jinan City, led the villagers to become rich and set up a sports team through the construction of a rural ecological demonstration park and a construction project service company. Good family and village traditions have become common practice.

#### **4.2. Play the Role of First Secretary**

In the existing township rules and regulations, some are carved stone as the law, others are written as the basis. It has played an important role in the establishment of simple rural customs, the guidance of neighborhood harmony and help, and the support and protection of public welfare undertakings such as rural customs. With 582 "first secretaries" sent by Shandong to help poor villages in Bangbao in 2012, Huang Jiangtao, the "first secretary" of Qushi University, has "beautified the appearance of villages" in his precise poverty alleviation for provincial key poor villages (Sanchahe Village, Jang Jin, Si, Surabaya county, Shandong Province). He advocated Confucianism and filial piety and created a harmonious cultural atmosphere in the new village by "selecting traditional cultural themes and drawing more than 70 wall paintings along the main roads in the village".

#### **4.3. On the Feasibility of Officials Returning Home from Retirement**

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, there was a general tradition of returning to their hometown after officials became officials. After returning to their hometown, officials often served as moral models to help their neighbors, donate their salaries, and serve their local communities. Therefore, some scholars have put forward the view of "returning to one's native place after one's old age and being a" new country squires' ".[6]. The proposal of this view has obvious positive significance and is very conducive to the coordinated development of urban and rural areas. However, we should also see the difficulty in implementing this ideal model, such as the backwardness of medical care and pension systems in rural and urban areas. Zhangqiu District of Jinan City put forward "the model of revitalizing Qilu in rural areas" at the 2019 rural agricultural work conference, among which "accelerating the construction of a number of comprehensive old-age service centers, rural happiness homes and day care centers, exploring various old-age care modes, and enabling the elderly to live in their twilight years" and other measures mean the narrowing of the urban-rural gap and the sound development of rural economy. Country squires, the official in the new country squires, will return to the motherland actively. The vision of becoming a new model for returning to the motherland after aging will no longer be just an ideal.

### **5. Conclusion**

Fei Xiaotong mentioned in "Rural China": "From the grass-roots level, Chinese society is rural" [7] Apart from studying in cities to change their fate, farmers now face two ways to stick to the villages or withdraw villages and go upstairs. For this reason, in August 2016, the general offices of the Shandong Provincial Committee and the provincial government issued "Opinions on Promoting Standardization Construction in beautiful countryside", proposing to promote the construction of beautiful countryside with the concept of standardization. However, it is the soft power inside the countryside that is the real core construction. It is the necessary way to protect ancient residents' customs, pay attention to farmers' psychology, pay attention to

the education of socialist core values, and write country squires culture. In today's era of rural urbanization, learning from the experience of country squires in the Qing Dynasty in local cultural education, the new country squires can continue to play an important role in rural revitalization, farmer education and community education.

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