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**Grassroots NGOs as Rural-Urban Bridge for Chinese
Sustainable Development:
With Reference to Japanese Experience of "Teikei" System**

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	i
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures an Tables.....	iv
Abbreviations.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Goal of the Study.....	5
1.3 Methodology.....	6
2. Grassroots NGOs’ role in Chinese rural-urban sustainability.....	7
2.1 Crisis of sustainable development.....	7
2.2 Case study: LvGeng.....	8
2.3 CSA Experiment in China.....	13
2.4 Challenges and problems.....	14
3. Japanese experience: Teikei system.....	16
3.1 Teikei: Social movement of CSA.....	16
3.2 Case study: Tsukutte Taberu Kai, Daichi and Coops.....	21
3.3 Why does Teikei work in Japan?.....	25
4. Conclusion: what can we learn from Teikei?.....	27
4.1 Mutual trust.....	27
4.2 Direct selling and Eat Locally Grown.....	28
4.3 Traceability.....	28
4.4 Creditability.....	29
4.5 Balance of nature.....	29
Reference.....	31
Appendix.....	34
About the Author.....	37

List of Figures and Tables

Tables

2.2.3.3	Benefit of villagers from the program.....	10
2.2.3.4	Local contribution from the program.....	11

Figures

2.2.1.1	Fair trade.....	8
2.2.1.2	Village hotels.....	9
2.2.3.1	Income change before and after village hotel 2011.....	9
2.2.3.2	Distribution of Village Hotel Income 2011.....	10
2.2.4.1	The rural-urban sustainable development.....	13
3.1.2.1	Conventional marketing.....	18
3.1.2.2	Alternative marketing: Teikei.....	18

Abbreviations

AISUPV	Agricultural Input Supervision
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
PESUPV	Production Environmental Supervision
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
JAS	Japanese Agricultural Standards
JOAA	Japan Organic Agriculture Association
URGENCI	International Network of Community Supported Agriculture

Abstract

This paper explores in particular how Teikei groups, as forms of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), operate in Japan, focusing on several particular groups. The paper links the Teikei approach to Chinese rural and urban sustainability, arguing that pre-existing consumer/citizen institutions may usefully be engaged in rural and urban sustainability. Teikei brings producers and consumers closer together in terms of reconnecting the agricultural producer and consumer to aid food traceability and quality. Teikei also exhibits elements of new assemblies of agricultural governance based on enhanced consumer-citizenship where consumers have a say in what and how produce is grown and how the land is managed. China will face both challenges and opportunities when developing CSA. Mutual trust, direct selling and eat Locally Grown, traceability, creditability, and balance of nature can be learned from Teikei system.

Key words: NGO; Sustainable development; Teikei

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Chinese grassroots NGOs working in rural and urban cooperation

In China, NGO working on poverty alleviation is encouraged by government. NGOs could increase the pecuniary resources of poverty alleviation and rural development program. NGOs along with the poverty-relief programs conducted by them is a beneficial supplement to the governmental efforts given the limited financial capability of the governments especially the ones in the poverty-stricken areas. Anti-poverty practices of NGOs set up a frame of reference for government to increase its efficiency. The function of NGOs is based on the voluntariness and support of participants.¹

Supermarkets, specialized wholesalers, processors, and agro-exporters are transforming the marketing channels into which smallholder farmers sell produce in low-income economies. A conceptual framework is developed with which to study contracting between smallholders and a commodity-processing firm. The resulting meta-narrative documents patterns of participation, the welfare gains associated with participation, reasons for nonparticipation, the significant extent of contract noncompliance, and the considerable dynamism of these value chains as farmers and firms enter and exit frequently.²

Programs focused on developing community-level management skills and human capacity can increase the opportunities for small farmers to benefit from market participation. Contract/Business programs such as out-grower and cash-crop schemes facilitate farmer access to goods and services required for production and marketing of a target commodity. Project/Technology programs, usually mediated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), focus on the promotion of improved technology. Process/Human Capacity investments also facilitate technology adoption and marketing, but focus initially on the development of foundation skills and social capital, including assistance for collective self-help, literacy programs, marketing activities, and decentralized development planning. Although the latter programs tend to be slower in producing tangible results, the skills emphasized often determine the ability

¹ The Guangcai Programme and the Poverty Alleviation Mechanism of NGOs.

² Christopher B. Barrett et. Smallholder Participation in Contract Farming: Comparative Evidence from Five Countries, World Development, Volume 40, Issue 4, April 2012, Pages 715–730.

of a community to access inputs and market production beyond the life of a project.³

Farmers' moral hazard in safe farming is prevented by a combination of incentives and constraints. Among incentive factors, profits from safe agro-products are verified to affect farmers' moral hazard negatively, whereas the effect of safe certification subsidy is not clear. In constraint factors, production environmental supervision (PESUPV) and agricultural input supervision (AISUPV) have significant effects in reducing farmers' moral hazard, whereas the effects of production process supervision and market access supervision are not clear. Further, the incentives from higher profits of safe agro-products play a greater role in the prevention of farmers' moral hazard than the constraints from PESUPV and AISUPV. The results indicate that farmers' moral hazard in safe farming is more likely to be prevented by incentives compared with constraints.⁴

Since the 1990s, China has developed a unique system of progressively stringent food quality production standards—'hazard-free', 'green food', and organic—on its purported path to zero ecological impact and zero food safety risk.⁵

1.1.2 Origin of CSA and Teikei

The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement, which involves local farmers and community members working together as partners to create a sustainable local food system.⁶

CSAs have the potential to enhance economically-viable alternatives for local farmers in rural areas, while simultaneously improving local access to healthy foods and fostering social equity and perceptions of democracy for members of the community.⁷

³ Jim Bingen, Alex Serrano, Julie Howard, *Linking farmers to markets: different approaches to human capital development*, Food Policy, Volume 28, Issue 4, August 2003, Pages 405–419.

⁴ Xiong Ying et al. Prevention of farmers' moral hazard in safe farming in China: by incentives or constraints?, *Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies*, Volume 3, Issue 2.

⁵ Steffanie Scott et al. Contradictions in state- and civil society-driven developments in China's ecological agriculture sector, *Food Policy*, Volume 45, April 2014, Pages 158–166.

⁶ Joan M. Brehm, et., Motivations For Participating in Community Supported Agriculture and Their Relationship with Community Attachment and Social Capital, *Southern Rural Sociology*, 23(1), 2008, p95.

⁷ Joan M. Brehm, et., Motivations For Participating in Community Supported Agriculture and Their Relationship with Community Attachment and Social Capital, *Southern Rural Sociology*, 23(1), 2008, p96.

All the way around the world in countries as diverse as the United States, Japan, France, China or Mali, people who farm and people who eat are forming communities around locally grown food. CSA, Teikei, Reciproco – the names may be different but the essence is the same. ⁸ Active citizens are making a commitment to local farms to share the risks and the bounty of ecological farming.

The modern CSA originated in Japan in the 1960s, when Japanese women became concerned about the loss of farmland and the rising levels of imported foods. In response, the women asked local farmers to grow fruits and vegetables for them and the farmers agreed with the caveat that families had to commit themselves to supporting the farmers to make it economically viable. ⁹ The term “Teikei” became universal, and its philosophy and marketing methods can be seen in CSA farms in North America, AMAP partnerships in France and the creation of the URGENCI International network.

Human history abounds in examples of specific groups of non-farmers being connected with specific farms—the medieval manor, the Soviet system of linking a farm with a factory, or the steady attachment of particular customers to the stand of a particular farm at a farmers’ market. ¹⁰

How to support and encourage alternative practices for agricultural sustainability and rural development is worth research.

1.1.3 Necessity of China’s CSA: sustainable rural and urban development

The current economy is growing very fast in China, but other aspects associated with the scale and rapidity of this growth are not satisfactory. In recent years, the issue of China’s food safety has been a primary focus of the media at home and abroad due to the continual recurrence of food safety scandals. ¹¹ The scandal has deepened widespread

⁸ Elizabeth Henderson: *The World of Community Supported Agriculture*, <http://www.chelseagreen.com/content/elizabeth-henderson-the-world-of-community-supported-agriculture/>.

⁹ Van En, R. 1995. “Eating for Your Community: Towards Agriculture supported Community.” *In Context* 42:29-31.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Henderson: *The World of Community Supported Agriculture*, <http://www.chelseagreen.com/content/elizabeth-henderson-the-world-of-community-supported-agriculture/>.

¹¹ Hong-Gang Ni, Hui Zeng, *Law enforcement is key to China's food safety*,

feelings of mistrust and consumer anxiety over food safety. Major sources of food poisoning in China include pathogenic microorganisms, toxic animals and plants entering the food supply, and chemical contamination. Meanwhile, two growing food safety issues are illegal additives and contamination of the food supply by toxic industrial waste. China's connections to global agricultural markets are also having important effects on food supply and food safety within the country. Although the Chinese Government has shown determination to reform laws, establish monitoring systems, and strengthen food safety regulation, weak links in implementation remain.¹² Frequent food safety incidents have increased Chinese consumers' concerns about food quality and safety. This has resulted in an expansion of the safe food market, a segment that includes hazard free, green and organic food. Chinese consumers have a high awareness of safe food but limited knowledge about the concept of safe food, low recognition of the relevant labels and limited ability to identify safe food. Despite limited knowledge about safe food, Chinese consumers generally hold positive attitudes towards it, particularly with regard to its safety, quality, nutrition and taste. They are willing to pay more for safe food products.¹³ Consumers in China, on average, are willing to pay 47% more for Green vegetables and 40% more for Green meat than for their conventional counterparts.¹⁴

Since the spring of 2008, an increase of urinary tract stones in infants and young children were noticed by pediatricians in Gansu, Hebei, Beijing, and other cities/provinces. This was followed by an epidemic of urinary tract stones in infants and young children in more than 10 provinces in the mainland of China. In September 2008, the cause of this unusual epidemic was identified, i.e. the illegal use of “protein essence” (melamine, an industrially synthesized chemical) in raw milk (the main ingredient of infant formula) to falsely increase the protein content of raw milk after dilution with water. This was a typical case of raw milk adulteration. When melamine concentration was high enough in the infant formula, because of its very low solubility, it formed crystals or stones in the urinary tract of infants and young children. The names of the 22 dairy companies whose infant formula products have been found tainted with melamine were immediately released by the State Council. The Sanlu Company was

Environmental Pollution, Volume 157, Issue 7, July 2009, Pages 1990–1992.

¹² Prof Hon-Ming Lam, Food supply and food safety issues in China, *The Lancet*, Volume 381, Issue 9882, 8–14 June 2013, Pages 2044–2053.

¹³ Rongduo Liu et al. Consumers' attitudes and behaviour towards safe food in China: A review, *Food Control*, Volume 33, Issue 1, September 2013, Pages 93–104.

¹⁴ Xiaohua Yu et al. Willingness to pay for the “Green Food” in China, *Food Policy*, Volume 45, April 2014, Pages 80–87.

identified as the one most seriously violated the law.¹⁵

According to a report from the Chinese Ministry of Health, 294 000 infants had been affected by melamine-contaminated infant formula by the end of November 2008. More than 50 000 infants have been hospitalized, and six deaths have been confirmed.¹⁶ This scandal became a disaster and destroyed the trust system of domestic milk powder market.

Rapid income growth is changing the structure of Chinese food expenditure, a development that has important implications for China's agricultural and food sector and for international trade in agricultural products. As household incomes rise, consumers demand not only a greater quantity of food, but also higher quality.¹⁷

CSA will benefit in three aspects in China: Consumers can get fresh and safe food, have a sense of involvement in the process of price setting and field visit; Farmers can get regular order, price guarantee, risk share and organic farming; The harmony of ecosystem and balance of nature will be better achieved.

1.2 Goal of the study

1.2.1 Objective

1) To develop the knowledge base and practical skills necessary to address chronic problems in rural China from the perspective of NGO/NPO ;

2) To experience and learn how to improve the lives and living conditions of the poor and marginalized people;

3) To gain a thorough understanding of voluntary and non-profit organization in Japan and its impact on rural development in Japanese society, then apply the experience to Chinese society.

¹⁵ CHEN Jun-shi, A worldwide food safety concern in 2008—melamine-contaminated infant formula in China caused urinary tract stone in 290 000 children in China, *Chinese Medical Journal* 2009;122(3):243-244.

¹⁶ WHO expert meeting to review toxicological aspects of melamine and cyanuric acid, Ottawa, Canada, 1–4 December 2008, Executive Summary. (Accessed at December 8, 2008 http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/Exec_Summary_melamine.pdf).

¹⁷ Fred Gale and Kuo Huang, Demand for Food Quantity and Quality in China, United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Report Number 32 January 2007.

1.2.2 Limitation

Detailed investigations of other cases in Japan and elsewhere are necessary to really understand how and why different criteria are more or less important, or more or less achievable in given contexts.¹⁸

Because of language barrier, field visit is limited to several places with the interpretation of my counterpart. Failure to access Japanese books on my topic is kind of limitation to broaden my understanding of original materials.

Because of time limit, the research only focuses on two or three cases in each side. And the report does not cover the legislation and e-commerce.

1.3 Methodology

The research is based primarily on case studies in two diverse country contexts with active CSA performance: China and Japan. The countries were chosen in conjunction with local partners with the aim of using examples from both developed country and developing country with very different political and economic environments, but share similar background of urban consumer anxiety and rural organic planting initiation.

The research involved the following activities:

- . Literature review of rural development, organic agriculture and consumer food safety concern in the countries concerned.
- . Overview of current regulatory frameworks and obstacles faced by social enterprises in legal registration.
- . Semi-structured interviews with NGOs/NPOs and social enterprises in the selected sectors to assess current role and new opportunities for rural-urban sustainability.

Cases were chosen to focus on local NGOs and social enterprises with a capacity to use and implement the findings. In China, the study was carried out in Center for

¹⁸ Gavin Parker, Sustainable food? Teikei, Co-operatives and food citizenship in Japan and the UK.

Advancement of Rural-urban Sustainability (LvGeng) and Nurturland. In Japan, The case study was undertaken in Tsukutte Taberu Kai , Daichi-o-Mamoru-Kai and Consumer cooperatives. To better understand the background and operation, The author spent lots of time on field visit, based on the cases chosen in the report.

2. Grassroots NGOs' role in Chinese rural-urban sustainability

2.1 Crisis of sustainable development

Due to differences in social development, culture and political system, Chinese NGOs have widely different background and history from NGOs in developed countries. As far as the society in which they emerged and developed is concerned, western NGOs emerged in the post-modern era as a reform and remedy of the weaknesses of modern society, while Chinese NGOs are the inevitable results of China's modernization.

Chinese NGOs sprang from the double dysfunction of government and market; the disillusion of an almighty government in the 1970s and the shattered hopes of a magic market in 1990s. However, the "dysfunction" of Chinese government is not equal to the failure of a western welfare state namely chaos in offering common goods, it refers to a weak and feeble economy resulted from a tight regulation over the distribution of resources. Similarly, the Chinese "dysfunction" of market is also different from the western one. Chinese dysfunction of market refers to an imperfection of the market economy, which has been distorted due to too much intervention of government; the western "dysfunction" means the intrinsic flaws of a free market.

Lester M. Salamon, a pioneer in the empirical study of the nonprofit sector in the United States and a leading specialist on the nonprofit sector, said that the pressure and motivation promoting the development of non-profit sector has at least three sources: the enthusiasm and initiative of the frontline; public and private institutions undertaking non-profit causes outside of the system; top-down policies. The most fundamental force, however, is the masses that are resolute in addressing the social problems, in rallying to improve their conditions and in striving for their basic rights. Their responsibility for their own life drives the development of NGOs. However, public with the awareness is rarely seen in China. Therefore, non-governmental forces seldom take the initiative in non-profit causes.¹⁹

¹⁹ Guangcai,p83.

Why is NGO important in rural-urban sustainability? I think there are at least 3 reasons:

(1)To reach out to marginalized people in remote areas where governments have not been able to reach.

(2)To bridge the information gap between farmers and consumers.

(3)To equip rural people with modern idea and advanced technology.

2.2 Case study: LvGeng

2.2.1 Introduction of LvGeng

Guangdong LvGeng Social Work Service Center, which changed its English name into Center for Advancement of Rural-urban Sustainability in 2014, is an NGO approved by Provincial Department of Civil Affairs and registered in 2011. It is originated by Professor Zhang Heqing(张和清) from department of Social Work at Sun Yat-sen University, its vision “Co-operative, Fair trade, Eco-civilization, Sustainable development”, and mission “Mutual help, Culture continuity, Gender equality, Eco conservation”.

2.2.1 LvGeng’s Project:

LvGeng has been dedicated to the community development for more than 8 years. Realizing that it’s better to help the local people establish self-esteem and gratitude towards land, LvGeng is endeavored to teach farmers ecological agriculture methods and sell locally grown vegetables to big cities such as Guangzhou.

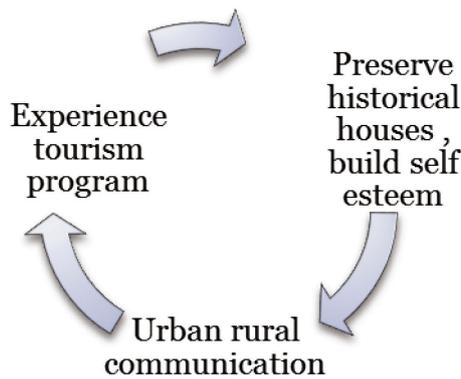
2.2.1.1 Fair trade



(Source: Author’s own investigation and LvGeng Conghua Project Report, 2012)

2.2.1.2 Village hotels

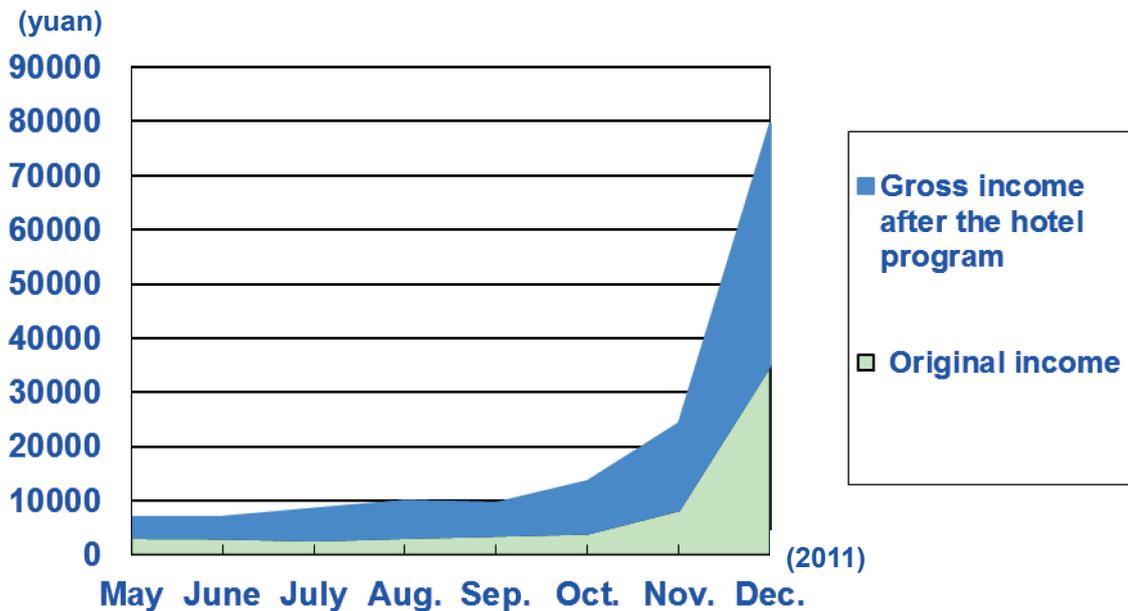
To make full use of local resource and connect urban consumers, LvGeng organized 8 women in the Xianniaoxi village to repair the abandoned houses and decorate them into village hotels. Combined with experience tourism program, the hotels brought extra income to 8 women.



(Source: Author's own investigation and LvGeng Conghua Project Report, 2012)

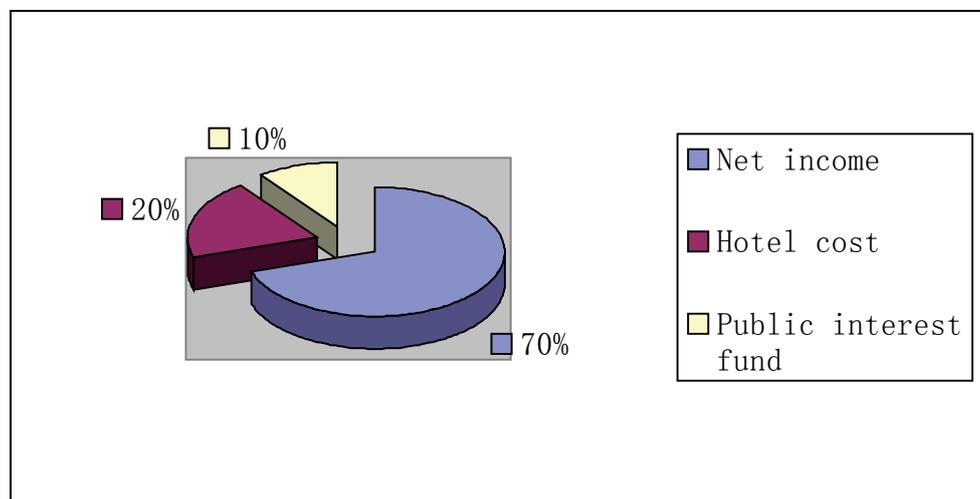
2.2.3 Positive change

2.2.3.1 Income change before and after village hotel 2011 (Gross income of eight women involved; the currency unit: yuan).



(Source: Author's own investigation and LvGeng Conghua Project Report, 2012)

2.2.3.2 Distribution of Village Hotel Income 2011 (The currency unit:yuan)



(Source: Author's own investigation and LvGeng Conghua Project Report, 2012)

2.2.3.3 Benefit of villagers from the program(From Jan.2010 to Dec. 2011)

Program	Data	Beneficiary
Village hotel & Green tourism Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income: 128,436.6 RMB; 2. Fundamental construction labor salary:29,705 RMB; 3. Tourist groups: 89 groups 4. Tourists:776 persons 	8 women from Xianniaoxi(仙娘溪) village hotel management group and other 5 families as homestay.
Eco-agriculture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product delivering:243,830 RMB; 2. Farmer's market:15,000 RMB 3. Cooperative farmers: 31; 4. Honey groups: 6 	105 farmers from Xianniaoxi(仙娘溪)、Changji(长岌)、Leming(乐明) villages

Urban-rural co-operative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fair trade shop income: 135,420 RMB; 2. Urban organic markets: 10 times 	
Persons making traditional food and handicrafts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bamboo craft: 2 persons 2. pickled vegetable : 2 persons 3. Organic Tofu: 1 person 4. Organic honey: 1 person 	6 farmers

2.2.3.4 Local contribution from the program(From Jan.2010 to Dec. 2011)

Local culture restoration	<p>Culture museums: 2</p> <p>Ancestral temples: 1</p> <p>Fengshui pool(风水池): 1</p> <p>Culture square: 1</p> <p>Library: 1</p> <p>Social work station: 1</p> <p>Long-term volunteers: 89 persons</p>	67 families from the whole xianniaoxi(仙娘溪) village and some villagers from Changji(长岌) and Yangwei(杨围) village
Environment protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agricultural eco environment improvement(eco-planting) 2. Living environment improvement(Public health education and village hotel training) 3. Village environment 	67 families from the whole xianniaoxi(仙娘溪) village

	protection(Volunteering in collecting community waste once a month)	
Women empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community public affairs 2. Community environment 3. Self-esteem and satisfaction 	8 members from women group and other 25 non-members from the village
Training and consultation	<p>Women group training: 5</p> <p>Villagers outreach training: 1</p> <p>Villagers consultative meetings:15</p> <p>Joint meeting of women group and farmers' cooperative meeting:2</p>	Villagers from Changliu(长流) village

(Source: Author's own investigation and LvGeng Conghua Project Report, 2012)

As the “organic” is accredited by government authorities, but lots of Chinese farms are not accredited through the official channel, so these farms call themselves “ecological farm”(生态农场).

2.2.4 LvGeng's partnership—Nurtureland

Nurtureland is described as non-profit organization, founded in 2006 by urban groups of critical thoughts, who realized lots of social problems originated from commercial society between “urban-rural and farmer-land” the predator-prey relationship. Nurtureland is focusing on sensitive relationship between Wellbeing of human and health of soil. LvGeng is cooperating with Nurtureland to sell the produce to the market. With the development of e-commerce, Nurtureland established an online shop and wechat shop selling ecological vegetables and poultry to interested consumers.

So, the stakeholders involved in the rural-urban sustainable development can be described as the following:

2.2.4.1 The rural-urban sustainable development



(Source: authors' compilation)

2.3 CSA Experiment in China

Ecological agriculture is a pressing concern worldwide and is causing people across the globe to increase their awareness on issues surrounding food importance and sustainable livelihoods. The development of eco-agriculture and ecologically constructed communities provide valuable starting points of reference for grappling with these issues.

In China, almost 80% of the population are rural people. Chinese farms are predominantly small-size, and the problems faced CSA farms are obviously tied to the problems of peasant agriculture in an age of industrial cultivation and global markets. CSA farms are working to bridge the gap of knowledge and trust between urban consumers and their sources of food in general by initiating evolving dialogues about what we eat and where it comes from.

Little Donkey Farm was established in April 2008 comprising 230 mu and situated in Beijing. The experiment that claims to be China's first "CSA" (community-supported agriculture) – the North American model of the experiments with "alternative food networks" that have been sweeping the globe over the past few years – was set up in Beijing by a student of Wen Tiejun at Renmin University named Shi Yan.²⁰ Cultivation

²⁰ Husunzi, alternative food networks" in China, <http://chinastudygroup.net/2009/10/alternative-food-networks-in-china/>, visited on August 8th, 2014.

at the farm follows a programme of non-chemical agriculture designed to improve soil health and agro ecosystem well-being. This program borrows knowledge and techniques from traditional local farming practice; permaculture systems; the ‘Natural Farming’ system developed by South Korean master farmer Cho Han Kyu; and Shi Yan’s experience with organic farming in the US.²¹Part of Little Donkey’s mission is to include agriculture in the tertiary industry of culture and heritage through mobilizing not just farmers, but citizens, NGOs, and governments to join the sustainable agricultural movement. Little Donkey also seeks to use international experience to build “civic agriculture and cooperative sustainable agriculture.”

Little Donkey Farm boasts a core research base, connecting rural and urban areas through affiliation with NGO named Green Ground Eco-Tech Center (Beijing), founded in 2003, formerly known as the Institute of Rural Reconstruction. Green Ground Eco-Tech Center has extensive experience in urban and rural ecological agriculture. Currently, Little Donkey Farm utilizes organic production and marketing techniques through research and development to support ongoing environmental protection. The farm also acts as a place for community involvement through visits or public land rentals, ecological agriculture demonstrations, training and education, technology research and development, as well as theoretical research and policy advocacy to continue the exploration of rural and urban China’s road to sustainable development. The farm also organize lessons, teaching citizens to care food and environment with effective techniques, helping them plant better in their own land.

More and more CSA experiments are undertaken in big cities with developed economies such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Guangzhou CSA is another pioneer in this new field. Different from Little Donkey Farm, Guangzhou CSA is defined as a NGO, acting as a platform to introduce ecological farms to eager consumers. LvGeng is also cooperating with Guangzhou CSA.

2.4 Challenges and problems

2.4.1 Farmers’ attitude towards land

²¹ Yan Shi , Cunwang Cheng , Peng Lei , Tiejun Wen & Caroline Merrifield (2011) Safe food, green food, good food: Chinese Community Supported Agriculture and the rising middle class, *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, 9:4, 551-558, DOI: 10.1080/14735903.2011.619327.

With modernization, natural farming was once deemed as inefficiency and indecency because it is labor intensive and less mechanized. Without effective marketing channel, farmers are hesitate to plant: What to plant, how to sell? As the income from the land can't afford the family, farmers are reluctant to plant. Young people go to big cities as migrant worker, leaving the old and children home.

2.4.2 Fragility of mutual trust

As I have mentioned before, because of numerous food safety scandals in China, the trust system between producers and consumers was almost broken.

How to guarantee the quality of organic products? One major challenge facing all forms of alternative economic production in general, and food in particular, is that of standards and quality. On one hand, not all farmers are well equipped with modern technology to grow ecological vegetables. On the other hand, it's difficult for consumers to supervise the whole farming procedure. A far greater and more insidious threat is the industrial-scale production of organic food by transnational corporations, trying to cash in on the 'niche market' of the increasing number of people who have understood the dangers of GMOs and pesticides, but are unable to distinguish between industrial-organic and family-farm produce, and who see the organic food sold in supermarkets as an attractive option. It seems important to me to raise public awareness on this issue.

2.4.2 Legal barrier

Chinese NGOs are largely dependent on the government since they are lacking in condition and capability to stand on their own feet. Generally speaking, government and NGOs can be cooperative, discrepant or both since the two belong to different sectors of society. In China, however, the development, resource acquisition, structure and management of NGOs are closely connected to the administrative system.²²

A dual management system means that, on the one hand, NGOs need to observe the Regulations on Registration and Management of Social Communities and register in the

²² L. Wang, Poverty Alleviation Investment and Private Economy in China: An Exploration of The Guangeai Programme, DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-40612-6_4, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2014.,p88.

Civil Administration Department; on the other, they have to be supervised by their corresponding instrumentalities. In the period between the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 and the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Party Central Committee, the Party and the nation judged and selected organizations of the day with a socialist value outlook and disbanded some of them; several organizations were transformed to democratic parties while some were integrated into the political structure. The reserved NGOs all received financial appropriate funds instead of raising funds on their own. These changes made Chinese NGOs under the control of the government since then.²³ Even though the dual management requirement has been loosened, the registration procedure is still a problem in China. If NGOs pursue sustainable development and operate under sunshine, recognition of legal status is crucial.

3. Japanese experience: Teikei system

3.1 Introduction of Teikei system

3.1.1 Teikei: Social movement of CSA

Consumers and farmers shared common interest in safer and healthier farming methods and products but they remained isolated from each other. Because there were no distribution system for the organic products. Therefore, organic farmers and consumers had to establish an alternative distribution systems based on a partnership and mutual trust. This is the beginning of “Teikei” system in Japan. ²⁴

Teikei activities provide many opportunities for farmers and consumers to meet together including farm visits, meetings, and so on. In Japan, Teikei is based on the principle of mutual cooperation of farmers and consumers, with the basic idea that everyone involved will be able to share a deep understanding about the farming methods.

Most of Japan's Teikei farmers have selected to not get the JAS (Japan Agricultural Standard) Organic Certification. IFOAM has recently defined Participatory Guarantee Systems as “locally focused quality assurance systems.” This applies especially to farmers who sell their produce at farmers markets, regional natural shops and

²³ The Guangcai Programme and the Poverty Alleviation Mechanism of NGOs,,p88.

²⁴ Masaya Koriyama, Introduction of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Japan -the history, philosophy behind CSA and Teikei system,2010.

sometimes regional supermarkets, etc.²⁵The aim is to find novel ways to certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders, built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange.

3.1.2 History of Teikei system

Organic agriculture in Japan started with the introduction of the Teikei system at the time when the Japanese economy began to emerge as a world power in the 1960s. Although the Japanese standard of living and luxury had improved, many different societal problems were beginning to surface. In urban areas, the growth of population caused traffic, pollution, crime, and a degradation of the traditional community. Many people in the city became isolated and stressed. As business took priority of human life, many foods were found with different kinds of additives and they lost credibility among consumers.

A small group of Japanese women concerned with food safety, pesticide use, processed and imported foods, and the corresponding decrease in the regional small-scale farming population in Japan. In 1965, this group of women approached a local farm family with an idea to address the issues of concern to them. The essence of their proposal was that the farmer would provide their families with fresh milk, fresh fruits, and vegetables, and the families would guarantee to pay a negotiated fair price. The farmer agreed so long as they organized a large enough number of people willing to commit to purchasing the farm's production. A contract was drawn and the Teikei concept was born. Translated literally, Teikei means "partnership," but philosophically it means "food with the farmer's face on it."²⁶

Consumers and farmers shared common interest in safer and healthier farming methods and products but they remained isolated from each other. Because there were no distribution system for the organic products. Therefore, organic farmers and consumers had to establish an alternative distribution systems based on a partnership and mutual trust. This is the beginning of "Teikei" system in Japan.²⁷The approach is centered on

²⁵ Organic Farming in Japan: Lessons for the World
<http://www.nishoren.org/en/?p=1099>, visited on July 7th, 2014..

²⁶ Mike Lewis, Food Revolution in Japan,
<http://www.newsociety.com/blog/2012/Guest-Post-Mike-Lewis-Food-Revolution-in-Japan-BookaDay>, visited on July 28th, 2014.

²⁷ Gavin Parker, Sustainable food? Teikei, Co-operatives and food citizenship in Japan

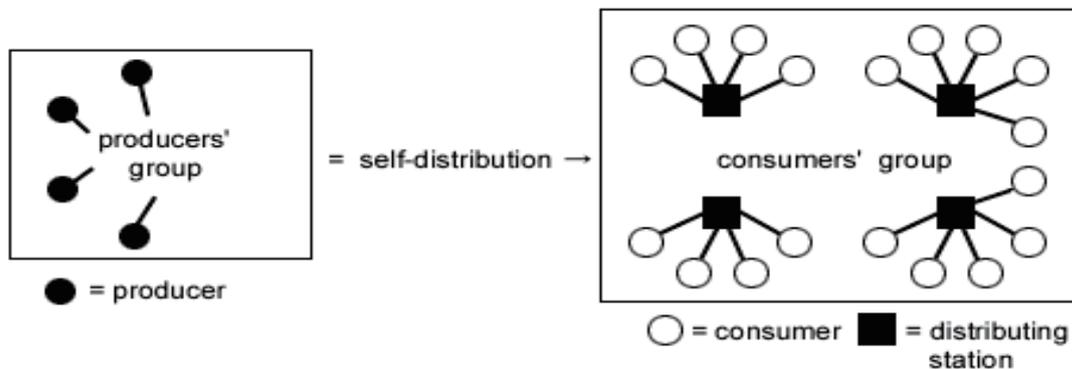
an alternative distribution system based around organic agriculture in Japan.

In 1975, consumer awareness became even more focused with the release of Sawako Ariyoshi book *Fukugouosen* (a Japanese word meaning “complex pollution”) that disclosed the danger of agricultural products contaminated with pesticides, chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and antibiotics. Meanwhile in rural areas, some farmers had suffered from disease after applying pesticides and herbicides. Then those consumers, out of a sense of crisis, sought better food and met with farmers who wanted to produce products that gave priority to safeness rather than appearance. This was the beginning of the Teikei system. In this spirit, the Japan Organic Agriculture Association was founded In 1971 with consumers, farmers, scholars, public servants and cooperative workers in order to promote Teikei system.

Under the Teikei system, relationships are face-to-face, as all products are distributed directly from producers to consumers. There is no middleman or costly inspection bodies, so the pricing is very competitive compared to conventional distribution systems.
28



(3.1.2.1 Conventional marketing)²⁹



(3.1.2.2 Alternative marketing: Teikei)³⁰

and the UK. Working Papers in Real Estate & Planning 11/05 ,April 2005.

²⁸ <http://www.joaa.net/mokuhyou/Teikei.html>.

²⁹ Cited from Japan Organic Agriculture Association website.

³⁰ Cited from Japan Organic Agriculture Association website.

Japanese consumers after the 1990's have moved from the safety and security of food to a new stage of nature protection movement. They are interested in not only securing agricultural products not depending on pesticides and chemical fertilizers but also to build an agriculture and rural area, which protect nature and biological diversities from being contaminated by modern farming methods. As exchanges between consumers and farmers have become more active, consumer have recognized that multi-functional roles demonstrated through appropriate agricultural production activities in rural areas include roles to preserve national land and the natural environment, foster water resources, create scenic landscapes, and pass on cultures.

3.1.3 Ten basic principles of Teikei

The system of Teikei can be described in ten principles³³ below:

1. Principle of mutual assistance. The essence of this partnership lies, not in trading itself, but in the friendly relationship between people. Therefore, both producers and consumers should help each other on the basis of mutual understanding: This relation should be established through the reflection of past experiences.
2. Principle of intended production. Producers should, through consultation with consumers, intend to produce the maximum amount and maximum variety of produce within the capacity of the farms.
3. Principle of accepting the produce. Consumers should accept all the produce that has been grown according to previous consultation between both groups, and their diet should depend as much as possible on this produce.
4. Principle of mutual concession in the price decision. In deciding the price of the produce, producers should take full account of savings in labor and cost, due to grading and packaging processes being curtailed, as well as of all their produce being accepted; and consumers should take into full account the benefit of getting fresh, safe, and tasty foods.
5. Principle of deepening friendly relationships. The continuous development of this partnership requires the deepening of friendly relationships between producers and

³³ Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 1978.

consumers. This will be achieved only through maximizing contact between the partners.

6. Principle of self-distribution. On this principle, the transportation of produce should be carried out by either the producer's or consumer's groups, up to the latter's depots, without dependence on professional transporters.

7. Principle of democratic management. Both groups should avoid over-reliance upon limited number of leaders in their activities, and try to practice democratic management with responsibility shared by all. The particular conditions of the members' families should be taken into consideration on the principle of mutual assistance.

8. Principle of learning among each group. Both groups of producers and consumers should attach much importance to studying among themselves, and should try to keep their activities from ending only in the distribution of safe foods.

9. Principle of maintaining the appropriate group scale. The full practice of the matters written in the above articles will be difficult if the membership or the territory of these groups becomes too large. That is the reason why both of them should be kept to an appropriate size. The development of this movement in terms of membership should be promoted through increasing the number of groups and the collaboration among them.

10. Principle of steady development. In most cases, neither producers nor consumers will be able to enjoy such good conditions as mentioned above from the very beginning. Therefore, it is necessary for both of them to choose promising partners, even if their present situation is unsatisfactory, and to go ahead with the effort to advance in mutual cooperation.

As we can read above, Teikei system stresses in the ecologically way of life rather than technical emphasis on sustainable agriculture. We think that the problems of the present agricultural condition will not change by just converting conventional farms and farmers to organic. Unless we pay closer attention to the larger systems that production and consumption are imbedded in, it will be difficult for the organic movement to stay in touch with its original meaning.

There are some organic farmers who think what they are doing is not Teikei as it doesn't

meet the ten principles of Teikei, Teikei is heavy, Teikei is old and so forth. There seems to be a tendency to take Teikei negatively, but Teikei originally means to help each other and mutual support, and the first principle says its heart is “bond”.³⁴ This is the only necessary and sufficient condition of Teikei. For your information, from the second through the tenth are methodologies.

3.2 Case study: Tsukutte Taberu Kai, Daichi and Coops

3.2.1 Anzen-na Tabemono-o Tsukutte Taberu Kai (The Grow and Eat Safe Food Society)

Anzen-na Tabemono-o Tsukutte Taberu Kai (The Grow and Eat Safe Food Society) in Nishi Tokyo City, Tokyo started in 1973 when housewives in Tokyo who worried about the food safety, rushed into Miyoshi Village in Chiba and requested farmers to grow rice, fruits and vegetables without using any chemical fertilizers and agrochemicals. The association is the member of JOAA, which follows the principles of Teikei.

Tsukutte Taberu Kai and Miyoshi Village Producers Group are in Teikei together and have set up three principles for the purpose of realizing a healthy food life and proper farming, to protect the health and lives of children, grandchildren and generations to come. The three principles are as the following³⁵:

- (1) The society will accept all that is produced;
- (2) The society will respect farm producers’ deciding the sale price;
- (3) The society will support the farm producers to produce and deliver the products and takes responsibility as well.

The Teikei alliance between Anzen-na Tabemono-o Tsukutte Taberu Kai(The Grow and Eat Safe Food Society) and Miyoshi Village Producers Group has worked for more than 40 years. The number of members at the very beginning was 111, and reached 1,372 at one time in 1985, but gradually decreased. On average, it has been 850 members in

³⁴ Wakashima Reiko, Social Reform from the Kitchen: From Anzen-na Tabemono-o Tsukutte Taberu Kai and the Organic Agriculture Teikei Action of Miyoshi Village Producers’ Group, in Teikei Networks for Forests, Homelands and the Sea-All Connected Through Humus, Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 2010.

³⁵ Wakashima Reiko, Social reform from the kitchen—From Anzen-na Tabemono-o Tsukutte Taberu Kai (The Grow & Eat Safe Food Society) and the Organic Agriculture Teikei Action of Miyoshi Village Producers’ Group , in Teikei Networks for Forests, Homelands and the Sea-All Connected Through Humus, Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 2010,p27.

2010.

3.2.2 The revolution of an radish: Daichi

Daichi is famous not only in Japan, but also in China, especially after its cooperation with a Chinese NGO. Even though it's different from the face-to-face Teikei relationship, but its contract farming with farmers and direct selling to consumers, and the social responsibility based on environment protection, can fall into the category of Teikei.

As Japanese agriculture was rapidly modernized to improve productivity in the late 1950s, practical farmers were quick to adopt pesticides and chemical fertilizers. However, after 15 to 20 years, they began to understand the dangers of using agrichemicals. Living organisms disappeared from the soil and increases in crop yields finally fell off in spite of expectations. Some people reported feeling ill or getting sick because of agrichemicals and some farmers began to stop using them on the principle that food produced using such dangerous substances cannot be good for the human body.

At the inception of those organizations, which was about 30 years ago, such movements for organic farming were badly outnumbered. It was a time when development was believed to lead to happiness, and in the agriculture sector, productivity was increased through the use of chemical fertilizers and agrichemicals, while tasks such as weeding the lawn could be eliminated thanks to agrichemicals. At the same time, consumers started gaining knowledge about food safety and the dangers of agrichemicals, and many people were influenced by the novel *Fukugo Osen* (combined pollution) (by Sawako Ariyoshi), which was serialized from 1974 to 1975 in the *Asahi Shimbun*, a major Japanese newspaper, and depicted the threat of agriculture and its quest for efficiency. This same influence led to the establishment of "Daichi-o-Mamoru-Kai" in 1975.

The Daichi-o-Mamoru-Kai was established in 1975 as a result of an encounter with farmers disillusioned with agrichemicals. "Rather than shout a million times about the danger of agrichemicals, let's start by growing, delivering and eating just one agrichemical-free daikon radish." Under this slogan, the association was established as

an NGO³⁶ and first started its activities as a civil movement working with farmers to seek ways of growing agrichemical-free vegetables and rice and delivering them to consumers in urban areas.

And two years later, "Daichi Co." was established and started to encourage schools to use chemical-free foods in school lunches, and to encourage supermarkets and green grocers to sell chemical-free foods. Up to the early 1980s, we also tried to expand our activities.

In the late 1980s, forward-looking co-ops started selling organic farm products, and in the 1990s, when this type of food became more common on the market, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries issued new guidelines for chemical-free foods (in 1992) in order to crack down on counterfeits. Public understanding of chemical-free foods was then deepened, and the Law on Promotion of Organic Agriculture came into effect in 2006, which provides a legal structure for sustainable agriculture.³⁷

Daichi's delivery service initially was a group-purchasing system that required at least three consumers to place a combined order. Then, with a growing number of working homemakers, it began a door-to-door delivery service for individual households. With this, its number of consumer members dramatically increased.

The company classifies its products into five categories: vegetables, meat and eggs, fish, processed products, and general merchandise. It has strict safety standards in each category, and only carries products that meet these standards. In the vegetable category, four standards apply: the soil must be maintained with organic fertilizer, the soil must never be sterilized, chemical weed killers must never be used, and pesticide use must be minimized as far as possible. Daichi and a third party investigator confirm whether products meet these standards.

At the end of 2009, Daichi began to cooperate with Chinese famous NGO –Fuping institute, and Fuping's Eco-agriculture business started since then.

³⁶ Before the issue of NPO law, there is no legal procedure of registering an NGO.

³⁷ Kazuyoshi Fujita, Thinking of Japan and the World through Food and Agriculture, http://www.japanfs.org/en/projects/sus_college/sus_college_id033811.html, visited on July 8th, 2014.

It is a joint program co-funded by both sides. The program aims at providing technology, management training and seminar gathering for creditworthy, earth-loving and eco-conscious cooperative farmers and professional cooperatives. An Eco-agriculture exchange network composed of over 20 professional cooperatives and over 200 farmers has come into being.

3.2.3 Consumer Cooperatives

If there is something more than just direct exchange of goods and money between farmer and consumer, then it can be called Teikei. Some co-operatives may be called Teikei consumers.³⁸ Japan's consumer cooperatives conduct two pillar businesses of "Sanchoku-Teikei" (direct transaction of food and coop-PB products under contract with producers) and operating supermarket-level stores.³⁹ The co-ops have developed joint buying system in which members form small group units of 5-10 households called "Han" through which they place advance orders for various kinds of goods. The joint buying system and "Han" group unit were established in the 1950's and early 1960's, when consumer were worried about threatening living conditions of food safety and environment caused by agricultural chemicals, artificial food additives, wrong labeling. They also wished to know proper information how to produce agricultural products and processed food.

During the rapid economic growth of Japan in the 1960's, co-ops also grew rapidly and not only individual coops but also the Japanese Consumers' Union developed new products. Originally the activities of joint buying, such as the circulation of order forms, totaling, submission of orders, receipt of goods, and collection of money were carried out at the "Han" level. With the introduction of computerized systems in the 1990's, it becomes easy for individual members to place individual orders directly. As the joint buying system grew, coop members tried to reform the organizational structure of coop.

They established such organs as unit leaders' council and steering committees. The group unit "Han" and the steering committees have become basis units for grass roots

³⁸ Namiki Yoshio, *Reactivating communities to fend off the global economy*, in Teikei Networks for Forests, Homelands and the Sea-All Connected Through Humus, Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 2010.

³⁹ But we should clarify that not all the Co-ops fall into the category of Teikei defined by JOAA. According to JOAA, Teikei means "producer-consumer co-partnership". The life club co-op at early stage better matches the requirements of Teikei than other co-ops. The Teikei in most co-ops nowadays can be only understood as "direct selling".

membership activities.⁴⁰ The consumers and the producers are connected but still have some distance. This may be difficult to avoid because they are connected through the associations.⁴¹

Co-ops are engaged in a wide array of mutual help activities covering all aspects of daily living including: medicine, insurance, housing, and education. CSA relationships are strongly supported by Japanese co-op members as they allow for more direct communication with the producers on how foods are produced, thereby allowing members to gauge food safety and the soundness of agricultural practices for themselves. The development of coop products can be seen as the starting point for activities undertaken by members. The coops have a specialized committee for inspection and development of coop products. The committee members participate in all phases of products development, including determination of the safety, quality, price, and producer of the products and comparison of samples and conducting of development test.

3.3 Why does Teikei work in Japan?

Organic agricultural practice has developed shared values that underline the importance of environmental conservation and the protection of biodiversity. Our lifestyles reflect these values.

Kobe Conference Declaration announces that it's very important to implement the following four points:

- a. Promote appropriate scale organic agriculture so that producers, distributors, and consumers can cooperate;
- b. Realize the policy to develop local community and biodiversity based on agriculture, food, and environment;
- c. Establish the environmentally sound global trading rules which value local

⁴⁰ MATSUKI Yoichi, Agri-Food Supply Chain Development By Various Chain Leaders: Case Studies in Japan and New Concept of High Nature Value.

⁴¹ Tateno Hiroyuki, *The meaning of Teikei from the farmer's point of view*, in Teikei Networks for Forests, Homelands and the Sea-All Connected Through Humus, Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 2010.

agriculture and food sovereignty;

d. Establish the recycling-oriented and cooperative society based on natural cycle and life cycle.⁴²

UK scholar and practitioner Gavin Parker concluded why has Teikei worked in Japan, after several months' visit and research in Japan.

(1) Fragmented land ownership: Small farm structure pushing people towards co-operation;

(2) Pre-existing co-operatisation due to fragmented land ownership as above and the social milieu which led to the control of Japanese agriculture by the Nohkyo / JA producer co-ops;

(3) The attitude of consumers towards food and environmental and health issues;

(4) Crop types involved-rice features strongly, as well as vegetables and fruit. Some consumers join more than one Teikei group to source different products;

(5) Social organization and the Han (small group) system where groups of consumers share deliveries and order jointly ;

(6) Role of mediating institutions in providing a milieu for interaction and engagement for consumers-i.e. schools.⁴³

Bearing this Declaration in mind and in search of future development of Grow Local, Eat Local Teikei and URGENCI movement we have shared our organic agricultural history, current trends, a new path for the future as follows:

Consumers' concern of food safety has been increasing with the trend moving to environmental conservation. Japanese coops have much experienced the business activities of developing consumer-driven agri-food supply system and its products since

⁴² Kobe Conference Declaration: Community Supported Food and Farming (Symposium Final Declaration).

⁴³ Gavin Parker, Sustainable food: Teikei, Co-operatives and food citizenship in Japan and the UK, working paper in real estate and planning, 11/05, April 2005.

the 1960's. In 21st century they will try to revitalize rural community by making new agri-food supply chains, which can produce environmental friendly food.⁴⁴

4. Conclusion: what can we learn from Teikei?

There are numerous lessons to be drawn from Teikei, and the recent history of co-operatives in Japan and using this information selectively I want to address the issue of how to predict the role of grassroots NGOs as the rural-urban bridge for Chinese sustainable development and CSA operation in China.

After reading the materials and undertaking field visit, I found out that the situation China's facing today is very similar as that in Japan in 1970's. LvGeng and its partner's work is very similar as Tsukutte Taberu Kai, connecting farmers and consumers.

Even though Teikei requires face-to face relationship between farmers and consumers, It's better for Chinese counterpart to achieve the goal with the help of NGOs which is devoted into rural development. As the development of Chinese rural economy and educational improvement of rural farmers, one day more farmers and consumers can meet each other and build relationship between each other. At that time, NGOs will not be so important as today in the relationship.

What are most important aspects of Teikei for China to learn? In my opinion, the following should be considered.

4.1 Mutual trust

Mutual trust is the most important content of Teikei. Teikei has created a visible relationship between producers and consumers growing and eating to support each other and learning together. Even if Farmer-Consumer Relationships are close, it is still difficult for consumers to get precise information about produce.⁴⁵ Consumers cannot follow farmers around their fields all the time in order to see what farmers do in cultivating the produce they offer for sale. Direct inspection may reduce uncertainty, but

⁴⁴ MATSUKI Yoichi, Agri-Food Supply Chain Development By Various Chain Leaders: Case Studies in Japan and New Concept of High Nature Value.

⁴⁵ Motoki Akitsu and Namie Aminaka, *The Development of Farmer-Consumer Direct Relationships in Japan: Focusing on the Trade of Organic Produce*, 4th Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA) International Conference, September 2010, Philippines.

is costly. For consumers, trust plays an essential role in reducing uncertainty. When consumers trust farmers completely, consumers can secure something expected without any concrete certification. Trust is one of the key ideas in analyzing modernity in contemporary societies.

The farm products of Teikei are delivered to the consumers to share the blessings from the land for a certain amount of counter value. Both producers and consumers feel happy for the plentiful harvest and sad for the small harvest together, and build a relationship to share the natural blessings.

4.2 Direct selling and Eat Locally Grown

Teikei is not merely an alternative distribution system of organic products, but rather an ecological production and consumption system that places the producers and consumers in a dynamic and creative relationship. The community sharing direct distribution systems, and the ecological consciousness fostered in the Teikei system is what we need to learn from Teikei system.⁴⁶

It's not difficult for Chinese farmers and consumers to understand and accept the idea, because in the past thousand years we were doing the same. Now as the urbanization, consumers living in big cities find it difficult to buy locally grown food. So some grassroots NGOs such as LvGeng and Guangzhou CSA are playing the role of bridge to provide a platform for farmers to sell and consumers to buy. Consumers can learn to cook meals using food that is in season in your own area, purchase food from local farms and farmers markets and eat at restaurants that purchase foods grown on local farms whenever possible.

4.3 Traceability

Food safety is now a major factor for consumers. It has become an urgent matter to restore the confidence of consumers by establishing a system of scientific inspection, guarantees and traceability of food, and making the information publicly available. Teikei is considered to be a chain in which producers can trace all information about production, thus traceability is guaranteed.

⁴⁶ Shinji Hashimoto, Teikei System in Japan, <http://blog.urgenci.net/?p=71m>, visited on August 4, 2014.

This system has the following three characteristics: (i) to establish the production standards; (ii) to record all production history; and (iii) to make the production history known to the public.⁴⁷ The Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Fishery (MAFF) have issued guidelines of the traceability of beef and food in general. Traceability may function as a strategy for product differentiation, since the identity of food now serves as an important part of brands of food.

4.4 Creditability

The voluntary guidelines (i.e. not mandatory) on sustainable agriculture issued by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in 1992 and applied until the year 2000, did not require independent organic certification. In April 2000 new Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) legislation for organic agriculture was implemented. Under the JAS law, all products labelled as organic must be certified by an accredited organic certification agency, and must display the JAS logo.

But JOAA insists it's not necessary for Teikei farmers to get JAS certification because mutual trust is enough to certificate the food safety. Japanese consumers prefer to buy domestically grown products. There is a trend to increasingly buy on price and food safety assurances. Perfect shape and color of a product are important but are no longer the key selling points.

To meet the need of the international trend and domestic market, JOAA began to introduce the participatory guarantee system (PGS) to Japan since the Kobe conference in 2010. PGS offer a complementary, low-cost, locally-based system of quality assurance, with a heavy emphasis on social control and knowledge building. PGS, as a complementary method to third-party certification, is essential to the continued growth of the organic movement, especially if we want to include poorer smallholder farmers who have the most to benefit from organic.⁴⁸ PGS is also workable in Chinese context.

4.5 Balance of nature

⁴⁷ Miki Nagamatsu & Yoichi Matsuki, Food safety and security system in agri-food chains in Japan,

⁴⁸ PGS General Questions, "Why do we need PGS programs? Aren't third-party certification systems enough?", <http://www.ifoam.org/en/pgs-general-questions>, August 13th 2014 visited.

The purpose for producers to grow farm products in Teikei is to build a happy and peaceful world by keeping both consumers and the natural environment healthy and safe.⁴⁹ Japanese farms (both conventional and organic) are mostly small (less than 0.5 ha) with around 85 percent of farmers part-time with an average age of 65 years. Production from Japanese conventional farms is in decline, but it is expected that organically certified products will increase both in area of production and in the range of products presented to the market. A 20-year Teikei member once said: "We wanted to connect 'safe' foods and the support of organic farming with the survival of family farmers, with the preservation of the environment, with opposition to militarism and imperialism, with demands for social justice, and with our need to work collectively to create a better future."

Jennifer Sumner once wrote, "Organic agriculture can strengthen the relationship between rural and urban communities.....CSAs and NGOs are traditional arenas ripe for building bridges."⁵⁰ We have to remember there is special background of rural areas in China. Even though China's economy is developing fast, Chinese rural areas haven't reached the same development stage as Japan's today. Teikei is better achieved by face to face contact, but Chinese rural farmers and urban consumers are not used to know each other and still suffers from information inequality, so NGOs are necessary to get involved in the contact at the early stage as a bridge.

But, with awareness of environmental protection and food safety, emergence of middle-class, step-by-step political, economic and legal reform, China's rural and urban sustainability will be better achieved in the future, and when the grassroots self-organizations are mature , the purpose of sustainability will be fulfilled without NGOs.

⁴⁹ Tateno Hiroyuki, The meaning of Teikei from the farmer's point of view, in Teikei Networks for Forests, Homelands and the Sea-All Connected Through Humus, Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 2010.

⁵⁰ Jennifer Sumner,2009.

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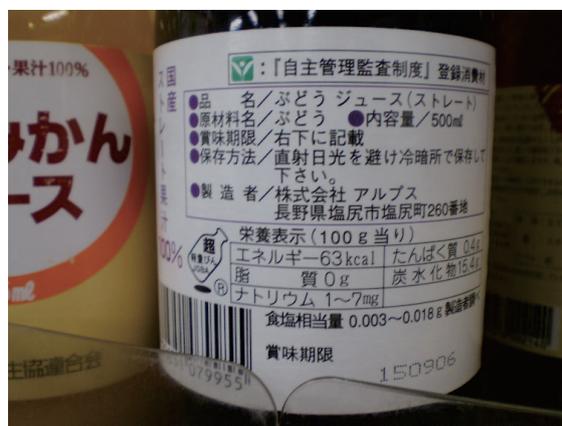
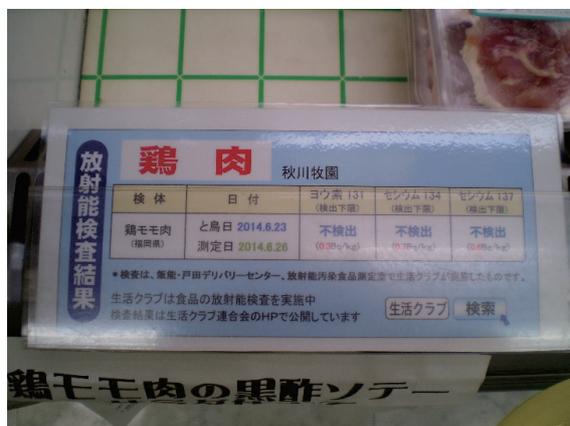
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Appendix 1 Photos taken in field visit to Life Club Consumer Cooperative

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Appendix 2 Photos taken in field visit to Farmers' Land, Makuhari, Chiba

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Appendix 3 Photos taken in field visit to Daichi-o-Mamoru-Kai

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About the Author

Dr. Jing Li, is Associate Professor of Department of Social Sciences at Jinan University, China. She undertook the VRF program in IDE from June to September in 2014.

She pursued doctor's degree in international law and international relations in Jinan University. Before she came to Department of Social Sciences, she was once Vice president of Hainan Province Youth Federation (2003-2004) and Vice president of Jinan Youth Volunteers Association (2007-2009).

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For the past seven years, Dr. Jing Li has followed up several cases specializing in the social development and welfare of marginalized groups in rural China, working in particular with local grassroots NGOs. Dr. Jing Li also teaches the course NGO Management in international school at Jinan University.