Culture of Country in China in the Context of Globalization

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Abstract. The paper tries to illustrate the huge changes which have happened in the country of the Northeast of China by following a foreign writer’s footsteps. In the book, The Manchuria, the writer tells what he has seen, what he has heard and what he has thought about in the northeastern part of China. The changes the country of Northeast China are becoming more and more prominent in many aspects. Some changes belong to many group and personal efforts, other changes deserve concern. Based on the book, The Manchuria, the paper studies them from the background of globalization for the warnings and some strategies that are to be figured out. China is going on the way to becoming a more powerful country and the countryside is going to play an important role in it. The tradition of China’s country is to mingle in the background of globalization with some original characteristics, preventing the countryside from being marginalized, the New Countryside with a Chinese characteristic is the best policy.

Introduction

Globalization is an essential world characteristic nowadays and it is also one of the most prominent world developing trends. Under this background of globalization, China is going on the way to becoming a great powerful country with higher international status. The sphere of national activities is no longer limited in traditional politics, military and economy. Therefore, many people and groups are attractive to today’s China, which foreigners are frequently found all over the country. The first-hand experience speaks louder than a film of propaganda. China’s open-minded attitudes towards the outside world improves its international reputation whereas some problems are brought up. The right attitudes towards all these is going to make China more powerful all over the world, for confidence and strength work in pairs.

Introduction to the Author and his Work

Michael Meyer is an American travel writer and he is famous for writing a China trilogy: The Road to Sleeping Dragon, In Manchuria and The Last Days of Old Beijing. Michael graduated from University of Wisconsin-Madison. It was early in 1995 that he went to China the first time with the Peace Corps. Following the Peace Corps, he graduated from the famous University of California, Berkeley, where he studied writing. His works has appeared in many major newspapers and magazines in America. He has received several awards, which include Lowell Thomas Award winner for Best Travel Book in 2015, National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar award in 2016-2017. Michael has represented an organization, doing some training work in China. He is an associate professor of English at the university of Pittsburgh, teaching nonfiction writing. He spends most of the time living in Singapore and Pittsburgh. He has lived in China for decade years, and China can be his second hometown because his wife is Chinese and they have two half-Chinese children. Michael Meyer’s trilogy belong to nonfiction. The Road to Sleeping Dragon is about learning China from the Ground up. The Last Days of Old Beijing talks about life in the vanishing backstreets of a city transformed. The Manchuria narrates a village named Wasteland and the transformation of urbanization of China. The Manchuria was published in 2015, telling the story Michael Meyer has gone through in a village, Wasteland in the Northeast of China. The title of the Chinese version of the book is translated into “Journey to the Northeast”. During his stay in the Wasteland in the Northeast of
China, Michael Meyer spent a lot of time travelling about twenty-five thousand miles in this area in order to develop into the past four centuries’ history of this vast landscape.

**Present Status of the Country in the Northeast of China**

*The Marginalization of Ways of Thinking*

Michael Meyer emphasized that what happens in Wasteland is definitely not a typical image of rural China, but rather, an epitome of the country on the brink of change. Since a few decades of years ago, China has been going through the transition from agriculture-based economy to the knowledge-based economy, from small towns to big cities. The changes bring up many opportunities, even to the farmers who were born and bred in the country. There is an unwritten rule in the countryside of China, the quieter to surrounding is, the louder noise people will make. The outside world is attractive to them, especially to the young people. Some of them catch up to leave the country for a promising future. Some of the rest staying in the country do not feel so settled. This unsettling atmosphere cannot make full use of the land and its relevant sources. Seniors still feel attached to the lands whereas some of the youth do not think so any more. The loss of the energetic workers accelerates the marginalization of the country in the rural area. To accelerate its economy, the municipal finance must give a full play to financial policy.

*The Narrow-minded World*

In Manchuria, Michael Meyer mentions that many international incidents occur in the Northeastern part of China, like Russo-Japanese war in 1905, and then the warlord era under the Kuomintang, Chinese communist party era, and so on. At the beginning of the foundation of China, the Northeast was called “The Older Brother” by all the nation. The long history and its unique policy given by the government has made the country in this area quite different from the other part of the society. Being quarantined leads to slow response to the changes in the outside. The farmers in the village are likely to be narrow-minded because of the isolation. Some of them would like to be asleep while other people, especially those in the southern part of China, are catching up and seeking opportunities under the background of globalization.

It is universally acknowledged that the globalization has propelled the industrialization and urbanization in the developing countries, like China; however, it has also created many new issues and intensified other regional problems. Alienation issues and other negative social aspects have resulted from mass marginalization. In Manchuria, the third aunt is going through the conflict over land rights due to industrialization. Urbanization creates opportunities which are not available in the countryside, but some farmers feel unsettled.

**Available Practical Strategies Confronting the Urbanization under the Globalization**

*The Promotion of Universal Values with a Chinese Characteristic in the Country*

The urbanization is for the sake of people’s demands, but the country cannot be the waste land, like the name of the village in Michael’s book, *The Manchuria*. “Agriculture and all connected with the countryside are considered to be undeveloped, ugly and rotten, therefore, the farmers who are mistreated in every way should be educated for urban people.”

This way of thinking needs change. The aunt Michael Meyer mentioned in *The Manchuria* is worried about the fact that she lost her house and has to rent a place to live in from a big company. When enough materials are provided, people need higher level of things, such as freedom, dignity and self-respect, which are included in the universal values. Some conservative members attack the idea of universal values as a Western plot aiming at undermining the communist party rule, neglecting the increasing demands of dignity and human rights with development. In the historical experiments, human beings from East and West keep trying to find out the universal values admitted by all nations. It is high time to reassert the universal values in the country under the background of globalization for a continuous prosperity in
China. Only in this way, can global values of social justice and liberty be defended and advanced and the universal value can be achieved. The lack of tradition of value can lead to much consequence the national chaos and the conflict from the other nations. Comparatively speaking, Britain has lost many credits, but one thing Britain is still famous for the beautiful scenery in the country. It has nothing to do with the development, instead, it is a choice of way of living; the summer house, the villa located in the country, where people can relax. It is not an escapism, but a peaceful lifestyle people choose to live. The Chinese can have more options if the ideas despising the countryside are changed.

Urbanization and the Development of New Countryside are Supposed to be Advanced Steadily Together

Although the level of urbanization is an important index of a country’s economic development, the urbanization process and economic development should not be based on the sacrifice of the people in the countryside. The famous American Economist claimed, “The secret to the future of China is in the countryside.”[5] The new China was founded after the success of the countryside besieging the city. The countryside has played and is going to be playing a profound role in the new era. What is more, the Chinese are well known for reconnecting to the source, while China is an agriculture country and most people came from the countryside. The countryside is many Chinese’s soul home. Just like the author of *The Manchuria*, Chinese can travel or live all the world, however, when there is a condition, many choose to return to their hometowns. The concept of New Countryside with a Chinese characteristic should have broader ranges, so that the countryside is not fading in China.

The Urban-rural Integration

The urbanization is an inevitable trend of modernization in developing country like the industrialization. Trying to realize the urban and rural integration for a better future is one of the key factors the government must deal with. With the development of urbanization, lots of suburbs, some towns and villages have been the urban part, which accelerates the pace of the urban-rural integration process. The Chinese Dream must include the farmers in the countryside, for this, every effort should be tried. The countryside is required to be a part of the well-off society in China.

Conclusion

Michael Meyer and his book, *The Manchuria*, take the readers to the Northeast of China, to observe their daily lives, to recall its history, and to touch its future. He also reveals a much more mixed emotion behind the seemingly promising urbanization.[6] Like it or not, the place has been involved in the background of globalization, however, Chinese nation are well-known for the tradition of seeking roots. No matter where they went, where they chose to live, they cannot forget the hometown, the home country. Last century, majority of the Chinese population belonged to the country population, which means major part of Chinese people is or is to be seeking roots in the country. The Chinese country’s developing trend is playing an important role in tomorrow’s China. It deserves more concerns and more opportunities. The new countryside with a Chinese characteristic can break through the double-edged sword of globalization

References
