



EVALUATION ON THE ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: China's traditional agricultural ecological philosophy, rooted in principles like intensive planting and diversified management, has historically minimized the ecological impact of agriculture. This study explores their application in rural sustainable development, providing theoretical insights and policy recommendations to balance economic growth and environmental conservation. The excellent ecological tradition of intensive planting, the combination of utilization and cultivation, and the diversified management passed down for thousands of years have played a very good role in alleviating the damage of agricultural farming to the ecological environment. Applying these concepts to the sustainable development of rural areas can balance rural economic development and environmental protection, regulate land use, maintain ecological balance and, finally, achieve harmonious coexistence. By analyzing China's traditional agricultural ecological philosophy, this study identifies valuable ideological resources and provides methodological guidance for promoting sustainable rural development. It proposes strategies to balance economic growth with environmental protection, thereby ensuring the long-term ecological balance and harmonious coexistence in rural areas.


Keywords: Ecological Philosophy Thought. Rural China. Traditional Agriculture. Sustainable Development.

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Resumo: A filosofia ecológica agrícola tradicional da China, enraizada em alguns princípios, como a plantação intensiva e a gestão diversificada, minimizou historicamente o impacto ecológico da agricultura. Este estudo explora a sua aplicação no desenvolvimento rural sustentável, fornecendo conhecimentos teóricos e recomendações políticas para equilibrar o crescimento econômico e a conservação ambiental. A tradição ecológica de plantação intensiva, a combinação de utilização e cultivo, e a gestão diversificada transmitida durante milhares de anos têm desempenhado um papel muito bom na redução dos danos da agricultura ao ambiente ecológico. A aplicação desses conceitos ao desenvolvimento sustentável das zonas rurais pode equilibrar o desenvolvimento econômico rural e a proteção ambiental. Ademais, pode regular o uso da terra, manter o equilíbrio ecológico e, finalmente, alcançar uma coexistência harmoniosa. Ao analisar a filosofia ecológica agrícola tradicional da China, este estudo identifica recursos ideológicos valiosos e fornece orientação metodológica para a promoção do desenvolvimento rural sustentável. Propõe estratégias para equilibrar o crescimento econômico com a proteção ambiental, garantindo, assim, o equilíbrio ecológico em longo prazo e a coexistência harmoniosa, nas zonas rurais.

Palavras-chave: Pensamento da Filosofia Ecológica. China rural. Agricultura tradicional. Desenvolvimento sustentável.

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EVALUATION ON THE ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: China's traditional agricultural ecological philosophy, rooted in principles like intensive planting and diversified management, has historically minimized the ecological impact of agriculture. This study explores their application in rural sustainable development, providing theoretical insights and policy recommendations to balance economic growth and environmental conservation. The excellent ecological tradition of intensive planting, the combination of utilization and cultivation, and the diversified management passed down for thousands of years have played a very good role in alleviating the damage of agricultural farming to the ecological environment. Applying these concepts to the sustainable development of rural areas can balance rural economic development and environmental protection, regulate land use, maintain ecological balance and, finally, achieve harmonious coexistence. By analyzing China's traditional agricultural ecological philosophy, this study identifies valuable ideological resources and provides methodological guidance for promoting sustainable rural development. It proposes strategies to balance economic growth with environmental protection, thereby ensuring the long-term ecological balance and harmonious coexistence in rural areas.

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INTRODUCTION

The transition from traditional to modern agricultural practices in China reflects a historical emphasis on intensive farming methods to ensure food security (Cui, 1977, p. 42). However, achieving long-term sustainability in agriculture necessitates balancing economic growth with resource preservation (Yin, 2018, p. 152). This shift is crucial in addressing environmental concerns and ensuring the sustainability of rural development. However, how to develop and operate the rural economy and protect the farming environment to achieve long-term sustainable development in rural areas is not only China's research direction, but also various countries' key focus. So far, the history of agricultural development, in the entire world, is 7,000 years old. Since modern times, relying on the development of various science and technology, human beings have achieved great success in the transformation and expropriation of crops (Li, 2018, p. 630; Chen; Zhang, 2021, p. 110). In the early 1980s, the first group of developed countries, such as "[...] the United States, Japan, and others,

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gradually began to focus on how to put national agriculture on a sustainable development path through reasonable management” (Scown *et al.*, 2020, p. 244).

Various studies emphasize the importance of sustainable agricultural development, highlighting principles, such as agroecological intensification and urban agriculture (Zhang; Wu, 2018, p. 127; Hu; Yang, 2022, p. 3). These principles underscore the need for careful land management to prevent ecological damage and ensure sustainable food production. Sustainable development encompasses economic, social and ecological dimensions (Liu *et al.*, 2021, p. 95). This holistic approach is essential for balancing agricultural development with environmental protection.

1 RELATED RESEARCH ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AGRICULTURE

1.1 SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“Sustainable development was first proposed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 1980 in a report on the World Conservation Strategy” (Xu; Xue, 1991, p. 3). It refers to an enhanced development approach that meets the contemporary people’s needs without affecting the future generations’ vertical development . The background of this concept is a long-standing discussion among Western scholars on the limitations of economic development and the cost of economic growth. At that time, Meadows and others (1974) established the so-called ‘finite growth theory’ model based on five factors: population explosion, food supply, capital investment, environmental pollution, and resource depletion. The final discussion result was not satisfactory, and the conclusions drawn by these scholars were biased towards pessimism. Although their conclusions have many loopholes due to the limitations of the times and access to information, it is worth noting that their proposed irreversible consequences of excessive exploitation and consumption of non-renewable resources by humans would have a negative impact on human future survival. “Countries proposed sustainable development goals at the Rio Earth Summit in 2012” (Arora; Isha, 2019, p. 340). Among the Millennium Sustainable Development Goals, eradicating hunger, achieving food security, improving nutritional status and promoting sustainable agriculture occupy a very important column.

The concept of sustainable agriculture and rural development has important scientific value in protecting natural resources, maintaining the ecological environment, ensuring food security, eradicating poverty and even promoting rural revitalization (Liu *et al.*, 2021, p. 95). The foundation of petroleum agriculture is technologies, such as chemical engineering, machinery, fertilizers and pesticides. As an important agricultural stage after traditional agriculture, its progress is reflected in the replacement of expensive labor, livestock and other high-cost factors with cheap petroleum technology. Based on resources, such as

oil, coal and natural gas, large-scale agriculture operates through high investment and high-energy consumption, with output and scale far exceeding traditional agriculture. However, high-speed production comes with the cost of overdrafting the environment. Although petroleum agriculture has brought high output, at the same time, it has also caused serious ecological problems and many environmental pollution incidents. The characteristics of petroleum agriculture are high consumption and investment, but the most serious drawback of this production model is its unsustainable production method.

Observed from a sustainable perspective, the production method that should be introduced and promoted on a large scale should be an ecological agriculture model that advocates green, recycling and sustainability, incorporating traditional Chinese agro-ecological philosophical ideas (Zhao, 2018, p. 54).

In order to achieve the goal of sustainable development, people should adhere to the three principles of sustainable development. These three principles are fairness, continuity and commonality.

These three principles are mainly oriented towards humanism and environmentalism. The principle of fairness applies to all humanity from now to the future. By adhering to the principle of sustainability, people strive to ensure that two generations share the same resources and meet people's basic living needs. "The principle of sustainability focuses on both human and environmental aspects" (Biel, 2014, p. 183-202). As an auxiliary, humans mainly examine the ability of ecosystems to cope with unexpected situations, whether they can maintain a certain level of productivity, and so on. After achieving a certain level of recycling capacity, the human society's sustainable development can be maintained through the continuous reuse of resources. The last principle refers to the principle of commonality. "The main target of power is humans, relying on the joint cooperation of global humans" (Tomislav, 2018, p. 69). "Based on the holistic and interdependent attributes of the Earth, a collaborative association is conducted" (Weiland, 2021, p. 93). Following these three principles is the main method to achieve the basic meaning of sustainable development.

Sustainable development encompasses three integral dimensions: economic, social and ecological. Historically, the traditional high-investment, high-consumption and high-pollution models, prevalent in Western agriculture, have necessitated a shift towards more sustainable practices that integrate ecological considerations into daily life and production. As noted by Szerszynski (2002, p. 51), sustainable economic development not only enhances individual living standards, but also strengthens national power. This development is primarily driven by advancements in industry and agriculture, which are pivotal for elevating the economic landscape.

On a societal level, sustainable development focuses on a people-centric approach that caters to both material and spiritual needs, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between consumer behavior and economic growth, as described by Berawi (2019, p. 646). Ecologically, sustainable development requires humans to live harmoniously within natural ecosystems. The sustainability of economic and social frameworks, including all human activities, hinges on the responsible management of natural resources and the reduction of pollutants to maintain ecological balance and ensure the health of the environment. This tripartite framework of sustainability underscores the interconnectedness of economic vigor, social well-being and environmental health, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to fostering global sustainable development.

1.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE AGRICULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development integrates three essential dimensions—economic, social and ecological — demanding a shift from traditional high-consumption models to practices that consider ecological impacts, as noted by Szerszynski (2002, p. 51). This approach enhances individual living standards and national strength, driven by advancements in industry and agriculture. Berawi (2019, p. 646) “[...] highlights a societal focus that meets both material and spiritual needs, promoting economic growth through consumer behavior”. Ecologically, it necessitates living within natural ecosystems, managing resources responsibly and reducing pollutants to maintain environmental health. This holistic framework emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that fosters sustainable development, aligning economic progress with social welfare and environmental stewardship.

The drawback of traditional agriculture is that farming is carried out on a household basis, with the primary goal of self-sufficiency. It is difficult to achieve scale when operating within a family’s scope . However, what is very worth learning from is their cultivation mode. The main term for the ecological model of traditional Chinese agriculture is intensive cultivation. In the process of farming, people actively raised land instead of over squeezing, organically combined land use and land cultivation, and maintained the ecological balance of soil structure. As one of the traditional agricultural ideas in China, the concept of land fertility is also based on this agricultural model. The soil fertility is always new, which is a dialectical view of it.

The idea of soil cultivation is the earliest to emerge, guiding people to take proactive measures to improve soil and enhance soil fertility, making fertile soil more fertile and turning barren soil into fertile one. The constant improvement of soil fertility has laid a theoretical foundation for artificial fertilization. Traditional Chinese agricultural philosophy emphasizes intensive cultivation and sustainable land use practices (Han, 2019, p. 368). By integrating

these philosophies into modern agricultural practices, we can mitigate environmental impact and enhance agricultural sustainability. In addition to making full use of land through continuous cropping, rotation and multiple cropping, the combination of agriculture and animal husbandry with human and animal resources, as the core power, is also worth learning.

The final result of development is modern agriculture. The characteristics of modern agriculture are strong commercial nature, large production volume, high-energy consumption, high investment and high pollution. The typical model, in modern agriculture, is petroleum agriculture. The operation method is to transport a large amount of auxiliary energy to agriculture through developed industrial capabilities, assist in output and provide assistance. Artificial intervention is conducted on the crop growth process. Although the overall increase in crop yield is significant, the corresponding total resource consumption is also very large.

If people want to achieve sustainable development of agriculture and rural economy, protecting the ecological environment is an essential link. Among the three agricultural models from ancient times to the present, the combination of use and nutrition of traditional agriculture and the dialectic view of soil fertility of agricultural cultivation are of great reference significance.

In the development of traditional agriculture in China for thousands of years, many related philosophical ideas have been derived. By incorporating the parts of these philosophical ideas that are beneficial for the ecological environment cycle into agricultural cultivation, they can effectively affect agricultural production and increase the sustainability of production. The foundation of human survival and reproduction is the resource environment ecosystem, and the relationship between humans and nature is the core issue of this system. As a part of the ecological cycle, humans should not only benefit from it, but also be responsible for protecting this cycle. The ecological environment, in the entire agricultural system, is protected.

As it is well known, the core of traditional Chinese agricultural ecological ideology is the “unity of heaven and man”, which means that, in addition to the protection and reuse of the environment during the production process, people are also an important aspect that needs to be considered. The ancients formed a holistic view of the agricultural ecosystem through the coordination and unity of heaven, earth, humans and things, which coordinated the natural environment of heaven and earth, human production activities and crops, leading the ecological practice of traditional agriculture. In the ecological ideology of ancient agriculture, there also existed the concept of “humanistic consciousness”. People are the carriers and beneficiaries of agricultural activities.

In the process of developing agricultural economy, in addition to paying attention to soil as a carrier of cultivation, it is also necessary to appropriately focus on people. Due to underdeveloped rural economy, relatively low income and inadequate infrastructure, the

young and middle-aged population in rural areas is losing in large quantities and transferring to cities. In order to maintain the sustainable development of rural agricultural economy, the young and middle-aged population, as the main labor force, is indispensable. In future economic development, appropriate consideration should be given to this factor, and a careful understanding of the production and operation models of local residents' agricultural cultivation should be given. Based on this, corresponding policy, technical and economic support are provided. Starting from both depth and breadth, people aim to improve the local residents' living standards and economic benefits, retain the working population for a long time, and establish a corresponding humanistic culture and suitable agricultural production direction based on China's ethnic characteristics.

2 TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL ECOLOGICAL THINKING IN THE PROCESS OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 CORE OF TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL PHILOSOPHY

In order to cope with the pressure of explosive population growth, contemporary agriculture has focused on the high output of crops. The direct result of overdrafting the environment is eutrophication of water bodies, severe soil pollution, reduced environmental tolerance and self-healing ability, and the balance of the ecological cycle is disrupted, unable to self-repair and constantly deteriorating. In the long run, this overdraft behavior can be said to have more drawbacks than benefits. However, many researchers have noted that in the modern world. A significant portion of the youth is attracted to a new style of living with the rise of the blue-collar workforce. Many countries are trying to outsource agriculture to underdeveloped nations to not allow for economic growth to slow down. The introduction of such a grow-to-sell model is a recent development in the modern world that has shifted the perspective.

Indeed, in order to cope with population growth, contemporary agriculture focuses on the pursuit of high yield. Although it meets the food demand to a certain extent in the short term, in the long run, this overdraft has brought serious environmental problems, and even caused irreversible damage to human society and ecosystem. Long-term overdraft environment may have a negative impact on the rural economy. Excessive reliance on fertilizers and pesticides may increase agricultural costs and reduce the quality and market competitiveness of agricultural products. At the same time, farmers may face a greater risk of natural disasters due to environmental degradation. The way that contemporary agriculture overdrafts the environment may indeed cause more harm than good in the long term. Therefore, it is necessary to seek sustainable agricultural development modes, such as the development of ecological agriculture, green agriculture, etc., which pay more attention to

environmental protection and ecological balance, aiming to achieve the long-term sustainable development of agriculture.

Chinese traditional ecological agriculture ideology, influenced by various cultural sects, summarizes the relationship between humans and nature. The conclusion is drawn that humans follow the earth, the earth follows the heavens, the heavens follow the Dao, and the Dao follows the nature. It is perfectly combined with agricultural cultivation. According to Zhao (2020), the most typical representative of traditional Chinese agricultural ecological thinking and farming practices is the 'Qi Min Yao Shu' written by Chinese agronomist Jia Sixie during the Northern Wei Dynasty. This book provides a detailed summary of agricultural production in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River before the sixth century AD. It is quite high and highly prospective. Among them, the philosophical ecological thought of "the unity of man and nature" is also summarized brilliantly. There are four points in total: food is the top priority of government, and it should be taught in order to ensure the people's safety and prosperity, and used for festivals.

The first is that food is the political leader, and the core viewpoint is "food is the top priority for the people", which emphasizes solving the most basic problem of food and clothing for the people. The main economic genre in ancient China was agriculture, and the most widespread group was also farmers, scholars, farmers and businessmen, who supported politics and health through agriculture. As a major agricultural country, the overall operation of ancient Chinese dynasties relied on the agricultural system. Therefore, it can be said that solving the farmers and others' basic needs is the first key point of political governance.

The second step is to improve the people's living standards and increase stability in the process of social operation after ensuring the people's safety and solving the most basic problem of food and clothing. The focus is on "putting people first", allowing people to live and work in peace and fulfill their respective responsibilities.

The third is to be rich and educated. After addressing the material needs for food and clothing, it is necessary to educate the people, improve their cultural literacy and enhance their spiritual level.

Fourthly, and most importantly, it is used to save time. Jia Sixie proposed in the book that resources can promote social and economic development, but at the same time, they also constrain the development process. Limited resources and unlimited demands should be used with restraint. The essence of this idea is to use resources reasonably to achieve sustainable social development. As early as 1500 years ago, Jia Sixie's argument was highly forward-looking.

2.2 ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE PROCESS OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The development of modern agriculture has also gone through a certain period of time, which has been used by people to reflect on the shortcomings of modern agricultural models. People gradually realize that they are facing a series of problems, such as rich oxidation of water body, accumulation of food toxins, deterioration of soil structure, reduction of biodiversity, reduction of ecological self-adjustment ability and vacancy of internal structural mechanism, brought about by the high consumption and high input agricultural management model.

The theory of the “second enlightenment” is pivotal in shaping the trajectory of Chinese modernization, the advancement of ecological civilization, and fostering a global dialogue on civilization. This concept extends beyond merely understanding the theoretical nuances of post-modern ecological civilization. It introduces a suite of novel ideas and categories crucial for addressing contemporary ecological challenges. According to Wu and Guan (2023, p. 49), this theory advocates for a transformative approach that redefines human interaction with nature, promoting sustainable practices that integrate with modern agricultural advancements.

By re-evaluating traditional Enlightenment values through the lens of ecological and ethical considerations, the “second enlightenment” theory suggests a profound shift in paradigm—from exploitation to a respectful coexistence with nature. It encourages the development of technologies and methodologies that not only advance agricultural productivity, but also ensure environmental sustainability. This includes practices that enhance soil fertility, conserve water and reduce chemical inputs, aligning modern agriculture with ecological principles. Thus, the theory serves as a cornerstone for developing a comprehensive strategy that supports the growth of a post-modern ecological civilization, aiming for a balance between economic development and environmental preservation, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of both human and natural systems.

Currently, globally, people are shifting their perspective back to long-term land management, rather than short-term overdraft. People actively adopt various more ecological and naturalized methods for agricultural product cultivation. “Taking Japan as an example, as early as the 1950s, Japan was influenced by the idea of ‘governing without action’ in Chinese Taoist culture, advocating that humans should conform to nature, rather than transform it” (Zhang, 2012, p. 33). During the cultivation process, a series of methods were adopted, such as no tillage, no use of pesticides, using animal manure and plant residues as fertilizers, and microbial cultivation of the soil, for fully naturalized planting. The experimental results show that the local land fertility has increased, and the yield remains the same as traditional methods, while the water retention capacity has also improved.

A thorough analysis is conducted of the theoretical frameworks of ecological philosophy, development philosophy and classical development theory. It is noted that the torture of Yuan problems and the absence of premise criticism of development problems are the main causes of the collapse of traditional development theory. “The development philosophy surpasses the ecological philosophy in a fundamental way since it is founded on the principles of sustainable development” (Chen, 2018, p. 27). New ethics and ecological ethics are necessary for the sustainable development of rural regions, and they are crucial to the achievement of rural sustainable development.

To support the sustainable development of rural areas, ecological ethics require to build an ecological civilization village, enhance the development of ecological culture and the education of farmers’ ecological ethics, and assist farmers in selecting a more rational way of life (Ma, 2017, p. 49).

Of course, there is more than one ecological farming model that has emerged so far. Other typical representative ecological maintenance methods include reducing harvest demand, organic agriculture that focuses on environmental protection and ecological agriculture that uses less or no chemical products when agricultural products are surplus. Tracing back to the source, these cultivation models are all based on the ecological theme of “[...] harmony between heaven and man, and adapting to nature” (Han, 2021, p. 1014), which coincides with the “heaven, earth, and man” ideology in China’s traditional agricultural ecological culture.

2.3 SYSTEM SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR RURAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In promoting sustainable development in rural areas, it is essential to merge traditional Chinese agricultural ecological philosophy with contemporary support mechanisms. These mechanisms encompass a range of systems, including environmental and resource management, production operations, market economics and technological advancements, each playing a critical role in the sustainable evolution of rural sectors.

Firstly, environmental and resource management is foundational, focusing on sustainable land use and the conservation of ecological resources to enhance agricultural productivity. Practices, such as organic farming and crop rotation, exemplify how traditional methods can support sustainable resource use, ensuring long-term viability and ecological balance (Smith, 2020, p. 112).

Secondly, the integration of production and management with market dynamics is crucial. The typical family-based business model prevalent in rural areas, while sufficient for subsistence, often lacks the scope for larger market engagement. Adopting cooperative farming

models or small-scale agribusiness initiatives could provide more effective management and distribution strategies, improving market access and economic outcomes.

Lastly, the role of technology and policy in supporting rural sustainability cannot be overstated.

Technological innovations like precision agriculture can address resource scarcity and enhance productivity, while robust policy frameworks can streamline sustainable practices and incentivize farmers towards eco-friendly operations (Zilberman, 2018, p. 29).

Collectively, these elements foster a comprehensive approach to rural development that aligns with traditional values while embracing modern efficiencies.

2.4 RESEARCH METHODS OF TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL ECOLOGICAL THOUGHT

This research explores the vital links between the ecological philosophy of traditional Chinese agriculture and modern rural sustainable development, leveraging interdisciplinary perspectives from philosophy, sociology, ecology and agricultural economics. By investigating concepts, such as “the unity of humanity with nature” and “conformity to nature,” this study seeks to apply these age-old principles to contemporary challenges in rural sustainability, providing new solutions and frameworks for development.

Philosophically, the study reevaluates ancient Chinese agricultural ideas, examining their relevance and application in today’s environmental context. This involves a detailed analysis of holistic thinking, which emphasizes the interdependence of agricultural practices with natural, social and economic systems. The philosophical approach encourages a broader understanding of sustainability that goes beyond immediate agricultural outputs to consider long-term ecological and social stability (Kidd, 2019, p. 281-285).

From a sociological perspective, the research considers how these agricultural practices influence and are influenced by community dynamics and rural social structures. It explores how traditional methods can foster community cohesion and sustainable practices through cooperative efforts and shared responsibilities in resource management.

Ecologically, the study assesses how traditional agricultural methods can enhance biodiversity, improve soil health and conserve water, contributing to the ecological balance necessary for sustainable farming. The ecological analysis also extends to how these practices can mitigate adverse environmental impacts, such as soil erosion and water pollution. Economically, the research examines the impact of traditional agricultural practices on rural economies, assessing their potential to enhance sustainability through cost-effective methods that reduce reliance on chemical inputs and non-renewable resources. It explores economic

models that align with sustainable practices, promoting long-term viability over short-term gains.

Overall, the interdisciplinary approach provides a comprehensive view of how the ecological philosophies of traditional Chinese agriculture can be integrated into modern sustainable rural development strategies. This framework not only addresses current environmental and social challenges, but also offers practical insights and guidelines for policy-making and agricultural practice. This study ultimately aims to contribute significantly to the discourse on sustainable development, offering a deepened understanding of the interplay between traditional wisdom and contemporary ecological practices.

2.5 RURAL RESIDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND AGRICULTURE

The interaction between philosophy and agriculture offers profound insights and practical applications, especially evident in the implementation of philosophical principles, like holism, balance and sustainability within agricultural contexts. These principles not only enrich the conceptual understanding of farming, but also guide practical decisions that promote sustainable agricultural methods.

Holism in Agriculture: embracing holistic thinking encourages an understanding of the interconnectedness within farming systems. This principle compels agricultural practitioners to consider the impacts of their activities on all components of the ecosystem, including soil health, water management and biodiversity. Such an approach fosters sustainable farming practices that enhance productivity and environmental health simultaneously.

Balance in Farming Practices: the principle of balance is crucial in managing the trade-offs between economic efficiency and ecological stewardship. Techniques, such as crop rotation, intercropping and the integration of renewable energy sources, help maintain this balance, ensuring that farming remains both profitable and ecologically sound. Balancing traditional methods with modern technology also aids in preserving cultural heritage while innovating for efficiency and reduced environmental impact.

Sustainability and Philosophical Thought: the philosophical underpinning of sustainability emphasizes the necessity of practices that do not deplete resources or harm future generations' ability to meet their needs. In practical terms, this translates into adopting agricultural techniques that minimize resource use and pollution, thus protecting the environment while ensuring long-term productivity and economic viability of farming enterprises.

These philosophical principles, when applied to agriculture, not only enhance the understanding of the role of farming in societal and ecological systems, but also provide actionable strategies that lead to more ethical, sustainable and productive agricultural outcomes. They offer a framework for navigating the complexities of modern agriculture and for fostering farming practices that are aligned with the goals of environmental conservation and social equity.

CONCLUSIONS

The ecological philosophy of traditional Chinese agriculture, emphasizing the unity of humanity and nature, offers valuable insights into sustainable practices today. This philosophy advocates for agriculture that aligns with natural laws, utilizes conditions favorably and protects resources to foster sustainable development. It underscores “harmony and symbiosis,” promoting agricultural production that harmonizes with both ecological and socioeconomic factors for mutual growth. These principles are essential for modern agriculture, advocating for green development, and a balanced and sustainable rural economy. They reflect centuries of agricultural wisdom, stressing foresight and relevance to contemporary environmental challenges. These philosophies can significantly aid in addressing today’s sustainability issues, such as environmental pollution and improving rural livelihoods by applying traditional ecological concepts to modern practices.

Traditional Chinese agricultural philosophy provides a practical framework during global crises like the coronavirus pandemic. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of human activities and ecosystems, advocating moderation and balance in natural resource use to prevent exploitation. This perspective is crucial today, reminding us to maintain environmental and public health balance as we resume normal activities. The philosophy also values community and interpersonal relationships, which have become particularly poignant during lockdowns, reinforcing the importance of cooperation and communal living for a sustainable future. By revisiting these ancient concepts, we can foster a lifestyle that prioritizes ecological balance, resource sustainability and harmonious coexistence, offering a pathway to effectively tackle global and environmental challenges and enhance our collective wellbeing.

The ecological philosophy of the Chinese traditional agriculture emphasizes “the unity of man and nature”, that is, the harmonious coexistence between man and nature. This idea holds that agricultural production should conform to the law of nature, make full use of the natural conditions and, at the same time, protect the natural resources to achieve sustainable development. This thought provides an important inspiration for the development of modern agriculture, that is, to establish the concept of green development and promote the coordinated development of agriculture and ecological environment. The ecological philosophy of Chinese traditional agriculture focuses on “harmony and symbiosis”, that is,

harmonious coexistence and common development. This thought holds that agricultural production should be coordinated with the ecological environment and social economy to achieve common development. This thought provides an important idea for the sustainable development of rural areas, that is, to establish the concept of coordinated development and promote the all-round development of agriculture, rural economy and society.

Its ideological theme is the essence of China's thousands of years of agricultural experience. In addition, this article also conducted research and analysis on the traditional Chinese agricultural ecological philosophy. The ecological philosophy of traditional Chinese agriculture itself has strong foresight, and many of the viewpoints contained in it are predictions and concerns about sustainable development issues that are currently or in the future. Therefore, it can be said that the ecological philosophy of Chinese traditional agriculture has a high reference value for solving the problem of sustainable development faced by people today. Therefore, applying the ecological philosophy of traditional agriculture to the sustainable development of rural areas can help alleviate the environmental pollution problem after farming, and it can also help rural residents to improve their personal income and improve their happiness in life. Overall, the sustainable development of agriculture lies in meeting the new era society's requirements, providing help for rural residents to protect the ecological environment and inheriting traditional Chinese agricultural ecological philosophy. Therefore, while developing modern agriculture, people cannot forget to inherit and promote the ecological ideas of the past.

The ecological philosophy of traditional Chinese agriculture offers a fresh viewpoint and practical response to a global disaster, such as the coronavirus outbreak. It first places a strong emphasis on systematization and integrity, and holds that nature and humans are interrelated. This is consistent with the belief held by environmental science and contemporary ecology that decisions made by humans have an impact on the ecosystem as a whole. Second, moderation and balance are key components of traditional Chinese agricultural ecology. This implies that moderation is required while utilizing natural resources in order to prevent abuse and excessive usage. This serves as a reminder to individuals, in the current scenario, that they should always remember to protect the environment and public health when they resume their social and economic activities. To guarantee sustainable development, a balance between environmental preservation and development must be struck.

The principles of symbiosis and harmony are promoted by the ecological philosophy of traditional Chinese agriculture. This holds true for interpersonal relationships as well as those between humans and the natural world. People learn the importance of interpersonal relationships and community during the lockdown, and they focus more on interacting and working together with friends, family and neighbors. The desire for balance and symbiosis can serve as a major motivator for living a more sustainable and active lifestyle.

Thus, the ecological philosophy of traditional Chinese agriculture offers a fresh viewpoint on challenges related to present and future sustainable development. It serves as a reminder for people to prioritize protecting the environment, using resources sustainably and living in balance with the natural world. This change in viewpoint can help address global issues more effectively and promote an active and sustainable lifestyle.

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