

## **A Basic Study on the Housing for the Rural Aged in Korea**

**-Focusing on the longitudinal change in the elderly living arrangement and on the current housing conditions of the rural aged and a guide for their improvement-**

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As Korean society goes through the process of aging, providing the housing for the aged is being required as a part of the general social service policy. The appropriate provision of the housing for the aged would require the analysis of the current living arrangement of the aged based on the demographical information of Korea.

The result of analyzing the trend in living arrangements in the National Census shows that the multi-generation co-residence is on its way of decrease and that the aged only living, in couples and in singles, is increasing rapidly. The speed of increase surpasses those of the countries with earlier experiences of the aging process like Japan and U.S.A.

And in the general process of increase of aged living alone and living with spouse only throughout the world, Korea has its peculiarity of having far higher rate of the aged living in the rural areas than of those living in the urban area. Although local deviations can be found as to the detailed expression, the trend in the longitudinal change clearly shows the tendency of higher increase in the rural areas than in the urban areas.

These facts show the urgent need of Korean society to develop policies to provide the housing for the aged as well as the priority of rural over urban areas. They also show the need to respond to the respective needs for different localities.

In developing housing policies for the rural aged, critical review of the existing researches and policies over rural housing and the current situation in the rural housing comes as pre-requisites. In such context, this research tries to assess the merits and shortages of the current rural housing as the residence for the rural aged.

In-depth analysis of both quantitative and qualitative methods shows the existing attempts to redress the inconvenience of the traditional rural housing without giving enough consideration to the psychological and habitual conditions has produced many problems and that the traditional housing, so-far considered as merely an object to reform, has on the contrary many merits as the housing for the rural aged.

The merits can be summarized into 'NAIGAIRENKETUSEI (Inner and

Outer Space Connection)’.

As the aged, with their tendency towards feeling solitude and their physical traits of having difficulties in moving, live on themselves, they tend to prefer communicating with outer world visually as well as virtually and want to observe and be observed easily. Such preferred conditions can be summed up as ‘NAIGAIKENKETUSEI (Inner and Outer Space Connection)’.

This research reveals the fact that the Korean traditional rural housing is excellent in ‘NAIGAIKENKETUSEI (Inner and Outer Space Connection)’ in several ways and that the rural old aged acknowledges such merits consciously and/or unconsciously.

Therefore, more research attention should be given and more policy efforts should focus on the merits and the shortages of traditional rural housing, with the result of more accomplished policy implementation of the housing for the rural aged.