

03.20-Rural poverty

Rural poverty

Ham-fisted handouts

China's biggest anti-poverty programme isn't working
Oct 31st 2015 | DAYINGHAN VILLAGE, SHANXI | From the print edition

Vocab

1. **ham-fisted** adj. =clumsy 笨手笨脚的; (尤指双手) 笨拙的 If you describe someone as **ham-fisted**, you mean that they are clumsy, especially in the way that they use their hands.
e.g. his ham-fisted efforts to assist her 他为了帮她做出的笨手笨脚的努力
2. **handout** n. 救济金; 救济物; 施舍物 A **handout** is a gift of money, clothing, or food, which is given free to poor people.
e.g. Each family is being given a cash **handout** of six thousand rupees. 每户都领到6,000卢比的救济金。

A CONCRETE track meanders past nurseries of pine saplings and sheep grazing on stubble, petering out at Dayinghan, the poorest, most remote village in the stony hills of central Shanxi, a northern province. Some of the villagers live in caves. A few chickens and ducks scratch for food amid the rocks. Zhang Erping's family is one of about 100 that remain, half the number of ten years ago. He and his wife eat meat a couple of times a month; they buy it at Gujiao, the nearest town, but even the 1.4 yuan (20 cents) bus fare is usually too much for the household to afford.

Vocab

1. **concrete** adj. made of concrete 混凝土制的
2. **meander** v. o curve a lot rather than being in a straight line 蜿蜒而行; 迂回曲折
3. **nursery** n. 苗圃 A **nursery** is a place where plants are grown in order to be sold.
4. **sapling** n. 幼树 A **sapling** is a young tree.
5. **grazing** n. 草场; 牧场 **Grazing** or **grazing land** is land on which animals graze.
6. **stubble** n. (作物收割后的)茬 **Stubble** is the short stalks which are left standing in fields after corn or wheat has been cut.
7. **peter out** v. 逐渐结束; 逐渐消亡 If something **peters out**, it gradually comes to an end.
e.g. The road **petered out** into a rutted track. 这条路渐渐变成一条满是车辙印的小径。

Sentence

A CONCRETE track meanders past nurseries of pine saplings and sheep grazing on stubble, petering out at Dayinghan, the poorest, most remote village in the stony hills of central Shanxi, a northern province.

主干: track meander past nursery of pine saplings.

后面的都是修饰, petering out at Dayinghan 是对 stubble 的修饰, the poorest, most remote village in the stony hills of central Shanxi 是对 Dayinghan 的解释, a northern province 是对 Shanxi 的说明。

Mr Zhang used to drive there in a **dilapidated** three-wheel truck, **hauling** surplus

crops to market. But the city government bans such vehicles for safety reasons, so he has two years' worth of potatoes and beans **rotting away**, unsellable. When he reaches 60 he will get a state pension of 1,200 yuan (\$190) a year, but that is two years away and, anyway, is **barely** half the official poverty line. The city has promised him 350 yuan to heat his two-room home, and half-price medicines. But when his grandson fell ill recently, he had to borrow 1,000 yuan to pay the bills. Two massive debts are **scrawled** in pencil on a calendar hanging on the wall: 2,500 yuan and 6,400 yuan. "We've always been poor in this village," he says.

Vocab

1. dilapidated adj. =**ramshackle** old and in very bad condition 破旧的；破烂的；年久失修的
2. haul v. to pull sth/ sb with a lot of effort (用力) 拖，拉，拽
3. rot away 短语动词 彻底腐烂；完全腐败 When something **rots away**, it decays until it falls to pieces or none of it remains.

e.g. The pillars rotted away and were replaced. 柱子完全腐烂以后换了新的。

4. barely adv. in a way that is just possible but only with difficulty 仅仅；刚刚；勉强可能

e.g. The music was barely audible. 音乐声勉强能听见。

5. scrawl v. =**scribble** ~ (sth) (across/ in/ on sth) to write sth in a careless untidy way, making it difficult to read 马马虎虎 (或潦草) 地写

e.g. He scribbled a note to his sister before leaving. 临行前，他给妹妹草草写了一封短信。

Sentence

"We've always been poor in this village," 我们在这个村子里一直都很穷

On October 16th President Xi Jinping said China would **eradicate** poverty by 2020. That would mean that 70m people must rise above the official poverty line, which is 2,300 yuan a year (the equivalent of about \$2 a day at purchasing-power **parity**, slightly higher than the World Bank's global standard). This is supposed to be a priority in the next five-year plan, which was being discussed by the Communist Party's Central Committee as The Economist went to press.

Vocab

1. eradicate v. =**wipeout** ~ sth (from sth) to destroy or get rid of sth completely, especially sth bad 根除；消灭；杜绝
2. parity n. 平等；同等；相等 If there is **parity** between two things, they are equal.

Sentence

This is supposed to be a priority in the next five-year plan, which was being discussed by the Communist Party's Central Committee as The Economist went to press.

主干：This is supposed to be a priority

which was being discussed by the Communist Party's Central Committee 这个非限定性定语从句的先行词是 plan

as The Economist went to press. 这里的 as 是作 当...的时候

Between 1980 and 2010 China cut the number living below the poverty line by around 600m, **by far** the biggest reduction in a single country ever. It did this indirectly—by building everything from roads and factories to schools and hospitals,

thus boosting employment and incomes. The country has all but eradicated extreme poverty in cities (though the much-higher cost of living in urban areas means that many city-dwellers above the poverty line are still living hand to mouth). Those still living below the line are almost entirely rural people who cannot work for reasons such as age, disability or because their villages are remote and inhospitable. Helping them will require more direct measures, not least giving cash.

Vocab

1. **by far** 到目前为止；远，非常（与比较级或最高级连用）
2. **inhospitable** *adj.* (地方等)不适合居住的 An **inhospitable** place is unpleasant to live in.

Sentence

Those still living below the line are almost entirely rural people who cannot work for reasons such as age, disability or because their villages are remote and inhospitable.

主干：those are almost entirely rural people

其中 Those still living below 可以理解为 those people (who still living below the line) **are** almost entirely rural people.

who cannot work for reasons such as age, disability 这里的 who 修饰的是 rural people

The government mainly does this through its “subsistence guarantee” programme, often known by its Chinese **shorthand**, dibao. In principle, those whose income is below the minimum needed to keep them in adequate comfort (the level is decided by local governments) get a payment to bring them up to that level. The dibao programme began as a **pilot** scheme in cities in 1994, spread to the countryside in the mid 2000s and went nationwide after 2007. It has grown fast: the number of rural **recipients** more than **trebled** between 2006 and 2013; spending on it rose eightfold (see chart). Two-thirds of those who were below the poverty line on joining the scheme are now above it.

Vocab

1. **shorthand** *n.* (对某事)简略的表达方式 You can use **shorthand** to mean a quick or simple way of referring to something.
2. **pilot** *adj.* done on a small scale in order to see if sth is successful enough to do on a large scale 试验性的；试点的
e.g. a **pilot project/ study/ survey** 试验性项目/研究/调查
3. **recipient** *n.* a person who receives sth 受方；接受者
4. **treble** **PREDET** 前置限定词 **three times as much or as many** 三倍的；三重的

Sentence

In principle, those whose income is below the minimum needed to keep them in adequate comfort (the level is decided by local governments) get a payment to bring them up to that level.

主干：those get a payment to bring them up to that level. 又可以看成 those people who get a payment...

其中 whose income is below the minimum 这个从句的主语是 income, 谓语 is

Most of China's poorest, however, are not in the programme. A study published by the World Bank in August found that in 2007-09 only 10% of those below the poverty line in the countryside got dibao payments. (Mr Zhang does not get any.) Around three-quarters of those who did get payments were above the line. Data are **patchy**, but it is clear that a lot of dibao spending goes **awry**.

Vocab

1. **patchy** adj. not complete; good in some parts, but not in others 不完整的；参差不齐的
2. **awry** adj. 出岔子的；出错的 If something goes **awry**, it does not happen in the way it was planned.

Sentence

Most of China's poorest, however, are not in the programme.
把转折词放在句中也是不错的，这样句子的重心就在主语上面了

The dibao system was set up by the central government but is implemented by local authorities which can limit the size of **payouts**. The study found that in rural areas local **thresholds** for receiving dibao payments ranged from 500 yuan to 3,000 yuan a year (ie, from above the national poverty line to far below it). Spending per head varied from almost nothing in some places to 4,000 yuan a year in others. Cost-of-living differences accounted for some of this **variation** but not all. In practice, richer villages tend to be more **generous**.

Vocab

1. **payout** n. 支付款；（尤指）大笔付款，大额支出 A **payout** is a sum of money, especially a large one, that is paid to someone, for example by an insurance company or as a prize.
e.g. And there's time to win more, with a £10,000 **payout** still to play for over the next few days. 还有时间多赢些，后面几天还有一笔1万英镑的奖金。
2. **threshold** n. (某事发生或改变的)界限，阈，起始点 A **threshold** is an amount, level, or limit on a scale. When the **threshold** is reached, something else happens or changes.
e.g. The consensus has clearly shifted in favour of raising the nuclear **threshold**... 显然大家已普遍开始转向支持提高核武器使用的门槛了。
3. **cost of living** n. the amount of money that people need to pay for food, clothing and somewhere to live 生活费用
e.g. a steady rise in the cost of living 生活费用的持续上升
4. **variation** n. a change, especially in the amount or level of sth (数量、水平等的) 变化，变更，变异
5. **generous** adj. giving or willing to give freely; given freely 慷慨的；大方的；慷慨给予的

Sentence

Cost-of-living differences accounted for some of this **variation** but not all.
account for 这里是导致的意思 导致；解释 If something **accounts for** a particular fact or situation, it causes or explains it.
but not all 这里是指不是全部，即 Cost-of-living differences 不是全部的原因

Widespread **discretion** breeds widespread corruption. In Dayinghan a 68-year-old neighbour of Mr Zhang says that only ten households in the village get dibao payments, all of them friends of the village's party chief. "It's completely unfair," he says. It is also common. In 2012 He Guoqiang, then one of China's highest-ranking leaders, said of village bosses: "They don't do their jobs...they don't really understand which households are in difficulty... and they give dibao benefits to relatives, friends or even themselves."

Vocab

1. **discretion** n. the freedom or power to decide what should be done in a particular situation 自行决定的自由；自行决定权

e.g. I'll leave it up to you to **use your discretion**. 我把这件事留给你自己斟酌决定。

Sentence

In Dayinghan a 68-year-old neighbour of Mr Zhang says that only ten households in the village get dibao payments, all of them friends of the village's party chief.

主干: a 68-year-old neighbour of Mr Zhang says...

all of them friends of the village's party chief. 这里的all of them 是指 ten households

The programme is thus doing little to help lift more people above the poverty line. The World Bank study says each ten yuan spent on the dibao system **narrowed** the gap between a poor person's income and the local dibao threshold by only one yuan to 2.4 yuan, a **miserable** result.

Vocab

1. **narrow** v. to become or make sth narrower 使窄小；变窄；缩小

e.g. This is where the river narrows. 这条河就是在这里变窄的。

2. **miserable** adj. making you feel very unhappy or uncomfortable 使难受的；使不舒服的；令人不快的

e.g. I spent a miserable weekend alone at home. 我独自一人在家度过了一个惨兮兮的周末。

Sentence

The World Bank study says each ten yuan spent on the dibao system narrowed the gap between a poor person's income and the local dibao threshold by only one yuan to 2.4 yuan, a miserable result.

主干: The World Bank study says...

从句的主干: ten yuan spent on the dibao system (还原: which is narrow the gap between)

Recently, matters have begun to improve. The government has set up a system of **cross-checking** applications with other official documents (such as medical records) to limit **fraud**. It is **streamlining bureaucracy** and creating a database of all those in the countryside below the poverty line. Local authorities used to bear most of the cost of the dibao system. Now the central government pays two-thirds. This should give it more **clout** in its attempts to improve the programme.

Vocab

1. **cross-checking** n. 相互检验

2. **fraud** n. the crime of cheating sb in order to get money or goods illegally 欺诈罪；欺骗罪

e.g. She was charged with credit card fraud. 她被告信用卡欺骗罪。

3. **streamline** v. to make a system, an organization, etc. work better, especially in a way that saves money 使(系统、机构等)效率更高；(尤指)使增产节约

4. **bureaucracy** n. 官僚制度 A **bureaucracy** is an administrative system operated by a large number of officials.

e.g. **State bureaucracies can tend to stifle enterprise and initiative.** 国家的官僚体制往往会扼杀人们的事业心和积极性。

5. **clout** n. power and influence 影响力；势力

e.g. **political/ financial clout** 政治/经济势力

Sentence

Local authorities **used to** bear most of the cost of the dibao system.

⌋ You use **used to do sth** to talk about something that happened regularly or was the case in the past, but is not now. * used to do sth 指过去惯常做某事，而现在则不了：
I used to smoke, but I gave up a couple of years ago. 我以前抽烟，但几年前就戒掉了。

⌋ You use **be used to sth/to doing sth** to talk about something that you are familiar with so that it no longer seems new or strange to you. * be used to sth/to doing sth 指习惯于、适应于：

We're used to the noise from the traffic now. 现在我们已经适应车辆往来的噪音了。

I'm used to getting up early. 我习惯早起。

You can also use **get used to sth**. 亦可用 get used to sth :

Don't worry — you'll soon get used to his sense of humour. 别担心，你不久就会适应他的幽默感。

But more needs to be done. "We need to improve the quality of our data and really solve the issue of who we are supporting," says Liu Yongfu, a senior anti-poverty official in Beijing. The target of **eliminating** rural poverty by 2020 is unlikely to be met without further reform of dibao.

Vocab

1. **eliminate** v. ~ sth/ sb (from sth) to remove or get rid of sth/ sb 排除；清除；消除

Sentence

The target of **eliminating** rural poverty by 2020 is unlikely to be met without further reform of dibao.

主干：...target is unlikely to be met...

is unlikely to be met without further reform of dibao. 没有更进步的低保改革的话，就很难实现

Back at Dayinghan, farmers are not optimistic. Asked about the idea of **lifting** everyone out of poverty within five years, Mr Zhang and his neighbour look at each other **quizzically**, and then smile.

Vocab

1. **lift** v. to make the amount or level of sth greater; to become greater in amount or level 提高；增加；（使）增长

有个短语 **not lift/ raise a finger/ hand (to do sth)** (informal) to do nothing to help sb 一点忙也不帮；油瓶倒了都不扶

2. **quizzical** adj. showing that you are slightly surprised or amused 诧异的；感到好笑的

Sentence

这一段承接开头，回到了 Dayinghan 再次提及 farmers

From the print edition: China

Rural poverty Ham-fisted handouts

农村贫困：无济于事的救济金

China's biggest anti-poverty programme isn't working.

中国最大力度的扶贫项目未见实效。

A CONCRETE track meanders past nurseries of pine saplings and sheep grazing on stubble, petering out at Dayinghan, the poorest, most remote village in the stony hills of central Shanxi, a northern province. Some of the villagers live in caves. A few chickens and ducks scratch for food amid the rocks. Zhang Erping's family is one of about 100 that remain, half the number of ten years ago. He and his wife eat meat a couple of times a month; they buy it at Gujiao, the nearest town, but even the 1.4 yuan (20 cents) bus fare is usually too much for the household to afford.

一条水泥小路蜿蜒穿过松树苗圃和啃食麦茬的羊群，逐渐消失在大应寒村尽头。这个最贫困、最偏远的村庄，坐落在中国北方省份山西中部的石山群里，有些村民还住着窑洞，岩石堆上有几只鸡鸭在觅食。十年前，这里的村民有200户，而现在只剩一半，张二平一家就是其中的一户。他和妻子一个月只吃几次肉。肉是他们从距离最近的古交市买来的，即使公交车费才1.4元（20美分），但对这家人来说也是一笔很大的花费。

Mr Zhang used to drive there in a dilapidated three-wheel truck, hauling surplus crops to market. But the city government bans such vehicles for safety reasons, so he has two years' worth of potatoes and beans rotting away, unsellable. When he reaches 60 he will get a state pension of 1,200 yuan (\$190) a year, but that is two years away and, anyway, is barely half the official poverty line. The city has promised him 350 yuan to heat his two-room home, and half-price medicines. But when his grandson fell ill recently, he had to borrow 1,000 yuan to pay the bills. Two massive debts are scrawled in pencil on a calendar hanging on the wall: 2,500 yuan and 6,400 yuan. "We've always been poor in this village," he says.

以前，张先生常开着一辆破旧的三轮卡车，拉着多余的粮食到集市上去卖。但出于安全考虑，市政府禁止这类车辆的通行，因此他那些够吃2年的土豆和豆子卖不出去，正在慢慢腐烂。到了60岁，他就可以每年从政府领到1200元（折合190美元）养老金，但他还有两年才60岁，而且这笔钱还不足官方贫困线标准的一半。市政府承诺给他350元用来给他的两居室供暖，并且承诺他能半价购买药物。但最近他孙子生病了，他不得不借了1000元来还医药费。挂在墙上的日历用铅笔写着两项大数额的债务：2500元和6400元。他说：“在这村里我们一直都很贫穷。”

On October 16th President Xi Jinping said China would eradicate poverty by 2020. That would mean that 70m people must rise above the official poverty line, which is 2,300 yuan a year (the equivalent of about \$2 a day at purchasing-power parity, slightly higher than the World Bank's global standard). This is supposed to be a priority in the next five-year plan, which was being discussed by the Communist Party's Central Committee as *The Economist* went to press.

10月16日，习近平称中国将在2020年根除贫困。这就意味着有7000万人口的年收入必须提高到官方贫困线以上，也就是年收入达2300元（按购买力平价计算，大约相当于每天2美元，稍微高于世界银行的全球贫困标准）。这应该是下个五年计划的优先事项，在本期《经济学人》付印时，中共中央党委会正在讨论该五年计划。

Between 1980 and 2010 China cut the number living below the poverty line by around 600m, by far the biggest reduction in a single country ever. It did this indirectly—by building everything from roads and factories to schools and hospitals, thus boosting employment and incomes. The country has all but eradicated extreme poverty in cities (though the much-higher cost of living in urban areas means that many city-dwellers above the poverty line are still living hand to mouth) . Those still living below the line are almost entirely rural people who cannot work for reasons such as age, disability or because their villages are remote and inhospitable. Helping them will require more direct measures, not least giving cash.

1980年至2010年，生活在贫困线以下的中国人口大约减少了6亿，是迄今为止单个国家脱贫人数最多的一次。中国以间接的方式——修建公路、工厂、学校及医院等——来促进就业和提高收入。中国几乎在所有城市消除了绝对贫困（然而生活在城市地区需要更高的成本，这意味着许多生活在贫困线以上的城市居民仍然只能勉强糊口）。那些仍然生活在贫困线以下的基本都是农村居民，他们因年老病残，或由于所处的乡村属于偏远荒芜的地区而无法工作。帮助他们脱贫需要更多直接的措施，尤其是给他们现金。

The government mainly does this through its “subsistence guarantee” programme, often known by its Chinese shorthand, dibao. In principle, those whose income is below the minimum needed to keep them in adequate comfort (the level is decided by local governments) get a payment to bring them up to that level. The dibao programme began as a pilot scheme in cities in 1994, spread to the countryside in the mid 2000s and went nationwide after 2007. It has grown fast: the number of rural recipients more than trebled between 2006 and 2013; spending on it rose eightfold. Two-thirds of those who were below the poverty line on joining the scheme are now above it.

中国政府主要通过最低生活保障制度来实现人口脱贫，人们熟知的是它的简称“低保”。原则上，那些收入低于当地低保标准（这一标准由地方政府制定）的人能得到政府发放的救济金，让他们的生活水平提高到最低生活保障水平之上。1994年，低保制度先在城市试点，并于2005年前后扩散至农村地区，2007年后，推广至全国。这一制度发展得很快，2006年到2013年，农村低保人数已为原来的三倍多，政府在这方面的支出增长到原来的8倍。参加低保时生活在贫困线以下的人口，现在有三分之二生活在贫困线以上。

Most of China's poorest, however, are not in the programme. A study published by the World Bank in August found that in 2007-09 only 10% of those below the poverty line in the countryside got dibao payments. (Mr Zhang does not get any.) Around three-quarters of those who did get payments were above the line. Data are patchy, but it is clear that a lot of dibao spending goes awry.

然而，中国大多数最贫困的人口却不在这一制度内。今年8月，世界银行公布了一份研究报告，该报告称2007年至2009年，生活在贫困线以下的农村居民只有10%拿到了低保救济金。（张先生一分钱也没拿到。）这些得到低保救济金的人中大约有四分之三生活在贫困线以上。虽然数据不全，但有一点很明显，大部分低保支出未按计划进行。

The dibao system was set up by the central government but is implemented by local authorities which can limit the size of payouts. The study found that in rural areas local thresholds for receiving dibao payments ranged from 500 yuan to 3,000 yuan a year (ie, from above the national poverty line to far below it) . Spending per head varied from almost nothing in some places to 4,000 yuan a year in others. Cost-of-living differences accounted

for some of this variation but not all. In practice, richer villages tend to be more generous. 低保制度是中央政府制定的，但由地方政府来实施，而地方政府能自行决定发放额度。世界银行的调查发现，农村地区各地领取救济金的门槛从每年500元到3000元不等（也就是，从高于全国贫困线到远低于全国贫困线）。有些地方的人均年救济金少得可怜，而有些地方却达到4000元/年。生活成本的差异造成了上述的结果，但不是全部的原因。实践中发现，富裕的乡村更慷慨。

Widespread discretion breeds widespread corruption. In Dayinghan a 68-year-old neighbour of Mr Zhang says that only ten households in the village get dibao payments, all of them friends of the village's party chief. "It's completely unfair," he says. It is also common. In 2012 He Guoqiang, then one of China's highest-ranking leaders, said of village bosses: "They don't do their jobs...they don't really understand which households are in difficulty... and they give dibao benefits to relatives, friends or even themselves."

普遍的自主决定权导致了普遍性腐败。在大应寒村，张先生的一位68岁的邻居称，村里只有10户人家能拿到低保救济金，他们都是村党委书记的朋友。他说：“这非常不公平。”但这种现象也很常见。2012年，中国最高级别领导人之一的贺国强这样评价村官：“他们不司其职.....他们无法真正理解百姓的困难.....他们把低保津贴给了亲戚，朋友甚至是自己。”

The programme is thus doing little to help lift more people above the poverty line. The World Bank study says each ten yuan spent on the dibao system narrowed the gap between a poor person's income and the local dibao threshold by only one yuan to 2.4 yuan, a miserable result.

因此这一制度根本没办法将更多人的生活水平提高到贫困线以上。世界银行的研究报告显示了一项令人遗憾的结果：每花10元钱在低保制度上，穷人的收入和当地低保门槛的差距只能缩小大概1至2.4元。

Recently, matters have begun to improve. The government has set up a system of cross-checking applications with other official documents (such as medical records) to limit fraud. It is streamlining bureaucracy and creating a database of all those in the countryside below the poverty line. Local authorities used to bear most of the cost of the dibao system. Now the central government pays two-thirds. This should give it more clout in its attempts to improve the programme.

最近问题已经有所改善。政府已经设立交叉检查（配合其他官方文件来检查是否满足低保条件，比如医疗记录）的申请制度，以此来限制欺瞒行为。政府简化官僚机构，并且建立了数据库，登记所有生活在贫困线以下的农村人口。过去地方政府要承担大部分低保的支出，现在在中央政府支付三分之二。这应该能给它更多的影响，用以改善低保制度。

But more needs to be done. "We need to improve the quality of our data and really solve the issue of who we are supporting," says Liu Yongfu, a senior anti-poverty official in Beijing. The target of eliminating rural poverty by 2020 is unlikely to be met without further reform of dibao.

但需要做的事情还有很多。国务院扶贫办主任刘永福表示：“我们需要提高数据的质量，真正弄清楚谁才是我们要帮助的。”如果不进一步改革低保制度，2020年消除农村贫困这一目标将很难实现。

Back at Dayinghan, farmers are not optimistic. Asked about the idea of lifting everyone out

of poverty within five years, Mr Zhang and his neighbour look at each other quizzically, and then smile.

将视线转移到大应寒村，这里的农民并不乐观。被问及怎么看待在五年内将所有人脱离贫困这一想法时，张先生和他的邻居疑惑地看着对方，然后笑了。