

The Economic Growth Devastating the World

By Venerable Master Haiyun Jimeng

As we pointed out earlier, the mechanism of the accomplice structure is such that the democratic political ballot is determined by the social welfare pie; the quality of social welfare is conditioned on the tax revenues from economic activities; in order to increase tax revenues, enterprise profit must be repeatedly pursued and economic growth must be promoted. Therefore, through this accomplice structural mechanism, economic growth is strengthened and promoted repeatedly, forming the universal values of the mainstream culture.

Today, the whole world faces such predicaments as uneven distribution of resources, depletion of natural resources, and serious distortion of human nature. Economic growth is the biggest prime culprit; it is the devil that is devastating the world. How so? In this chapter, we shall first deal with how economic growth is destroying the world, and then clarify the philosophical and cultural underpinnings of such behavior.

Section 1: Economic growth and destruction

The wrong thinking and behavioural patterns that economic growth generates have brought total disasters to our three basic constructs of livelihood: 1.) destruction to human nature and spirituality, 2.)

destruction to human interactions and ethnic group relationships, and 3.)
destruction to natural ecology.

The arrival and expansion of these three big disasters cannot be quantified by statistics such as the GNP (Gross National Product) and GDP (Gross Domestic Product). It is impossible to display these negative effects with statistical representations of economic development and growth. Thus, people repeatedly ignore the existence of such disasters and the fact that they are worsening. Let us look at how economic growth totally devastates humanity in these three aspects:

1. Devastation of human nature and spirituality

Cultivating and elevating our spirituality in order to realize ultimate goodness is the foremost goal of the Buddha's teachings. However, economic growth takes as its criteria external objects instead of spirituality. As a result, people cannot stop feeling worried, empty, and frightened, despite great material abundances. Economic growth has not made people happy; on the contrary the opposite is true, as has been well portrayed in the movie "*Amal!*" In other words, cultivation of spirituality is neither in the central value of the accomplice structure nor in the data of its power and profit structure. We should know that power and profit only benefit a small number of people, but spiritual growth is a natural blessing and right for all humanity. However, we throw away the essentials for the inessentials, and we expend too much only to get a

meagre return! This is why philosophers, educators and religious leaders have repeatedly regretted that materialism has eroded spirituality, bringing upon them a sense of resentment and helplessness.

When a society's values run counter to spiritual norms, the systems that they establish are enormously deviated. The worst damage can be seen in education and religious professionalism. Imparting of knowledge is geared towards the pursuit of power and profit, and fails to recognize the value of life or to experience the meaning of human nature. Religious professionalism further harms dignity of life and the value of human nature, turning man into statistical data. Every human being has become a pawn on the chessboard or just some data. One is not free to decide for oneself, but has become a mere material form, devoid of spirituality and lacking divine life, forcing one to live in formal oppositions and ideological struggles. These are the root causes of worldwide conflicts today and of neglecting the functions of mental and spiritual recovery, social acceptance, and praise.

This materialistic accomplice structure has been engineered by political figures, economists, social activists into a formidable devilish economic growth that devours the human soul, his morals, education and religion. How will the common folks able to see the cunning tricks of this dreadful, fiendish devil? Some moralists, educators, and religious leaders even take initiatives in constructing such structure. This makes it

even harder for us to understand clearly the root structure of our modern society.

2. Devastation of interpersonal and inter-group relationships

Man is a social animal who lives in groups. Human culture evolves from the interactions of men living in groups into unique cultural systems. In other words, human beings interact with one another through living in groups, forging human interactions, social restraints, mutual coordination and communications that encourage, stimulate, and build this great human culture.

When economic growth becomes the highest criterion of social values, human interactions and deepening of relationships are completely neglected and loathed. This becomes the biggest barrier and devastation to human cultural development! Today, the Hebrew civilization by the rule of law sets law as the criterion. However, law is the by-product the vested interests and legislation is to protect the vested interests. Although it is said that in front of the law everybody is equal, the power to interpret the law is in fact in the hands of the authority. Thus, human nature, humanity, and morality are neglected; this is the root cause for disappointment! Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that while some judges still uphold the conscience and strive to preserve human nature and humanity, our system on the whole is going downhill, and their efforts are not strong enough to save the desperate crises!

Under the pretexts of law and contract, the concept of economic growth wantonly plunders the resources of weaker ethnic groups to maintain the G7's social welfare, tilting the balance of the overall structure. International trade and the pay-by-instalment system further poison interpersonal relationships and the ethnic conventions among various nationalities. The most obvious example is home purchasing by instalment, which breaks up families, causing children to move away from parents, and the issues with the elderly become more serious. Who is the culprit? Economists, government officials, and sociologists euphemize it as "substantial increases in average national housing," but few care about the harm to interpersonal and ethnic group relationships. Other issues concerning kids, teenagers, young people, and married couples also arise as a result, but few care to investigate their causes, and the majority even accept this as the inevitable phenomenon of economic development, euphemizing it as advanced countries, which is totally absurd!

The G7's solution is to deal with such issues entirely through social welfare, which is absurd! The psychological problems with the elderly certainly cannot be solved by building senior communities and geriatric wards. The issue with the elderly is an issue of human dignity that social welfare or economic growth cannot solve! We have also found that all that religious leaders can do is to worry but cannot come up with solutions! The key solution lies in building an environment

among ethnic groups that is not based on a social welfare system implemented by legislations, indifferences, and standardizations, a purely materialistic structure devoid of human sentiments and nature! We need to build a social environment based on human nature, humanism, and human values, in particular human nature and family relationships, rather than showing off material possessions. This is the only way we can restore the brilliance of human nature and the joy of being together among ethnic groups!

1. Devastation of the natural environment

We have only one Earth, and we anticipate it to continually and stably provide us with rich and colourful living conditions. But, today economic growth has wreaked havoc on Earth, exhausted resources, destroyed nature, enlarged the holes in the ozone layer, and produced greenhouse effects, global warming, exceptional weather, rise in the sea level, and plagues, spread of diseases, species change, etc. to the point that mankind are unable to bear. Hence the so-called Kyoto Protocol, which is a better-late-than-never approach with extremely limited effect! Why? The Kyoto Protocol limits gas discharge from terminals, and hopes to reduce emissions so as to dampen the global warming effect rather than dealing with the effects and not with the root causes. We do not oppose any counter-pollution measures, but as long as this world holds economic growth as its values, there is no change to the whole

accomplice structure. The end result is that there will be increasingly number of countries joining the rank of polluters of the Earth. How can this call for small energy conservation and carbon reduction match the infinite demands of economic growth? Moreover, the proportional increase in carbon emissions and the degree of pollution is definitely greater than the proportion of economic growth every year, but the effects and targets of carbon reduction and energy conservation are much smaller than economic growth figures! In other words, if this old ailment of economic growth is not eliminated, no additional energy conservation and carbon reduction formulae are able to control such condition! As a result, attempting to save the Earth from catastrophes in this way is as futile as putting out a carful of fire with a small cup of water!

Therefore, we solemnly appeal as follows: in order for man to save the Earth from catastrophes, he must begin from the root causes of all issues and change social values and communal basic behavioural patterns. In terms of actions, man must **immediately cease to compete for economic growth and must restructure the G7 social welfare system!** Otherwise, the unfair resource distribution and wastage of resources will continue to increase, pollution and carbon dioxide emissions will grow unchecked, and any provisions of the Kyoto Protocol will be reduced to burying one head in the sand. What good does it have? Certainly our appeal is a big challenge to the G7's vested

interests, but we challenge them to change anyways. We expect young and educated people interested in protecting the values and meaning of existence of the world to join us conscientiously and boldly forge ahead without forsaking their conscience for the vested interests!

It is extremely clear to us that so long as we cease to compete for economic growth, the free democratic society will collapse; in other words, the G7 nations will bear the brunt! But, our global situation being reduced to one such as we are in today, undeniably the G7 nations are the biggest secret evil manipulators behind-the-scenes! Moreover, the majority of resources are not evenly distributed among G7 countries, with a greater majority of resources controlled by 20% of people. Do you not see how financial investors on Wall Street play with their modern economic accomplice structural prawns? What can you do about them? Thus, the only way is to reshuffle the cards, start afresh, layout new world values, and let man restore his fundamental aspects based on human nature, humanism, and human values. Only then will our Earth become pure, serene, stable, harmonious, balanced, and everlastingly bountiful again!

In brief, stop competition in economic growth and the Earth and humanity will have a chance to revive, but there will be a huge reshuffle effect in the human and economic society! The development of Hebrew civilization until now has only made a small percentage of people powerful, but has let the majority sink into an abyss of pain; for 500

years, people could not deal with the global situation but have fallen deeper and deeper to the point of annihilating the whole world. Hence, we cannot stand by anymore; we can no longer feel dreadful about people in power and the mighty currents of the mainstream values; we must break through the calm and complacent barriers of traditional Buddhism that separated us from the rest of the world; we must raise a hue and cry saying: “We are here!” “We will not be absent!” “We will deliver the world from crises and reset a new direction for the world!” We earnestly hope to propose a plan to save the world! Young and educated Buddhists of today! Where do you stand on protecting the values and meaning of existence of the world? Please boldly come forward! This is the spirit and way of the Bodhisattva!

Our motive for such suggestions is not to be vehement critics of or punish the G7 nations; in fact, we are not interested in punishing anyone. We intend to identify the crux of global issues of our time. More importantly, we intend to find new world values whereby people everywhere on Earth will live peacefully and happily, a truly feasible plan to save the world; we intend to change the operation patterns by which a small number of people arbitrarily control all resources and power, and wilfully let this devilish economic growth devastate human nature and the environment. Such operation patterns are no different from annihilating the whole world; not even the G7 nations will be

spared from global disasters! In other words, under economic growth the devil rules and no one is a winner!

Therefore, we need urgently to propose a plan to save the world, a win-win plan that will help all nations including the G7 nations, to eliminate poverty, environmental pollution, and rebuild a world where people are happy and spiritual and no longer feel helpless, frustration, fear and other suffering! This win-win plan is to realize the Bodhisattva spirit of using compassion to save all living things without discriminating anyone!

Section 2: Modern economic thought and practice

Before we propose our plan however, in order to get to the crux of the problem that let the whole world deviate, we need first to analyze the philosophies and operation patterns of modern economics and their origins.

One may say that all of economics and its history have avoided, overlooked, or played down human nature and conscience altogether, and are based on such trends as materialism, profit, and quantification that are misleading to human nature. Why? All economic assumptions take “desires” as their premise and reduce complex human nature to the “pursuit of highest profit!” Human desires are thus infinitely expanded but conscience completely left out of theories and formulae; these assumptions mislead researchers repeatedly and misguide everyone

towards plundering of resources, causing the human soul to fall! In other words, under the premise of economic growth, human lives, human nature, everyday living, human culture, humanism, and human values, etc., have become materialistic and are absolutely negated. Moreover, the vested interests have used legislation, the rule of law, and the power of language to sink human nature into the Bermuda triangle!

From an economic standpoint, “economy of desires” and “economy of scarcity” differ only in our attitude towards utilization of natural resources! Since its proposal, economy of scarcity has been implemented for decades but man's universal values have been progressively worsening. Natural resource consumption has not economized as the economists have expected. We may have a few extra clever recycling schemes, but large quantities of products from clothing to automobiles, home appliances, notebook computers are being renewed and made obsolete in terms of designs, fittings, selection of materials, bringing massive wastes and making all products incompatible. This is the ferocious look of the economic growth devil that turns natural resources into peoples’ family wastes: whether clothing, name brand handbags, home appliances, battery chargers, batteries, etc. are a big pile of wastes. Is this all to show the fruit of economic growth?

Since the US 1929 Great Depression and after John Maynard Keynes proposed his “General Theory” in 1936, the accomplice

structure had found its theoretical basis and was widely implemented. This was a US civilization masterpiece! Later Paul A. Samuelson and others also repeatedly proposed theories of economic development and economic cycle, which have become common concepts of today, whose validity few people would seriously question.

You may not have noticed that every economic boom and recovery comes only from the discovery of new resources, new worlds, new colonies, and new plundering but the electronics industries of this era are only emerging bubble shows! The 2008 global financial crisis has proven that the Hebrew universal values are completely unrealistic, with unstable foundations. Do we wait until all systems and resources have broken down completely before we re-consider our situation?

Today we widely implement a system of economics that avoids the human conscience and makes human nature orient towards materials and desires, and which is combined with the effects of the accomplice structure. This is a great boost to harming human nature, isolating people, and plundering resources. However, economics has its own origins.

Section 3: Economic growth as the root cause of hegemonism

The birth of this economic growth devil is expedited by the accomplice structure, which is generated from the distorted philosophies of hegemonism and plunderage of the Hebrew civilization.

The formation of core values of a civilization inevitably has its profound philosophical and cultural context. There were priests who performed sacrifices and official historians in China, Brahmins in India, popes and bishops in Europe and the US, which present the historical context on which such core values depend. Since we discussed how the present universal values deviate and the part that we must rectify, we must also discuss the root of these philosophies. Our goal is not to criticize and accuse anyone, but to find the key to thoroughly cure today's inveterate diseases! Thus, exposing this unspeakable sore spot is painful, but an effective reform plan cannot avoid this inevitable question. Moreover the greater the reform plan, the deeper it digs down to the crux of the problem to identify its sore spots! We are fully aware that exposing the sore spots is bound to cause oppositions far and wide, but for the future happiness and survival of man, we cannot be weak and acquiescent! Therefore we appeal to all conscientious intelligentsia and elites to learn from painful experiences, and calmly, objectively, fairly self-criticize and reconsider the whole situation! We must also state explicitly that **we are not here to criticize or accuse anyone for religious competition, or to provoke conflicts and anxiety among the general mass by raising sensitive issues, but we are here to calmly, objectively, and fairly propose a reform plan, and in so doing, we cannot truly avoid such sensitive topic! We only hope the reader understands the awkward and solemn situation we are in, and**

calmly and deeply consider our words and not make the same mistakes over again!

One may recall western thoughts and history are under the strong influences of the Hebrew civilization. Most remarkable is the birth of monotheism in the west. The Old Testament comes from Judaism. Records in the Old Testament have their complex historical context, with which we are not going to deal here. However there are numerous references to God's names or his presence in the annihilation of heathens. These references have repeatedly been used in western history by careerists posing as God's servants to launch numerous religious wars; the 200-years Crusades were a remarkable example! From a believer's logic, monotheism means either "believe in God and have eternal life or go to hell," which is an intensely restrictive and intimidating religion. With the exaggerations, promotions, and actions of devotees, such restrictive, despotic, and hegemonistic attitudes and behaviours have become the special characteristics of monotheism, which even monotheists cannot deny.

We do not intend to criticize the basic religious doctrines of monotheism; we wish only to point out that western careerists have been using it for a long time to commit hegemonism and plunderage in the name of religion! **Although the essence of such hegemonism and plunderage may not necessarily have come from monotheism, under the formidable strength of religion, western civilization has been**

immersed for a long time in the philosophies of hegemonism and plunderage. Around the fifth century A.D. during the times of the Roman Empire, such thoughts devastated the Mediterranean regions and ushered in the Dark Ages for more than 1,000 years, and coincided with the philosophy of the Divine Right of Kings, which brought about the bloody Crusades between 11th and 13th centuries. Since the Renaissance, between the 16th and 19th centuries came the big sea navigation and colonization period of unrest; the two world wars of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the accomplice structure all found their origins in hegemonistic and plundering thoughts! **Although the incidents were different, its hegemonistic and plundering essence was the same in all cases!** These philosophies and behaviours harmful to human nature still dominate mainstream values.

Looking at the entire development process of western civilization and philosophies, whether the Divine Right of Kings or economic growth invariably has been hegemonistic and plundering in essence. Such developmental process is not one of political systems, but of the structure and essence of philosophies. The G7 nations often use democracy and human rights as their pretext to intimidate underdeveloped regions and countries as undemocratic and lacking freedom and human rights; their goal is nothing but to give a pretext to plunderage. How shallow this is!

We might as well calmly consider this: the G7 have plundered 90% of the world's resources to feed their social welfare policies; where would the other countries get another 90% of resources to develop themselves to developed nations? Great nations should not have such self-satisfying, plundering and ridiculous attitudes! What the western world thinks of is China's uneven income distribution, not global uneven income distribution, which is a contradicting double standard! As for politics, we are not concerned with the question of dynasty change or political systems, but we are concerned with **fair distribution, stability, and continuity of resources; more importantly, we are concerned with the value of human nature and dignity of human existence, and with the questions of happiness of all humanity.** Thus, in order to avoid devastation from economic growth, we must eradicate hegemonistic and plundering thoughts and put forward a new age proposal based on deep universal love to thoroughly rectify such devious tendencies!

Let us stop for a moment and consider this: even if we can immediately halt competition for economic growth, with its social structures and values still intact, we estimate it will probably take 50 to 60 years to rectify the situation. But at present destruction to nature is carried out at an unprecedented rate. We worry how much more nature can bear such destructions. If we do not take actions promptly, after 50 to 60 years, coastal civilizations will soon vanish, humanity will return

to mountain civilization! Even more fearful is that when Mother Nature fights back, the entire human civilization will be wiped out in an instant! Then in the morning after, man will have to wait until the glacial epoch retrogresses to start afresh from drinking blood and eating raw meat again!

Ask yourselves, all of you who are responsible for protecting universal values and their significance! Should we not work together calmly, objectively, fairly to draw up a feasible historic plan to save the Earth, our history, and our descendants? We must not be hoodwinked by the vested interests or our selfish likes and dislikes!

~“Our Only Choice” A new vision for the long-term survival of humanity and the Earth, Chapter Two

By Venerable Master Haiyun Jimeng