

Our Only Choice:
An Economy of Spirituality for a Bright Tomorrow

Section 1: What is an economy of spirituality?

I want to propose clearly a bright tomorrow for all humanity, which neither relies on the natural resources nor the economic activities and incomes from economic growth, but rather it is the economic activities and incomes from spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is exploring valuable spiritual ore. As long as people are born, their spirituality needs to be developed. Such development does not pollute the earth, but only purifies the human heart, restoring it to its source! Not only is spiritual growth the best way to save the Earth, it can also cleanse the human spirit for the purpose of realizing ultimate goodness. In so doing, it can also promote interpersonal and ethnic group relationships so that the various tribes may preserve their respective characteristics and mutually accommodate one another despite their differences. More importantly, it does not harm Mother Nature but rather promotes the continued, natural, balanced existence of the Earth!

In order to resolve the deep level issues underlying the accomplice structure, we propose an economy of spirituality. Economics is a subject reek of the odour of money, especially when it comes to raising the devilish economic growth; how can it unify with spirituality? Our views are as follows: in maintaining the supply of material wealth, we need only to apply existing technologies to make goods available to everyone, and to use man-power and manual means to maintain man's basic living standards, and in so doing extinguishes the differences between the developed and under-developed, and restore all living things to a peaceful, stable, and harmonious world. This is to minimize material economic growth and focus and redirect man's energy and talents to developing his spirituality and the humanities.

Such spiritual growth and development activities are based on human nature, humanities, humanism, and human values, and not on external material wealth and money. Enjoyment based on spending material wealth and money is massive consumption of Earth's resources, **but enjoyment based on humanism and human nature is a form of spiritual existence of eternal warmth and feeling, which will not vanish because we enjoy it!** Therefore, we may infinitely indulge in spiritual growth and development, and infinitely roam in the spiritual world without causing pollution, depletion and harm to the Earth! Pollution of the human mind might be inevitable but comparatively to a smaller extent than today's devastation and pollution of human nature! This is an inevitable phenomenon of the law of averages operating in man's society.

One point we must clarify is that all ethnic groups are born equal, all possess their own characteristics, and all may receive spiritual growth and development! Although in their development there may be cultural differences or contradictions, all these are cultural manifestations arising from their spirituality, and mutual communication and co-existence in peace are precisely the aim of spiritual growth. Therefore there is no dominant or mainstream civilization in spiritual growth and development, but rather a harmonious, accommodating, co-existence despite cultural differences, a bright cultural field where human nature, humanism, and human values become the prime guiding principles instead of external targets such as building up material wealth and money.

Section 2: An economy of spirituality – Blueprint for a harmonious society: The environment

My friends! To build a harmonious society is not a slogan, but rather it is our work-in-progress! There are two aspects of Huayen thoughts – intrinsic order and things: scriptures are intrinsic order, which are the guiding principles; and things are practices. How to harmonize intrinsic order with things and realize abstract ideals in the real world is religion! In intrinsic order, Huayen thoughts are exhaustive; in things, they are specific and concrete. Using exhaustive intrinsic order to guide us in performing specific matters to build a harmonious society is the core of Huayen thoughts. A society built upon such thoughts is called a flower repository world or a harmonious society, which simply is defined as a society most suited for human habitation. Our proposal of economy of spirituality is in response to building such harmonious society.

The first step in using economy of spirituality to build a harmonious society is to maintain economic productivity at zero exploitation of natural resources. Zero exploitation means less than 1%, with utilization rate between zero and 1%. This means no mechanical exploitation of mineral resources, minimal mining, and high utilization, with automobiles and home appliances thus becoming permanent goods, and allowing forests to regenerate more than two times over. In so doing, the inevitable trend is that manual labour and material goods become permanent, and thus first-class human resources will be invested in fostering spirituality, human nature, the humanities, human values, human integrity, including in-depth self-development and universally saving all living things. Then the value, significance, dignity of human existence will

be respected, the proposition that man as the most intelligent creature will be true, and man's destruction and pollution to natural resources and the Earth will stop immediately.

It is obvious to us that stopping economic growth is not the same as stopping economic activities and incomes. In fact, a basic condition of the ideal society is absolute economic abundance. Abundance here does not mean wanton plundering of natural resources but maintaining nature in continued and balanced growth so that we will live in inexhaustible abundance. For example, in using forest resources, we must have corresponding forest regenerative plans to ensure their continuity; as well, we should teach people to love our resources, and promote the production and use of permanent goods. What we want is "abundance based on love," where there is continuity in the growth and use of natural resources and prolonged use of material goods, and not "affluence based on plunder" where there are mass production, mass consumption, massive wastages, and massive pollution.

Economic growth discussed in western theories is affluence based on plunder. We know that economic growth is fuelled by economic development, and thus exploitation of natural resource is an essential factor in economic growth. 500 years of human economic history has attested to the fact that economic and social construction and achievements are exploitation and utilization of natural resources. But this was the wrong way. Our conditions of our present society and the Earth are ample proof; we need not say more!

Further analyses reveal that prosperity and the decline of human civilization follow a certain pattern. The rise of various great civilizations, though related to the wisdom of the state founders, more importantly depended on the occupation of important resources such as forests and prairies that would support the livelihood of the common people. But the fall of great civilizations, though related to bad planning and choice of officials, depended more on deficiency of resources, and thus definitely related to popular sentiment betrayals. Historical records usually showed the former because the fact that historical conditions determined the objective environment was not fully understood. When we carefully examine nearly four millenniums of the development of Chinese civilization:

1. Xia and Shang dynasties in the Henan regions had exhausted resources for over one thousand years;

2. The Zhou Dynasty established in Shaanxi, and throughout the Han and Tang Dynasties for over thousand years, had exhausted resources on the Guanzhong plain in Shaanxi valley of the Wei River; and
3. Since the fall of the Tang Dynasty, the political center moved to the Kaifeng northern capital, and Liao's northern capital became the center until today, for another millennium, sand storms had continued to wreak havoc.

In brief, the ancient people did not know that resources were external factors for survival or how to manage them for continuity, and so that resources were uncultivated, over-exploited, and spoiled, pushing our excellent landscape and civilization to the verge of collapse and disintegration. The recent rise of European and US civilization is a series of intense, across-the-board, planned plunders of global natural resources, not the kind of regional destruction we saw in ancient civilizations. Destruction to nature in ancient civilizations was due to ignorance, but our present destruction is planned, mechanical destruction. Does man need to ruin all global resources, human civilization, and happiness and prospect for the wrong values of the small number people of the G7 nations?

Therefore, after examining the ancient and modern histories of China and other countries and their histories of civilizations, we may utilize modern science and technologies, and information to make up for the ignorance of ancient times. An outstanding example is the endeavour of Beijing in preventing and controlling sand storms. We believe that instead of plunders we protect and breed nature resources, we will produce direct results in man's happiness, and return the Earth to a continued safe, stable, and balanced state!

Based on the above, in order to reformulate central social values using the Earth's resources as the standard, so as to rectify wrong behavioural patterns of mass consumption and over-exploitation of natural resources that arise from economic growth, we set forth a concrete proposal regarding the Earth's ecological balance, as detailed below:

1. Limit mass production: use natural resources conservatively and frugally to avoid highly efficient production and massive wastages. Effectively limit energy use in producing all industrial products so as to save natural resources.
2. Limit mass consumption: use all industrial products frugally, treat non-consumables as permanent goods, and use consumables frugally. Saving energy is about conserving

energy for our descendants, not about profit. Treating all products as permanent goods will eliminate massive trash.

3. Limit the payment-by-installment system: Apply payment-by-installment only to capital goods, and not everyday consumer items. Therefore, payment-by-installment and the use of credit cards on general consumer goods should be strictly restricted so as to enhance conservation of natural resources and avoid wastages.
4. All governments of countries and regions producing raw materials should levy a resource tax to restrict wastage and excessive exploitation of resources. All resources on Earth should be commonly owned by all mankind and not monopolized by entrepreneurs. This is to formulate social values that natural resources are common shared by all men.
5. People in under-developed nations should be encouraged to take leisure in activities such as afforestation, environmental protection, and banning illegal pollution, and not in entertainment that produces wastes. Moreover, celebration of births and grieving of deaths should take the form of afforestation or environmental protection religious activities.

Section 3: An economy of spirituality – Blueprint for a harmonious society: Interpersonal and inter-group relationships

The main axle central to economy of spirituality is human nature; the road to realize human nature through practising humanity, i.e. to build and develop a harmonious society.

In terms of sentiment, reason, and law, the Chinese most often place sentiment before reason and place law last. In here there is profound meaning. In all social processes, we are dealing with interpersonal and ethnic group relationships, and because the core issues are human, their solutions must come from working with human nature first. Here, operations that conform to human sentiments and human nature become the norms and are therefore reasonable. On the basis of such reasonable norms laws are formulated. It then follows that the laws can only be legitimate if they are reasonable and conform to human sentiment or human nature, otherwise they cannot be the law, but are only the selfish desires of those in power! The modern society, which is modelled on the Hebrew civilization uses the law as its norms, often emphasizes legitimacy before reason and sentiment last. It ignores human nature and humanity, so that numerous social incidents involving immoral and inhuman acts occur. This is putting the cart before the horse!

Thus the key position of economy of spirituality is to build a social system based on human nature, and to make human interactions harmonious and accommodating. In other words, what economy of spirituality builds is a humanistic society in which one should “treat humanity ... as an end ... never merely as a means to an end.”¹ This is a premise under which different nationalities, countries, and regions may based on their respective customs and national characteristics, formulate their own agreements among ethnic groups to develop unique cultural and political systems whereby people will avoid mutual interference but will appreciate one another, and whereby all cultures will co-prosper and coexist without pursuit of unification, unitary values, or cultural supremacy, but will exist in their respective perfect beauty. This is to build a harmonious world!

Historically speaking, there were only two cases in which man succeeded in formulating a stable social system based on human nature, one was the Chinese systems of rules of propriety, music, and ethics, and the other was the Indian caste system. They had maintained several millenniums of traditional cultures and enabled these two nations to become well-established and to endure many crises, and create brilliant cultural thoughts. In India, whether vaisyas, sudras, or the outcastes regardless were resigned to their castes throughout their lives, and therefore their minds were stable and they could be happy. This is different from the Buddhist saying of pacifying people’s minds. Having a resigned attitude under the caste system was less flexible, and remained at the grassroots level. Social stability could be maintained under the caste system only insofar as the educational system was not implemented. But the Buddhist stabilizes people’s minds by awakening them to life, promoting quality of life and stabilizing the entire society at the same time.

Modern western-style education teaches people never to be resigned, but rather to get ahead and innovate; old traditions become unimportant, and people are not satisfied with what they already have. The western affluent society is extremely powerful, but social opposition is also very strong. This is why tragedies on campuses, shootings, and man slaughters are frequent. This is not the problems with a small number of people, but rather the entire society is under constrains, unable to loosen, and therefore creates such tragedies. This is the root of suffering of

¹ “Treat humanity ... as an end ... never merely as a means to an end.” is a quote from the German philosopher Kant.

modern people, a sort of social structural disease! The general farming populace are resigned to a stable life, and are therefore happy, which is not foolishness. People who are not willing to live a resigned life often have families broken up. They may be rich but when they suffer from worries, indigestion and insomnia, no material goods can make them happy. The resources consumed in economic growth are extremely high; if goods so produced cannot make people happy, all resources are wasted in vain!

What are the pre-requisites of a happy society? In China, Confucius emphasized his rules of propriety in education. In the Analects, the Master said, “It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused. “It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. “It is from Music that the finish is received.” (Chapter 8.8 Book of T’ai Po) He added, “If you do not learn the Rules of Propriety, your character cannot be established.” (Chapter 16.13 Book of Ji) The rules of propriety are precisely the education that the modern age needs most. They are the basic attitudes of human interactions. Such rules comprise mutual love, respect, and accommodation. In real life, the most important rules are to conserve resources, respect everyone’s endeavours, accommodate the possible mistakes and failures of others, and especially accommodate and encourage the losers. Rules of propriety are not limited to those rules and music of ancient times, but all rules regarding resource conservation, mutual respect, and mutual accommodation should be strengthened in education. In a modern society that has lost its main axle of human nature, we must start with rules of propriety in building a harmonious society.

The second condition is ethics. The reason why the rules of propriety can impel is because they are built on an ethics system. In the work place, there are work ethics; at school, there are school ethics; in government, there are government ethics. Ethics exists everywhere in society and is universally needed. In ancient times, China was extremely fastidious about ethics: among the “five human relationships” the first three were family related.² It is obvious that the family is the most basic foundation and important unit for building a harmonious society. The

² The “five human relationships” were those between: rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, husbands and wives, brothers, and friends, in which the first three sets are family ethics. Such a concept first appeared in the Analects, but matured in the Book of Mencius. In the Analects, “The Duke Ching, of Ch’i, asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, ‘There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son.’” (Chapter 12.11 Book of Yen Yuan) In the Book of Mencius, Book 3 Part 1 T’eng Wen Kung officially proposed: “between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between elder and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity.”

violence of modern society mostly arises from family problems. Therefore, family harmony is extremely important. If the family fails to provide loved ones with warm loving care or acts as a haven for the discouraged members who have experienced setback to rest, then violence and anger will inevitably fill the air in society and will become an indefinite time bomb. China's ethics system have maintained the Chinese culture for five millenniums on the basis of which the Chinese nation has grown formidable; but her recent 200 years of deterioration and transformation had the Chinese lose confidence in their traditional culture, and therefore her ethics system had also collapsed such that an enormous crisis is lurking behind. In fact, formulating a perfect ethics system is far more important than economic growth. In ancient times, the Chinese had fully mastered the rules of propriety and ethics software before they could effectively build their harmonious society on other hardware infrastructure and operations.

Building a harmonious society does not start with hardware infrastructures in urban, county, or village planning. Software planning involving the mind, spirituality, and human nature is more important. Economic growth should not harm human nature, but at present economic growth is done all at the cost of human nature. Once we lose human nature, nothing else matter! You may work very hard, but you may not give up your health, your family, your children's education, the foundation of a happy life, otherwise all your endeavours will be in vain.

Today, the best way for all countries and nationalities in the world to build a harmonious social system is to fully master the ancient Chinese core values and spirit in such respect and each in accordance with its respective national characteristics build its own social system. We believe this will create a great and bright new culture!

Based on above, in order to reformulate the central social values based on a harmonious human society, and to rectify the devious social values which arise from economic growth, we put forth a proposal regarding interpersonal and ethnic group relationships, as detailed below:

1. Advocate home and ethics education: advocate human relations, deepen human understanding and communication, strengthen discussions on the value of life and meaning of existence, encourage independent life experiences, and draw up concrete humanism-oriented educational system, but not intimidating system based on competition and the power of language.

2. Advocate community life and social ethics and awareness: expand the scope of human relationships, encourage cooperative mutual understanding among different groups, strengthen interpersonal clashes to improve resistance to pressure, the ability to release pressure and processing setback. The ability to resist pressure and process setback is the foundation of a human-orient society, and should be listed in its basic education system.
3. Advocate human interactions and mind sharing: promote non-governmental exchange among different cultures, nationalities, and nations, and through interaction and communication, eliminate unnecessary misunderstanding and conflicts and enhance meeting of human nature. This will help people know and respect life better.
4. Advocate research and counselling in home and social incidents: In this information age, home and social incidents are extremely commonplace teaching material. Governments should use such real life teaching material to assist in human nature development and counselling, and should not let such incidents harm people's mind. Therefore, based on such functions, they should positively promote a "home harmony program,"³ whereby through open discussions of such incidents may be educational, and through "listening, appreciation, and acceptance" all members fully share their minds and safeguard the family from further occurrences of such incidents.
5. Respect different ethnic groups and societies based on humanism, through education to promote humanistic mechanism, and not through violent political, military, murderous means to intervene life and the social system. At the same time, we should redefine the meaning of a state to eliminate the three components of sovereignty, people, territory because this is the principal factor that creates world conflicts. We should establish the

³ I advocate the flower bank program as a means to building a flower bank world in which people may live in ultimate goodness. If practised earnestly, one may eradicate one's self-attachment. The program comprises three basic operational procedures: 1. three to five persons should form a group; 2. everyone speaks in turn on the deliberation subject for three to five minutes; 3. during the program, one's attitude should be to "listen respectfully, appreciate, and accept." When applied at home, this is the home flower bank program, which may facilitate full communication among family members, avoid rebellious children and opposition, and promote family harmony. For details, please refer to my book *The Beckoning Home to Life 4: Living like a spoiled brat*. Taipei: Kong-ting Publishing, 2004. Chapter 12: Home Flower Bank Program.

concept of one family one world, and the Earth is home to all people. We should never divide the Earth, segregate people, or cause world chaos and conflicts.

Section 4: An economy of spirituality – Blueprint for a harmonious society: Spiritual wisdom

The most important proposition in an economy of spirituality is to move from the exploitation of natural resources to the development and enrichment of resources of the heart, mind and spirituality. Such development or enrichment does not have sequelae; we need only to educate the people. Once people have developed such treasures of the heart, they will live fully and will be truly happy.

Spiritual satisfaction is the most important condition in building a harmonious society. If people are spiritually satisfied and do not feel empty, they will live life full of confidence, fully enjoy what they have in their own space in life and will not chase after material wealth. Certainly, because nothing is permanent and eternal success is impossible, and ups and downs, failures and setbacks in life are unavoidable, but when people are spiritually satisfied, they will live life feeling stable, satisfied and without fear. Once fear is gone, happiness and comfort can be felt everywhere; even in failure, people can still clearly see the cause of such failure.

We must deal with a person's happiness and survival from a religious standpoint. Religion cannot guarantee people's achievements in real life, but may give them a healthier and more confident outlook to face reality. Religion tells us setbacks in life are inevitable, but we must face such setbacks or even death with a very healthy attitude. Death to a truly religious person can be very beautiful: he is not afraid of death and illness, but only truly knows he is ill and should leave this world and welcome death.

Therefore, the biggest key point and merit of religion are in human spiritual satisfaction; when people are fully spiritually satisfied, their families will be happy and stable and the society will also be stable. Thus, in enlightening people spiritually, we can also achieve social stability! When social stability is achieved, this naturally also helps bring about stable government. Thus there are no power struggles in religion, no desires of authority, fame and fortune, but only in spiritually enlightening people, stabilizing people's hearts and minds, and eventually the government. In the past, China's Huayen thoughts in the prosperous times of the T'ang Dynasty were able to spiritually enlighten the hearts and minds of people, stabilize them and eventually stabilize the government; now, Buddhism in our time can also help us find in this chaotic environment a good and feasible way of revival.

Based on above, in order to reformulate values of ecological balance to bring peace and serenity to the human mind, and to rectify the wrong thinking patterns that arise from economic growth, to ensure everybody has sufficient space in life, protect human dignity and his independent and God given right to live, we put forward our concrete proposal regarding spirituality and wisdom as detailed below:

1. Religion provides the grounds for raising and promoting human spirituality. Its goal is to promote interpersonal harmony and stability in life and the hearts and minds of people, so that man and nature can have a harmonious and balanced living environment. Therefore, various religions should interact with absolute broadmindedness and engage in honest exchange, and simultaneously draft the future social values based on humanism so as to use such values as the foundation in human nature development; such is the true goal and significance for establishing religion in society.
2. Religion and education is not general occupation, but rather a life and mind mission. Its personnel must positively engage themselves in life's in-depth intrinsic experience to benefit of all people. Therefore personnel who engage in religious and educational activities should receive special training and management different from those of general trade personnel because they shoulder the mission perfecting human nature development and not general production and trading of goods. Therefore we ask that governments, schools and colleges, and public figures to face up to this basic question regarding humanity's heart and nature. Since the rise of the European civilization, these two sacred responsibilities have vanished altogether; education tends towards mass production and religion turns to professionalism, so that human quality becomes worse and worse!
3. Strengthen dialogue and mutual research on the differences in the basic religious doctrines among various religions: such exchange is inevitable; without direct exchange, different religions will engage in mutual guess work and interpretation, which is harm their peace and friendships. Therefore to avoid religious wars, various religious high-ranking monks should have direct dialogue and exchange first, and then communicating the message to each level down the ranks, mutually recognizing a common highest ideal of world peace while preserving their different religious doctrines.

4. Traditional religions when facing changing times should take a tolerant attitude so as to guide themselves to adapt to the needs of the new age and reinterpret the existence and value of life, and thoroughly experience special characteristics of the new age society, and draft the religious policies for the new age.
5. In dealing with emerging new religions, primary religions should guide them in real life experience so that in the new age they receive true intrinsic life experience and benefit all living things, and should not persecute them! They should go a step further to understand the contemporary significance of such new religions and the demands modern people. Only then will the new religions become truly valuable and beneficial to people in the new age.
6. A great religion will be born of this new age. All young and educated religious people should broadmindedly greet reformation in all religions, and positively engage in life's in-depth intrinsic experience. Only then will they truly benefit all living things. No religion is able to define the objectives of the new age religion, the direction and objectives of which are the common asset of future humanity. People of our time have no right to control it, but only to assist in its birth.
7. All religious activities must be carried out legally: religion functions to purify the heart and mind, enlighten the people, stabilize society, and help stabilize the government; no religious group should hold office government or assume power, but should stabilize the society, indirectly help stabilize the government, must not secretly violate state policies, and instigate rebellions. All religious activities should be restricted to enlightening the heart and mind of people and purification of human spirit in accordance with state policies. Therefore, of primal importance a religion should be legal, it should not harm any living things, it should not persecute other beliefs, and it should correspond to special characteristics of the respective country and nationality, and may not be global and universally integrated.

Section 5: Prospects for an economy of spirituality

We propose using economy of spirituality as a specific means to rectify the wrong universal values under the accomplice structure of modern civilization. There is no economic growth but spiritual growth in economy of spirituality, no economic development, but spiritual

development, no dependence on natural resources but inexhaustible valuable treasures of the mind waiting to be excavated. Under economy of spirituality, there is no pollution, no destruction, only beauty and enjoyment, and harmony and happiness, but no fear, emptiness, anxiety and helplessness.

Under the guidance of economy of spirituality, there are no economic growth indices because these are indicators of destruction to nature; no such statistics as GDP, GNP, or GIP; no statistics on the quantity of beef, poultry, or eggs or red wine consumed. Certainly, research on indifference curves, supply and demand curves, and industrial organization in microeconomics will also fall to the threshold. But a new world will appear - for example: research on the factors of life will become famous doctrines in the next 200 years, which will include researches on various aspects of changes in the body, mind and spirit during spiritual growth, for example: announcement and discussion of research data regarding changes in breathing, palpitation, body temperature, Galvanic skin response (GSR), finger blood flow, electrocardiogram (EKG), Electroencephalography (EEG), neuroimaging, as well as FMRI, PET, EMG, hormone, immunity, etc. Do not think this is a medical report. This is research in the factors of life!

The goal of civilization and human endeavour is to pursue humanity's happiness and value, but the results of development of civilization of our time are material-orientation of life, restriction by the rule of law, and intimidation by the power of language; not only are people ignorant about their own body, mind, and spirit, they have also built up numerous missiles, aircraft carriers, cement jungles, highways, serious traffic jams, massive pollution and destruction, and everybody are panicky, anxious, and restless. How can this be the achievements of our struggles? How can this be civilized humanity? Proposing economy of spirituality is to set humanity's struggles and civilization establishment directly on the treasures of spirituality, and not like in macroeconomics or microeconomics, set them in natural resources. Therefore, economy of spirituality develops the treasures in human spirituality and has a completely different new look. It will not develop factories or enterprises of different sizes, but will develop countless centers for spiritual practice and education centers fully equipped with complete teaching systems and life transformation programs.

In this portion, along with stopping economic growth, and planned obsolescence of equipment becoming permanent wealth, first-class manpower will join the huge program of spiritual development, and as a result, social competitions and struggles will vanish, and people

will be more concerned with humanity and the humanities, and will stop pursuing profits. Education about NPO and other aspects of human nature will be fully launched, and society will no longer take material achievement as international standard, but will be take happiness as the index of quality of life. At the same time, politics, human integrity, and the medical system based on the legal system will disintegrate gradually, and norms based on human nature and humanity will appear! Phenomena to govern by the power of language will also vanish, and factional strives and discrimination among ethnic groups will gradually disappear. Politicians who spread political rumours or who play with the law will also vanish, and truly saintly kings will appear! Humanity and human nature will become the universal social values.

Proposing economy of spirituality not only can rectify our wrong universal values and the deviancies of European and the US civilization of our time, such as Monotheism's belief in opposition, exclusiveness and plunderage, but also can rebuild a harmonious new age civilization, just like China accepted Buddhism and expanded its cultural contents, making Buddhism an important component of Chinese culture. Therefore, to western civilization, adopting economy of spirituality will rebuild and enrich its contents and the way western civilization can save itself! It may also mould a new age civilization, religion and tradition!

However today's western Hebrew civilization continuously confuse people's sights and sounds with its double talk: on the one hand it advocates eastern civilization needs to accept western civilization, but on the other hand repels eastern civilization vigorously. In western mainstream society, people repel eastern civilization completely, although some universities or people cater to Buddhism, this does not mean no repelling by its mainstream society! Western universities' oriental studies programs are only restricted to the East Asian studies faculty, concentrating all East Asian languages, literatures, histories, cultures, and philosophies into one faculty or institute. In the faculty of philosophy or institute of religion, research is focused mainly on western philosophies and monotheism, with next to no research given to eastern thoughts, religions, or Buddhism, which is absurd. When we preach Buddhism we are always annoyed by such double talk. When the west preaches to the east, it is called "freedom of speech," but when the east preaches to the west, they call it "disturbing people's private lives" and obstruct us in every possible way!

Today we also see many euphemized "religious exchange" activities, but true religious exchanges definitely are not just superficial acts of politeness whereby people mutually present

gifts, shake hands, take photographs, together shout “world peace” or engage in great religious worship. Rather, people must engage in in-depth studies of each other’s religious doctrines. This is true understanding and respect towards friendly religions, isn’t it? However when we preach, no matter how hard we strive, people are not willing to issue official documents for carrying out true and equal religious exchanges; we do not have the platform for equal dialogues. Is this true religious exchange? Peace and exchange should not be superficial; true peace and exchange come from respect, and true respect cannot be perfunctory, much less eliminating dissidents!

In modern western society, are people can truly be magnanimous enough to admit eastern civilization rationally? Are they really open-minded and willing to understand, do research and engage in dialogues? We are aware that to people in the west, East Asia is a hot topic, but is that true understanding? People seem “interested,” but is this research and involvement, or just curiosity and exploration? If this is just contact and exploration based on curiosity and mysticism, it is not acceptance, but despise! True acceptance must be similar to the third and fourth centuries when China opened wide her heart and fully accepted the Indian philosophy, and then completely dissected it by “cultural anatomy.”⁴ Only through cultural anatomy will the western civilization fully understand the philosophies of eastern civilization; only through complete understanding is true acceptance and assimilation of essence and nutrients possible. This is an important milestone for the west to accept eastern civilization!

Section 6: The precise timing for promoting an economy of spirituality

The label “economy of spirituality” may be changed, but its invariable central value lies in substituting the infinite treasures of spirituality for the exploitation of scarce natural resources. We thus advocate substituting activity centered on spiritual growth in life for activity centered on desires for material wealth. In developing infinite spiritual treasures, humanity's material economic activity will fall to the lowest degree, but humanity's intrinsic treasure, happiness will be restored to a large extent. As well, in interpersonal and ethnic group relationships, there exists

⁴ The most representative of “cultural anatomy” is the Chinese “classification of religious thoughts. The Chinese conducted thorough research and classification on the huge system of Indian ideologies and assimilated it into Chinese thoughts. *The Five Hs’ien Shou Doctrines* by the Head Teacher of the State Hs’ien Shou of the Tang Dynasty was a representative work. For details see my book: *Lectures on the Five Hs’ien Shou Doctrines*. Taipei: Kong-ting Publishing, 2006.

also a spiritual education comprising non-material economic activity. Such spiritual economic activity will become one of biggest contributions to society in the future. Only in this way may we eliminate all kinds of psychological problems in modern society, including strange phenomena such as anxiety, autism, worries, fear, restlessness, frustration, helplessness, resignation to despair, excessive drinking, drugs, violence and so on. Why can't humanity ponder carefully this good undertaking that can “kill several birds with one stone?”

Our intention is not to transform but to save the world with economy of spirituality, and thus we must positively propose set of effective plans. We are practitioners, not experts specializing in drafting investment plans, and thus we are cannot propose a set of systematic and effective plan to rock the leaders of the mainstream culture; we must certainly most sincerely propose the core of the issues and its solutions. We have no intention of winning or losing, but humanity must advance in this direction. Terminologies may be different but its orientation is inevitably the same.

We plan to transform the world in 500 years; however we discover that this is the precise timing because today is just like China in the third and fourth centuries. If today's mainstream civilization cannot accept eastern civilization, it will be expelled from human history inevitably. But in those days, China not only the northern nationalities were sinicized, but the Chinese mainstream culture also accepted India, central Asian and Buddhist multi-cultures, causing China to gain remarkable achievements from various aspects. This not only transformed China's cultural contents but also surmounted the Chinese national disposition, and hence the “Tang Dynasty Prosperity!”

Today is the precisely the best timing for carrying out economy of spirituality because the whole world happens to be in labour. If we wait until the “BRIC nations⁵” accelerate their economic growth, the Earth will have perished! This is because the population of the BRIC nations is more than double the combined population of the G7 nations, and therefore their demand for natural resources will certainly far exceed the extent that the Earth can meet! Moreover, if we want to carry out human spiritual development, the more developed the region,

⁵ The BRIC nations refer to the four countries Brazil, Russia, India, and China. It has been argued that in a few decades the BRIC nations could eclipse the G7 industrial organization to become the world's biggest economic bloc. This abbreviation comes from the initials **BRICs** (*Brazil, Russia, India, and China*) which rhymes with brick.

the deeper is the hurt spiritually, and the heavier is the pollution, and hence the more difficult to inspire spirituality. Although there is the need for spiritual development, the difficulty is actually higher! At present, reforming the G7 nations is the most difficulty, but reforming 12 countries and regions, i.e., from G8 to G20 and their people is the easiest, although there is still some difficulty, but overall it is an extremely good environment for reform. As for the other unranked countries and regions, implementing economy of spirituality will be most effective and quickest!

In other words, economy of spirituality will cause the structure of economic activity and income to change tremendously, and finally, regions, nationalities and countries with the best human nature and cultural resources will get the advantage, but those totally dependent on resources and management will fall into the mire for the big reshuffle! This is because human nature and spirituality resource development is without limits, but the development of natural resources is limited! Hence if the highly developed G7 nations will not consider changing their ways, then China, India, Iran, Turkey, Brazil will perhaps become the leaders in the next age of civilization!

~“Our Only Choice” A new vision for the long-term survival of humanity and the Earth, Chapter Three
By Venerable Master Haiyun Jimeng