

The outline on Ecological Marxism Economics

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PART 1

When the 20th century went to its end, British Broadcasting Company held a global appraisal activity to all thinkers and Marx was appraised as “the No. 1 thinker of the thousand years”. Recently, the fourth station of BBC held again an appraisal activity to the greatest philosophers both ancient and contemporary, and Marx was again named the top 1 among global ten great philosophers. The two results tell us clearly that Marx is living in our real world and must live continuously in the future world. The doctrines of Marx are still full of vitality and keep vigorous life in modern times, which not only are influencing today’s human development of civilization, but also will surely influence human development of civilization in the future. When human civilization enters the 21st century, an English man wrote following words in mellifluous English in the visitors’ book at the Great British Museum: “Karl Marx, your thoughts will remain forever because you are a great designer for the human social progress forever.” What a good comment! The reason why Marx’s doctrines are full of vitality all the time is that Marxism is a scientific theory on unceasing progress and creative development of human society, and owns the quality of keeping pace with the times, which is the fundamental attribution and soul of Marxism, and the key of keeping animation and strong life all the time for Marxism in over 150 years. The ecological thoughts and eco-economy theory of Marx are scientific ones which own features of the strongest sense of reality and times, and now are showing fully their modern scientific values and powerful lives. Therefore, ecological Marxism is an important representation of the creative development of Marxism. To establish eco-economics of Marxism with Chinese characteristics is a holy mission for Chinese Marxist economists.

PART 2

The ecological Marxism, born in 1970s, is a normal result of the times, of which

generation and formation are deeply concerned with social and historical background, and is a modern representation of new development of Marxism. Ecological Marxism is a combination of modern ecology and Marxism, and a theoretical formation for human civilization to transform from industrial one into modern eco-civilization. As a Marxism school, its impacts are increasingly larger and larger, presenting the theoretical summon to Marxism at the turn of modern civilization.

As for the cognizance to the relationship between Marxism and ecology, Marxism scholars abroad sense have experienced three phases, which are ecological Marxism, eco-socialism and Marx's ecology. When American famous scholar Foster, the head of Marx school, reformed the ecological theory of Marx, it hallmarks the phase of Marx's ecology has come in western Marxism, ecological Marxism has reached its mature period and is a complete formation of it. The theoretical achievement has shaped a frame of ecological theory of the whole theoretical system of Marxism, revealed in true color that Marx was an ecologist, and finally established the speaking right for Marx to solve the eco-environment problems in modern civilization process, therefore, provided a thinking frame and thoughts resource to revive Marxism theory including Marx's eco-philosophy, eco-economics and eco-sociology etc. However, there is obviously theoretical defect in ecological Marxism, especially in developed countries; there are many ecological Marxism schools with greatly different specific views. Thus, the point should be clarified and scientifically criticized.

PART 3

Generally, the ecological Marxism established by western scholars, is mainly shown as philosophical pattern of ecological Marxism, which is a contribution to the world of a new philosophical formation of Marxism by western, especially North American Marxism philosophers, and is an originally creative research achievement in contemporary philosophical development of Marxism. Since 1980s, some philosophers in our country have done some researches on some of the contents of ecological Marxism philosophy, but few on Marx's ecological thoughts, especially no research from the reform of philosophical pattern, let alone the new subject of

philosophical pattern of ecological Marxism with distinct Chinese characteristics. Therefore, the study on ecological Marxism both at home and abroad sense is mostly limited in the range of eco-Marxism philosophy. Even if some foreign scholars mentioned the economics point of ecological Marxism, e.g. economics professor Paul Burkett at Indiana State University did discuss some important theories and practical problems of ecological Marxism economics in his book named *Marx and the Nature*, which is still a philosophical subject, they did not establish the Ecological Marxism Economics pattern based on the reform of economics pattern. We have to say it is a pity for the theoretical study on ecological Marxism both domestic and abroad sense.

PART 4

As early as the beginning of 1980s, Chinese eco-economists with famous Marxism economist Mr. Xu Dixin as a representative, were engaged in some contents of Ecological Marxism economics in the process of establishing Chinese eco-economics. As the founder of Chinese eco-economics, Xu Dixin said, in his article *Marxism and Eco-economics* on the memorial ceremony of 100th Anniversary of the Death of Marx, “Marx, in many of his works, particularly the immortal masterpiece *On Capital*, had ever mentioned several times the eco-balance, the metabolism between human being and the nature and other problems.”; “The metabolism between human being and the nature during the process of labor presented by Marx contains the meaning of eco-system without any doubt. It is of the significance of mutual relationship between human being (forming the society) and environmental system they live in ”; “The problems are exactly the ones that should be studied by eco-economics.” This is a precedent set for the study on Chinese Ecological Marxism economics.

Under the initiation of Mr. Xu Dixian, Mr. Cheng Fulu, the earliest researcher of eco-economics in China, and I have done some researches on the interrelationship between Marxism economics and modern ecology. The achievements are shown in my thesis *Reaches on Problems of Theoretical Eco-economics*, which was issued in 1989 and gained the second class prize in the First Competition of Achievements in Arts Science of Chinese Universities, and Mr. Cheng’s *Environmental Economics*

issued in 1993. In the above works, some basic principles and important contents have been studied.

Since the meeting of UN environment and development in 1992, some scholars in our country, under the guide of Marxism, have found that a lot of inferences in Marx's theoretical system are the most penetrating expressions to sustainable development and the thoughts of sustainable development economy. Therefore, a conclusion is drawn: Marx is a theoretical pioneer discussing human being should follow the way of sustainable development. Therefore, it is a strategic mission for the innovation and new development of contemporary Marxism economics in China to clear achievements concerning Ecological Marxism economics in our earlier researches on eco-economics, eco-philosophy, eco-sociology and sustainable theory, outline the basic category, theory and feature of Ecological Marxism economics based on reforms of economics patterns, and establish Ecological Marxism economics with distinct Chinese characteristics.

PART 5

Two kinds of one-sidedness should be avoided in scientific research on Marxism: stress only the research based on the three components of Marxism, but ignore the whole research on theoretic system of Marxism; conversely, stress only the latter but ignore the former is not in favor of prosperity and development of Marxism science either. Marx's doctrine itself is a meticulous integration indeed, as the saying of Marx himself: "No matter what shortcoming there is in my works, there is one advantage, i.e. artistic integration."(p.196, Letters Collection (On Capital) by Marx and Engels, version 1976, People's Press). Therefore, integral research, integral grasp and integral development of Marx's doctrine system should be enhanced. However, the integral research should not substitute or even negate each component of Marxism, especially the research on the three components respective, i.e. to carry out a further research, innovation and development to Marxism Philosophy, Marxism Economics and Scientific Socialism. As for the point, I agree greatly on Professor Gao Fang's viewpoint: "To enhance the integral research on Marxism does not mean to weaken the respective research on the three components, but means a higher-level synthesis

and supplement to the three components respective.” Currently, we should further enhance the integrate research on the interrelationship among each component of eco-Marxism based on the integral study of Ecological Marxism science, particularly strengthen the study of intersection and combination between eco-Marxism philosophy and economics in order to establish Ecological Marxism economics—a new Marxism economics pattern.

PART 6

Establish Ecological Marxism economics and enhance the integral research on Marx’s doctrine. Here, the integral research has three implications: the first is when we look back to and understand the brilliant thoughts of Marx and Engels, we can easily find that there are abundant theories and thoughts concerning ecology and eco-economics, which provide basic principles to the formation of Ecological Marxism economics. The second is to rely on the nature-history idea of Marx’s. In Marx’s doctrine, the developing relationship among human being, the society and the nature is a foundation and soul of Marx’s doctrine. In fact, Marx put forward three keys elements when he began to establish his doctrine: the nature, human being and the society and their organic wholes. Therefore, in the history of human thought, Marx is the first theorist who discussed the dialectical unity relationship among human liberation, social liberation and natural liberation. Just on the sense, Marx’s doctrine is the ones of human and natural liberations, which is the highest value and principle of ecological Marxism economics. The value and principle lay a legal and scientific foundation for eco-Marxism economics. And again on the sense, we can define Ecological Marxism economics as a science that discloses a law and its mechanism of organic unity, movement and development, i.e. broad sense Marxism economics. The third is to carry out comprehensive study on Marx’s eco-economics thought starting from each component, i.e. to have a higher-level combination of theoretical base of Marx’s eco-economics through study of every part of it, and then provide a theoretical base for Marxism philosophy, economics, sociology particularly Marx’s ecology.

PART 7

Since long time ago, traditional economics, both the western and the eastern, has obviously featured an isolation between the natural ecology and the social economy, so has Marxism economics. Theoretically, it did not contain the theoretical frame of ecological thought of Marx's, so in the traditional Marxism economics, there was no connection between Marx's economy theory and its ecological thought, and so it did not disclose on the sense of ecology the significance of the natural eco-environment towards modern human civilization and social economical development. In practice, it ignored the alienation and its reality caused by capitalism industrial civilization, especially ignored the same reality still existing in the process of socialism civilization and development, brushed aside the decisively basic function of the natural environment towards modern social and economical development both of capitalism and socialism. Thereby, the traditional Marxism economics lost its speaking right and guide function to solve the problem of today's global ecological crisis and sustainable development. Therefore, one important aspect of development of traditional Marxism economics is to take Marx's ecological thought into account, take in Marx's theory of the natural eco-environment into the theoretical frame of itself in order to adapt to the objective demand of modern civilization and development. Meanwhile, another more important mission is to establish Ecological Marxism economics, a new pattern of Marxism economics. From the viewpoint of the internal unity of Marx's ecology and economics, objective law of movement and development of modern eco-economy system should be exposed around the subject of developing relationship between human economical activity and the natural ecology. Thus, we should revive Marx's eco-economy theory on the basis of the natural ecology and social economy, overcome the defect that traditional Marxism economical theory could not solve or completely solve the issue between human economical activity and the natural eco-environment; and finally determine from all directions the position of speaking right and guide that Marx and Marxism tackling the crisis of modern human living and unsustainable development of modern social economy. This can be a qualitative flit in the history of Marxism economics.

PART 8

Two fundamental principles must be observed in setting up the theoretical frame of Ecological Marxism economics: 1) the basic content, principle, spiritual essence and method of thinking of Marx's doctrines must be met, particularly, the consolidated theory and the full views of eco-economy theory in Marx's ecology and economics should be embodied completely. 2) the motif of contemporary times and the basic practice of building socialism with Chinese characteristics must be reflected. Marx pointed out, 'All real contents of systems in all new times are formed due to the needs of those systems in those times, and all the systems are based on the whole development of the past in that country.' (P 544, Vol.3, All Collections of Marx and Engels). Just on the basis of the two requirements, I think the formation of the theoretical frame of Ecological Marxism economics should contain following contents on five different levels:

Firstly, a basic precondition i.e. theoretical base should be available, which means from the integrity of Marx's doctrines, to carry out the researches on Marx's eco-economy thought, and lay down a profound base of Marxism philosophy, sociology, economics and ecology for Ecological Marxism economics. Secondly, a scientific logical starting point, i.e. Marx's duality doctrine should be available, which is an internal unity of the natural factor and social economy factor, and becomes the starting point of studying Ecological Marxism economics. Thirdly, a vivid mainline i.e. the Marx's theory of eco-economy relationship of metabolism between human being and the nature should be available, which is a deep reveal of the nature of eco-economy called by me the theory of essence of eco-economy. The essence determines that the viewpoint of development of Marx's doctrine is an organic unity of social economy development idea and the natural eco-development idea, and becomes the lifeline of Ecological Marxism economics. Fourthly, an objective core idea i.e. Marx's eco-environmental internal cause theory should be available, which is a conversion of external variable into internal variable, therefore, the innovation and development of economy theory in the 21st century may be executed around formation of a sustainable economy running and development of eco-environment,

and is bound to be the core idea of Ecological Marxism economics. Fifthly, a series of brand new fundamental theories should be available, which include eco-economy duality, material transformation, internal biochemical theory of eco-environment, full production theory, broad sense production force, material circulation, full development of civilization etc. and form the basic theories of the main parts of eco-Marxism economics.

PART 9

Eco-Marxism economics theory will show that he is an earlier explorer of the theory of eco-economy sustainable development and a pioneer of the ideas of scientific developing and harmonious society of socialism. Marx's doctrine is "the most complete and profound doctrine without any one-sidedness on development." (p.422, Vol.2, All Collections of Lenin). Therefore, Marx's doctrine is substantially a scientific development idea. As per Marx's nature-history idea, the scientific development idea should be a unity of social economy development and the natural eco-development ideas with the unity of taking human being and ecology as roots as its core. In the doctrine of Marx's scientific socialism and communism, the idea of harmonious and collaborative society which human being has pursued for millions of years can only be truly realized in socialism and communism. Communism civilization is the highest image of harmony and collaboration between human being and the nature, people and people. While, the high development of material production force can lead to economical harmony; the high development of the nature can lead to eco-harmony, which are two sills of socialism and communism civilizations. We can say without any doubt that harmonious society of socialism is the fullest expression to ecology, eco-economy attribute and feature of socialism. Thus, the practical goal of forming eco-Marxism economics is absolutely to provide a brand new way of thinking for the turn from industrial civilization to eco-civilization. Thereby, the functions of guide and promotion of Marxism economics toward practicing scientific development idea, building socialism harmonious society and impulsing fully the collaboratively and harmoniously sustainable development of socialism civilization can be given full play.

PART 10

Enhancing the research on eco-Marxism economics does not only mean to stress the study on the doctrine of Marx and Engels and basic principle of Marxism, but also the one of new development of the Chinese Marxism, i.e. the three theoretical achievements of Chinese Marxism. Not only should the Chinese Marxism, i.e. sustainable development of eco-economy of Marxism in political field be studied, but also the rich theoretically innovative achievements of sustainable development of eco-economy in Chinese academic field should be outlined. All these are shown as three aspects: 1) from the end of 1970s to the late of 1980s, Chinese scholars set up an eco-economics theory with the theory of harmonious development of eco-economy as its core, which was a mainly theoretical contribution to the development of Marx's eco-economy theory. 2) since 1990s, Chinese scholars have set up an idea of economics of sustainable development based on the base of harmonious development of eco-economy, which is a mainly theoretical contribution to the development of sustainable development of Marx's eco-economy idea. 3) since the reform and opening-up of China, the central government leaders of the second generation and the Party central committee led by Hu Jintao, General secretary, have started a new complexion of combining Marxism eco-economics with the actuality of China, and developed a new doctrine of sustainable development of eco-economy among economy construction and population, resource and environment and put the theory of sustainable development of Marxism eco-economy to a new phase. Therefore, it is urgent for us to systemize and summon up the theories from a new level of Ecological Marxism and form Ecological Marxism economics with Chinese characteristics. This is a new development of keeping pace with the times of Marxism economics.