

Covert and Overt Cultivation to Achieve Ecological Civilization

Abraham Shue Yan Poon

The Twenty Characters of Heaven's Magnanimity &
Holy Teaching Religion Association, Hong Kong

The way human beings destroy ecological civilization has already reached an exploding edge. We must join hand in hand to twist the current situation. It is not lasting to solely rely on government legislation to reverse the circumstances. We should in parallel set up the legislation while educate the people. This is the most effective way to deal with the root of the problem. This article suggests the method of education is to use the "Soul Virtue Education" as the principle. This is a kind of cultivation method for our temperament. Then, simplify it to become a way that it is easy to be grasped by modern people and easy to change your inner self. The Chinese culture has the mentality of collective harmony, and the fulfillment of inner self through cultivation of temperament. It extends from inside to outside, in which the overt behavior matches the ecological civilization of the heaven and the land. This is also the natural Dao of the union of the universe and human beings.

Keywords: cultivation, ecological civilization, "Soul Virtue", philosophy of twenty words

Destruction of Ecological Civilization

Depletion Caused by Civilization and Advancement

Human beings work hard for their livelihood. Apart from avoiding the natural disasters and attack from fierce animals, we look for advancement in living conditions. This can be regarded as promotion of civilization. From another perspective to describe civilization, "Human society advances and is open-minded, it detaches from the animal behavior of being brutal". Characters are the ethnic badge of ancient clans, and later on become the records of history. Propagandas are powerful; Zhang Huaiguan has produced the publications, namely, *Shu Duan* (書斷) and *Wenzi Lun* (文字論). "Ming" means bright. To lead human beings to the continuation of a bright future, it relies on the fusion of different cultures and thinking in order to sparkle. Only through practising the truth, opening up the spirituality and wisdom, highlighting capability and conscience, the path to peace and civilization of human beings can be achieved.

In reality, human beings have a big improvement in respect of material enjoyment. The earth is the source of supply chain of all substances. Although ancient Chinese placed human on a top hierarchy, being equal to the position of the heaven and earth and became one of the three talents, Chinese people still held a humble attitude when dealing with the relationship between themselves and the environment. Each one of us should respect: the heaven (unexpected days, gods, as well as the natural phenomenon), the earth (the land holds all

Abraham Shue Yan Poon, Chief Instructor of Level Nine: "Holo-cosmic Qigong The Instigation of Wisdom Exercise"; researcher, Qigong Department, The Twenty Characters of Heaven's Magnanimity & Holy Teaching Religion Association, Hong Kong.

creations and contains all natural resources), the king (the leader of a country and the management officials, and the supervisors at the workplace), our kinship (parents and all elders), teachers (our tutors, masters who deliver craftsmanship, all the authors of the publications), and place our own self at the sixth position, unleashing our potentials and strengths in a humble manner.

The ethical principles of social discipline and family should be empathized and put on the first place. Our personal enjoyment should be shared with the family members. The policy address of the government should be people-oriented and protect the welfare of the people, as they are treasurable assets of a country. The development of civilization should also consider the depletion of the environment, that is why ancient Chinese would not exploit the earth's resources in a casual manner. Rapid development certainly consumes excessively. Therefore mining the coal and minerals is usually strictly controlled by the country.

The Spread of Human Desire and Greediness

After people experienced enjoyment, it will create more desire, and the fire of human desire will grow bigger and bigger, which is difficult to extinguish. At the moment when the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil had a big fire, a large piece of primeval forest was burnt. It is suitable to develop farm land by appropriate means, but if we lose control, it will only destroy our home and the surrounding environment. The loss of ecological balance in long run leads to death of large quantity of species, resulting disastrous outcome.

Table 1

The Growth of World Population

Year	May 2019	2010	2005	2000	1995	1985	1975
Population	7.7 billion	6.8 billion	6.5 billion	6.1 billion	5.7 billion	4.8 billion	4.1 billion

The natural growth of population is rapid, but this is not followed by food production. This leads to a big discrepancy of the poor and the rich. The increase in the food price causes the trade war among countries. The competition for resources becomes fierce; for instance, America did not sign the climate treaty, and Japan resumed the hunting of whales. All these invisible fights start to blaze up, which destroy the ecological civilization in a direct or indirect way.

Greed, jealousy, idiot are the three poisons coined by Buddhism (Sanskrit: *triviṣa*), or so called the three bad roots (Sanskrit: *akuśala-mūla*). They are the origins of all sorts of annoyances. Asanga Buddha *Bodhisattva* (佛子行) talked about greed:

Acquainting with bad people increases three kinds of poisons. Leaving the evil and reflecting yourself can accomplish good works. Being compassionate and stay away from evil people makes you to become Bodhisattva... Those who are greedy will rob other's property. For those who like to use kindness for three generations, and transferring the merit to someone, they are also Bodhisattva... All kinds of desire are just like salty water, the more you enjoy, the greedier you are. As you desire everything, you choose to give up Bodhisattva. (Khenchen, 2001)

To acquaint with bad friends will increase the harm of the three poisons. The increase of greediness is just like a wide spread of infectious virus, you will lose and destruct the wisdom of your mind and thinking, and your passion for compassion will diminish. The root cause of the destruction of ecological civilization is actually due to the infinite desire of human and the enjoyment of being greedy for material life. This kind of greed is just like drinking salty water, we only ask for more and more salty water, but still we are not satisfied. Gradually,

we are giving up the sense of awareness for kindness.

Impossible Intact Control of Rule of Law

The Objectivity of Rule of Law and Truth of Evidence

When Donald Trump became the President of America in June 2017, where America is such a big country, he overthrew his precedent President Obama's official submission of the Paris Agreement in September 2016. The slogan for freedom and democracy arbitrarily overrides legal documentation, breaking the promise on bearing the responsibility for climate change. This is such a poor behavior for losing the integrity internationally. This global agreement has been signed by 195 countries, aiming to

strengthen the *Framework Convention on Climate Change FCCC/CP/2015/L.9*: (1) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change; (2) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; (3) Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development. (Poon, 2006, p. 22, Chapter 2)

A simple elaboration on "ecology", "The living species within the biosphere, regardless if they are the same or different types, they will affect each other. Living species and their living conditions will also interact with each other. This phenomenon is called 'ecology'". The author wrote an article in 2005 on "The Greenhouse Effect is Alarming" in Singdao Newspaper in Hong Kong, reminding people to aware of the rapid deterioration of our ecological environment. The planet we are living has a significant change after pollution and damage. For instance, the reduction of ice levels in the North Pole. The land has now started to take revenge on the mankind. There is an increase of the extremely violent tsunami and hurricane. Only by a large reduction of greenhouse gas by one-third can revert this trend. Unfortunately those with vested interest will not be willing to change. Legislation is being delayed by many countries, so the environment is still on the abnormal track. Maybe within 5 to 10 years if the situation is not reversed, there will be a big disaster. But someone still thinks that evidence is not enough to support its validity.

The Virtue Boundary of Rule of Law

The most important point for rule of law is the truth and sufficiency of the evidence. If evidence is not enough or in doubt, the defendant can be released and avoid the responsibility. When human beings destroy ecological civilization, the serious consequence may not be seen immediately. Therefore, the control on the rule of law may be neglected. Exceeding the rule of law of a country is the universal value of virtues. Whether people can create common virtues or even join hand in hand to maintain virtues depends on great wisdom and courage.

We should possess the sense of belonging and different levels of loyalty for where we belong to at each level of the society ("The big I"). Only sage, philosophy and religion would advocate the target of loyalty should exceed "All people" in the past. But in recent years, ecologists, environmental scientists and green peace advocates are also included. (Chen, 2006, p. 394)

Such kind of loyalty virtue takes into account the universe and exceeds the boundary of rule of law.

Mencius—Liang Hui Wang Shang 《孟子·梁惠王上》,

If the seasons of husbandry be not interfered with, the grain will be more than can be eaten. If close nets are not

allowed to enter the pools and ponds, the fishes and turtles will be more than can be consumed. If the axes and bills enter the hills and forests only at the proper time, the wood will be more than can be used. When the grain and fish and turtles are more than can be eaten, and there is more wood than can be used, this enables the people to nourish their living and mourn for their dead, without any feeling against any. This condition, in which the people nourish their living and bury their dead without any feeling against any, is the first step of royal government. (2017, p. 32)

Lin Anwu (2017) suggested, “We should always ask ourselves, ‘When we talk about environmental protection, should we retain a utilitarian mentality?’” Meng Hao’s “First step of royal government” should be built up on the people who “nourish their living and bury their dead without any feeling against any” (p. 32). This is a respect for “humanity”. What is even worth for emphasis is that, the respect for humanity is in fact built up on the respect for “property”, that is a respect for the whole nature. The natural virtue value of humanity is the final bottom line. The way Chinese culture loves the nature first comes with sentiment, followed by a rational way of tackling the problem. That confirms the natural affection of the heaven and earth, an affection of all the creations, as well as an affection of mankind. When we share our feeling, appreciate the feeding by the heaven and the land, and the nurture of human growth by all the creations. That is, there are creations inside of me, and there is me inside of all the creations. This kind of merging consolidates the highest virtue of the universe.

A Simple Education on Covert and Overt Cultivation

The Upbringing of the Overt Virtuous Behavior

“Liyi” (Etiquette) is the universal virtuous value strictly upheld by Chinese. A young man should be educated since he was very young so that he knows how to perform kindness in his life. Propriety becomes the overt behavior of respect and tolerance. Righteousness is the common virtuous goal. Propriety before righteousness describes the respect for different equity objectives to achieve an exchange of equality. This kind of education should begin with oneself. A person has to cultivate himself before he can achieve a harmonious family, and then he can talk about ruling a country and ultimately head for pacifying the whole world. Besides, it expands on the virtue level. “Care for my own aged parents and extend the same care to the aged parents of others; love my own young children and extend the same love to the children of others”. This extends to all the creations in the heaven and the land, as well as to the infinity of time and space. “To ordain conscience for heaven and earth. To secure life and fortune for the people. To continue lost teachings for past sages. To establish peace for all future generations”.

Filial piety is the feature of Chinese culture. Having the storm and rain and sunny days as our father, and all the creations on earth as our mother, we should cherish everything as we do to our parents. The heaven and earth are our shelter, so protection of the ecological environment is entirely natural. Filial piety, propriety, and righteousness are the fundamental education. It is essential to train these qualities within the family, and only this would further become the elemental energy of the world.

Here I would also like to introduce the philosophy of harmony in this new era. Master Hsiao Chang Ming (1895-1943) in his *Harmony of Religions Promotion Society Q&A Session* used

The formulation and mentality of all religions are similar to the loyalty and altruism of Confucianism, the mercifulness of Buddhism, the induction of Daoism, the universal love of Jesus, the genuineness of Islamic, which forms twenty words, namely, Loyalty, Altruism, Integrity, Straightforwardness, Magnanimity, Uprightness, Righteousness, Trustworthiness, Forbearance, Impartiality, Universal Brotherhood, Filial Piety, Benevolence, Mercifulness,

Comprehension, Temperance, Frugality, Genuineness, Propriety, and Harmony, as the destination. (충, 서, 염, 명, 덕, 정, 의, 신, 인, 공, 박, 효, 인, 자, 각, 절, 검, 진, 예, 화. 忠恕廉明德正義信忍公博孝仁慈覺節儉真禮和) When people are standing on the right Dao, the heaven will also be on the same Dao. (1926, p. 2)

These twenty words merge the differences among the mentality of different religions, and use harmony as the goal, and universal peace and equality as the objectives. This is regarded as the virtue compass of the universe, which accompanies the daily life of each person, leading to a happy and blessed family, and a tranquil and auspicious society. The key to achieve is simple; each person chooses two words as a starting point for practice and as the standard and living motto. When each individual performs virtue cultivation behaviors, it will further create caring relations among people. When you love someone, you will also love the thing or person that has to do with them. Hence, we gently hug all the creations in this world, and treasure and cherish them. In this way, the earth's ecology can be sustainable. This is the conciliation of the world, which also means the continuation of the Dao of the heaven and land.

The Wisdom of Inner Cultivation

The philosophy of twenty words is not just the virtue cultivation of personal behaviors, but also “virtue education of the soul”. It can also be seen as the frequent conversion of Qi between the heaven and the land. The consolidation of Qi can self-cultivate Nidan skills, and can even help healing other people. “The curing action recovers the passion for healing”; it adjusts one's physical, psychological, and spiritual condition. With inner cultivation, it brings the wonderful effect of wisdom growth, and an intact Dao. It connects all the creations to become one with continuity, achieving the best protection for ecological civilization. Self-cultivation is the starting point in Chinese cultivation tradition, giving up the ego which appears in the western modality. As individual must connect to family, society, country, and the universe, with the principle of achieving harmonious relations, justice could still be manifested. For instance, in between an individual and the society, the focus should be the discipline of the society, while the person naturally becomes the secondary. When there is a problem in the society, there will be massive reactions among the people.

This kind of wisdom cultivation extends from the inside to the outside, and exists among the philosophies of the Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Ancient Confucians had the ability of inner cultivation. Confucius also had a very thorough understanding on covert cultivation. *Zhuangzi—Man in the World* 《莊子·人間世》 recorded,

Zhongni said, “Maintain a perfect unity in every movement of your will, you will not wait for the hearing of your ears about it, but for the hearing of your mind. You will not wait even for the hearing of your mind, but for the hearing of the spirit. Let the hearing (of the ears) rest with the ears. Let the mind rest in the verification (of the rightness of what is in the will). But the spirit is free from all pre-occupation and so waits for (the appearance of) things. Where the (proper) course is, there is freedom from all pre-occupation; such freedom is the fasting of the mind”. (p. 280 B.C., Inner Chapter 4)

Huainan honglie—Yuandao Originating in the Way 《淮南鴻烈·卷一·原道》 said,

So when our mindset would not have the emotion of worries and happiness, virtue will then arrive. When there is perforation of vigor without any change in determination, tranquility will then come. Although we have basic desires, but they will never be recorded in our heart, and hence humble will be achieved. When we have no particular likes or dislikes, our mind will return calm and stable. When we do not follow the messiness of our desire, our conscious will be concentrated and become succinct. When we reach the above five status, our mentality will be enlightened, and this kind of

people will acquire inner wisdom. Hence, we can use our wisdom to tackle all the issues we face. Nothing will be neglected and can be handled properly. Real innate wisdom can be mastered by yourself, and that the outer disturbances can also be calmed down. (p. 139 B.C., Chapter 1)

The five cultivation methods mentioned above have succeeded the thinking of Daoism. The mentality of wisdom comes from inside to outside, so that it can be extended to appropriate behaviors. *The Altar Sutra of Sixth Patriarch* 《六祖壇經》 said, “Inwardly, it illuminates the self-nature and casts out the three poisons” (p. 700, Chapter 3). Self-cultivation, introspection, and contentment are the keys to understand the mind and see the nature. Greed, jealousy, idiot will eventually be wiped out.

To deal with the complicated society nowadays, especially on the issues related to ecological environment, we must possess great wisdom while leading the people to understand it should be the responsibility and obligation of each person to protect the ecology. They should not waste the resources nor destroy the environment. While each one of us is entitled to the resources of the planet, we must ensure a peaceful coexistence with the ecological environment, so that our future generations can continue to develop the society in a sustainable manner.

Conclusion

For the sake of preserving a civilized ecological environment, several recommendations are given as follows:

1. Education should be the focus, accompanied by legislation: All governments can set up law and order according to the situation of their country, meanwhile, setting up rules on waste reduction or a timetable for it. They must also explain to their people the rationale behind, and establish a long run education policy accompanied by a thorough plan on basic virtue education. Long term education for the youth enables them to gain comprehensive knowledge on ecological civilization. Therefore legislation should be done in parallel with education.

2. Recommend physical, psychological, and spiritual purity: Through simple training on self-cultivation, people can connect the nature with their soul. The tranquility of body and mind can expand their sensation, so that they have the ability to purify and filter everything. While purifying their soul, they can also experience the pleasure of ecological purity. When there is a thorough change of their soul, there will also be feasible change on their behaviors. Protection of the soul is the radical cure.

3. More discussions on the subject matter: People can connect to ecological environment in multiple ways. They can also reflect ecological questions from different subjects. For example, the community environmental hygiene should be commonly taken care of by the public, and this also applies to our ecological environment. Ecological disasters destruct the health of and cause damage to the species; the mankind will eventually have to suffer the adverse consequences. The ecology affects the climate, creating such phenomenon as giant super storm and downpour, causing big damage on weirs and various flood control devices, etc.

4. Foster a brotherhood of youth groups: Strengthen the training for youngsters who possess aspiration. They will further conduct promotion, exchange with other young people around the globe, have face-to-face meeting on the topics related to ecological civilization and cultural matters, experience the construction of global village, talk to different religious leaders and sage, and explore the possibility of one family under the world. In this multi-cultural world, assess how people can respect each other and collaborate, and how the one family under the world can be achieved.

5. Conversation on cosmopolitanism: Search for the chance of conversing from the perspective of academic cultural differences. Use conversation to offset contradiction. Jointly look for solutions to tackle the universal crisis and problems and to take actions immediately. We should work towards the goal of building a blissful and happy future by holding a multi-lateral discussion, having equality and mutual tolerance, and exchanging precious experiences. We should all work hard together for harmony and peace.

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