

# **CULTURE AND ECONOMICS IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

## **A Framework for Socioeconomic Development**

Review of the Book written by Prof. Kensei Hiwaki

### **AUTHOR'S OUTLINE**

The author discusses a long-term integral framework for Sustainable Development, as well as the related issues, ideas, methodologies and perspectives. The main thrust of the argument is an appropriate paradigm shift – sound enrichment of diverse society-specific cultures across the world. By means of the paradigm shift, the author emphasizes the generation of “sound communal value system” in each society, comprising the mutually reinforcing human integrity, social solidarity, societal continuity and relational mutuality, all of which center on a dynamic communal harmony. Such a sound communal value system worldwide is argued to rectify the modern lopsided/extreme value system of materialism, individualism, progressivism and egotism, all of which center on the antagonistic free competition. The author theoretically puts together all the discussions and arguments in the book with the relevant methodologies and guidelines. Following the Foreword, Acknowledgement, Preface and Introduction, the main text is partitioned into five Parts with thirty Chapters, complemented by Epilogue and Theoretical Appendixes.

In Part I (Unsustainable Modern Expansion) the on-going *unsustainable* contemporary expansion is critically examined to emphasize the necessity of paradigm shift for Sustainable Development. After generally describing the on-going human predicaments, a few examples of *antithesis* to Sustainable Development are examined in turn. To begin with, the author refers to philosophies and thoughts of the modern and contemporary world, and he concentrates on the general discussion of the modern and contemporary predicaments (Chap. 1). Then, the definition, characteristics and framework for the concept and phenomenon of the Credibility Trap are introduced as an *antithesis* to Sustainable Development (Chap. 2). As related to an unavoidable issue of the contemporary *underdevelopment* among the vast majority of societies in the world, the author delves into the Credibility Trap in general as well as in specific. The case of “Japan today” is dealt with as a specific example of the Credibility Trap (Chap. 3). The potential Credibility Trap in China is also a specific case, but China is described as a microcosm of the world, representing generally the contemporary conditions (Chap. 4).

Then, the author takes up the controversial issue of the on-going haphazard economic globalization that generally conduces to “market failure”, “policy failure”, “culture failure” and “human failure” worldwide. The problem of economic globalization - another *antithesis* to Sustainable Development - is discussed as a prominent issue of our contemporary world, which makes the worldwide collaboration for Sustainable Development extremely difficult (Chap. 5). Also, he delves into the nature of market fundamentalism (abbreviated as “Market”) that caters to the contemporary power structure (abbreviated as “Big Market”). The Big Market’ is now compared and contrasted with the “Big Brother” - the Orwellian power structure - in order to examine a viable alternative choice of world models (Chap. 6). Finally, the author summarily describes a simplified overview of human predicament - “disparity-animosity-spiral” - as a contemporary hindrance to Sustainable Development (Chap. 7). Thus, Part 1 attempts to reveal the contemporary style/mode of the modern lopsided politico-economic activities as *antitheses* to Sustainable Development.

Then, in Part II (Theoretical Framework and Ramifications) the author introduces and discusses in detail the present theoretical framework, together with the definitions of pivotal concepts in the ensuing discussions, the important assumptions, value premises and general features as well as the basic construct of the theoretical framework. He first defines and discusses the pivotal concepts, including Sustainable Development, Culture of Peace, Global Humanity, holistic society-specific culture (Culture), market fundamentalism (Market), Balanced Socioeconomic Development, Comprehensive Human Development and New Enlightenment (Chap. 8) After such definitions and discussions, he offers some of his views of balanced socioeconomic development and long-term strategies for Sustainable Development (Chap. 9). Then, a variety of assumptions and general features of the theoretical framework are taken up to clarify the idea relevant to the basic theoretical construct (Chap. 10). Also, he refers to the mathematical derivation of the theoretical construct and the necessary-and-sufficient conditions for a Balanced Socioeconomic Development (as local Sustainable Development) and other aspects of the theoretical construct, which are largely delegated to Appendixes at the end of the book as *optional reading*.

This preliminary discussion of the theoretical construct is followed by discussion of the Basic Ratio as the value aspect of the theoretical construct, indicating theoretical and realistic ramifications, (Chap. 11). The Basic Ratio is discussed in terms of the two-way processes on the normative and analogical development path - Optimal Development Path (abbreviated as ODP) that serves as simplified expression of a general theory of development. The discussion of the analogical and normative ODP leads to an explanation of actual development paths that are different from the ODP (Chap. 12). The author also delves into a new concept of socioeconomic development - the People's Own Invisible Hands (abbreviated as "Own Hands" that complement the classical "invisible hand") with the relevant value renewal (Chap. 13). Further, he discusses the relationship between the concepts of Own Hands and the thought-frame enhancement for Sustainable Development. Finally, a new proposition – 'sunny-side proposition' - is discussed in terms of Balanced Socioeconomic Development (Chapter 14). This discussion is related to a paradigm shift appropriate for the age of Sustainable Development

In Part III (Cultures and Comprehensive Human Development), the author discusses the necessity of enriching diverse society-specific cultures (abbreviated as "Cultures") across the world as an appropriate paradigm shift for Sustainable Development. For, national, regional and global Sustainable Development are deemed to depend on the enrichment of diverse Cultures worldwide, which influences both comprehensive human development and balanced socioeconomic development. First, the author, referring to a harmonious communal value system, discusses the so-called "creativity" in the contemporary setting of distorted/lopsided value system. Then, he defines the theoretical and normative framework of "Sound Culture", referring to the Sound Culture-based "sound creativity" that may eliminate most of the modern and contemporary varieties of distorted "creativity", particularly the one of transient nature (Chap. 15). After this, the author relates the concept of Sound Culture to the "complex wisdom" as being embedded in the Seventeen-Article Constitution that was promulgated by Prince Shotoku in the early 7<sup>th</sup>-century Japan (Chap. 16). He thinks of the "complex wisdom" as directly relevant to our present Insular Planet with the severe environment and resource constraints.

Now, sound enrichment of diverse Cultures – the paradigm shift - is related to comprehensive human development, the New Enlightenment, thought-frame enhancement, innovative education, and personal-societal maturation of the respective peoples. Then, the author explains the concept of comprehensive human development in relation to the New Enlightenment that, restraining the prevailing market fundamentalism (Market), promotes a long-term endeavor for sound enrichment of diverse Cultures across the world (Chap. 17). He now sets himself in a position to discuss a framework for multilateral value enhancement, a flowchart model of thought-frame enhancement and a potential variety of innovative education based on sound enrichment of the respective Cultures (Chapter 18). Moreover, stressing the importance of personal and spiritual maturation, the author argues for constant enrichment of diverse holistic Cultures essential for innovative education, by pointing out the deficiency of modern education for personal development as well as the ill effect of the Market to personal maturation (Chap. 19).

In Part IV (Methodology and Sustainability), the author concentrates on institutional and methodological implications relevant to Sustainable Development. To begin with, the relationship between the diverse Cultures and Sustainable Development is examined in terms of functional approaches. Here, he attempts first to deal with an appropriate functional guideline for integral approach to Sustainable Development (Chap. 20). Secondly, the Optimal Development Path (ODP) is taken up in view of the stabilization of worldwide “social cost” for a balanced global socioeconomic development – Sustainable Development (Chapter 21). Here, he assumes that worldwide “social cost” stabilization paves the way to national, regional and global Sustainable Development.

Thirdly, a single rate value-added tax across the world is examined as supplement to the main engine – spirit and will of the people at large – in pursuance of Sustainable Development. The author argues that such global value-added tax is more desirable and effective to environmental protection and balanced development than the presently pursued Kyoto Protocol (Chap. 22). In this connection, he proposes a prototype global governance system for Sustainable Development. Fourthly, the author examines the desirability and viability of Culture-enhancing and Culture-integrated employment as against the prevalent employment heavily biased to the competitive market model (Chap. 23). Fifthly, as closely related to the discussion of employment, he argues for Culture-enhancing and Culture-integrated international trade as a viable long-term trade that harmoniously develops and integrates the diverse societies and Cultures (Chap. 24). Finally, the author takes up the issue of society-specific and worldwide campaigns as synchronous local-and-global endeavors for Sustainable Development on the basis of dynamic enrichment of diverse Cultures, which is promoted locally by grass-roots endeavors and globally by the New Enlightenment (Chap. 25).

In the final Part V (Harmonious and Integral Development), the author discusses first the Japanese experience of “democratization” after the Meiji Restoration (social revolution in 1868). Then, he elaborates on the characteristics relevant to the “open democracy” (based on the politico-legal principle of “Integrity in Diversity”) that is required for the prospective global community (Chap. 26). Next, the author takes up the contemporary demographic development - Society of Longevity – in relation to a “happiness triangle” depicting the trilateral interactions among “full life”, “good health” and “meaningful career”. Then, he proposes for our viable future

a positive socioeconomic policy relevant to the Society of Longevity that is closely related to Sustainable Development. According to the author, such socioeconomic policy, must base itself on the long-term “preventive” principle for health care. Also, it must emphasize the Culture-based “mutual help” principle for pension plan much more than the existing individual “self help” principle, to accommodate the combination of decreased *inter*-generational income transfer with gradually increased *intra*-generational income transfer based on the “mutual help” principle (Chap. 27).

Now, the author discusses the integrative interactions of society’s value aspect and real aspect – “Value-Real” interactions - for domestic “trilateral virtuous circle” among balanced socioeconomic development, Cultural enrichment and comprehensive human development. Also, the complex nature of balanced socioeconomic development (as local Sustainable Development) is explained summarily through both the Culture-based and Culture-enriching perpetual socioeconomic development and human development (Chap. 28). Such complex development is also related to dynamic “multilateral-value interactions” to promote Cultural enrichment and sound value system. Further, the author addresses the long-term, mutually-supportive interactions among Sustainable Development, Culture of Peace and Global Humanity, as well as of their simultaneous resolutions (Chap. 29). Finally, the author takes up the proposed paradigm shift again to illuminate analogically and succinctly an effective ‘local-global’ linkage on the basis of perpetual local and global “virtuous circles” for the simultaneous resolutions of Sustainable Development, Culture of Peace and Global Humanity (Chap. 30).

Main points of the above discussions are summarily drawn together in Epilogue to clarify the important arguments and conclusions of the present book. Also, the following Theoretical Appendixes (1-8) complement and augment the persuasiveness of the overall discussions and arguments.

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