

## **Editorial**

# **ECONOMICS OF ENOUGH AND ETHICS OF CARE FOR A PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE LIFE**

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Unprecedented in human history, we are living in a unique time of promise and peril. As the UN Resolution on Sustainable Development Goals observes, “We can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet. The world will be a better place in 2030 if we succeed in our objectives” (United Nations, 50). During the Holocene, the conditions were favourable for human flourishing and wellbeing on Earth – clean and abundant air, water, biodiversity and a protective ozone layer – and humanity made tremendous progress from being hunters and food gatherers to settled farmers and from that stage to that of mass producers of goods and services through the four industrial revolutions. Through the combined and sustained partnerships of the academia, market, local and national governments, and people’s movements, humanity achieved remarkable progress in reducing poverty, racial and gender discriminations and providing quality education and health services. However, in the present world, in the mad rush for ever more goods and services, we left behind millions of fellow human beings. While a few billionaires make trips to Mars, millions of people continue to struggle for survival – for clean air, water, food, and fundamental human rights.

During the era of Great Acceleration, we also did not consider, though silent, the most important stakeholder, the Earth, our common home. We forgot or foolishly set aside the simple fact that Earth has only finite sources, and we cannot carry on making use of the resources indefinitely and dump anthropogenic wastes beyond the capacity of ecosystems. From the most adaptive Holocene, we are entering into the Anthropocene, destroying our common home and those who live in there. We need to wake up to the fact that we cannot continue to live healthily and flourish on a sick planet; we need to learn to live and flourish together with all our fellow human beings and other living beings within the planetary boundaries. Because of

our madness in the pursuit of growth, millions are suffering, many species are disappearing, and ecosystems are dying. We need to envision and live the economics of enough and the ethics of care together with the economics of care and the ethics of enough for sustainable prosperity and peace for people and the planet.

The economics of the past century insisted that inventions and market expansions will lead to higher incomes, better quality of life, and overall prosperity. It was based on a circular flow of goods and services from the investment of capital and labour. Human beings are basically producers and consumers in this market economy. We invest capital and labour to firms and markets; in return, they are paid to spend it on goods and services. We use the developments in science and technology to continually produce more and more and consume more and more. The resources and money supposedly flow circularly. However, the market economy slowly became more like a 'casino economy' where we buy things that we do not need with money that we do not have, often to impress people we do not care about. The unfettered consumerist economic growth also resulted in unbearable and unjust inequalities among the people, loss of biodiversity, and climate change.

It is time for us to move to an 'amateur economy' in which we do things because we love to provide health, education, social care, and build communities and sustain ecosystems: from product- and money-oriented market economy, we move to a people- and service-oriented 'amateur economy' where work is love made visible. Here, the market is for people, and economics enhances the values necessary for the wellbeing of all people and all beings on the planet. In the sixth century BCE, Lao Tzu wisely told that the person who knows that enough is enough will always have enough. Xenophon from Athens wrote *Oeconomicus*, a treatise on household management, in the fourth century BCE. He was giving principles to manage homes and his home town, Athens. Adam Smith, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, enhanced the horizon of economics to the wealth of nations. In this era of globalisation, we need planetary economics to manage Earth, our common home, and all those who live with us; economics for the common good – for home, city, nation, and the planet. We are called upon to liberate ourselves from the delusion of constantly increasing economic growth in a finite planet with limits and boundaries. We need an economics of enough and economics of care.

An economics of enough and care could and should replace the hedonistic consumerism, liberate the poor from unjust and unbearable poverty, and provide sustainable prosperity for people and the planet. We need to make an economic and ethical conversion from the madness of more to the wisdom of enough. We are not just hedonistic, novelty-seeking, and selfish consumers. We care for the planet and all those who live in our common home. Sustainable prosperity could only be shared prosperity. Our wellbeing depends on each of us having the resources we need to meet our fundamental rights to food, water, health, education, housing, energy; our wellbeing also depends on our planetary home, the Earth. The fact that all human beings are sisters and brothers living in the common home, the Earth, together with other living beings, is a fundamental fact of life that calls for a fundamental moral vision and mission to treat everyone as siblings and practice ethics of care. Human beings are entrusted with the care of the Earth and all those who live in it. A planet-based and people-centred economy is necessary for sustainable prosperity.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is a response to the cry of the people and planet for prosperity and peace. Prosperity is the third pillar of the Agenda 2030, and we read in the Preamble: "We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature." The SDGs for Prosperity focus on different aspects of the economy: Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8); Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9); Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11). These goals are not only about economic development, making money, and providing jobs, but they are also about reducing inequalities of gender, stratification, and labour, and building greener and environment-friendly cities and energy sources. Prosperous societies with equal access to resources to utilise them sustainably should be the motto of the world to establish a sustainable and ethical human existence.

The *Journal of Dharma* is happy to present in this issue seven articles on different dimensions of sustainable prosperity for people and the planet, exploring the ethical interface of economics and the necessity of ethics for sustainable prosperity.

In the first paper, "The Ethical Interface of Sustainable Prosperity in the Teachings of Pope Francis," Jijimon Alakkalam Joseph argues

that the values of creatureliness, solidarity, and interconnectedness contained in the God-oriented, people-centred, and planet-inclusive ethical vision of Pope Francis offer the world a very comprehensive, practical, and bottom-up approach to sustainable development. In the first part of the paper, we discuss the importance of including ethics/morality and religious/spiritual values in SD discussions. The second part elaborates on the ethical vision of Pope Francis and how those values contribute to the creation of prosperous societies. In his conclusion, the author proposes ways for higher-education institutions to integrate the ethical vision of Pope Francis into the curriculum and thus help students become responsible and active citizens, with a clear vision of the future challenges of prosperity and sustainability.

Stephanie Ann Puen draws to another dimension of sustainable prosperity in her essay, "Contributions of Catholic Social Thought to Doughnut Economics to Achieve a Vision of Flourishing of Creation," investigating the relationship between Doughnut Economics (DE) and the Integral Ecology proposed by Catholic Social Thought (CST). This intersection of ideas between CST and DE is a fruitful point for dialogue between economics and theology in order to help attain the vision of flourishing of life and prosperity that both disciplines are seeking to achieve, particularly in line with the sustainable development goals on decent work and economic growth and sustainable cities and communities. This paper develops this dialogue by arguing for three ways that CST can help DE further in terms of i.) fleshing out a more robust understanding of human nature, ii.) emphasising the importance of arts and culture, and iii.) articulating the role of and reform needed in business activities in order to achieve the vision of flourishing for the ecosystem, of which human beings are an integral part.

"Ethics in Sustainable Enterprise Development" by Wenjun Shen argues that ethics has become a growing concern for the management of enterprises under the background of economic globalisation due to the intensification of competition and changes in the social and business environment. By exploring the relationship between ethics and sustainable development of the enterprise, the article points out the importance of ethics and morality in the process of enterprise development and provides references for the sustainable development of modern enterprises.

Leena P. Kuriakose, in her essay, "A Culture of Agriculture for Sustainable Prosperity: A Prophetic Voice of Wendell Berry," casts light on Wendell Berry's holistic approach to establishing sustainable societies worldwide by promoting a culture of agriculture and fostering prosperity. Berry critiques the modern era's dominant principles of acquisitiveness, self-centeredness, and short-sightedness, as well as the destructive aspects of prosperity, justice, and peace. People should recognise their role as guardians of the Earth and live in partnership and solidarity with all living beings. This paper analyses the possibility of maintaining sustainable prosperity through a culture of agriculture, where one does not denigrate human labour, lose family farms, and continue to destroy nature in the quest for economic development. The ethical interface of this paper emphasises that everyone should consider it imperative to safeguard natural harmony, food security, and people's wellbeing; without which sustainability becomes questionable and impossible.

"Culture as Enabler for SDGs: Learning from Jesus of Nazareth's Vision/Mission" by Ferdinand D. Dagmang insists that proponents of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) should be mindful of culture's enabling and disabling tendencies. It thus maintains that the SDG action plan will profit from the tradition-transforming ways of Jesus of Nazareth i) who challenged many religio-cultural traditions of his time; ii) who espoused a ministry of empowerment of the poor; iii) who was portrayed by the evangelists as the real bringer of Good News and *shalom* against the claim of the global powers. The paper further discusses Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God as the guide of today's Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC), the spearhead of a religious culture that enables the poor in their pursuit of prosperity and fulfilment. The discussion on the BEC serves to focus on the implications of Jesus' vision/ mission for sustainable prosperity and fulfilment of peoples as targets of the SDGs.

In "Shaolin Cultural Brand under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative," Qinye Li examines the opportunities and challenges in the external communication of the Shaolin cultural brand in the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. The spread of Buddhism on the ancient Silk Road laid a solid foundation for the external communication of the Shaolin cultural brand. Since China's reform and opening up, the Shaolin temple has gradually become a face of Chinese culture and has had a strong international influence.

Based on the research regarding the development and dissemination of Shaolin cultural industry, the article explores a new path for sustainable economic and cultural development in the 21st century and promote the maintenance of the cultural diversity of the world, the breaking of the self-centred thinking paradigm, and the construction of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity.

Drawing theoretical insights from Martin Buber, Arthur Kleinman, Joan C Tronto, and others, Sathyaraj Venkatesan and Livine Ancy A., examine how caregiving provides alternative ways of living for ill/disabled people and their caregivers and shows the significance of caregiving against the backdrop of neoliberal policies in their research article, titled, "In Defence of Caregiving: Neoliberalism, Care Ethics, and Graphic Medicine." The article also presents how the interdisciplinary field of graphic medicine fortifies the inevitability of dependency and care as an embodied practice. Neoliberal tendencies, which belittle the socio-political and cultural importance of care, are countered by the ethics of care philosophy. Defending humans as relational entities, care ethics offers philosophical credence and legitimacy to dependencies caused due to old age, illness, and impairment. Against such a background, graphic somatographies play a distinctive and productive role in representing the inevitability of interdependence and care caused by illness.

Acknowledging profound gratitude to all the scholars and researchers who investigated the SDGs in relation to the sustainable Prosperity of People and Planet and with the hope that all of us will take decisions for a sustainable future for all, may I submit this issue of the *Journal of Dharma* on "Towards Sustainable Societies: Prosperity, Ethics, and Development" for your reading and reflection.

## References

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