

## 2016 Virtual Dialogue on Harmony with Nature – Theme: Earth Jurisprudence

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1. What would the practice of your selected discipline look like from an Earth Jurisprudence perspective? How is that different from the way that your discipline is generally practiced now? And, what are the benefits of practicing the selected discipline from an Earth Jurisprudence perspective?

Of crucial importance is the role of energy, which is the *sine qua non* for the survival of life on the planet. Let us note the fact that in "advanced societies" human beings are now consuming energy amounting to 40 times their basal metabolic rate (bmr). The worldwide average per capita consumption of energy exceeds 15 times the average human bmr. We should always be conscious of the limited availability of energy supplies, but more importantly we must be aware of the inevitability of the degradation in the environment that accompanies the use of energy.

A simple example of how much energy humanity is consuming can be visualized by imagining the situation in which the world's elephant population reaches 7 billion (7,000,000,000). Per capita, elephants consume nearly the same amount of energy as the per capita average for the world human population. Can the earth accommodate 7 billion elephants? While the Earth centered worldview informs us of the impossibility for the planet to accommodate such a great elephant population, the prevailing anthropomorphic model instructs political and economic powers to continue increasing per capita consumption of energy in order to attain more affluent living conditions.

It is important to remember that only human beings use energy in excess of their basal metabolic rate. In summary, reducing energy consumption is imperative in order to achieve Harmony-With-Nature, or in other words, a world governed under the regime of Earth Jurisprudence. Time is of essence, there is no longer the luxury to debate endlessly the "benefits" and "costs" of consuming more or less energy, because if humanity fails to reduce worldwide energy consumption the consequence will be the extinction of human life as we know it.

In his book *The True Natural Way of Life: Shizen-Shin-Eido*, Ando Shoeki (1703-1762) described what he called "the animal court." In this court he imagined all non-human creatures including insects, birds, fishes and animals, gathered to accuse human beings of greed and gluttony and to point out that each creature on earth had an equal right to enjoy nature's affluence. According to the court, only human beings were living extravagant lives, consuming so much more energy than it needed to survive thereby depriving the chance of other creatures to enjoy even as much as their natural portions..

In short, humanity has to cease from building over-consuming societies and to seek to enjoy living in more frugal, less energy imbibing societies. We do not have much time to postpone changing the prevailing belief that attaches affluence to happiness, to a belief that relates frugality to happiness. Many people are now actually discovering that less means more and even more happiness.

2. What promising approaches do you recommend for achieving the implementation of an Earth-centered worldview for the discipline selected? (Note: depending on the discipline, approaches could also be theoretical, although practical approaches should be prioritized).

In the first instance it is necessary to accept: that there is no "clever" way to get the benefits of energy use without affecting the earth's environment. To believe that there is such a clever way, means that people are putting too much weight on the advancement of technology based on natural science. The fact remains that the "use" of energy is always accompanied by an increase in entropy, which is synonymous with the degradation of the environment. There is no way to escape this fact, no matter how much technological advancement is achieved. Hence the Earth centered view is again concomitant with energy saving. The first step in implementing an earth-centered worldview is to educate people.

The "efficiency" of energy usage depends on the magnitude of the temperature differential between the energy source and where and how energy is being expended. The term energy "consumption" simply means the equalization of temperatures at the source and consumption state (expressed as the entropy increase). At the equalized temperature energy becomes inert, and thus a source of environmental degradation.

Knowledge of the nature of energy and entropy is indispensable to convey the conviction that there is need for an the Earth-centered world view. It is the choice between the infinite benefits of a sustainable human existence or joining the rapidly growing ranks of extinct species. .

Human nature is apt however, to seek short term benefits that derive from with high energy consumption because long term benefits are difficult to foresee. Therefore the most effective way to encourage people to experience an energy-frugal way of life is to adjust the pricing system of energy so that energy saving would bring tangible short term benefits. The simplest way is to prompt energy prices to increase to the point where excess energy consumption becomes a burden on the purse. There must be various ways to avoid the accompanying side effects of this policy, in particular the extra burden on poor people. This may be achieved by a rationing system to ensure that everyone gets a fair share of lower priced energy.

In conclusion, it is indispensable for the majority of the world's population to agree to reduce their energy consumption. The role of government is essential to guide people in that direction by a clever and equitable use of their taxing systems. To guide people to extinction or to a sustainable future is equivalent to the choice between zero and infinity.

3. What key problems or obstacles do you see impeding the implementation of an Earth-centered worldview in the discipline selected?

In this context:

Underlying the prevailing anthropocentric worldview is human arrogance and the false confidence that human beings can manage the degradation of environment by the use of present and future "advanced" technologies. We are all dazzled by the recent development of technology

represented by the computer, medical advances that prolong life, space science and so on. However we have to remind ourselves from time to time that we actually know nothing.

The simplest question "why are we here?" no one can answer. The roles of philosophy and religion are increasingly important if humanity is to live well in the better way of rational humble life-styles. Yet there was no era other than today where the taste for such simple life styles has disappeared in accordance with the disappearing respect for the humanities including philosophy and religion. For example, in Japan for over 250 years from around 1600 to the end of 19th century, people lived under a feudal system. The rate of economic progress was quite slow and there was not much liberty to discuss politics. But note that, during this time nature was rigorously guarded. The reason for this was that people realized that their lives were totally dependent on nature and realized that they were part of that nature. The Earth-centered worldview was without discussion, a matter of fact then.

At this time, the arts flourished in the fields of literature, design and visual arts (Ukiyoe for example), dance and theater performance (Kabuki), music, and so on. I have to add that over this long feudal period there were no wars fought with other countries and not one inside Japan either. Peace was as common as the air then.

In sum, it is not so worthwhile a matter to discuss what benefit humanity can get from technological development. It should be increasingly realized that it is only nature on which humankind can depend. We cannot be too careful as we seek to preserve nature. A harmony with nature way of life is, without discussion, the only reasonable choice for humanity.

4. What are the top recommendations for priority, near-term action to move your selected discipline toward an Earth Jurisprudence approach? What are the specific, longer-term priorities for action? (Note: give 3 to 10 priorities for action).

Priority for the action:

1. Let people realize that there is no method for consuming energy which does not degrade the environment. In this context, education on the facts of energy is important.

2. Learning about the history of the degradation of nature is very important. The extinction of passenger pigeon in North America, the extinction of mujina raccoon in Japan, and the tragedy of Easter Islands are all historic examples of the over exploitation of nature.

3. Taxation as the management tool for the over-usage of energy: We have to support an energy price increase to give space to people to voluntarily save energy without teaching them to do so. What governments should do is to contrive the way to guarantee the lives of poor people under high energy price.

Distribution of the right of low price electrical energy usage up to say, 30kwh/month per person may be employed for example. If one live by 20kwh/month that person can trade the remaining right to use under low price, 10kwh/month to other person who wants to use more energy under much higher fee.

4. We have to remind ourselves from time to time that we do not know everything. About the most important essence of life, we are as ignorant as the ancient people who worshipped the sun as god.

5. We must not be enticed to believe in the opinions of experts who say that the present degradation of earth's environment (average temperature rise, increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere) is not due to the human activities.

Perhaps they might be right in the long run. But if they are, in fact wrong, and if we adhere to their views and an unlimited energy spending policy is continued, the outcome is a catastrophe for human life.

6. What we can do is to think: To think about what is good for the future. If we hope for the better future, we have to put our weight on the conviction that energy saving is the only assurance of human survival.