

VENERABLE MASTER HSING YUN'S “BUDDHIST ECONOMICS”

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Abstract

There is limited research regarding the economic problems faced by Buddhism in its development over the past 2000 years, which has contributed to much confusion and many misunderstandings. Venerable Master Hsing Yun is the first eminent monk to publicly disclose his Buddhist economic beliefs based on his experience propagating the Dharma in the past decades. Venerable Master Hsing Yun merges the laws of society with the Dharma, explaining in a considerate and rational manner. According to Honoré de Balzac, a famous French novelist and playwright in the nineteenth century, “Behind each sum of wealth, there is evil.” Perhaps solving the problem of the “original sin” of wealth is a difficult task worldwide. Nevertheless, “pure wealth” can boost the happiness index more than “easy money,” marking a general principle for wealth ethics. Based on this value, Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Buddhist economic beliefs present a bright and beautiful chapter in modern economics.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s theories of wealth and its management are present in his writings. He treats economic issues comprehensively from the aspect of benefiting people while developing society. He defines money from a perspective of “spiritual wealth” and “pure wealth,” guiding commercial ethics with cause and effect, and suggests managing wealth by cherishing affinities and in an environmentally-friendly way.

Keywords: Venerable Master Hsing Yun, Humanistic Buddhism, Buddhist economics

1. Does Buddhism have Economics?

(a) Franklin’s “Secrets of dealing with money”

“Buddhist economics” is not recognized as an academic discipline by orthodox economists. People are accustomed to various theories of economics in the Western

context, and are often unaware of any forms of economics in Buddhism. An area of study is called an “academic subject” only when it is theoretically systematic, normative, and self-consistent, and uses a large number of technical terms. For example, in *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith, a British economist in the eighteenth century, discussed the economic relationships between wealth, labor, division of labor, taxation, commodities, capital, profits, colonization, agriculturalism, and mercantilism from the perspective of “an economic person” and “an invisible hand.” He developed a theoretical foundation for the functioning of capital markets. Smith is therefore called the “father of modern economics.” Today, the economic courses offered by universities, including international trade, finance, insurance, and development economics are all very “specialized” and of strict “academic standards.” It usually takes a few years to complete these courses.

In fact, economics is the theory of wealth. This can be illustrated by the original title of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, which was *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. So-called capital accumulation is in essence “making money.” If economics does not increase wealth, if it does not help people make money, who will take it seriously? Therefore, simply put, economics is the science of money making. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), a famous American politician and thinker, produced many classic sayings about money making in his book *Advice to a Young Tradesman*, such as “Time is money,” “Credit is money,” “Money can beget money,” “A good payer is the master of another’s purse,” etc. These “secrets of making money” are regarded by Americans as mottos for living. In other words, if you want to make a fortune, remember that diligence, integrity, and frugality are the primary virtues. Although we can’t use Franklin’s money-making mottos as an economic theory, because they represent the creed in American life and the American spirit, Franklin can be regarded as the father of economic ethics in America. The question is, if Franklin is not a well-known and influential celebrity in American history, would you find any novelty from these money-making tips? Do the Chinese also have these mottos?

(b) Weber’s prejudice

One hundred years later, the German scholar Max Weber (1864-1920) was inspired by, and interpreted the Christian Puritan values of diligence, frugality, and honesty advocated by Franklin as “secularization of Protestant ethics.” He argued that the essence was not only being smart in doing business, but also a spirit of capitalism.

In his book, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber described Christian belief values such as ascetic practices, abstinence, and piety as the source of secular values including diligence, frugality, and honesty in Western capitalism. However, spiritual values including penance, abstinence, and piety are not exclusive properties of Western religions, but also exist in Eastern religions. Secular values of diligence, frugality, and honesty are also regarded as creeds in Chinese Confucianism. Why can there not be a spirit of capitalism in the East? How could Weber assert that Buddhism is completely a reclusive religion? Although Buddhist monks also manage businesses, the basic doctrine of “all is emptiness” and extinguishing greed and refuting attachment determines that Buddhist practitioners cannot have material wealth like the laity. Besides the necessary sustenance, the wealth itself and its accumulation are of no meaning to the monastics. This is equivalent to saying that Buddhism lacks any legitimacy in modern social life.

Weber was Western-centric, and his prejudice against the East was inevitable. The question is, have the Chinese and the people of the East always considered making money to be shameful? Or have they never even thought about the rules of making money? This is not true. However, we must find evidence to refute him. Whenever wealth and economic impacts are involved, there will be economic ethics and there will be a science of money-making. Is it true that Buddhists only rely on the northwest wind to survive? What people see, however, is monastics who do not engage in production, who practice asceticism, and always call themselves “humble monks.” They simply do not think there is a such thing as Buddhist business.

(c) Gold is not necessarily a poisonous snake

There is indeed a saying in Buddhist scriptures like “gold is a poisonous snake,” but this does not represent Buddhism’s basic view of the economy. It is easy for an average person to confuse the differences between teachings of the lesser vehicle and the greater vehicle, and the differences between monastic and lay believers.

When Buddhism was founded, Śākyamuni Buddha established the rule that those who renounced were not allowed to own property. This is to uphold one’s personal cultivation and maintain the discipline of the Saṅgha. Not only could they not own property, they also had to live an ascetic life. It is clearly documented in the early texts

that the monks should shave their heads, hold an alms bowl to beg for food, and live a very humble life. About one hundred years after the Buddha entered *nirvāṇa*, the Vajjian monks in Vaiśālī violated the vinaya and began to accept monetary offerings from the lay followers. After discussion at the Second Buddhist Council, the Saṅgha representatives affirmed the ten deviant rules, which included a rule that monks could not have money. According to some early Buddhist texts, money was considered to be impure, even regarded as poison or a poisonous snake, and should be avoided. Monastics could not accept monetary offerings, nor save or use money. They should not even touch money with their hands. All business transactions, including buying and selling, trading, and profit-making were not allowed.

However, the precept that banned money only applied to the monastics, not to the lay followers. The *Upāsaka Śīla Sūtra* translated by Buddhayaśas during Later Qin period is considered to be from the Āgamas, and to be in line with the spirit of early Buddhism. It is mentioned in the sūtra that lay practitioners can divide their wealth into four parts: one for family life, the second as business capital, the third as savings at home in case of emergency, and the fourth for lending to earn interest. This text is undoubtedly very important for understanding the view on wealth in early Buddhism. That is to say, the concept of money and wealth in early Buddhism cannot be interpreted only from the perspective of monastics.

The situation has changed significantly since the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The most important change was the affirmation of worldly life. Out of the need for benefiting the world with great compassion, the worldly life and the transcendental life are interconnected and integrated in Mahāyāna Buddhism. They are seen as “not the same and yet not different.” According to the *Lotus Sūtra*, “all phenomena are nothing but the Dharma,” and “all industries and businesses in the world are not contrary to reality.”¹ In the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the wealthy Vimalakīrti is depicted as an enlightened person with great miraculous powers. He had many child servants; he was very rich and willing to give to the poor. In the Pure Land texts such as the *Sūtra of the Medicine Buddha* and the *Amitābha Sūtra*, the Eastern Lapis Lazuli World is described as a place filled with peace and joy in the body and mind, where each household has abundant means. It is full of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, cornelian, ruby, and emerald, which is a great contrast with the Sahā World. It is the “land of bliss.” Because Mahāyāna Buddhism sees a bodhisattva as an ideal personality, going with the flow and employing

expedient means, Buddhism has a tolerance towards wealth and worldly activities. This inclusiveness defines the human character of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Another major change in Mahāyāna Buddhism is the introduction of the concept of spiritual wealth. Wealth is commonly defined to include land, real estate, jewelry, vehicles, and farm animals. From an economic perspective, they can all be converted into money. However, since the introduction of the “seven kinds of spiritual wealth” in Buddhism, the general concept of wealth has greatly expanded. It is also called the “seven kinds of Dharma wealth” or the “seven kinds of holy wealth,” which include faith, morality, conscience, shame, learning, giving, and wisdom. In the *Sūtra of Mañjuśrī’s Questions*, it states that “The seven noble treasures are: faith, conscience, shame, giving, moral discipline, learning the Dharma, and wisdom. These are called the seven noble treasures.”² There is a similar saying in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*: “There are seven noble treasures: faith, conscience, shame, charity, morality, learning, and wisdom.”³ The meaning is similar. Whether it is “spiritual wealth,” “Dharma wealth,” or “holy wealth,” these are all metaphors that reflect the sacred concept of economic ethics in Buddhism. They are referred to as “the nourishment for becoming a Buddha.” This has special significance for Mahāyāna Buddhism and is the most outstanding characteristic of the Buddhist view of wealth.

The Buddhist view of wealth can be explored from different angles. For example, the four immeasurable minds are comprised of kindness, compassion, joy, and giving. Among them, giving is generally understood as giving up, letting go, not obsessing with money and wealth. The interpretation in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* is “doing good deeds without expectations.” The concept cannot be limited to wealth. For another example, “giving” is the first *pāramitā* (perfection) in the six *pāramitās*, which includes giving wealth, giving Dharma, and giving fearlessness. It is believed that giving Dharma creates more merit than does giving wealth. In the *Diamond Sūtra*, the merit from simply spreading a four-line verse to others is much greater than to give away all seven treasures of the great thousand worlds. In addition, both teachings of the great vehicle and the lesser vehicle advocate the elimination of greed, lending a hand to the poor and transcend all sentient beings.

The Buddhist concept of wealth is very different from other religions. Without a thorough examination, there can easily be misunderstandings. Weber clearly confused

teachings of the great vehicle with the lesser vehicle's, and lay believers and monastics. To this day, many people, including some Buddhists themselves, may not understand the truth. They doubt whether Buddhism can be integrated into modern life. They even complain that Buddhism "has never told us how to make money and how to increase our wealth." Those who read the book *The Richest Man Liang Wengen and I: Demystifying Sany*⁴ may have noticed a detail. He Zhenlin, a member of the Hunan Sany Group, tried to persuade the president Liang Wengen to take refuge in Buddhism, citing successful stories of Buddhist businessmen from Japan and the United States such as Inamori Kabe and Jobs. However, Liang was not moved, instead argued that "it is better to believe in Christianity than to believe in the Buddha" because Christian Protestant ethics contributed to the rise of capitalist powers such as Britain and the United States. On the other hand, very few countries in Southeast Asia that were historically influenced by Buddhism became powerful countries, and some were even labelled as the "sick men of Asia."

It seems that the establishment of Buddhist economics depends not only on "convincing people with reasoning" but also on whether there are "real effects."

2. Thus Says Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Although the flagship of Chinese Buddhism is Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan School, Huineng had established the tradition of Humanistic Buddhism, pointing out that "The Dharma is within this world, apart from this world, there is no awakening." However, throughout history, there have been very few masters who ever talked about economic issues publicly. Venerable Master Hsing Yun is undoubtedly the most notable among those who have pondered this issue and put it into practice.

In his decades of spiritual practice and spreading of the Dharma, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has had extensive experience dealing with economic issues. He has built numerous schools, hospitals, newspapers, magazines, television stations, and art galleries, as well as creating countless songs, sūtra lectures, and trainings. For all of them, one thing is needed: money. In chapter three of the book *Hear Me Out: Messages from a Humble Monk*, "How much 'money' did I actually use?" Venerable Master Hsing Yun mentioned that in his life he does not like wealth, but has nominally had many

relationships with wealth.⁵ There are four major missions of Fo Guang Shan, including culture, education, charity, and mutual cultivation. Fo Guang University alone has cost more than 6 billion NT dollars; more than 4 billion for Nanhua University, and more than 2 billion for University of the West. The entire education mission has cost more than 23 billion over the decades. As for other areas, Venerable Master Hsing Yun can only estimate that more than one hundred billion has been spent. Take the Beautiful Life Television (BLTV) as an example:

In the past fifteen years, Beautiful Life Television has been a bottomless money pit. Because it is a charitable TV station, there is no advertising fee. Initially, we paid tens of millions of dollars every month to the twenty-six national operators for using the satellite. We also needed to produce programs and broadcasted 24 hours a day without a minute's break. It cost more than 100 million per month. Later, it was really beyond our budget. We had to slowly cut expenses, reducing the number of employees from 100 employees to about 70. For fifteen years, we have been fortunate to have financial support from several benefactors, including Lai Wei-cheng, Li Mei-hsiu, Lo Li A-chao, Chen Cheng Hsiu-tzu, and Hsueh Cheng-fang. The total cost should be more than three billion Taiwan dollars. Venerable Chueh Nien is in charge of the station.⁶

Many people say, "Fo Guang Shan is really rich!" Is this mockery, jealousy, or praise? It varies from person to person. As the saying goes, "The layman looks at the excitement, and the experts find the tricks." Knowing the hard work behind running the Beautiful Life Television, one may begin to have some respect. In fact, everyone knows it is true that "before soldiers and horses move, the grains and grass need to be prepared first," and "there are seven things before the door opens: fuel, rice, oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and tea." Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Fo Guang Shan can grow from its root in Taiwan and grow throughout the whole world to become a standard for contemporary Humanistic Buddhism. Without superb business wisdom and an economic mind, this will not be possible.

In fact, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has frequently and openly discussed economic issues on different occasions. In April 2002, the Buddha's Light International Association held its 9th World Membership Conference in Tokyo. Venerable Master Hsing Yun gave a keynote speech entitled "To Develop and Resolve" emphasizing the development of true wealth inside human beings. In August 2003, Venerable Master Hsing Yun held a symposium at the Jin Guang Ming Temple in Taipei. He gave a talk about economic ethics in Buddhism to more than 500 committee and members of the BLIA Chunghua Headquarters. Most notably, in 2012, the Beijing Xianzhuang Book Company published *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Lessons on Wealth*. This book represents the most comprehensive and systematic collection of Venerable Master Hsing Yun's thoughts about Buddhist economic issues. Those who read this book will surely find that Venerable Master Hsing Yun has extraordinary theories about Buddhist economics.

Due to space limitations, this article provides only some general discussion on these ideas.

(a) Wealth is more than money

There are many popular economic theories that do not consider spiritual wealth at all because it is difficult to quantify. Moreover, the general public is very pragmatic. They say they want to invigorate the economy, which basically means making more money. This is the reason why many countries and governments highly value GDP. Fortunately, people are increasingly aware that the "GDP only" theory is problematic. The root of the problem lies in a one-sided understanding of the economy.

i) "People's hearts" are the source of the economy

It is well-known that in everyday life, there are essential needs, including oil, salt, fuel, rice, clothing, food, accommodation, and transport. All of these are linked to the economy. From individuals, families, to the larger society and the nation, none can function without the support of an economy. In the "Mumin" (shepherding the people) chapter of *Guanzi*, it states: "When grains fill the storehouses, the people will know the rituals and manners. When they are fed and clothed, the people will have a sense of honor." This passage indicates that human ethics cannot be separated from basic economic conditions. In Sima Qian's "Biographies of Profiteers" chapter of the

Shi Ji (Records of the Grand Historian), there are records of some famous merchants and moneylenders of the past. The well-known saying, “all people in the world come for profit and go for profit” comes from this book. It justifies profit-seeking behaviors. Venerable Master Hsing Yun also agrees that money is important. However, he also believes that the economy is not an isolated activity of human beings. It must be viewed from the perspective of managing the economy to benefit the people.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun believes that modern people are overly concerned with money, but that money itself is not actually wealth. The economy is tied to many factors such as politics, education, morality, and human minds. Transparency in politics, healthy systems, the diligence and integrity of officials, the trust and harmony among the people, and hard work and frugality are all bricks for a solid foundation for economic development. At the core of all these is people. Confucianism advocates “striving for righteousness rather than personal interests.” This does not mean not to pursue profits, but to achieve profits to benefit the whole society. Righteousness is putting the public interest above personal interests. Just as Mencius said to King Hui of Liang, if the whole society is “fighting each other for profit, then the country is in danger.” Therefore, Venerable Master Hsing Yun regards unkind hearts, selfishness, and self-interest as the reason that the world is not at peace. The most important economic resource of a country is human talent and ability. Only through educating, cultivating, using, and retaining talent can we create a steady stream of wealth.⁷

Developing the economy and creating wealth, however, is still only an economic concept in the general sense. That is, it is still just making more money. If Buddhist economic ideas remain at this level, they are no different from the secular ones, and cannot show Buddhism’s glory and grandness.

ii) The value of “other wealth”

What is wealth? There is material wealth and spiritual wealth. Most people will stop here. However, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has conducted in-depth research on both, and proposed a very systematic “Buddhist view of wealth.” He says:

Speaking of wealth, there is “wealth in a narrow sense,” such as money, houses, land, and stocks; and there is “wealth in

a broad sense,” which includes health, wisdom, popularity, credit, morality, etc.

In addition, there is “wealth with a price,” such as prestige, reputation, achievement, and history; there is also “priceless wealth,” such as personality, conscience, sincerity, and nature. There are tangible wealth and intangible wealth; wealth of this life and wealth of the afterlife; personal wealth and public wealth; material wealth and spiritual wealth; temporary wealth and eternal wealth, and so on.

All kinds of wealth must be connected with happiness and wisdom. Happiness and wisdom are the most complete wealth in life. The Buddha had developed perfect happiness and wisdom. Without the development of happiness and wisdom, life is not complete. Therefore, we appeal to everyone to develop holy wealth in order to obtain perfect happiness and wisdom.

So-called holy wealth includes the wealth of *prajñā* and meditative contemplation, the wealth of the joy of the Dharma and of Chan, the wealth of gratitude, and the wealth of compassion and wisdom. That is, pure wealth, good wealth, and Dharma wealth.

The *Dharmasamuccaya* states, “Treasures can be lost, but the Dharma wealth is endless; only the wealth from cultivating wholesome Dharma lasts for hundreds and thousands of lives.” True wealth may not be the deposits in the bank, nor land, houses, gold or stocks. These are shared by the five parties⁸ and cannot be owned exclusively by individuals. The development of faith, satisfaction, joy, repentance, popularity, peace, health, wisdom, etc, is the only way to acquire the holy wealth of happiness and wisdom. Such wealth is not only used in the world, but can be used in the afterlife; not

only can it be used for the time being, but also for a lifetime;
not only can it be used by one person, but also by the public.

Therefore, one should not only value personal wealth, but also create and develop shared wealth. Even if you have private wealth, you must know how to enjoy shared wealth, such as sunshine, air, and clean water. If you can understand, the mountains and rivers in the universe and parks and roads are all the wealth we can enjoy. Will we still be poor?⁹

In the view of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, “everything in the world is wealth.” Money, houses, land, and stocks are just one kind of wealth, and are only regarded as “wealth in the narrow sense” and “tangible wealth.” The broad-sense wealth and intangible wealth, such as health, wisdom, popularity, credit, morality, prestige, reputation, achievement, history, personality, conscience, sincerity, nature, faith, etc. are greater and priceless forms of wealth. However, how many people in the world see the value of this “alternative wealth”?

Mother Teresa once said that she saw poverty as an honor throughout her life. She had no money, but she was willing to serve the poor. She convinced the whole world with her moral personality and reputation. This is the “wealth of faith.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun also said, “I think that enjoyment is not necessarily wealth. Having large deposits in a bank, dressing well, eating well, or feeling important may not be wealth either. I think often, being humble, being simple, or being upright is the wealth of life.”¹⁰ Worldly people usually value money too narrowly. The more they want money, the less likely they will get the money. They then complain about misfortune in life and about social injustice. However, from the perspective of the Buddha’s teaching, there are no real poor people in the world. Why? Because there are many kinds of “alternative wealth” in the world besides money. Being able to give, having “faith, repentance, shame, vision, generosity, and wisdom” as well as “Dharma wealth” and “pure wealth” such as the six *pāramitās* and the four means of embracing are true wealth.¹¹

According to the Buddhist scriptures, the greatest wealth of mankind is wisdom. In addition, repentance, humility, contentment, giving, and cultivation are all wealth. Poverty and wealth are all relative. People who are economically poor but content in

their hearts are not worse off than the rich. The rich may be dreaming for more every day, and thus are not happy. Venerable Master Hsing Yun once told a story: a chairman was worried about his huge fortune every day, and the couple next door who were teachers lived a sweet life. The chairman was very envious of the neighbors. His secretary gave him an idea, saying, “Boss, if you are worried about yourself, you might forward your troubles to your neighbors next door, and give them a million dollar check.” So, the couple who have never seen such a large fortune in their lives have become rich overnight. They were overjoyed, yet unable to sleep at night, and suffering every day. A few months later, they decided to return the “trouble” of the million dollars to the chairman and restore their past laughter.

At the end of this story, Venerable Master Hsing Yun made a conclusion, “Economy does not mean absolute wealth. Regardless how much money you have, you are wealthy poor as long as you are not content; for one who owns nothing, if he is content, he is a rich among the poor.”¹²

iii) Being rich by “attaining both happiness and wisdom”

However, most people are very pragmatic. They would rather be the poor with a wealth of money than be the rich who are destitute. They see the theory of Buddhist wealth as unrealistic and hypocritical. This is not only a misunderstanding of Buddhism, but also a form of ignorance. Venerable Master Hsing Yun never advocated that poverty is part of Buddhism. On the contrary, he believes that wealth itself is neither good nor evil. For “pure wealth,” “Dharma wealth,” or “true wealth,” the more the better. However, no matter how much money and fortune one has, that does not mean that one will be happy and comfortable. Venerable Master Hsing Yun has pointed out this with a poetic description:

Money may buy one many things, but it cannot buy eternal life for the physical body.

Money can buy cosmetics but not elegance.

Money can buy beautiful clothes but not a beautiful physique.

Money can buy gourmet food but not a healthy appetite.

Money can buy a big wide bed but not good sleep.

Money can buy tall mansions but not high morals.

Money can buy books and magazines but not intelligence and knowledge.

Money can buy furnitures and housewares but not joy and satisfaction.

Money can buy drinking buddies but not true friends.

Money can buy votes but not hearts.

Money can buy companies and banks but not wisdom.

Money can buy shouts of joy but not the respect with joined palms.

Money can buy high positions but not sagehood.¹³

People often say that, although money is not omnipotent, without money you can do nothing. This sentiment is only half right. From a Buddhist perspective, it may be said that money is not omnipotent, but without return of good karma you can do nothing. Venerable Master Hsing Yun repeatedly stressed that believing in Buddhism is not supposed to make people poor. Buddhism is actually a rich, joyful, and happy religion. However, the index of human happiness depends not only on material riches, but also on spiritual freedom. In other words, the richness advocated by Buddhism is the unity of “pure wealth” and “wisdom,” or “attainment of both happiness and wisdom.”

(b) Managing wealth wisely

“Can Buddhism make money?” This is a slightly hostile question. In fact, Buddhism has never denied the legitimacy of making money, and has its own unique way of managing wealth.

i) Smart financial management is the key

Venerable Master Hsing Yun has argued that in the human world, you cannot escape from making money through work. Some use labor to make a living, and some use time to make wages; some sell their bodies to meet their needs, and some make money by talking. No matter what kind of work you do or how you earn a living, it is important for it to be proper and honest. “Proper wealth can be made by investment and hard work. Whether it is made from farming or husbandry, from business and trade, from management or from investment, all are right economic means recognized by Buddhism.”¹⁴

Venerable Master Hsing Yun listed some high-level money-making skills that are popular currently: making money by signing autographs, making money by licensing, making money with a stamp, making money with a phone, making money on the internet, making money by brokering, making money with wisdom, making money by forming connections, and making money by using relationships, social bonds, or money. He believes that as long as the method is proper, all money-making techniques can be used. However, in the various high-level money-making skills of modern people, making money by forming a connection and making money with wisdom may best fit the nature of Buddhism.

What is making money with wisdom? The term wisdom is called *prajñā* in Buddhism. It is not being clever in trivial matters in the mundane sense, but the great wisdom of the nonduality of existence and nonexistence and regarding emptiness as existence. I think among the various money-making techniques mentioned by Venerable Master Hsing Yun on different occasions, making money with wisdom should be the most fundamental one.

ii) Let money come naturally

The most fundamental idea of Buddhism is the empty nature of dependent arising. To explain emptiness, scholars can go on for days. In the *Heart Sūtra*, it says that, “Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form. Form is not different from emptiness, and emptiness is not different from form.” One may not understand this even after reading many times. Instead of engaging in such metaphysical preaching, Venerable Master Hsing Yun told a story about letting money come naturally:

There was a third-rate hotel in New York state. The business had been bad and the owner could do nothing but wait to close the business. Later, a friend of the owner helped him with a new idea on the empty space behind the hotel.

The next day, the owner posted an advertisement, saying, “Dear customer, there is an open space behind the hotel for you to plant trees to commemorate your visit. If you are interested, you can plant ten trees. We will help you take a

photo, engrave your name and planting date on a wooden plaque to attach to the trees. When you visit our hotel next time, the little trees might be full of branches and leaves. We only charge you \$200 for the baby trees.” Immediately after that, many people were attracted to come, and the hotel became too busy to serve all the customers.

Not long after, the trees in the back flourished, and travellers enjoyed strolling through the woods. Those who planted could not forget that it was them who planted the young trees, and often came to visit. A wave of travellers came to plant young trees, and a wave of young trees attracted the returning customers to come, and ever since the hotel has been in full business.¹⁵

This is a typical example of generating wealth in a natural manner, and its essence lies in “giving is gaining.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun went on to explain, “It is not ‘to not have money,’ but rather ‘to have by not having.’ Do not seek wealth from others, it should come in a natural manner. We need to appreciate the idea of ‘nothing’ is ‘having.’ ‘Nothing’ does not mean ‘having nothing’, but ‘having from nothing.’ ‘Nothing’ has no limit, no boundary, it is infinite. We need to understand it at this level.”¹⁶ Here, “having from nothing” and “seeing nothing as having” is “emptiness.” This may help people realize the true meaning of the phrase: “form is emptiness, and emptiness is form” in the *Heart Sūtra*.

Buddhism encourages people to broadly invest in good conditions or causes. Generating wealth naturally is actually an example of a classic high-level money-making skill—investing in good conditions. Venerable Master Hsing Yun urges people in economic to cultivate good connections and to plant more seedlings in the process of economic development. In fact, in the business field, there is no profit without investment, and no harvest without planting. This is a general rule that ordinary people can understand. The Bible says you reap what you sow. This is the same as the law of cause and effect in Buddhism. However, some people do not understand this and complain, “I am a vegetarian and I worship the Buddha, why didn’t I make a fortune?” Venerable Master Hsing Yun considers this to be a wrong view. Worshipping Buddha

or being a vegetarian is a moral cause and effect, while getting rich needs the physical cause and effect of making money. For example, you have to invest to be able to take the interest; you need to work hard, invest with wisdom, and to understand the market economy, and then you can make a fortune.¹⁷

iii) Best investment

Venerable Master Hsing Yun also wrote a piece, “Optimal Investing.” It is actually about Buddhism’s principle of broadly investing good conditions or causes, and the cause and effect of making money. In the beginning of the piece, Venerable Master Hsing Yun quoted a story:

There was a barren land on the hillside 30 miles away from a city in the United States. The owner saw the land to be useless, and sold it at a very low price. The new owner had a new idea. He went to the local government and said, “I have a piece of land and am willing to donate to the government free of charge. However, I believe education can save the nation, and therefore, this land can only be used to build a university. The local government was thrilled and immediately agreed.

Thereafter, he donated two-thirds of the land to the government. Soon, a large-scale university was built on this barren land. The smart landlord then built student apartments, cafes, shopping malls, bars, theatres, etc. on the remaining one-third of the land, forming a commercial street in front of the university. Not long after, the loss from donating the land was fully compensated by the profit from the commercial street.¹⁸

After reading this story, you may immediately understand that this is what Buddhists call the law of cause and effect. Venerable Master Hsing Yun believes that investing in good conditions or causes is the optimal investment. On a positive note, real investment needs a long-term vision, not only investing in money and businesses, but more importantly, in relationships and beliefs. Sometimes a good word, a smile, a nod, a

greeting, may have unbelievable results in the future.

What should be invested? To invest means to give what is needed by others. It should be done when time, place, and conditions are right. Investment means the help to others. Investment with compassion, connection, wisdom, labor, or helping others is the best. On the other hand, investment for quick profits, for self-interest, or for something that is not approved by the public should not be made. Investment that does not foster good causes or conditions should not be made. Investment can only have its return when the causes and conditions are right. This is the law of cause and effect for creating wealth.¹⁹

iv) Good wealth can be given away

In Franklin's laws of making money, hard work, trustworthiness, and frugality are fundamental. These laws actually exist in the business ethics of all nations in the world, and are the general rules of business ethics. In comparison, Venerable Master Hsing Yun also listed five reliable ways of conducting business, including no cheating children and the elderly, being trustworthy, exploring business opportunities, valuing talents, and giving away good wealth. Of these five, "giving away good wealth" is considered to be most reflective of the Buddhist concepts of giving away good wealth and investing in good causes and condition. These are sometimes connected and combined.

What is "giving away"? Giving away is letting go, which is an antidote to greed and being rich and unkind. Some people may not understand, believing that to make more money, one has to be frugal. Does giving wealth to others make one poorer? Some may think that, although I am willing, I do not have enough money, so how can I give? This is actually a misunderstanding of the original intention of giving away. Venerable Master Hsing Yun writes:

How do we practice giving? A smile, nod, or greeting, to do something trivial and feeling happy about others' generosity are all forms of giving. We also need to learn the courage of giving demonstrated by Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, so that others feel no fear because of my presence. We don't have to have money to practice Buddhism. The most important

thing is to have a heart. Using academic qualifications as a metaphor, giving money is at the primary school level, giving labor is the secondary school, speaking good words are like the university level, and giving from the heart represents a postgraduate degree.²⁰

Good wealth is gained by giving. Giving money, giving labor, giving good words, and giving from the heart are all giving, and they reflect different levels in life. In the *Sūtra on Cause and Effect*, it says, “Why do people have food and clothing? The reason is they gave tea and food to poor in their past lives. Why do people not have food and clothing? Because they did not give even half a penny in their past lives. Why do people wear silk clothes? Because they gave clothing to monks in their past lives. Why are people pretty and handsome? Because they respectfully offered flowers to the Buddha in their past lives.”²¹ Perhaps you believe in science and do not believe in the so-called previous life and next life in Buddhism. However, the spirit of giving advocated by Buddhism’s *Sūtra on Cause and Effect* is indisputable. It is very difficult for a person to make a fortune without a heart of giving with joy and benefiting others. Speaking of giving and gaining, the truth is that “small giving leads to small gains, big giving leads to big gains, no giving leads to no gains.” This is the great wisdom of Buddhism.

For many years, Fo Guang Shan has been promoting the Three Acts of Goodness and the Four Givings. The essence of both is actually letting go and giving. By “saying good words, doing good deeds, thinking good thoughts” and “giving others confidence, giving others joy, giving others hope, giving others convenience,” we can overcome all obstacles and realize what Venerable Master says by “there is always a way if we have the Dharma.” It is precisely because of giving and letting go with joy, that the great mission of Fo Guang Shan led by Venerable Master Hsing Yun has achieved its success. Many people wonder why Venerable Master Hsing Yun is so wealthy. Venerable Master Hsing Yun often answers, “It is because I don’t want money; I take emptiness as having.” These words are worth pondering.

(c) From “Having” to “Using”

Most people desire financial wealth, not only individuals, but families, communities, and countries as well. However, it does not necessarily imply that having money is a

favorable matter. The key is whether you can use the money. There are people who hoard their money and not use it. There are people who become degenerate after becoming wealthy. Others become willful. None of these people are satisfied. These are not the right approaches to using money.

i) Having money but not spending is worse than not having money

What is the appropriate use of money? Perhaps we should first listen to what Venerable Master Hsing Yun spoke of in the story “Using Money and Storing Money”:

There was an individual who kept a lot of gold bars which were stored underground at his house. Upon storage, it was kept for more than thirty years. Within the time period of thirty years, though he has not used them, he looked at them occasionally and his heart was filled with joy.

One day, these gold bars were stolen. He was so upset he felt like he was dying. A neighbor asked him, “Your gold bars have been stored in that place for decades, have you ever used them?”

He replied sadly, “No.” Then that person said, “Since you have not used them, then that’s alright. I will go get a few bricks, use paper to wrap them up and then store them in the same place. Thereafter, you can frequently have a look, pretending they are gold bars stored there. Is this not the same way you can be joyful? Therefore, why are you still upset?”²²

Having read this story, perhaps we will immediately have thoughts and images of Plyushkin, a fictional character in *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol, a Russian author. However, Venerable Master Hsing Yun changed the title of the story to “Money is Only Yours if You Use It.” An individual who has money, but does not use it is worse off than one who does not have any. Money only fulfills its mission when it goes from being “owned” to being “used.”

Why does money have to be spent to be perfected? From a Buddhist perspective, it is to be “content and grateful.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun explained:

Being grateful in economic life refers to one’s attitude towards every single grain of rice. That is, by having thoughts of gratitude towards a rice grain is not easy. A silk thread and a piece of cloth are not simple matters. We have clothes to put on because of someone having weaved the cloth. We have rice to eat because of farmers who have toiled in the fields. Without a director and performers, we would not have movies to watch. Without drivers, we would not have public transportation. The main reason we are able to sustain our lives in this world because of everyone’s help to satisfy our needs. Not having society and everyone at large, we would not be able to lead a life. As such, we should base our moral economy on contentment and gratitude.²³

Ancient Chinese people were diligent and thrifty in running their households. In *Maxims of Regulating One’s Family (Zhuzi Jiaxun)*, there is a saying that one should have thoughts of gratitude for having every grain of rice to make congee. Also, to always keep in mind that the strength of cloth comes from each silk thread and each weave is difficult. This is similar to the concepts of contentment and gratitude in Buddhism. However, Venerable Master’s intention does not stop here. He uses his own personal experience to explain the secret of how money can generate more money.

ii) Money is only yours when you spend it

According to common practice, household funds should only be spent when there is a need, the rest should be saved. The *Singālovāda Sūtra* says the wealth in a layperson’s household should be put into four categories, each of which is useful, but it does not advocate spending it all. However, Venerable Master Hsing Yun as a monk has never retained wealth. He does not lament after spending money. He writes:

Why is it that we have to use money for it to be considered ours? I grew up being poor. As there was no money, I developed a habit of not buying things, and therefore not accumulating things. This habit has helped me a lot in my

lifetime. In handling Buddhist affairs, I have this habit. As I do not have money, I do not keep money. However, I am very good at spending money. Having money is a blessing, and being able to spend it is wisdom.²⁴

Not having money and yet being spend money, Venerable Master uses this extraordinary principle of finance to accomplish Fo Guang Shan's many undertakings. Venerable Master Hsing Yun recalls:

In 1951, I was the dean of academic affairs for the Taiwan Buddhist Seminar. I was provided with NT\$50 as my monthly salary by the Taiwan Buddhist Association. To the average person, this sum of money is insignificant. However, as I grew up in a Buddhist college since I was young, I have cultivated a habit of not being greedy and not accumulating a cash reserve. Fifty dollars to me is a considerable amount. Every month, I took this sum of money out to fund the school's amenities. I had practically no money left after funding the underprivileged students to purchase stationery. However, when I see that these learners have gone through difficult times, having grown up with Buddhist values and having the ability to apply them, deep down I am very grateful. Is this not also a type of valuable wealth? Actually, when you spend money, then it belongs to you!

Two years later, I was at Yilan Chanting Association. I received NT\$300 every month as an offering which made me feel very wealthy indeed. At that time, Christianity was extremely prevalent. As such, I took out NT\$150 to purchase a silver 「卍」 necklace to give them to build affinity with the Buddhist youths who attended my Buddhist class previously with the hope that when they wear it round their neck it represents an honorable status. When people saw others wearing a necklace with a cross, there are also people who proudly wear a Buddhist necklace. I used the remaining \$150

to subscribe to 100 copies of *Human Life* magazine to offer to devotees to read.

In 1954, my monthly offering increased to \$600. I took out \$150 each as financial support for Chang Yu-li (Venerable Tzu Hui), Wu Su-chen (Venerable Tzu Jung) and another person. These three individuals went to Taichung to receive preschool teacher certification. The remaining \$150 was used as financial assistance for Yen-Tzu and others to study at Hsi Chih Buddhist College. I contributed as such on a monthly basis. Subsequently, the number of young people learning Buddhism increased. The devotees who read *Human Life Magazine* followed me in spreading the Buddhist teaching. While the young ladies obtained their teaching qualifications and returned to assist me in managing Buddhist preschool education assisting at the temple and its branches. This has enhanced my understanding spending money before it is considered yours.

In 1956, I gave up an opportunity to attend Taisho University in Japan to pursue a doctorate degree. With the tuition money I had saved, I was able to support the youth in setting up a Buddhist Cultural Service Center. This initiative was a campaign to encourage Buddhist devotees to buy books and read them. In the end, Tzu Chuang, Tzu Hui, Tzu Jung, Tzu Chia, Tzu Yi, and others got to pursue education overseas. That year, the economy happened to be in its greatest financial difficulty. A lot of people mocked me, thinking I was a silly fool for not knowing how to manage my financial wealth. Ultimately, results spoke louder than words. They returned after completing their studies and used their knowledge to contribute to Buddhism. For about ten years, I provided continuing financial support to young Buddhist disciples to study and be ambitious in learning, to the extent of studying abroad. Those students are now core members of Fo Guang

Shan. This provides evidence that the phrase “only money spent is truly yours” is sensible.

Recalling the times since 1953, it has been very difficult with my financial constraints. Teaching was done outdoors in the plaza, so temporary lighting had to be purchased for \$12. Sending a person to beat gongs to promote the activity costed \$15. There were also texts, transport, and other expenses. Because I felt the importance of expounding the Dharma, I had no fear that I would not make ends meet. Often, I tightened my belt and went out hungry to broadly develop Dharma affinities. I travelled around Taiwan many times to spread the teachings. I spent money to advertise on television. I was the first to pay for television airtime to spread the Dharma. Ten years went by in what seemed like a day. However, today the Dharma flows universally in Taiwan. Was this not due to the bodhi seeds that had been planted everywhere at that time for them to bloom and bear fruit? We should not be afraid to spend money, it only becomes yours only if you spend it!²⁵

The above quotation may seem a little lengthy. However, quoted facts speak louder than a writer’s own words. Would you still have better words to express Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s financial wisdom?

iii) The Buddha sees that a grain of rice is as enormous as Mount Sumeru

The virtues of diligence and thrift are terms that any ethnic group in the world would agree on. No religion or culture has a patent on them. A true Buddhist, whether monastic or lay, will engage in diligent cultivation, build affinities, cherish their blessings, and strongly oppose any waste. Venerable Master Hsing Yun firmly believes that money is not yours until you spend it, yet he has nothing. He has a simple and modest lifestyle. Throughout his entire life, he has practiced cherishing his merits just as “the Buddha sees that a grain of rice is as enormous as Mount Sumeru.”

Modern material civilization has developed to an extent that brought enormous

damage to the environment and severely affected sustainable development and the survival of humanity. From a Buddhist perspective, Venerable Master Hsing Yun puts forward a way of financial management that is very suitable for the times. In the past, Buddhist monasteries attached great importance to environmental protection. Monastic life is simple, summed up by the saying “clothing and alms bowl weigh two and a half kati, washing your face takes two and half splashes, mealtime consists of four verses, and formal meals are the five contemplations.” Buddhism particularly emphasizes on “cherishing one’s merits.” It acknowledges that having fewer possessions implies that you will be unburdened and at ease when going on an outing. By consuming less food and drink, the digestive system will be less burdened.

In the Chinese Republican Era, Master Hong Yi used the same towel for three to five years. He had a hat that he wore for twenty to thirty years, which he was reluctant to throw away even after it had worn out. Tang dynasty Chan Master Fachang wrote this verse, “A pond of lotus leaves holds endless amounts of clothing, and the pine nuts from a few trees provide food to spare. When worldly people discover your lodgings, you move your thatched hut further into the forest.” Fachang lived unattached and content, with lotus leaves as clothing, pine flowers for food, and a thatched hut as accommodation. Living simply and flexibly to any conditions, he was joyful. This leads us to think of Confucian school’s “joy of Confucius and Yanzi.” Happiness is not necessarily acquired through bountiful material possessions. However, in this modern era, people are lost in their increasing cravings for materialism, and ultimately losing their inner wealth.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun believes that it is not a good thing for a person to consume too much. He gave an example that several decades ago, a copy of the newspapers had two and a half pages, which gradually increased to three pages, and the readers felt rather happy. However, currently, a copy of the newspapers consists of about ten pages and the readers feel frustrated because they cannot finish reading so many pages. Previously, there were only three television stations. Now there are more than a hundred television stations. After turning through all of the channels, you may give up watching any. In our daily lives, if we minimize using the things we use, our thoughts will become clearer and simpler. By spending less time watching television, there is more time to read books, to contemplate, or to get close to nature. This is not only environmental protection for all things, but it is also a type of spiritual environmental protection for the self.²⁶ Venerable Master Hsing Yun also mentioned the concept of

environmental protection in his notion of “cherishing the paper:”

Remembering the times I was studying in the monastery, both sides of the paper had to be used, even words were written and filled up the gaps between lines. On some occasions, a color pen was used to write on the written paper until there are no more ways that the paper could still be used. Even then the paper was thrown away reluctantly. I trust that I only started to become smart and wise after having accumulated such merits. Therefore, one can cherish blessings by developing habit of recycling paper. We easily waste the earth resources while carrying out activities in our daily lives. In response to the inevitable wastage, one should give proactive cooperation to recycling paper. Contributing to the recycling of resources is a way to accumulating one’s merits. According to statistics, it requires ten years for a tree to grow into maturity, however, chopping down a tree only requires a few minutes. The diapers used by a baby from the time of birth until the age of two require twenty trees to be chopped down. By recycling one ton of waste paper, twenty of those 8 meters tall and 14 centimeters wide trees can be saved. The use of recycled paper in printed matter can reduce the amount of logs cut by 400,000 every month.²⁷

Fo Guang University in Taiwan was established by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. To raise funds, he initiated the “Million-Member Fundraising Campaign.” In addition, there were quite a few devotees who generated funds to build the university through the “recycling of natural resources.” These touching initiatives present a model for applying Buddhist economics. There are people who tend to perceive Fo Guang Shan as “wealthy,” and “where there is the Dharma, there is a way.” However, those who were part of this campaign do not see it this way. This university is indeed an outcome created from “cherishing merits and building affinities.”²⁸

iv) The extraordinary nature of Buddhist Economics

This term “Buddhist economics” was coined in the 1970’s by a Thai scholar named P. A. Payutto. About the same time, British Economist E. F. Schumacher had a book titled *Small is Beautiful*, which, at the advent of a world energy crisis, promoted a Buddhist economic perspective in opposition to modern economics. Schumacher wrote, “The Earth provides us with material wealth to satisfy everyone’s needs. However, it is inadequate in satisfying everyone’s greed.” “Buddhist economics inevitably varies greatly from modern utilitarian economics. This is because Buddhist practitioners think that the essence of civilization is not depicted by growing demands, but by purifying personalities.”

Modern economic scholars have the tendency to use yearly spending to quantify standards of living. Historically, it has been assumed that those who spend more are better off than those who spend less. Buddhist economic scholars claim that this perspective is not reasonable. Since spending is only one means of providing for human welfare, the aim should be at “getting the greatest benefit out of the least spending.”

In brief, the goal of Buddhist economics is not about applying Buddhist values to blindly develop the economy. Instead, it is to apply the fundamental principles of Buddhist wisdom to give a different perspective for the study of economics that was grounded in Western values. The development of modern economics as a scientific study was completed in the industrial era. Although many economic schools may have played a certain role in different periods, in the globalized world today, this western-style economics is becoming narrower and more isolated. Its limitations are very obvious. The fundamental difference between Buddhist economics and orthodox economics is that, the latter views the economy from an economic perspective, while the former requires that the economy be viewed from the mutual coexistence of society, individuals, and the environment.

As discussed above, when Buddhism was developing more than 2,000 years ago, it already had many ideas on economics. However, there have been very few Buddhist scholars who openly and directly addressed the economic topics, which has led to much confusion and many misunderstandings. The emergence of “Weber’s difficult question” is not unfounded. Payutto, Schumacher, and other scholars of Buddhist economics are

like fresh breeze which has caused a stir in the depressing modern economics. However, the outcome of such research is like the sound of footsteps in a deserted valley, rare and precious whereby few know about it. Moreover, the discussion did not venture beyond theory. Venerable Master Hsing Yun with his decades of experience expounding the Buddha's teachings, and using his status as an eminent monk, has for the first time explained the concept of Buddhist economics to the public. This concept of Buddhist economics integrates worldly law with the Dharma. It not only points directly to the mind and provides insight, but is also useful in administering affairs. It provides a rare example of the noumenal and phenomenal interpenetrating.

Recently, there was a shocking online media report “on a bloody ‘original sin’ of the wealthy Chinese group,” and it was shocking. According to the article, in 2010, the number of millionaires (US\$) in China reached 240,000 people, and the total amount of wealth they had accumulated was US \$969 billion, equivalent to the sum of the social wealth created by the remaining 1.3 billion Chinese.

There is a section “an extensive inquiry on the Chinese perspective of wealth” relative to “how do you perceive financial wealth”? Surprisingly, a high rate of 65% are in the view that “financial wealth links with original offence. Only those with ruined moral values have chances to possess the greatest wealth.”

Since the reformation, the wealth possession of the many billionaires have some affiliations with the following: 1) corruption; 2) threats and robbery made by the criminal underworld; 3) gambling and drugs; and 4) skimp on the job and stint on materials. There are greatly varied reckless crimes and vicious means for making high profits, such as forcing laborers to work in mines, imprisoning the disabled to work as forced labor, embezzling salaries of the farmers, committing tax evasions and tax avoidance, manufacturing counterfeit and low quality products, plundering farmers' land, and even killing people for their property. The greediness, shamelessness and bloodiness of capitalism are so much reflected in their behavior.²⁹

This report, regardless of its completeness or its trueness, an impartial research prevail. However, it cannot be said that this report has no any relation with the “psychological hatred towards the rich” developed among the modern Chinese community. According to Honoré de Balzac, a famous French novelist and playwright in

the 19th century, there was a saying “behind every bundle of great financial wealth, there are hidden evil offences.” Perhaps, “original offence in financial wealth” is a worldwide issue that it is not necessary to speak in defense of the Chinese tycoons in modern era. Regardless, the earning of “genuine money” gives a higher score to the “index to happiness” compared to “windfall money,” hence it should be treated as the “general principle” in ethics of financial wealth. The main concern is that we have to widely promote the concept of “genuine wealth,” so that people can benefit from it. To some extent, Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s ideal of “Buddhist Economics” undoubtedly sheds light on modern economics.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun applies a highly integrative notion of “governing the worldly matter and prospering lives of people” upon economic issues. In which, worldly financial wealth are indicated by “sacred funds” and “authentic funds,” ethics on commerce are guided by “principle of law of cause and effect,” and wealth management through “cherishing one’s merits” and “protecting the environment.” These perspectives on the thoughts of Buddhist economics not only encompass Franklin’s highlight on the “dicta of earning money,” it has also subverted Weber’s difficult problem. Today, perhaps people do not acknowledge “Buddhist economics.” However, after reading about Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s and his related research papers, one would never undermine Buddhist perspective on wealth creation and management.

Notes

1 *Lotus Sūtra* T. 33, 1: 682.

2 T. 12: 433.

3 *Commentaries on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, fascicle 7, in *Zokuzōkyō*, vol. 19, 563.

4 何真臨, 《我與首富梁穩根: 揭祕三一》(Beijing: Posts and Telecom Press, 2013). -Ed.

5 Oral recounts of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, recorded by Venerable Miao Kuang and others at the Fo Guang Shan Founder’s Office: *Hear Me Out: Messages from a Humble Monk*, Fu Bao Cultural Co. Ltd., Taipei, June, 2015.

6 <http://www.merit-times.com/NewsPage.aspx?unid=395126>.

7 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, “A Buddhist View of ‘Economic Problems’” in *Humanistic Buddhism Series: Contemporary Questions Symposium*, vol. 1 (Taipei: Gandha Samudra Culture Company, 2008), 205-207.

8 五家 -Ed.

9 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, “To Resolve and Develop,” *Universal Gate Buddhist Journal*, vol. 10 (Kaohsiung: Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist Culture & Education, 2002), 11-12.

10 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Lessons on Wealth* (Preface) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 5.

11 *Id.*, First Series.

12 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, “A Buddhist View of ‘Economic Problems’” in *Humanistic Buddhism Series: Contemporary Questions Symposium*, vol. 1 (Taipei: Gandha Samudra Culture Company, 2008), 214.

13 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Lessons on Wealth* (first series) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 165.

14 *Id.*, 86.

15 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Lessons on Wealth* (first series) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 91.

16 *Id.*

- 17 *Id.*, 92.
- 18 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Lessons on Wealth* (first series) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 98.
- 19 *Id.*, 99.
- 20 *Id.*, 160.
- 21 The *Sūtra on Cause and Effect* belongs to the Buddhist apocrypha compiled by the Chinese. The editors presented no evidence. The Qing dynasty *Qianlong Tripitaka*, the Japanese *Taishō*, and other authoritative parts of the Buddhist canon have not included this sūtra, but the text is in line with the spirit of Buddhism.
- 22 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Venerable Master Hsing Yun Discusses Conducting Oneself in Society* (Shanghai: People's Publishing House, 2008), 105.
- 23 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Lessons on Wealth* (first series) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 136.
- 24 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Lessons on Wealth* (first series) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 148.
- 25 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, *Blessings: Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Lessons on Wealth* (first series) (Beijing: Xianzhuang Book Company, 2012), 148-150.
- 26 Venerable Master Hsing Yun, "A Buddhist View of 'Environmental Protection Problems'" in *Humanistic Buddhism Contemporary Questions Symposium: Society Issues Investigation* (vol. 1) (Taipei: Gandha Samudra Culture Company, 2008), 33.
- 27 *Id.*, 33-34.
- 28 *Id.*, 36.
- 29 〈中國暴富群體的血腥「原罪」〉, <http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-free-4621178-1.shtml>.