

On Ethics of Coexistence between Man and Nature

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Abstract: *Man belongs to nature, and man cannot exist alone without nature. Thus, man and nature coexist. However, human development depends on the development of natural resources. Since modern times, with the rapid development of industry and science and technology, the blind utilization of natural resources has damaged the natural environment to a certain extent, resulting in the threat to human normal survival. Especially in recent decades, environmental problems have become more and more serious. Disasters, diseases and other problems have deepened human's sense of crisis. Therefore, the coexistence of man and nature, environmental problems and environmental governance are urgent problems to be solved to realize the coexistence of man and nature. However, to solve the problems of natural environment and realize the coexistence of man and nature, a very important point is to establish a correct ethical consciousness and clarify the ethical responsibility. Only in this way can we effectively protect the natural environment and promote the continuous development of ecological civilization.*

Keywords: *Man; Nature; Coexistence; Environmental Protection; Living Community*

The coexistence of man and nature is a natural phenomenon and an important basis and premise for the sustainable survival and development of mankind. However, the blind and excessive exploitation and utilization of nature by human beings has destroyed the natural environment and natural ecology to a certain extent, which will seriously affect the coexistence of man and nature. It is necessary to take effective measures to promote the development of natural civilization and avoid the continuous deterioration of ecological civilization.

1. The ethical dimension of the meaning of coexistence between man and nature

Man is a part of nature and cannot exist alone without nature. On the evening of April 22, 2021, General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered an important speech titled "Jointly Build a Community of Life for Man and Nature" at the Leaders Summit on Climate, putting forward the concept of "a community of life for man and nature". The relationship between man and nature is an unavoidable topic in the course of human development. Nature breeds human beings, and human beings transform nature, so the coexistence of human and nature is of great significance to human beings and nature.

First, the coexistence between man and nature is more conducive to sustainable development of mankind. Human development cannot be separated from nature, and human development cannot be separated from the resources provided by nature. However, the natural resources are limited, not inexhaustible, so if human beings blindly demand from nature without restraint, when natural resources are depleted, it is bound to cause the stagnation of human development. Under the guidance of the coexistence of man and nature, natural resources can be recycled, so that human beings can achieve sustainable development.

Second, the coexistence of man and nature supports the life of nature. Nature without human beings is incomplete nature. Nature gave birth to all living things including human beings. In the natural life system, the natural life system is incomplete without human beings. At the same time, the development of human beings has transformed nature to a certain extent. Human beings can protect and transform nature through their own practices and become protectors of nature with reverence for nature, making nature more beautiful and stable.

Third, man and nature are a community of life. Nature gave birth to human beings, and human beings can actively transform nature. There is a high degree of connection between man and nature. Man affects nature and nature also affects human beings. If mankind uncontrollably develops and takes from the nature, when the nature cannot support this kind of taking and collapses, the crystallization of

human wisdom and brilliant civilization will cease to exist, and mankind will perish along with it. Just as Engels said, human beings should not be too intoxicated with the victory over nature, for every such victory, nature has taken revenge. Man and nature are interdependent. Nature provides us with a home to live on. We should also respect and care for nature.

Under the theme of peace and development in the new era, the pursuit and realization of coexistence between man and nature is the premise of peace and development, the value orientation of ecological priority protection and the goal of permanent interests of all mankind are the trend of historical development.

2. The ethical problem of the coexistence of man and nature

The development of industrial civilization has accumulated a large amount of material wealth for human beings, but it has destroyed the natural environment and worsened the relationship between human beings and nature. When human beings transform and overdo nature, the self-purification ability of nature can no longer be made up, nature will surely punish human beings. The change of the natural environment directly affects the survival and development of human society, so it needs to pay high attention to it. There are still a series of problems in the coexistence of man and environment.

First, influenced by the idea of “man can conquer nature”, men have no respect for nature. The continuous development of human society inevitably affects the environment. Human life produces a large amount of garbage, some of which is put into the use of reproduction, and some of which is disposed as landfill or incineration, which more or less will have a bad impact on the environment. Under the influence of the idea of “man can conquer nature”, the natural environment has become an object that human beings can dominate and conquer, and they can take whatever they want from the nature. This will lead to such a result that human beings unrestrainedly plunder and claim from the nature, and over-exploit the nature by using the emerging technologies developed based on the nature, which will eventually exceed the tolerance threshold of the nature and be unable to be digested by the self-purification ability of nature. This will definitely lead to the destruction of the nature and the ecological civilization.

Second, ignore the existence value of nature. Some people believe that nature provides human resources for free and do not cherish them. Natural resources are a gift from nature, but they are not inexhaustible. Under the influence of this thought, people cannot see the existence value of nature itself, that is, nature has no other value except providing resources to human beings. Under the influence of this thought, man and nature are not equal, but move towards a kind of anthropocentrism. However, the gift of nature is not free, human beings for the excessive exploitation and demand of nature will be returned to human beings bit by bit. Nature itself has its own value, the nature is not only a kind of life body, so it is not only to provide human resources this kind of value.

Third, the lack of awareness of environmental protection. Humans have direct access to nature, so many people have no sense of identity. Human beings are eager for a better living environment, hope to indulge in beautiful natural scenery. However, some people have not done their duty to protect nature when the gift of nature is shared by all mankind. Aristotle once said: “The public affairs that belong to the largest number of people are often the things that are taken least care of. People care about their own possessions and ignore the public affairs. Of all that is public, he is at best mindful of that which is of some personal interest to him.”^[1] According to the conventional wisdom, things shared with others are always not valued, and the same is true of the environment. People all yearn for neat and beautiful natural scenery, but do not cherish the scenery at the same time, litter in public places at will groups, most of them are driven by such psychology.

Affected by the above problems, the realization of coexistence between man and nature has been hindered. In the era of industry, science and technology and economic development, it is hard to avoid the mistake of light environmental protection. In order to realize the sustainable development of human beings, we should not only focus on the immediate small profits. In order to avoid the frequent occurrence of disasters and diseases and enjoy a better life, the relationship between man and nature needs to reach a new balance. The coexistence of man and nature also requires us to make changes.

3. Ethical appeal to the coexistence between man and nature

From the above analysis, the fundamental problem of coexistence between man and nature is that

man cannot treat nature well. Therefore, to solve the problem of coexistence between man and nature, we must start from man himself, on the basis of respecting nature, focus on the long-term development of human beings, and put forward requirements for human behavior.

First, to enhance human scientific understanding of nature. Human's exploitation of nature, in the final analysis, comes from insufficient understanding of nature. As Heirveus says, "Anyone who studies the history of human catastrophes can be convinced that most of the world's misfortunes have come from ignorance." Similarly, anthropocentrism is the result of such ignorance. Thus, those who hold such believe cannot respect nature, and thus causing damage to nature. Nature give birth to man, and man transform nature. There is no denying that human activities have a positive impact on nature, but blindly destroying the natural law will inevitably lead to negative effects. Man cannot do anything they want to nature nor do nothing to nature. Only when they take the initiative to transform nature without exploiting it can they reach coexistence with nature.

Second, to improve human awareness of the consequences of their actions. In many actions of human life, there are some actions that have unknown consequences. People lack a precise grasp of the consequences of their actions. Human beings generally have a profit-seeking mentality and act under the drive of profit-seeking mentality, but under the drive of such a mentality, human beings must analyze the consequences of their actions. The result of profit-seeking behavior is not necessarily gain, if only human gain and irreversible harm to nature, it belongs to put the cart before the horse, there will be bad results. Sustainable development is needed, even if the current benefits are substantial. Therefore, human behavior needs to carefully analyze the results of all parties, and achieve the double standard in favor of human and nature to realize the coexistence of human and nature.

Third, raise awareness of human responsibility to protect nature. There is no human being completely separated from nature, and nature completely separated from man is incomplete. Nature provides a living environment for human beings, and human beings have the responsibility to maintain their homes. Today's environmental problems are inseparable from human actions to nature, so human's responsibility to protect nature cannot be shirked. As a natural organism, as a natural community of life, we share weal and woe with nature, so we have the responsibility to protect the natural environment. Up to now, the development of human society has caused a lot of damage to nature. The over-exploitation of natural resources, the deforestation of trees and human wars have all caused damage to the natural environment. These destruction of nature will eventually feedback to human beings, and only when human beings assume the responsibility of protecting nature can this phenomenon be improved and the coexistence of human and nature be realized.

Coexistence between man and nature is an eternal topic to discuss the relationship between man and nature. Man and nature are inseparable and mutually supportive. They exist as a community of life. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a harmonious coexistence between man and nature to realize the sustainable development of mankind.

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