

Green Growth: A Realistic Choice for Sustainable Development in the Asian Region

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Abstract: The outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008 and the leakage of nuclear power plants in Japan caused by the local tsunami in 2011 made it necessary for countries around the world to simultaneously cope with the dual pressures of global climate change and economic crisis, and the Asian region is no exception. How to quickly overcome difficulties and continue to maintain the healthy development momentum of the Asian economy? Many countries have provided sustainable agricultural development paths that combine economic growth with environmental protection, taking into account their own characteristics. With the intensification of globalization and the maturity of civil society, clarifying the international responsibilities of developed and developing countries, forming a multi-level environmental governance mechanism in the Asian region, has become a new driving force for achieving sustainable development.

Key words: Sustainable development; environment Economics; Asia

In the 21st century, the issue of ecological crisis is not only a matter of economic development speed, but also a social and political issue. Marx once said that the production and reproduction of material resources, as well as the production and reproduction of man himself, should be based on the existence and development of nature. Because humans themselves are products of long-term development in nature, without nature, there would be no human beings themselves. Human beings are directly natural beings, referring to those who stand on a stable earth and exhale and inhale all natural forces. Without nature and humans, workers cannot create anything. It is the material used by workers to fulfill their labor, engage in labor activities, and produce and use it to produce their own products. Therefore, Due to the closely related mutual feedback relationship between "people, society, and nature", development is a win-win process between social development and ecological environment development. Along with economic and social development, it is necessary to protect nature and coordinate the relationship between good people and society based on it.

However, the development of capitalism not only creates abundant material productivity, but also creates a series of "difficulties" at the cost of ecological environment destruction, making human survival face the severe challenge of ecological environment crisis caused by climate change. The resurgence of the global financial crisis in 2008 and the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant explosion in Japan further exacerbated this challenge, making it necessary for countries around the world to simultaneously cope with the dual pressures of global climate change and economic crisis. In order to cope with this climate change and achieve sustainable economic development in the future, What is the practical significance in Asia? It is necessary to first examine this from the perspective of the diversity of development in the Asian region.

1 Background analysis

The Earth's environment is closely related and inseparable from the development of the world economy. The emergence of environmental problems in the Asian region is due to both political

system and economic development stages, as well as the influence of social forms, cultural diversity, and other aspects. Specifically, the following backgrounds play an extremely crucial role.

Firstly, the development levels of Asian countries are diverse. China, with the fastest economic development and significant environmental impact, is located in the Asian region. As the world's second largest economy, China has made significant achievements in areas related to energy conservation and emission reduction, development of new energy, afforestation, and addressing climate change. At the same time, countries such as Bangladesh and Laos, which have relatively weak social and economic capabilities in environmental governance and response to financial crises, also come from Asia. Providing assistance and cultivating their self-regulation capabilities has become a bottleneck in achieving sustainable development in the Asian region.

Secondly, with the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, environmental problems have not erupted in stages as initially anticipated, but have presented complex forms of simultaneous occurrence. The process of urbanization is constantly accelerating both in terms of space and speed, making sustainable urban construction even more difficult. We need to address both the environmental pollution and damage to nature caused by industrialization and urbanization, as well as the new global environmental issues arising from cutting-edge technology industries. It is impossible to develop the economy at the cost of sacrificing the environment, or to protect the environment at the cost of sacrificing the speed of economic development.

Once again, sound regional cooperation in the era of globalization is no longer just about economic cooperation, and the construction of a framework for regional environmental cooperation is receiving increasing attention. The European Union has taken a step forward in this regard, and in the future, the Asian region will become a key focus area for environmental protection cooperation. Although the economic growth rate of the Asian region has already ranked first in the world, its greenhouse gas emissions also exceed one-third of the world's total. If analyzed using the general principles of economic growth, with the further development of the Asian region's economy known as the "world workshop" and "world

market", it is expected that the total greenhouse gas emissions in the Asian region will continue to increase in the future.

At present, with the maturity of regional economic cooperation frameworks such as ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea (10+3), and APEC, environmental cooperation in the Asian region has entered a period of good development opportunities. In terms of project research and development, technology transfer, and experience sharing in environmental protection, cooperation and exchange among Asian countries are showing an increasingly expanding trend. However, there are still countries in Asia with slow economic growth, stagnation, and even poverty and backwardness. The total population of Bangladesh is about 130 million, of which about 30 million people live in coastal areas that may be submerged at any time after sea level rise. Moreover, 36% of Bangladesh's people have an average daily income of less than \$1. If the sea level rises by 1 meter due to climate change, Bangladesh will inevitably face a national disaster that cannot be cope with. For countries with low levels of economic development such as Bangladesh, in order to prevent or delay the occurrence of irreversible natural disasters, it is necessary for countries around the world to provide assistance and cooperate in various aspects such as diplomacy and funding to alleviate the disasters caused by climate change in impoverished areas. Therefore, in addition to the usual meaning of "sustainable development", "sustainable development" has also been given a new extension in the era of globalization, which is to establish a low-carbon development model while maintaining rapid economic growth, enabling poor countries to quickly have the ability to rescue themselves from crises.

As is well known, sustainable development includes both the concept of energy conservation and the concept of economic and social progress. How to form a sustainable development model for the Asian region has important theoretical and practical significance. D. O. Conner, an environmental expert at the United Nations Development Programme, once pointed out that "early developed countries experienced centuries of industrialization" in East Asian countries, but it only took a few decades. Compared with developed countries, the industrialization process in developing countries has significantly shortened, and this shortened industrialization is referred to as "compressed industrialization" by relevant experts. The compressed industrialization path of Asian countries, along with their corresponding production, consumption patterns, and international division of labor system, has had a certain impact on the local environment. Only by optimizing economic growth through environmental protection and achieving coordinated development between environment and economy, can sustainable development in the Asian region be achieved.

2 Path selection

How can we build a sustainable Asia? Firstly, we should recognize the contribution of environmental investment to economic growth, employment increase, and poverty reduction, and reflect this awareness in economic policies during economic crisis reconstruction; Secondly, further clarify the impact of climate change on economic development and specific action plans to address this change in the future, including promoting national economic greening through green investment and creating new green job opportunities, in order to revive and upgrade the Asian economy, ultimately making economic greening no longer a burden

on growth, but an engine of growth, that is, achieving "green growth".

In order to achieve the specific goals of the above two aspects, some countries in the Asian region have established specialized investigation and research institutions to fully and soberly analyze the current situation of climate change, and form mature solutions to environmental problems, sharing environmental protection information and technological achievements with other countries. These countries have taken active actions to combine their inherent environmental protection needs with future industrial development, providing effective paths for other Asian countries to learn from and making outstanding contributions to achieving sustainable development goals in the region.

2.1 South Korea's Green New Deal

"Green New Deal" is a new concept proposed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki moon at the United Nations Climate Change conference on December 11, 2008. It is a general term for environment-friendly policies, mainly involving environmental protection, pollution prevention, energy conservation and emission reduction, climate change and other major issues related to sustainable development of human and nature. Based on large-scale investment in green energy, the Green New Deal combines environmental and energy issues with the reconstruction of the world economy, aiming to overcome the financial crisis, energy crisis and environmental crisis, and repair the natural ecosystem supporting the global economy. After President Obama introduced it into the governing philosophy, the Green New Deal has been widely used throughout the world. The idea of the Green New Deal is consistent with the concept of sustainable development. It is not only popular in Europe and the United States, but also in Asia. Because Asia is an important region that determines global climate change, it is particularly necessary to build an effective framework to deal with climate change. South Korea has borrowed this approach and combined environmental governance with economic development, with a focus on preventing dual crises. The economic development model has shifted from quantitative growth to qualitative growth, commonly known as "low-carbon and green growth". South Korea has promulgated the "Green Growth Basic Law", which regards green growth as the engine of new growth, and has formulated green technology, green energy Specific policies to contribute to green communication and improve quality of life, with green growth as one of the national strategic five-year plans. In its Green New Deal, South Korea proposed that it would invest about 36 billion dollars in a series of eco-friendly projects in the next four years, including green transportation networks, green families and cleaning four major rivers in South Korea, and create 960000 green jobs. However, there are still some unresolved contradictions in South Korea's Green New Deal. For example, in terms of philosophy, Korean law stipulates that the Green Growth Basic Law, consisting of 7 chapters and 65 articles, has higher priority than laws such as the Sustainable Development Basic Law and the Energy Basic Law. The ultimate goal of human development is not economic growth, but poverty eradication, etc. Green growth can only be a means of economic growth. It is difficult to see that green growth is more helpful than sustainable development and other concepts for achieving human development and progress. If it is emphasized blindly, it may once again highlight the priority of growth. Therefore, this concept has been partially questioned

Secondly, the many issues arising from the short-term and long-term effects of green growth policies are also worth further consideration. There is a huge difference in the nature of economic crises and environmental crises. Economic crises usually have a certain periodicity, manifested as an increase in poverty and social instability factors. The appropriate use of emergency measures such as resuming employment and increasing social security can immediately see the effectiveness of policy implementation; Overcoming environmental crises and achieving sustainable development of nature and society requires measures such as controlling the greenhouse effect, ensuring the diversity of living organisms and ecosystems, and providing directional guidance on environmental, resource, and energy conservation awareness, as well as the efforts of several generations, in order to see the actual results. The projection time of the two effects is quite different. How to integrate the two completely different contradictions, Making the green growth policy concrete has become the difficulty in implementing the Green New Deal.

2.2 China's Sustainable Development Strategy

At present, China is in a critical period of environmental and development strategic transformation, and under the influence of multiple global crises, China is unable to stand alone. How to truly achieve environmental optimization and economic growth, promote sound and rapid economic development, and promote economic transformation and sustainable development is the fundamental guarantee for implementing the scientific development concept, achieving historical changes in environmental protection, and building a resource-saving and environmentally friendly society, among other major national strategic goals.

Correctly grasp the new issues and contradictions faced by the development of the world today and contemporary China; Not only does it earnestly summarize the practical experience of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, but it also attaches great importance to the practical experience of developing countries around the world; And by analyzing the new characteristics of the current era and the new trend of global green development, the overall strategy of "maintaining growth, expanding domestic demand, and adjusting structure" to cope with the financial crisis has been proposed.

At the practical level, under the guidance of the Scientific Outlook on Development, China has implemented energy-saving and emission reduction actions to address the issues of high resource and energy consumption and increased pollution emissions in economic activities. It has abandoned the "production pollution control repeated pollution" model, promoted resource integration and enterprise restructuring, utilized the regulatory role of market mechanisms to allocate resources to green industries, and built a modern green economy industrial system, Keep the concept of green development throughout the entire process of ensuring growth; In response to the problems of low resource utilization efficiency and high pollution emission intensity caused by simple resource utilization methods in economic activities, China advocates the development of circular economy activities, the establishment of ecological industrial parks and ecological agricultural parks, garbage recycling projects with resource recycling as the main body, and ecological economic projects with harmless agricultural products and green, organic food development and other agricultural and sideline products processing, utilization,

storage and preservation as the main body, To achieve a virtuous cycle between the ecological and economic systems and a high degree of unity among the three major benefits of economy, ecology, and society; At the same time, China has also established an environmental and economic policy system that includes environmental taxes, green credit, green insurance, green securities, emission trading, ecological compensation, green trade policies, etc. China's practices and experiences in environmental optimization and economic growth have made important contributions to the path selection of coordinated development of the international society, economy, and environment.

3 Unfinished business

South Korea and China have taken the lead in developing a green economy that is suitable for their own characteristics in terms of sustainable development, forming a balanced economic model characterized by maintaining the human living environment, reasonably protecting resources and energy, and benefiting human health. This provides a certain reference for other countries in choosing sustainable development paths. However, it is undeniable that environmental and economic development issues cannot be completely resolved solely by the efforts of individual countries and their own governments. They also require support from international and private sources. With the gradual intensification of globalization, this characteristic is becoming increasingly evident.

3.1 Clarify international responsibility

There is no doubt that economic growth will increase the environmental burden. However, the proposition that a country's economic growth is necessarily equivalent to an increase in environmental load may not necessarily hold true. What impact has the rapid economic growth in the Asian region had on the international environment? What is the relationship between the economic development of Asian countries and the rest of the world? Without understanding these issues, it is impossible to solve the sustainable development problem in Asia. Therefore, further analysis is needed on the relationship between environmental load and economic growth in the Asian region. According to the Kyoto Protocol, the carbon dioxide emissions of each country refer to the total amount of carbon dioxide emitted by that country. However, with the deepening development of economic globalization, the production activities of emitting carbon dioxide are not limited to the domestic market, and the final consumption places of raw materials and products required for production activities are not limited to the domestic market. Therefore, the completion of a production activity includes both the environmental load caused by the country to other countries and the additional environmental load imposed by other countries on the country. This concept has changed the understanding that the impact of a country's production activities on the environment must be borne by the country itself, and the raw material suppliers and product consumers of the production activities should also bear the burden proportionally.

After conducting research and argumentation, Japanese scholars such as Shigeru Shimada further concluded that in the Asia Pacific region, the top three countries in terms of energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are the United States, China, and Japan. In 1985, Japan and the United States were both major importers and exporters of products. While both countries were responsible for the environmental burden caused by carbon

dioxide emissions, they also passed on this responsibility to other countries. In 2000, the total amount of product imports from Japan and the United States began to exceed the total amount of product exports. However, the country gradually shifted from being a major importer of products to a major exporter of products. Due to the increase in production activities, the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by China also showed an increasing trend year by year. From this change, it can be seen that Japan and the United States have gradually shifted the responsibility of increasing environmental burden to developing countries over the past 15 years. But this is only a superficial conclusion. As analyzed above, the environmental burden caused by production activities should not only be borne by the producing countries, but also by the raw material supplying and consuming countries. The changes in the production structure of developed countries have made China and other Asian developing countries the main force of production activities, greatly increasing carbon dioxide emissions. However, developed countries cannot shirk their responsibility for environmental governance.

Although the rapid economic development in the Asian region has led to a surge in carbon dioxide emissions, the benefits of economic growth have been offset by the continuous deterioration of prices and terms of trade due to factors such as the low-level import and export structure and the overall deterioration of trade conditions, resulting in a decrease in actual benefits. In recent years, developed countries such as Japan and the United States have held the discourse power in international trade, occupied the commanding heights of technological innovation, and formed a relatively complete self-development model, thus obtaining high profits in international trade cooperation; On the contrary, except for Japan, most Asian countries, although deepening their cooperation with trading partners and to some extent promoting their own economic development and industrial structure upgrading, have not changed the fact that actual returns have decreased. In the 2008 financial crisis, the rapid economic development of Asian countries further highlighted the issue of fragile economic structures. That is to say, the current economic development of most Asian countries is still characterized by high resource consumption, low added value, and high dependence on foreign trade. When global climate change issues and financial crises erupt simultaneously, Asian countries are inevitably facing greater impacts.

In order to overcome the coexistence of increased environmental load and reduced economic benefits in the Asian region, while accelerating the adjustment of each country's own industrial structure, further clarifying the international responsibilities of developed and developing countries at the international level, changing unreasonable international economic relations, and establishing a climate change responsive international system have become necessary conditions for achieving sustainable development and an important issue facing the Asian region.

3.2 Establish a comprehensive risk assessment mechanism

After the outbreak of the Fukushima nuclear power plant crisis in March 2011, people began to pay attention to the extent to which nuclear safety regulators should consider all foreseeable unexpected events. As is well known, with the continuous reduction of reserves of oil and natural gas resources, nuclear energy, as a clean energy source, has received widespread attention from countries around the world in order to meet the demand for electricity. However, due to the lack of corresponding risk assessment mechanisms, in

Japan, a country famous for its earthquake prevention measures, a series of uncontrollable risk accidents have still occurred due to earthquakes exceeding the seismic level of nuclear power plants and a huge tsunami. Moreover, with the disposal of radioactive waste and the increase in regional disputes where power plants are located, other issues brought about by expanding nuclear power generation are gradually becoming prominent in the Asian region. How to promote energy conservation and environmental protection while ensuring the diversification of energy structure? How to handle safety hazards when conducting technological innovation? Whether it is China (including Taiwan), Japan, and South Korea, which already have nuclear power plants, or countries aspiring to develop nuclear energy such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, etc., all must carefully consider. Even without considering the quality of new energy planning, whether the country has sufficient capacity to respond to sudden safety accidents has become one of the factors that must be considered when approving new nuclear projects.

In addition to establishing a risk assessment mechanism for new energy development, it is also necessary to accelerate the development of asset assessment and prevent the impact of financial risks on the country's economic development. The operation of finance is based on the real economy. In the operation of the modern financial system, the generation and existence of certain virtualization and foam of asset prices are sometimes reasonable, and will not affect the healthy operation of the financial system. However, if asset prices are excessively inflated, the risks accumulated in the financial system will be deepened, which will lead to risks and crises. Therefore, financial institutions should use reasonable profits and accumulation of reserves to prepare for the business cycle at any time for a long time, so that our financial system will have sufficient strength and ability to respond adequately to the downturn and fluctuations at any time when adverse changes occur in the market. Developing a scientific and reasonable development strategy and overall plan that is based on the real economy and adapted to regulatory levels will become the focus of future financial development in the Asian region.

3.3 Forming a multi-level cooperative environmental governance model

One of the main reasons hindering sustainable development in the Asian region is the lagging economic development model and the simultaneous emergence of global issues in Asia. Climate change is also one of the main global issues currently facing the region. However, in the absence of a global institution responsible for global governance, how can concerted action on environmental protection be implemented in Asia? What are the impacts of environmental governance practices in the Asian region on global sustainable development? These all require further analysis of the diversity of Asian development and the interactions between various entities.

Due to the large-scale irreversible damage caused by environmental pollution, while promoting economic development, people also need to handle the relationship between environmental protection and economic growth, maintain competitiveness, and ensure the quality of economic development. They have to further focus on reducing pollution, saving energy, and environmental regeneration, and strictly control and manage from various aspects such as legislation, judiciary, and administration. Practice has

proven that this move has indeed achieved certain results. However, environmental problems inevitably have the characteristics of non exclusiveness and externality. It is far from enough to rely only on governance at the government level, and other social forces are also needed. With the further deepening of globalization in the world, the scale of interdependence in the world is increasingly reaching its maximum. The increasingly serious environmental problems and the growing civil society have become the driving force for the development of environmental NGOs in Asia. Environmental NGOs represent the environmental needs and public interests of people in Asian countries and regions, transcending the narrow scope of class interests and interest groups, but with the main purpose of protecting the domestic, regional, and international environment. They carry the mission of protecting the environment and achieving harmonious coexistence between nature and humanity. As an independent force in the field of environment and development, The establishment and development of environmental NGOs in Asia in the era of globalization is an effective organizational form and approach to protect the environment in the Asian region. They have played an irreplaceable role in promoting environmental institutionalization and rule of law, opposing or supervising environmental damage by commercial entities such as enterprises, and advocating cooperation with other international or regional organizations. In addition to leveraging the power of the grassroots, mobilizing the enthusiasm of various regions, forming

a comprehensive environmental protection mechanism with mutual cooperation and coordination among various departments, and improving environmental management capabilities, each Asian country also needs to make further efforts.

The last and most important point is to strengthen international exchanges and cooperation in the Asian region. Only through the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in environmental governance among Asian countries, and the joint management of environmental resources, can we establish a cooperative relationship for sustainable development. Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen external exchanges for the development of green economy, continuously explore sustainable development paths that are suitable for China's national conditions, and propose specific strategic frameworks, policy plans, and action plans; Secondly, establish a transfer mechanism for advanced green technologies with developed countries, especially various green production technologies and waste resource utilization technologies, to provide solid technological support for green growth; The third is to strengthen cooperation with developing countries and exchange and share China's practical experience in environmental governance and sustainable development with relevant developing countries. In the process of communication and cooperation with other countries, truly practice the Marxist concept of people-oriented, comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable social development.

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