Several Thoughts on the Green Development of the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma

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Abstract: The Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma is an economic spatial structure with Mount Qomolangma in the center of a circle with echelon extensions. There exist various effects and laws like the peaks of pyramid effect, the cultural source effect, the ecological butterfly effect, the law of value gradient distribution, and the inverse law of diminishing marginal utility. The Himalayas are the "Shenque" (which is believed to be the most secret and crucial acupoint for humans) of the Earth, and the "brain" of human beings. We must make the protection of the Himalayas a common task for all humans and establish the theory that the area around Mount Qomolangma should be regarded as the model and base of green development. The ten countries around Mount Qomolangma should build a partnership for green development and take a green low-carbon path for sustainable development.

Keywords: the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma; Green Development; partnership

The Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma has different names; Trans Himalaya Economic Circle, Trans Himalaya Economic Cooperation Zone, and what we call it, the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma. In *Opinions on Further Support Policies and Major Projects of Economic and Social Development in Tibet*, documents issued by the General Office of State Council, it is called the Trans Himalaya Economic Cooperation Zone. It requires the support and integration of the construction of "the Belt and Road" as the means to create

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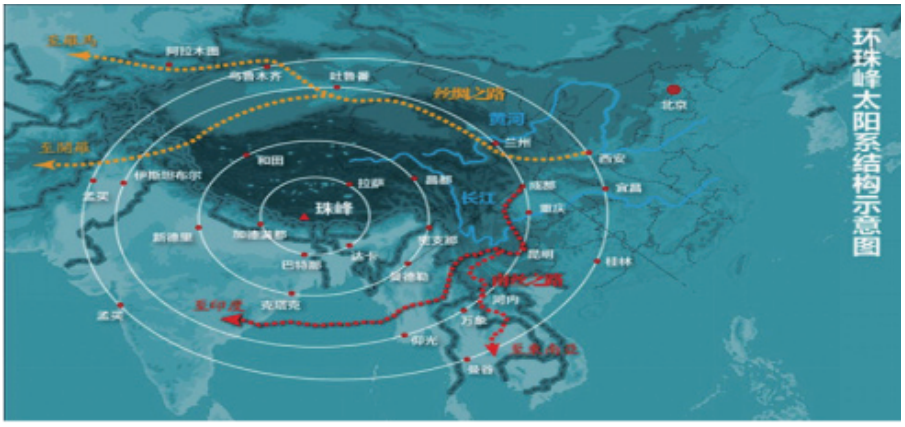

Figure 1. The Sketch Map of Structure of the "Solar System" in the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma (with Mount Qomolangma as the center)

a Bangladesh-Chinese-Indian-Burmese Corridor that will encourage population growth and a more open economy.

We believe that the height of Mount Qomolangma symbolizes the level of exchange and cooperation, and it indicates a vision and a goal. We adopted the name Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma due to its implication of bravely scaling the world' s heights and striving to be the first internationally.

Meanwhile, there are two definitions for the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma in a broad and narrow sense respectively. The Economic Circle in a broad sense refers to the expansion from the Himalaya Economic Zone to South Asian and Southeast Asian regions with Bangladesh, China, Burma, and India as the core. The Economic Circle in a narrow sense refers to the development of border trade, international tourism, Tibetan medicine as well as characteristic agriculture and animal husbandry and related cultural industries focused on countries like Nepal, India, Bhutan, Bangladesh and others supported by surrounding area like Lhasa and Shigatse, with the ports of Zhangmu, Geelong and Champlain acting as windows.

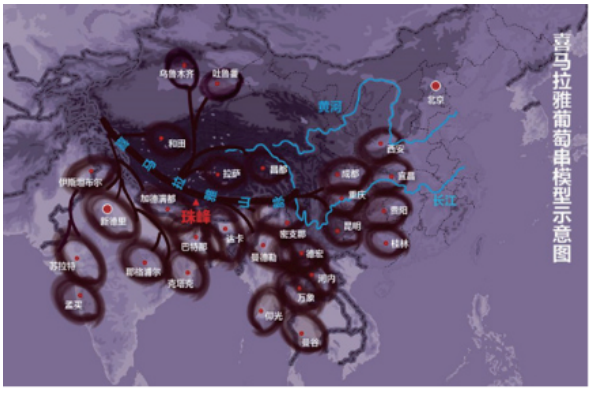

Figure 2. The "Grape Bunch" Model of the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma (with the Himalayas as the Stem and the Ten Countries with Cities as the Grapes)

Different areas in size are included with different radiuses. Objectively, the level of economic development is enhanced with the increase in radius. This is determined by the natural conditions as the smaller the radius the higher the altitude, thus a lower oxygen density which naturally leads to a lower level of economic development.

As the highest mountain in the world at an altitude of 8,844.43 meters and with a wide radiation surface, Mount Qomolangma is called the third pole on the Earth. Within a 20 kilometer radius there are over 40 peaks 7,000 meters or

more above sea level. This geological structure results in a magnificent scene. The Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma is an economic spatial structure with Mount Qomolangma as the center with echelon extensions.

The Sketch Map (Figure 1) displays the structure of the Economic Circle with Mount Qomolangma at the center of the Taichi Qinghai-Tibet Plateau (Figure 3) and the four echelon extensions showing the expanding economic layers beyond. The first layer includes the major cities of Lhasa, Katmandu, Patna, and Dhaka. The second layer includes Changdu, Hetian, New Delhi, Cuttack, Mandalay, and Myitkyina. The third layer contains Kunming, Chongqing, Chengdu, Lanzhou, Turpan, Istanbul, Rangoon, Vientiane, and Hanoi. The fourth layer includes Guilin, Yichang, Xi' an, Urumqi, Bombay, and Bangkok. The ten countries around Mount Qomolangma with their large and small cities are just like a bunch of delicious grapes as a whole. Inside the Economic Circle there exist effects and laws like the peaks of pyramid effect, the cultural source effect, the ecological butterfly effect, the law of value gradient distribution, and the inverse law of diminishing marginal utility. It is also the birthplace of many rivers and religions.

1. The Origin of the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma

Standing in the southern margin of the Tibetan Plateau, the Himalayas are distributed within the territories of Tibet China, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan, with the main part along the border between China and Nepal. The mountain range stretches from the Nanga Parbat Peak in the northwest of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau of west China to the Namjagbrawa Peak at the sharp turn of the YarlungZangbo River in east China. The total length of the range is 2,450 kilometers.

The preliminary concept originates from the regional economic cooperation between China, India, Burma and Bangladesh. The idea of economic cooperation in the region took shape in the early 1990' s and a more structured concept of regional economic cooperation was put forward by the academic circle of our country in the late 1990' s which prompted a response from the academic circles of India, Burma and Bangladesh. Scholars in China and India conducted special studies on the grand coalition and the construction of the continental bridge between China and regions like South Asia and Southeast Asia. Many Chinese scholars have made detailed analysis of the strategic framework of this region, for example: *A Preliminary Study on the Theory and Practice of the Development and Collaboration System of the Southwest Asian Continental Bridge* by Huang Zhilian, *Build the Bridge between the Two Oceans and Link the Silk Road in the South and in the North* by Xu Kangming, *Prospect of the Grand Coalition of China´s Southwest and South Asia and Southeast Asia from the Prospective of Pan Himalaya Range* by Tan Zhong, *Give Play to the Overall Advantage of Southwest China and Accelerate the Development of South Asian Market* by Wang Yiqian, *Analysis of the Economic and Trade Cooperation between Sichuan and South Asia* by Chen Jidong and Lei Qihuai, and *A Study on Southwest China´s Trade with India* by Yan Shijing and Chen Jidong.

During this same period China started to implement the national strategy of Western Development by building a great international passage. This was first proposed in Yunnan and the first international academic conference was held in Kunming, China in August, 1999. The mandate of the conference was to mark the formal proposal of the concept of regional economic cooperation between China, India, Burma and

Figure 3. The Natural "Taichi Graph" (with the Sichuan and Tarim Basins as the Symmetric Points)

Bangladesh.

The concept of the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma is the upgraded version of the Chinese-Indian-Burmese-Bangladesh Economic Corridor first conceived through the Kunming conference.

The Economic Circle is rooted in the natural Taichi Circle of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau (Figure 3) and is the western exit of the inland the Belt and Road. Geographically, it is an important hub connecting various regions of Asia. With both vast economic neighborhoods and good port facilities, it connects Northeast Asia in the North, the Indochina Peninsula in the east, and Pakistan, Iran and the Middle Eastern countries in the west. Economic cooperation around Mount Qomolangma will provide a model, and become a driving force for the integration of this region into the world economy, and provide a foundation for an Asian economic zone developing beyond the boundary of the sub regions of East Asia and South Asia. For China, the development of the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma, will put inland provinces like Tibet and Yunnan at the frontier for "opening up" to the world. China will be able to export commodities, technologies, and capital to South Asia and Southeast Asia through Tibet and Yunnan, and import resources like oil and timber for domestic energy security.

The Himalayas are the world' s fresh water tower, therefore the region around Mount Qomolangma is densely populated. The population of the ten countries around Mount Qomolangma is as many as 3 billion and the total GDP is more than 11 trillion USD. At the same time the natural environment is closely related to specific altitudes. Every increase of 1,000 meters leads to a drop in temperature of 5-6℃. This is called the vertical temperature lapse rate. Every such increase leads to a drop of about 12% in the relative atmospheric pressure and a drop of about 10% in the air density. There are also tests showing that every increase of 100 meters in altitude leads to a drop of roughly 5.9 mmhg in atmospheric pressure and a drop of approximately 1.2 mmhg in oxygen content. At an altitude of 5,000 meters, oxygen accounts for 12.95% of the air, only 61% of that at sea level. At an altitude of 10,000 meters, oxygen accounts for merely 4.95%, 23.6% of that at sea level. Take Linzhi in Tibet for example, it is at an altitude of 2,990 meters, where oxygen accounts for 84% or so in the air; Lhasa is at the altitude of 3,650 meters with about 65% oxygen in the air. Shigatsa is at the altitude of 3,830 meters with about 63% oxygen in the air. The lower the density of oxygen, the less suitable it is for human survival. Survival for plants and animals is equally difficult under such harsh conditions and thus they are of high value. The value is inversely proportional to the radius of the circle around Mount Qomolangma. The bigger the radius, the lower the value will be, which possibly satisfies the Harbert Red Shift

Effect or the universal gravitation effect. For effective economic cooperation around Mount Qomolangma, we must strengthen communication and exchanges between officials and the individuals, seek common ground while preserving differences, focus on complementary advantages, and build communities with a shared future and an economic development body in order to cope with the severe natural and social challenges.

2. Opportunities and Challenges of Green Development

The Himalayan Range is the roof of the world and its surrounding ecological environment has an impact on global weather through atmospheric circulation. It is the acupoint "Shenque" of the Earth and the "brain" of humans. No countries or regions are spared. As a result, we must make protecting the Himalayas a common task for human beings and establish the theory of Circle around Mount Qomolangma, which should be managed as the model and base line of green development. We should start with, and expand from, the ten countries around Mount Qomolangma.

China' s economy is facing a slowdown in growth, and has stepped into a new norm of deep adjustments in the three phase stack. The economic downturn in some provinces is very serious. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for the green development of our country.

First, the concept of green development is increasingly popular. The development of civilization is closely related with the prosperity or stress on ecology. The standard for a better life is changing from material abundance to ecological prosperity. People are shifting their pursuit for adequate food and clothing to environmental protection, with an increasing desire for clear water and blue sky, tranquility and health. With green development the ecological environment of our country and its resource utilization rate will be further improved and enhanced. The economic growth mode based on fossil fuel will gradually decline and green technologies will prevail.

Second, the Yangtze River ecological environment restoration project has been launched. During the Forum for the Promotion of the Development of the Yangtze River Economic Zone, President Xi Jinping emphasized that as the mother river of the Chinese nation, the Yangtze River is the important support for the development of the Chinese nation. In the long-term interests of the Chinese nation, the development of the Yangtze River Economic Zone must be promoted in a way that supports the ecology of the river and its surrounds, and focuses on green development. Huge ecological, economic and social benefits will be produced by clear water and green mountains so that our mother river will always be full of life and vitality. With a unique ecological system, the Yangtze River is the important ecological treasure of our country. The restoration of the Yangtze River ecological environment should be given the highest priority and the overall protection of the area should be supported through severe restrictions of big developments.

Third, supply side reform is essentially transforming the pattern of generation, output, and execution as well as making corrections and adjustments to public policy for better compatibility with market orientation. Thus the decisive role of the market in the allocation of resources can be fully played.

The strategic thinking regarding the needs of green development must be established for the promotion of supply side reform. The green concept should be implanted, infiltrated and integrated into the overall field of economic society, and economic and social development

should be given multiple green meanings like green kernel, green property, green culture, green spirit, green energy, green form, green ethics and green values in the whole range and process and applied to all aspects of economic thought and practice. Pollutants should be completely decoupled with economic growth for a win-win situation in economic and social development and ecological environmental protection and sustainable development.

Fourth, green development technology is becoming increasingly mature. Usually technologies in resources conservation, and avoiding or reducing environmental pollution are collectively referred to as green technology, including environmental engineering technology, waste utilization technology and cleaner production technology. Presently, parts of the green development technologies mastered by our country are basically just keeping pace with those of the world, for example, but we have an advantage in the competition with the world' s first class countries in many green technologies like wind power, nuclear power, and smart grids as well as low carbon technologies, and high-speed rail. As a responsible country, China actively advocates the idea of green development, participates in the global actions to tackle climate change and energy crisis, and strengthen technical communications and cooperation with developed countries.

Fifth, the information platform for green development is under construction. A sound information network helps to establish an effective environmental monitoring system and emergency system to reduce losses caused by unexpected events. There must be no time or regional restraints for environmental management. Securing accurate information is necessary for effective interactions and connections between the government and the public, and can better guarantee the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

Scientific environmental testing systems, environmental pollution sources, and environmental protection systems organically combine the entire national environmental protection effort and social relations through information management, and jointly advance green development.

Sixth, there exists a paradox between economic development and environmental protection. If aboriginal people cannot be provided with other economic opportunities, the protection of tropical rain forests will just be empty words. Simply surviving in poor countries is the overriding priority for most people and they are forced to invest in the future to meet the current needs. When it comes specifically to the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma, there is an interesting phenomenon: In terms of economic development level, the Economic Circle is an anti-nuclear pole model and the economic development level becomes higher from the inside out; while in terms of ecological protection, ecological value decreases from inside out.

On one hand, the overall economic development level of the countries in the Economic Circle is not high due to their weak industrial foundations, backward infrastructure construction, a large number of poor people, and complex social contradictions. On the other hand, Mount Qomolangma, hailed as the Water Tower of Asia and standing majestically on the roof of the world, is the holy land in the hearts of people, and the barometer of the global ecological environment. Influenced in recent years by the strict ecological environmental protection of the Chinese government, the ecological environment of Mount Qomolangma is becoming better and better on the side of Tibet of China with a significant increase in the quantity of rare animal and plant species and continuous improvements in biodiversity.

The holy goddess is full of life and vitality as always. But since the Himalayas are the youngest, the highest and the most unstable mountains, the crustal movement which has created many peaks continues to push the Himalayas upward, resulting in frequent natural disasters like earthquakes, landslides and torrential floods. At the same time, there still exist potential threats; glaciers are retreating, there are local signs of desertification, and there is the constant need for cleaning the garbage left by visitors at altitudes above the base camps.

3. Several Suggestions on the Construction of a Green Development Partner-ship

The Economic Circle is a region with concentrated population, developed religions, backward economies, rich resources, a fragile ecology and huge potential. There exists great poverty due to insufficient development and at the same time growing problems created by development that is extensive but environmentally unfriendly. The fundamental way to cope with these problems is through a program that encourages economic development and environmental protection simultaneously through green development partnerships and sticking to a green, low-carbon sustainable development path.

First, the *Mangshi Declaration of Green Development Partnership* has been issued. Experts and scholars from the participating countries reached a consensus regarding green development and jointly published the *Mangshi Declaration of Green Development Partnership*, which underscores the consensus of green developments being supported in academic circles and promoted by academic power through official contacts and exchanges. The *Declaration* emphasizes the global acceptance of a green economy being the most advanced production mode. The present practice of extensive and unlimited development based on limited resources should be denied, and the non-green growth mode with its vast consumption and waste of natural resources should be abandoned.

Economic factors should be effectively aggregated and the relative value of non-renewable resources in economic growth should be reduced. Efficiency should be enhanced through the application of new technologies and resource consumption should be reduced through enhanced efficiency.

Second, the signing of the *Memorandum of the Convention on Biological Diversity between Countries around Mount Qomolangma* is to be promoted. At present, there is a phenomenon called the "biopiracy" of genetic resources and traditional knowledge in the international society. Due to the gap in biological technology development and application, China and other countries around Mount Qomolangma are in positions of being almost free suppliers of genetic resources. The western developed countries directly acquire a large number of genetic resources as well as associated traditional knowledge through associations with China and other countries via various channels (like pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies and other multinational companies and organizations), and obtain substantial economic benefits in the international market. As the suppliers of genetic resources, China and other countries in the region do not share any of these benefits.

Also, multinational access to traditional knowledge must be studied. By taking advantage of loopholes and shortcomings in the protection of traditional knowledge by modern systems of intellectual property, based on technology development of traditional knowledge related

to genetic resources, some of the developed countries, multinational companies and biotechnology and research institutions can apply for patents and obtain intellectual property rights in the form of technical inventions merely through the simple packaging of traditional knowledge. As a consequence, developing countries like China and others around Mount Qomolangma have to apply and pay royalty fee to them, and further lose their due rights of genetic resources and traditional knowledge.

As the countries with the richest biological diversity globally, China and the other countries in the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma are the major providers of genetic resources and share common or similar interests and positions. With further implementation of the *Convention on Biological Diversity and Nagoya Protocol,* communication and understanding between the countries of the Economic Circle would be strengthened, and the Convention negotiation of international biological diversity and national interests of each country in the development would be maintained. The signing of the *Memorandum of Cooperation in Biological Diversity Convention between Countries around Mount Qomolangma* should be promoted and a new regional cooperation mechanism for the non-traditional safety issues like biological diversity of "China + countries around Mount Qomolangma" should be actively constructed.

Third, the forum of "around Mount Qomolangma" is to be established. The forum of "around Mount Qomolangma" is the extension and further development of "the Belt and Road" Initiative, aiming at an equal, open and compatible new platform for international cooperation and dialogue based on Asia, Europe and Africa and facing the whole world. Specifically, the principles of joint negotiation, and building and sharing should be adhered to. Relevant organizations in China should initiative forums and relevant countries host the forums in turn once per year. Related countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and Australia and organizations of the United Nations will be invited to the forums. Also, the theme of the forums can be determined as cooperation and development. There can be sub forums in various fields like economy, environment, culture, and society. The specific content can be different each time and results should be achieved in the forms of consensus, anthology, and continuing initiatives. Additionally, a *Journal of Forums around Mount Qomolangma* can be published including papers, research reports, project promotion and important events. The Boao Forum set a good example in the specific organizational work and the corresponding organizations, operation and management mode can be duplicated and referred to. It is recommended that the Asian Investment Bank or Chinese Institute of Modern International Relations and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences should take the lead in preparing the first session of the forum. Starting from Dehong Yunnan, the folk operation mechanism should be gradually introduced in the preparation of the forum logo, composing of the anthem and other related promotional material. The forum should be built into a non-official, non-profit and open international conference.

Fourth, regional environmental collaborative governance should be implemented. The environmental protection policy and the environment compensation standard for the region should be unified, and environmental protection coordination institutions should be established. Scientific planning should be executed, and contact and coordination should be strengthened for regional ecological protection, pollution control, ecological industry development, water

quality monitoring including early warning and forecasting, the execution of related ecological laws and regulations, and the prevention and emergency handling of major environment issues. The regional ecological construction should be jointly planned, the responsibilities should be jointly borne and the fruits should be shared. The land space management should be optimized and overall protection should be provided to ecologically fragile areas and large development should be forbidden.

Fifth, a regional barrier free tourism alliance should be established. Through resource sharing, complementary advantages, market interactions, removing regional space and time barriers, a regional barrier free tourism alliance should be established. The transportation network should be improved with the common characteristics including water system, transportation, and culture as the bond. Tourism brands should be built with cooperation and top quality tourism itineraries should be developed and promoted jointly, and tourism destinations of international influence should be built.

Sixth, the platform for carbon trading of the Economic Circle around Mount Qomolangma should be established. With the implementation of the *Paris Agreement* which copes with climate change, carbon sink resources will become scarcer and will be of ever-rising value. Each country should identify its real reserves of carbon, establish a carbon emission trading mechanism, cultivate talents and enterprises with the ability of emission control included in the carbon market, and encourage and guide more enterprises to participate in the carbon market. The intensive management and utilization of forest land should be strengthened and the economy of forest based resources should be developed. The low efficiency forest areas should be changed and transformed with enhanced carbon sink abilities.

Seventh, the path and method of the transfer from clear water and green mountains into wealth should be explored. The ecological productivity and products generated by ecological construction should be transformed into realistic productivity and economic benefits. Through cultivation of industries with positive ecological characteristics, circular economy, green economy and low-carbon economy like forest cultivation and tourism, biomass energy and materials should be developed. This way ecological improvements and protections can be transformed into economic advantages and become major sources for income. With a focus on clean energy industries like wind power, solar power, geothermal power, and bioenergy these industries will become new pillars of wealth generation in the region.

Eighth, an environmental protection industry should be vigorously developed. Presently, the global commodity and service market of the environmental protection industry is rapidly developing. There are five main trends; development of industrial products into green manufacturing, reform of agricultural economy into green economy, reform of technology development into green technology, transformation of consumption level into green commodities, and tilt of international trade to green economy. Environmental protection will usher in great opportunities for development. Favorable opportunities should be seized and supported by the fruits of new technology. The technical levels and quality levels of environmental protection products should be comprehensively improved. Water savings, energy savings and recycling of waste materials, utilization of new equipment and green energy-saving products should be developed. A new path for development should be taken, which is compatible with the economy,

society and the environment, so as to promote the rapid development of the environmental protection industry.

Ninth, green development and technical innovation should be encouraged. Green technology has formed a huge global market in three aspects including control of pollution, recycling of resources, and energy conservation. Technology innovation should be encouraged to improve the disposal of industrial wastes and reduce public hazard incidents as much as possible. Recycling technology innovation should be encouraged to save energy and protect the environment through recycling of resources. Green technologies with development potential should be provided with policy support and capital investment by the government to guarantee the smooth development of technology innovation. Information resources and foreign exchanges should be maximized to introduce green technologies or jointly tackle problems of green development. Finally, technology innovation of clean production should be encouraged.

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