



The Golden Thread of Perennial Wisdom Teachings on Land

Ethics, Morality and the Land Question

Council of Georgist Organizations Conference

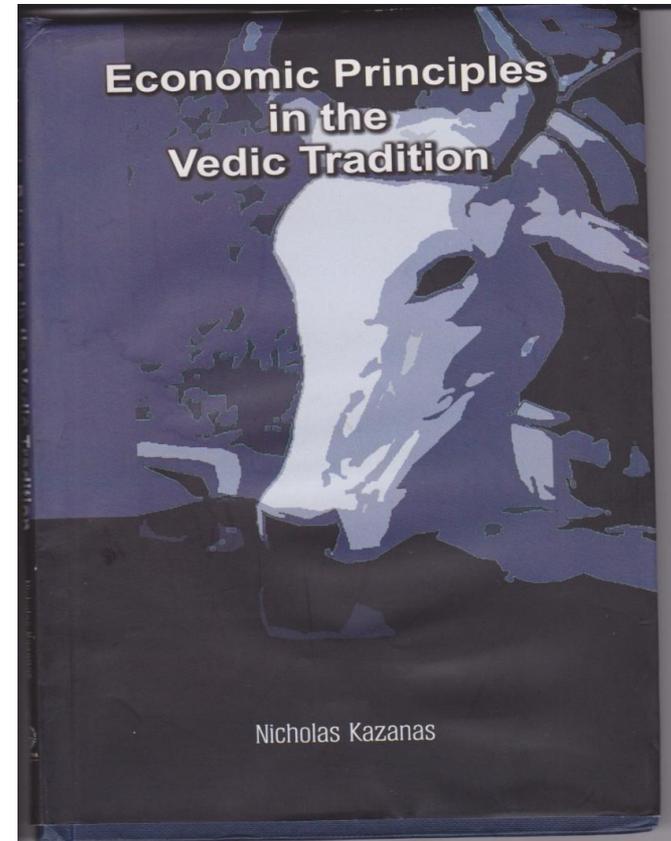
August 30, 2018

Presentation by Alanna Hartzok

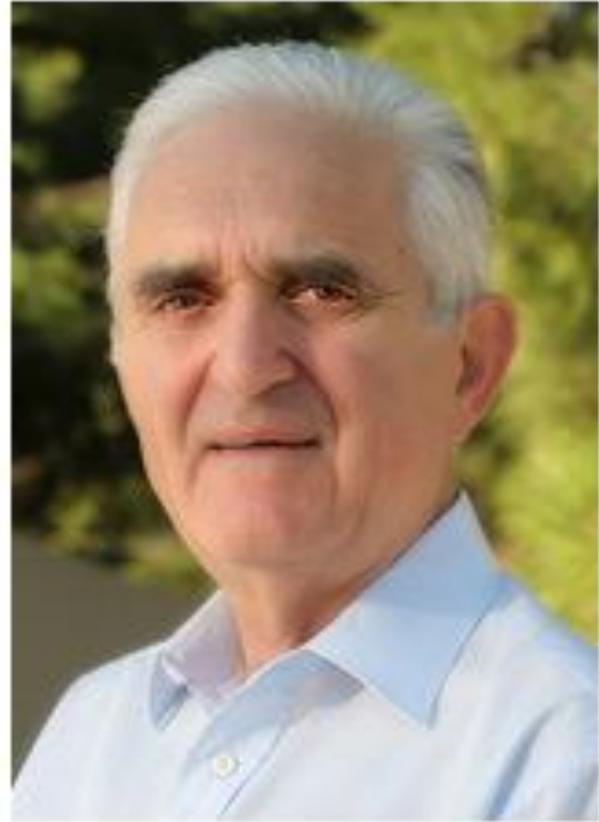
Economic Principles in the Vedic Tradition

by Nicholas Kazanas

Dr. Nicholas Kazanas is a Greek-born scholar of Vedic history, Indology and the culture in the Indus Valley back to 5,000 years ago.



The study deals with **principles** as found in the more ancient sources of the Vedic period...a principle has an **unchanging and eternal quality**. - Kazanas



Nicholas Kazanas

...the work of wise lawgivers in the remote antiquity of the Vedic period” (shows) “the same concern about the distribution of wealth that occupies the mind of modern economics.”

- Nicholas Kazanas



Ancient Indian Codes of Law

...the sages who instituted their Laws, recognized fully all the needs...for bodily wholeness, food and shelter, locomotion and assembly, property and reputation, solitude and peace, physical work and spiritual development.





The Vedas and Land Value Taxation

- A most surprising feature is the principle of free access to land for all and the Land Value Tax which should be the source of Government revenue (and expenditure).
- It is surprising because Land Value Taxation is supposed to be a fairly modern concept.
- There is a concept of “rent” or surplus: a higher charge on the more fertile land. - Kazanas

Land Tenure in the Vedic Age

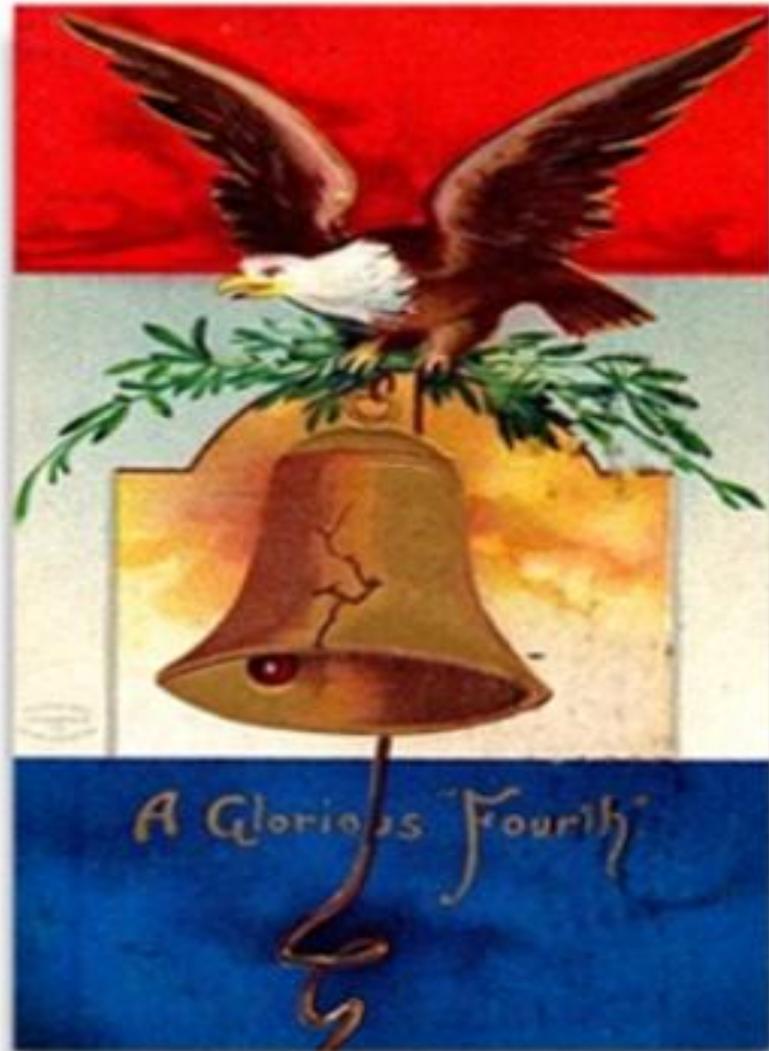
In ancient times...law-givers provided their people both with common lands and individual holdings.

The land is a divine entity and belongs to the whole of mankind.

The land belongs to all men equally; the whole community holds the region where it lives....

Land is cultivated by individuals (or families), not jointly by a community.





PROCLAIM
LIBERTY
THROUGHOUT
ALL THE LAND
UNTO ALL THE
INHABITANTS
THEREOF.

LEV. XXV X.

The Early Christian land ethic echoed Old Testament teachings concerning land rights.



- The land must not be sold beyond reclaim, for the land is Mine; you are but strangers resident with me. - Lev. 25:23 ‘
- The profit of the earth is for all. - Eccles. 5:9
- Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place. - Isaiah 5:8
- Restore, I pray you, to them even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive yards, and their houses. - Nehemiah 5:11

Land Tenure in the Promised Land Described in Leviticus

Those with poorer land were to be given more acreage and those with more fertile land would be given less.

But what about land locations regarding the market place?



The Gemara, Baba Bathra, (122, A)

Solomon Solis Cohen, "The Land Question in the Talmud"

Upon the more valuable holdings was to be imposed a tax, or lease fee, the measure of which was the excess of their respective values over a given standard, and the fund thus created was to be paid out in due proportions to those whose holdings were in less favorable locations.





As for land disadvantageously situated, the adjustment was to be made by money;

that is to say, those holding land nearer the city (Jerusalem) should pay into the common treasury the estimated excess of value pertaining to it by reason of its superior situation, while those holding land of less value, by reason of its distance from the city, would receive from the treasury a money compensation.



In this, then we see affirmed the doctrine that natural advantages are common property, and may not be diverted to private gain.

Early Christian Land Ethic



The land ethic of the early Christian communities was that of "koinonia" meaning essentially that God was the sole owner of the earth which was given as a gift to all for the "autarkeia," the self-reliant livelihood, of all.

China – Four Thousand Years of Taxing the Land



These next slides from Peter Bowman, School of Economic Science, presented at the IU Conference in London, 2013.

Chinese Dynasties Time Line

Xia

Shang

Zhou

Qin

Han

Tang

Song

Yuan (Mongols)

Ming

Qing (Manchu)



2000

1000

0

1000

2000

The West

Ancient
Greece

Rome

Medieval
Renaissance

Xia Dynasty 2100 - 1600 BCE

Land distributed following
the great flood

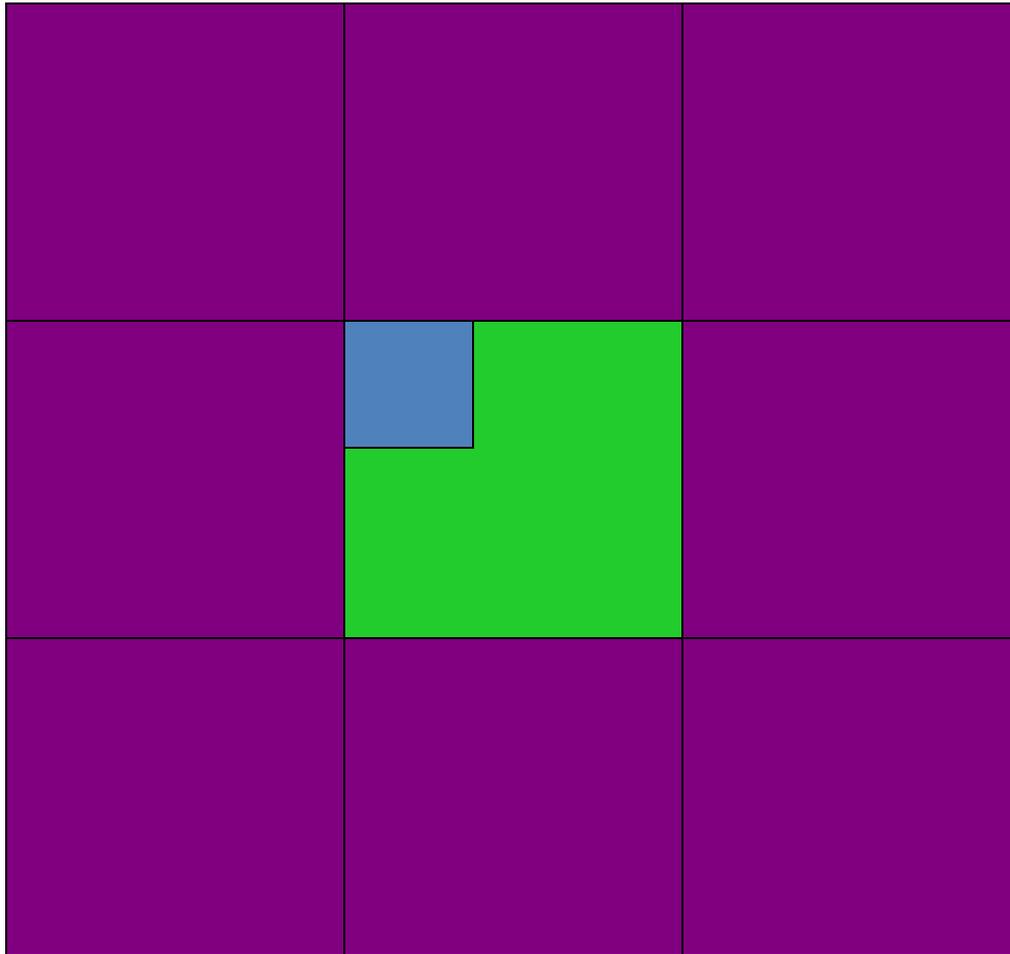
Kung fa - tribute

Lesson 1: The land belongs
to the people at large

Yu the Great



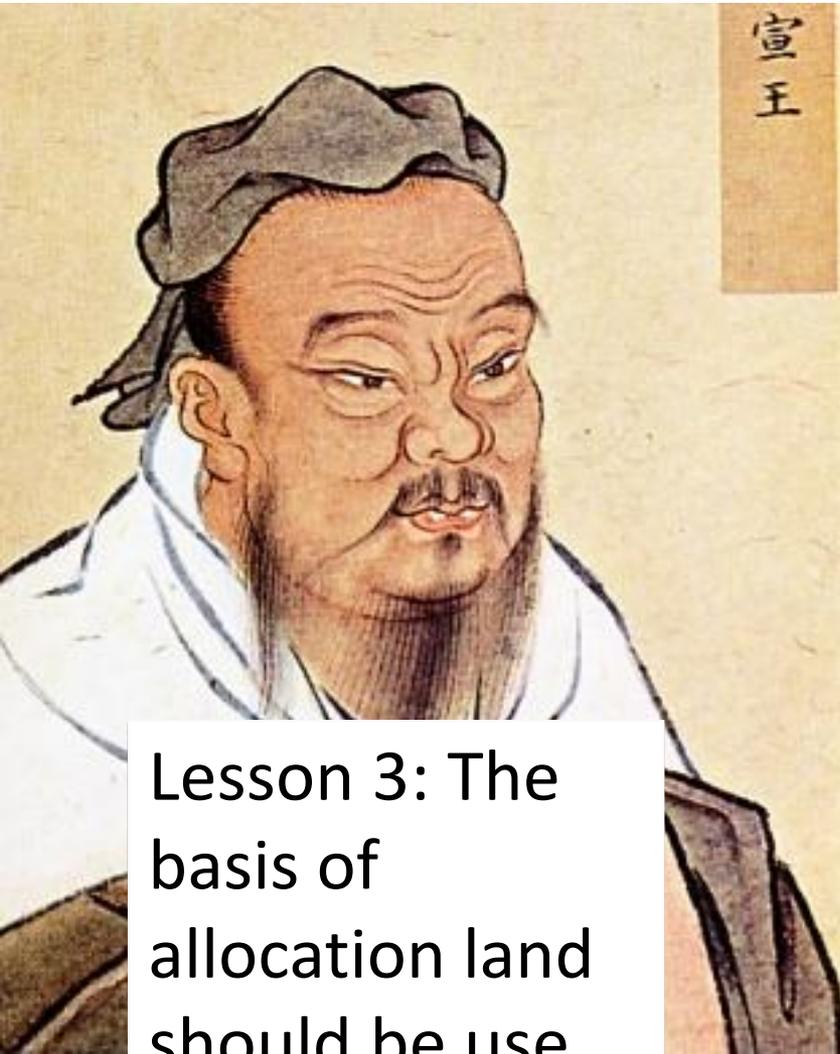
Shang Dynasty 1600 - 1045 BCE



Tsing tien

Lesson 2: The best method of public revenue is when you do not appropriate what people regard as their private property

Zhou Dynasty 1045 - 246 BCE



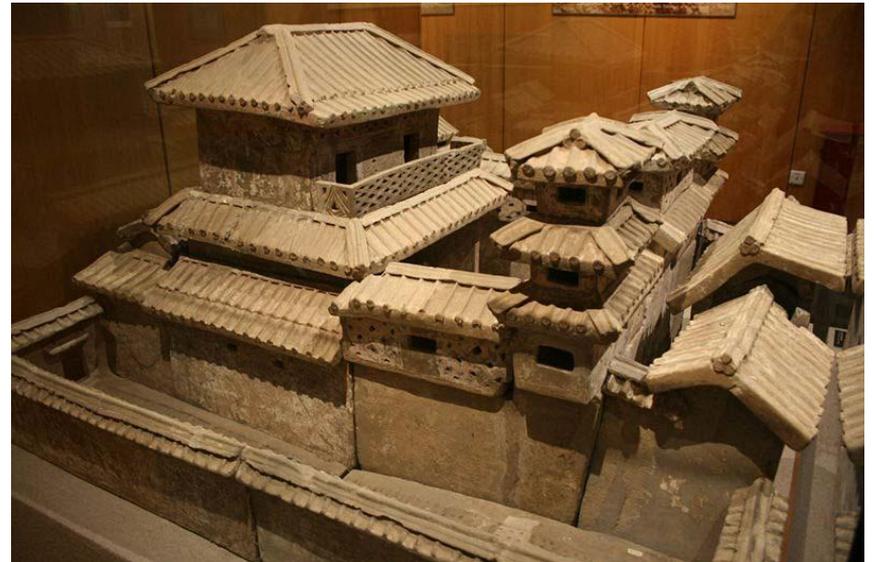
Lesson 3: The basis of allocation land should be use

- Land allocated for use
- Severe penalties for not using allocated land
- Amount of land allocated depends on fertility
- Public revenue first gift (*kung*), then aid (*tsu*) now replaced by universal obligation (*ch eh*)
- requirement to provide produce and military equipment
- Progressive taxation of feudal chiefs

Han Dynasty 206 BC - 220 AD

- Private ownership of land
 - “The rich own thousands of *mow* whilst the poor have not even enough land for an awl to stand on.”
- Powerful landowners influence government
 - “The two sources of production are labour and land and in order that all land capable of producing crops might be cultivated and all hands engaged in agriculture taxes on land should be abolished.”

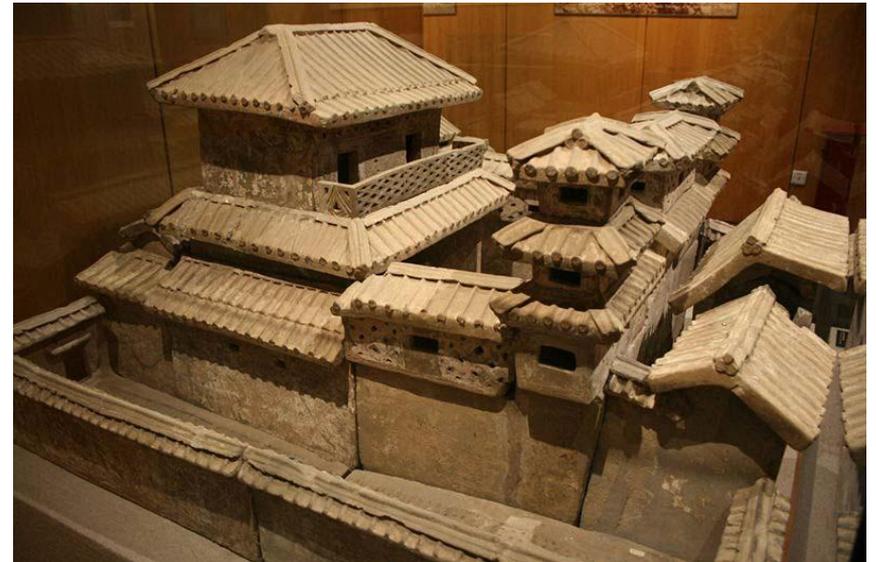
Tia Chu



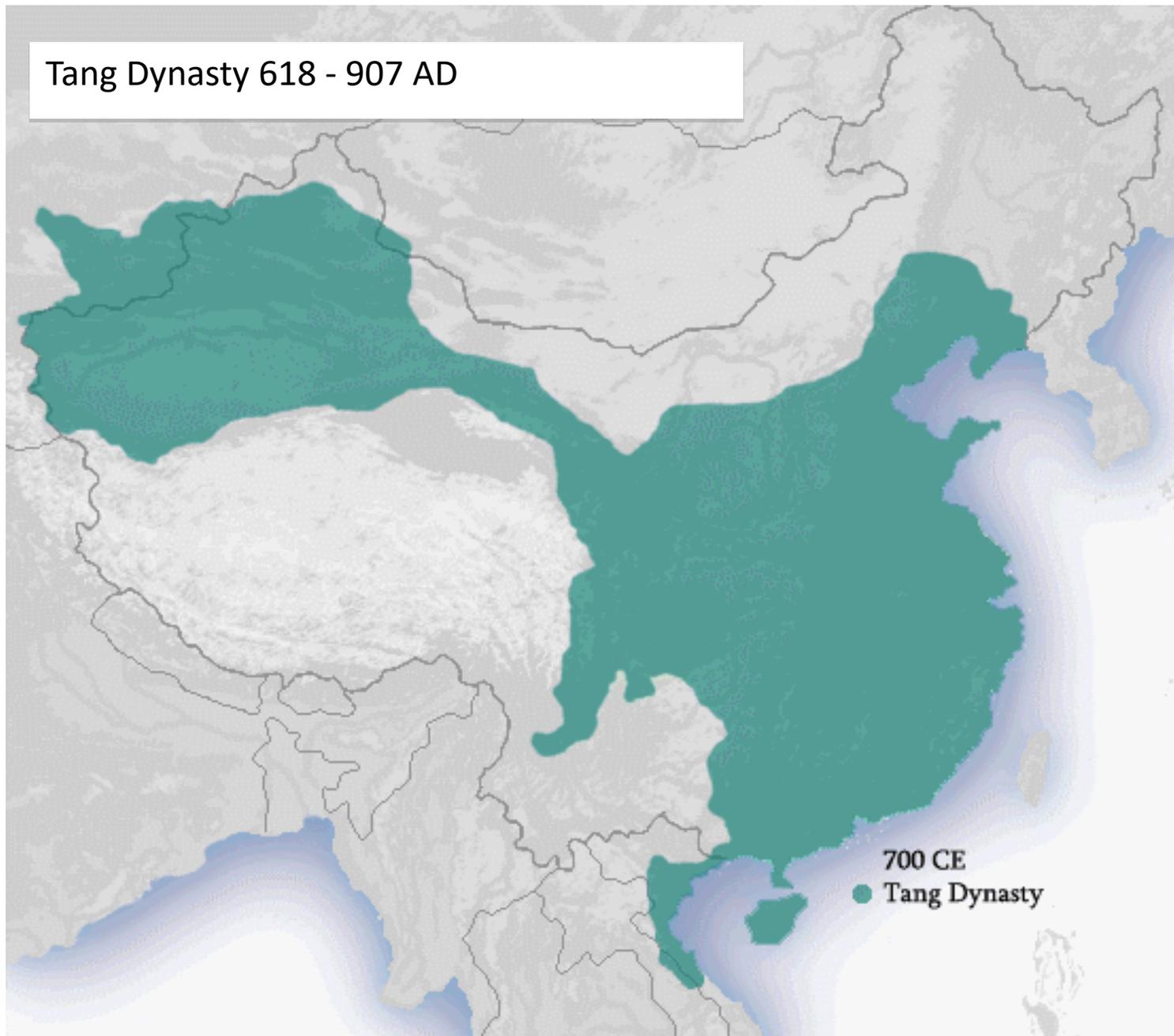
Han Dynasty 206 BC - 220 AD

- Low taxes on land
- Tenants paying high rent
- Poll tax

- Lesson 4: There will not be an effective land tax when there is unrestrained private ownership of land.



Tang Dynasty 618 - 907 AD



Tang Dynasty 618 - 907 AD

Yang Yen tax reforms

liangshi - Summer and Autumn levy

“People were not taxed according to their age – but according to their wealth or the amount of land possessed”



Lesson 6: a tax on land is better than a tax on people.

Tang Dynasty 618 - 907 AD



- Order restored
- Distribution of land re-established

Lesson 5: It is possible to move back from unrestrained private ownership to government allocation of land.

Ming Dynasty 1368 - 1644 AD

Initially an effective system but declined as tax roll became obsolete and additional levies raised

1410
● Ming Dynasty

A map of East Asia showing the territory of the Ming Dynasty in 1410 AD. The territory is shaded in a solid brown color and covers a large area of northern and central China, extending to the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago. The map includes geographical features like the Yellow Sea, the Bohai Sea, and the East China Sea. A legend in the bottom right corner indicates the year 1410 and the Ming Dynasty territory with a brown dot.

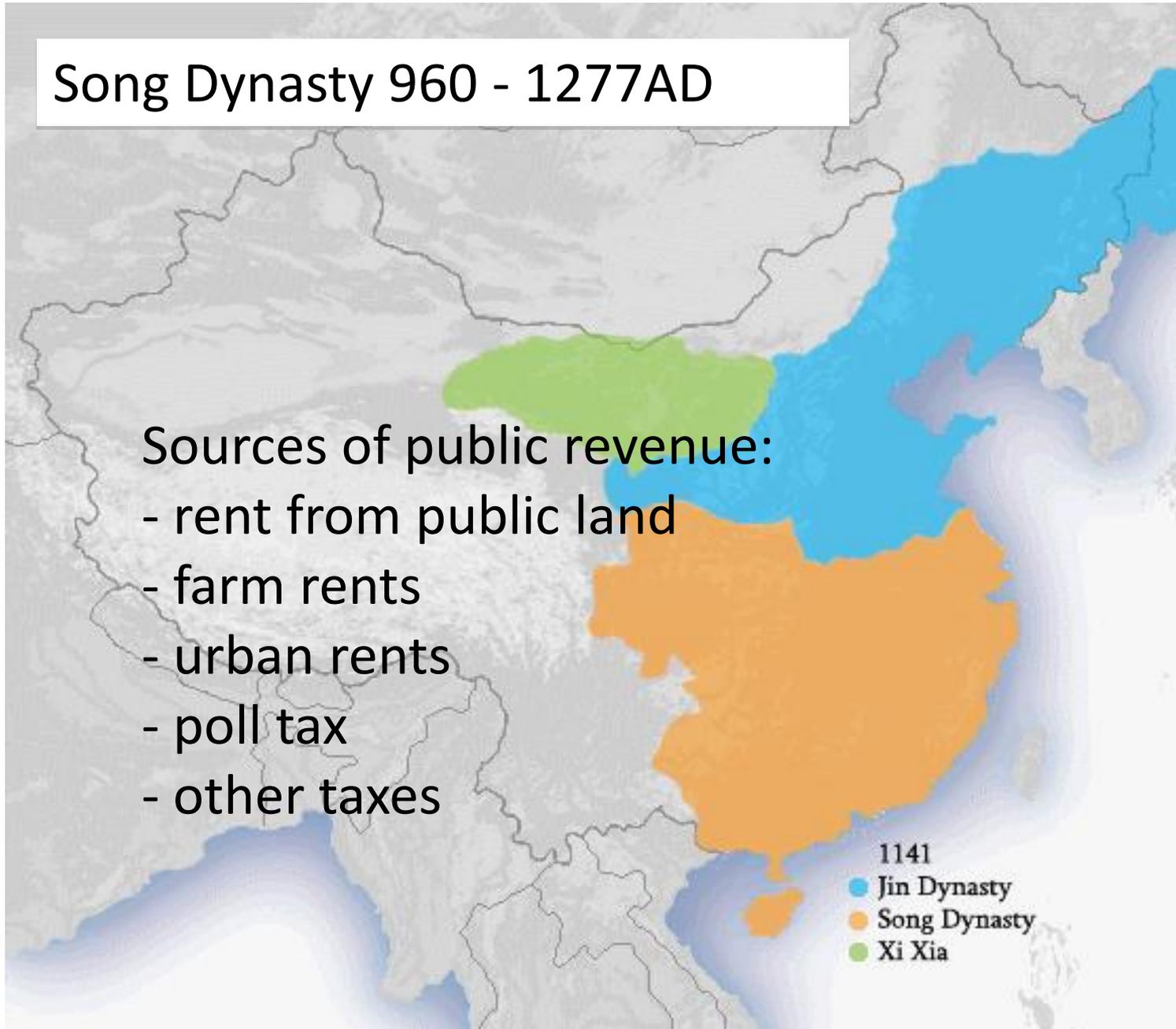
Song Dynasty 960 - 1277AD

Sources of public revenue:

- rent from public land
- farm rents
- urban rents
- poll tax
- other taxes

1141

- Jin Dynasty
- Song Dynasty
- Xi Xia



Qing Dynasty (Manchus) 1644 - 1911 AD



The Final Settlement 1713

Emperor Kang Xi. Number of taxable heads and land tax to be fixed an immutable for all time.

Poll tax and land tax amalgamated into single land tax, but complexity of additional charges appeared later.

Lesson 7: An effective land tax needs regular updating of land values

Sun Yat Sen (1866 – 1925)



“The teaching of Henry George will be the basis of our program of reform...The (land tax) as the only means of supporting the government is an infinitely just, reasonable and equitably distributed tax, and on it we will found our new system.”

Physiocrats



Franois Quesnay

1694 - 1774



Anne-Robert-
Jacques Turgot,

1727 - 1781



Victor Riqueti

de Mirabau

1715 -1789



The Physiocrats coined the phrase "***l'impôt unique***" ("the single tax") and urged the French kings to levy taxes on land instead of labor.

One of the Enlightenment's wise men, Mirabeau the Elder, held that their discovery would be if enacted a "**social advance equal to the inventions of writing and money.**"

Forbidden City, Beijing



Quesnay is known for his writings on Chinese politics and society.

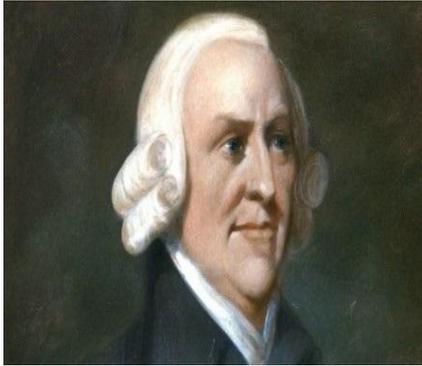
Because of his admiration of Confucianism, Quesnay follower's bestowed him with the title "Confucius of Europe."

Many tax principles put forth by him and other Physiocrats were derived from land and tax policies of dynasties of China.

See:

[Http://www.fampeople.com/cat-françois-quesnay_2](http://www.fampeople.com/cat-françois-quesnay_2)

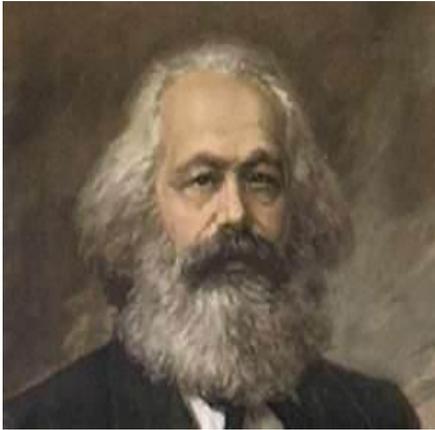
Writing by Tan Min



Adam Smith

Adam Smith (1720-1790) wrote in his classic, The Wealth of Nations, that "*Both ground rents and the ordinary rent of land are a species of revenue which the owner, in many cases, enjoys without any care or attention of his own... Ground rents seem, in this respect, a more proper subject of peculiar taxation... Nothing can be more reasonable than that a fund which owes its existence to the good government of the state should be taxed peculiarly...*"

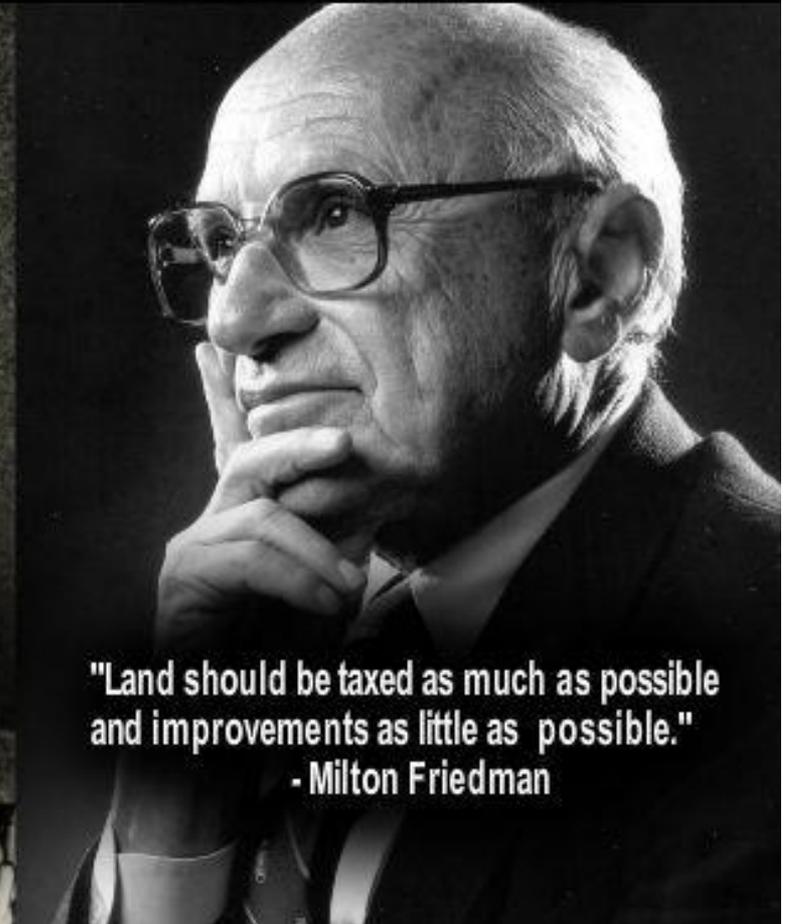
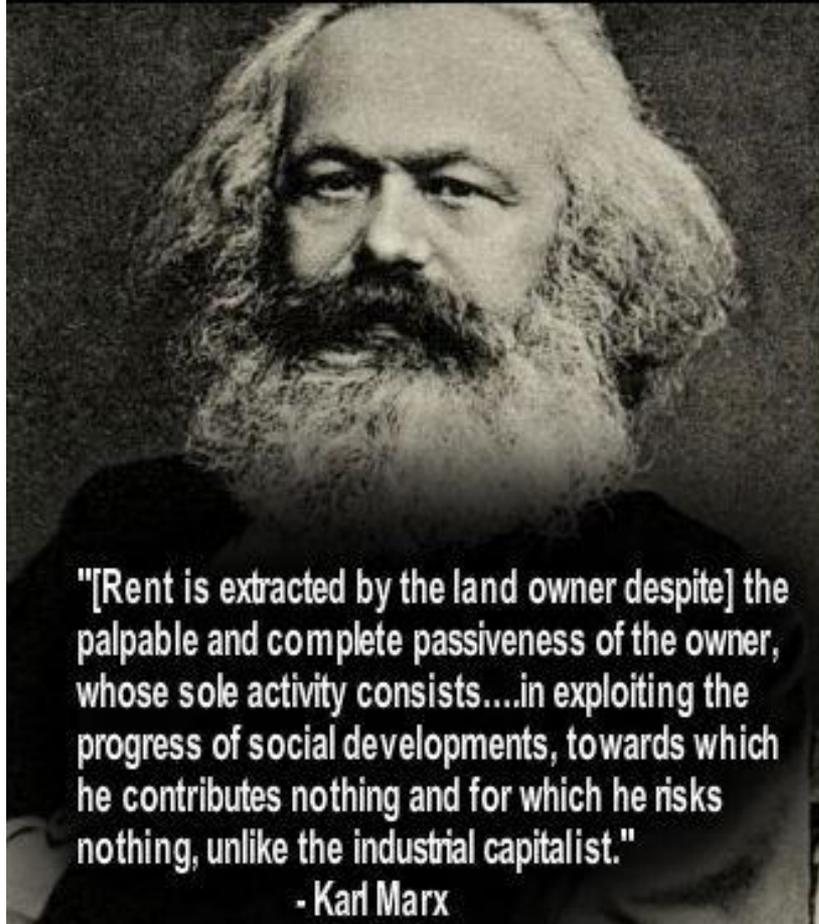
Vol 3, Book 5, Ch 2, Pt 2, Art 1, P 289



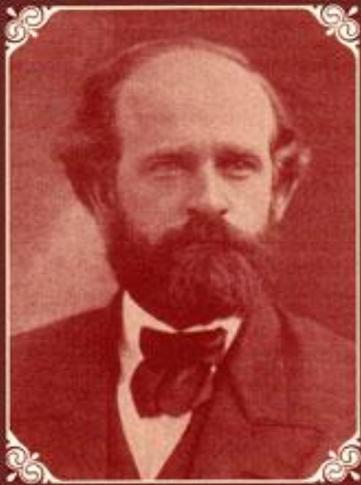
In The Communist Manifesto (1848) Marx and Engels listed 10 policies in order to achieve socialism.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.

Move beyond compromise. Reconcile. Land Value Taxation



*PROGRESS
and
POVERTY*



Henry George

It is not enough that men should vote; it is not enough that they be theoretically equal before the law. They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life. They must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. – Henry George



Henry George:
We must make land
common property.

The International Declaration on Individual & Common Rights to Earth states:



The exercise of both common and individual rights in land is essential to a society based on justice. But the rights of individuals in natural resources are limited by the just rights of the community.

Denying the existence of common rights in land creates a condition of society wherein the exercise of individual rights becomes impossible for the great mass of the people.



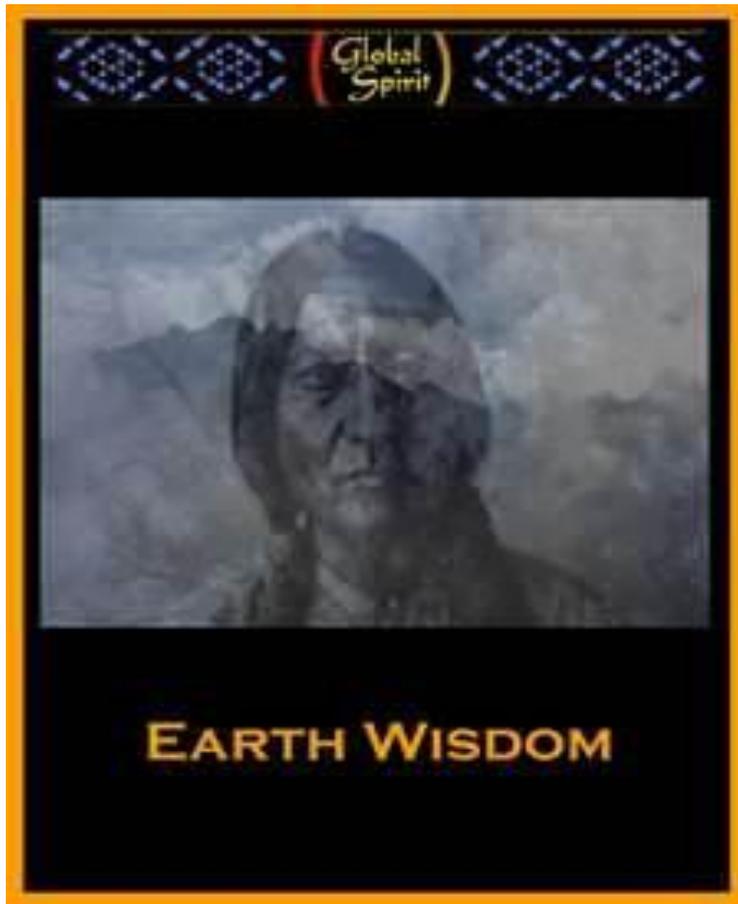
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What are the Commons?

- Our commons are the collective heritage of humanity — the shared resources of nature and society that we inherit, create and use.
- People across the world are now rediscovering these common goods and choosing to protect them for future generations.

From Global Commons Trust, James Quilligan's website:
<http://globalcommonstrust.org>

Natural Law



The equal right of all men and women to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air. It is a right proclaimed by the fact of their existence. For we cannot suppose that some men and women have a right to be in this world and others do not. - Henry George

Thy Kingdom Come Thy Will Be Done
on Earth As It Is in Heaven.



