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大众经济学 Economics

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牛津通识读本

大众经济学

Economics

A Very Short Introduction

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序言

林毅夫

改革开放以来,随着市场经济体制的确立,了解掌握现代市场经济运行的规律越来越成为我国社会各界关注的课题。学习理解当代经济学一时蔚然成风,我所主持的北京大学中国经济研究中心开设的经济学本科双学位,每年招收的新生达到800名,占北大校本部本科每年招收学生数的近三分之一,中国经济学界的新一代人正不断茁壮成长。

自亚当·斯密1776年发表《国富论》,现代经济学从哲学中独立成为一门自成体系的社会科学以来,国际经济学界名家辈出,研究者众,现在每年发表在顶级的《美国经济评论》上的论文多达2000页,各种一流学刊上发表的论文合计超过千篇;而且,流派繁多,学说纷呈,不同理论观点不断涌现。尤其,从上世纪50年代以后,大量的数学、统计和计量方法被引进经济学理论模型的构建和验证中,一般缺少扎实数学训练的读者已经不可能直接跟踪现代经济学的理论发展。

多年来我一直有一个强烈的愿望,想写一本像艾思奇的《大众哲学》那样通俗易懂的小册子,不用艰涩的语言、复杂的数学,而是以生动的笔调、浅显的例子,来介绍现代经济学的一个个基本命题,让读者了解现代经济学的基本体系和分析方

法,以帮助读者了解自己身边的经济现象,进而得到启发。待到下笔才觉得对现代经济学的庞大体系的介绍难以做到简而不繁、疏而不漏,就是对自己熟知领域的介绍,也很难做到通俗易懂,加上这些年来庶务缠身,每次拿起笔来都以放下而告终,至今仍留遗憾。因此,当我看到帕萨·达斯古普塔教授这本小书时,雀跃和崇敬之情油然而生。

帕萨·达斯古普塔教授是我多年的学界朋友,第一次和他见面是1991年10月,我应邀到英国温莎堡,参加国际经济学会组织的一个会议,讨论1977年诺贝尔经济学奖获得者詹姆斯·米德1989年的新著《阿嘎索托比亚:合伙经济学》(*Agathotopia: The Economics of Partnership*^①)。米德试图于此书中寻找一条有异于传统资本主义和共产主义的第三种道路,1972年诺贝尔经济学奖获得者肯尼斯·阿罗评论这本书是“理想主义、悲天悯人和坚实分析的结合”。在那次会议上我评论了达斯古普塔教授发表的论文《贫困、资源和生育率:家庭作为一个繁殖的合伙体》。后来,他的论文和我的评论一起被收录在1993年出版的会议论文集《资本主义的替代:合伙经济学》(*Alternatives to Capitalism: The Economics of Partnership*)当中。从那以后我们经常在一些国际学术活动中见面,交情也越来越深。

帕萨·达斯古普塔教授出生于达卡(现为孟加拉国首都,二战前属于英国印度殖民地),在印度德里大学受完大学本科教育后,到英国剑桥大学深造,于1968年获得经济学博士学位,现为剑桥大学弗兰克·拉姆齐讲座教授,圣约翰学院院士。

达斯古普塔教授是誉满国际的顶级经济学家,以在福利经

① Agathotopia意为“美好但非完美”,而Utopia则意为“完美但不可行”。——序言作者注

济学、发展经济学、技术变迁、人口、资源和环境经济学以及博弈论等领域做出的杰出贡献而获得了许多荣誉,包括英国科学院院士,第三世界科学院院士,以及美国科学院、美国人文和科学学院、瑞典皇家科学院、梵蒂冈社会科学院的外籍院士,曾任英国皇家经济学会和欧洲经济学会的会长。2002年被英国女王授予爵士爵位,同年获颁瑞典的沃尔沃环境奖,2004年获颁国际生态经济学会的肯尼斯·E. 鲍丁纪念奖,2007年获颁美国农业经济学会的约翰·肯尼斯·加尔布雷斯奖。最难得的是他于2004年获选为英国皇家学会的会员,该学会是世界上最古老、最有影响的学术团体,科学史上的巨人如牛顿、达尔文、爱因斯坦等均为其会员。该学会每年由现任会员推荐选举产生44位新会员,现共有会员一千三百多位,过去入选会员均来自科学和数学领域,达斯古普塔教授是在该学会350年的历史中第一位破例入选的经济学家。他未来很有可能以其在环境和资源经济学所做出的贡献而获得诺贝尔经济学奖。

帕萨·达斯古普塔教授1942年出生于印度经济学世家,其父阿弥亚·达斯古普塔为英国伦敦经济学院的博士,从1926年起一直在印度教授经济学,被尊为印度现代经济学之父、印度经济学家中的经济学家,其入门弟子包括1998年获得诺贝尔经济学奖的阿马蒂亚·森。帕萨·达斯古普塔教授的岳父则为1977年诺贝尔经济学奖获得者詹姆斯·米德。然而,帕萨·达斯古普塔在印度德里大学读的是理论物理,初到英国剑桥大学读的是数学,直到1965年才转为攻读经济学。当时,1996年获得诺贝尔经济学奖的詹姆斯·莫里斯刚在剑桥大学拿到经济学博士学位,留系担任讲师,由于莫里斯也是数学背景出身,于是达斯古普塔就请他担任导师,用了三年的时间,完成了三篇论文,于

1968年获得博士学位。

达斯古普塔教授和其他许多在国际上扬名的印度经济学家一样,以深厚的数学功底而成为杰出的理论经济学家,但是,他的经济学研究不是为了数学而数学,而是为了深入了解人类社会发展和人性本身,1989到1992年他在美国斯坦福大学任教时,同时担任了经济系和哲学系的教授,并且,兼任斯坦福大学社会伦理项目的主任。

1995年牛津大学出版社推出一套简短介绍每个学科领域的丛书,作者都是学界公认的大师。1999年达斯古普塔教授接到出版社邀请后,碰到了和我想写一本《大众经济学》时一样的困境,结果用了整整七年的时间才完稿。现在摆在读者面前的这本书,从描述一位生活于非洲的小女孩和一位生活于美国的同龄小女孩所处社会中的个人行为准则、家庭、社区、生产组织、市场、政府等各种制度安排的差异着手,来介绍自亚当·斯密以来,经济学家们不断探索一个主要问题——一个国家是贫是富的决定因素——所取得的各项研究成果。从书中的介绍可以知道,一般人关注的资本、自然资源等仅仅是决定一个国家贫富的表层原因,根本的决定因素则在于一个国家的制度安排是否能够最大程度地调动每个人在工作、学习、积累、创新等方面的积极性。

这本小书是在他1993年出版的一本巨著《贫富论》(*An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution*)的基础上,加上十多年来经济学界新的理论进展和他自己对斯密问题新的理解、新的体会而写成。和这本小书不同,《贫富论》厚达661页,单单参考书目就有80页。达斯古普塔教授将《贫富论》献给我父,在前言中他写到该书是对其父早年所提问题的回复,他想以该书所讨论

的内容告诉他父亲，“看，这是我认为我知道是重要的，这是我现在相信的，这些是我的价值，这是我思考问题的方法”。他的父亲阅读了前面几个章节，给了他一些正面的反馈，令他深感遗憾的是在1992年其父离世时，《贫富论》尚未能完稿。

2005年9月达斯古普塔教授应邀到北大中国经济研究中心来做严复纪念讲座，我那时得知他正在写作这本书，2006年我收到了他寄来的英文稿，一口气读下来，喜爱至极。他以文学家般的雅致和数学家般的准确语言，通俗易懂地向读者介绍了经济学界对斯密问题研究的成果，这正是我多年来想写而未能写的一本书！我当即建议将此书翻译成中文出版，并答应为之作序。现在这本书的中文译本即将出版，祝愿这本书的读者阅读之后能够对经济学家如何以理性的视角来观察世界和分析问题有所了解，并且，希望读者能够认识到决定一个国家贫富的主要因素在于制度，资本、自然资源的多寡仅仅是贫富的表象。

2008年1月16日于

朗润园

Foreword

Justin Yifu Lin

Following economic reform and liberalization, the establishment of a market economy in China has created much interest in understanding and mastering the principles of the operations of a modern market economy, and the study of modern economics has become very popular in China. For example, the China Center for Economic Research (CCER) at Peking University, of which I am the director, offers an undergraduate double degree in economics which admits 800 new students every year—a number equal to nearly one-third of all new undergraduate enrollment at Peking University. A new generation of Chinese economists is emerging.

Since Adam Smith published *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776, sparking the development of economics as an independent social science separate from philosophy, numerous famous economists have sprung up and a large number of researchers have devoted their lives to economic research. Currently, the *American Economic Review* publishes as many as 2000 pages per year, with other 1000 plus articles appearing annually in various first-tier academic journals. In addition, various schools and theories are appearing and different theoretical perspectives are emerging. In particular, since the 1950s, mathematics, statistics and econometrics have become common techniques in theoretical modeling and empirical testing in economic research. As a result, general readers without solid mathematical training are unable to directly track the development of modern economics.

For many years I have wanted to write a concise book similar to Ai Siqu's

Popular Philosophy to introduce the elementary propositions in modern economics in a lively style and through accessible examples, rather than complicated jargon and intricate mathematics, allowing readers to understand the basic ideas and analytic methods of modern economics. Further, the book would help readers understand the economic phenomena around them in their everyday lives. But, when I began to write, I found that this was much more easily said than done. Even writing a simple and understandable introduction for my own field—economic development—proved difficult. Given the added distraction of my administrative duties, I was never able to get very far, despite several attempts. Thus, when I first found Professor Partha Dasgupta's book, I immediately recognized the significance of his work.

Professor Partha Dasgupta has been my academic friend for years. We first met in October 1991. I had been invited to the International Economic Association Conference at Windsor, England, discussing the 1977 Nobel Laureate James Meade's new book *Agathotopia: The Economics of Partnership* (Agathotopia means 'good but not perfect', while Utopia means 'perfect but infeasible'). Meade had sought a 'third way' in his book, a road different from traditional capitalism or communism. In the words of Kenneth Arrow, the Nobel Prize laureate in 1972, it was a book that combines 'idealism and compassion with hard-headed analysis.' During the conference, I commented on Professor Partha Dasgupta's paper entitled 'Poverty, Resources and Fertility: The Household as a Reproductive Partnership'. Afterwards, both his paper and my comment were included in a volume entitled *Alternatives to Capitalism: The Economics of Partnership*, published by the International Economic Association in 1993. Since then we have seen each other in international academic activities, and our friendship has grown stronger.

Professor Partha Dasgupta was born in Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh now and at that time in India) and attended Cambridge after completing his undergraduate education at the University of Delhi in India. Professor Dasgupta received his PhD in Economics in 1968, and currently he is the Frank Ramsey Professor of Economics at the University of Cambridge and

Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Professor Dasgupta is an internationally renowned economist, and he has received many honors for his contributions to welfare economics; development economics; technological change; population, environmental and resource economics and game theory. Professor Dasgupta is a Fellow of the British Academy, Fellow of the Third World Academy of Sciences, Member of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Sciences, Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and he is a Past President of the Royal Economic Society and the European Economic Association. Professor Dasgupta was named Knight Bachelor by Queen Elizabeth II in 2002, won the 2002 Volvo Environment Prize and the 2004 Kenneth E. Boulding Memorial Award of the International Society for Ecological Economics, and received the John Kenneth Galbraith Award of the American Agricultural Economics Association in 2007. In a rare honor, in 2004 he was elected to the Royal Society, the oldest and most influential academy in the world. Fellows of the Royal Society include giants in the scientific history such as Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, and Albert Einstein. Every year the Fellows elect 44 new Fellows, and there are now 1,300 in total. In the past the Fellows were from scientific and mathematical fields, and Professor Dasgupta is the first economist in the 350 years of the Royal Society's history to be elected a Fellow. He is very likely to win the Nobel Prize in Economics for his remarkable contributions to environmental and resource economics.

Professor Dasgupta was born into an Indian family of economists in 1942. His father Amiya Dasgupta, who received his PhD at the London School of Economics in England, taught economics in India from 1926, and was respected as the father of modern economics and the 'economists' economist' in India. He had numerous students, including Amartya Sen, the winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize. Professor Dasgupta's father-in-law was the 1977 Nobel Prize laureate James Meade. However, Professor Dasgupta studied theoretical physics at the University of Delhi, and mathematics

when he first arrived at Cambridge. He did not switch to economics until 1965. At that time, the 1996 Nobel Prize winner Professor James Mirrlees received his PhD in Economics at the University of Cambridge and held the position of Lecturer at the department of economics. Professor Dasgupta asked Professor Mirrlees to be his supervisor, partly due to their common background in mathematics. Within three years, Professor Dasgupta completed three papers and received his PhD in 1968.

Like many other internationally renowned Indian economists, Professor Dasgupta's reputation as a theoretical economist rests on his strong mathematical training. However, his economic research is not purely theoretical, but explores the development of human society and human nature. Teaching at Stanford University from 1989 to 1992 he was jointly appointed as professor of economics and philosophy, and he also served as the Director of the Program in Ethics.

In 1995, the Oxford University Press launched a series of books, each giving a very short introduction to a particular field, and authors are well-known masters in academia. When Professor Dasgupta accepted the Press's invitation in 1999, he faced the same difficulty as I did in writing a *Popular Economics*. It took him a full seven years to finish writing the book. Through comparing the lives of two children, one living in Africa and the other in the United States, the book illuminates the economic influences of trust, households, communities, production organization, markets and government, and presents the achievements of economists from Adam Smith to the present day in the context of a key issue: what are the factors which determine whether a nation is rich or poor. From this examination, we learn that capital and natural resources, which are of public concern, are merely proximate causes in determining a nation's wealth. The fundamental factor is whether institutional arrangements are able to maximally motivate individuals to actively engage in working, learning, accumulation and innovation.

This book followed his masterpiece *An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution*, published in 1993, and added new theoretical developments in

economics and his own newly updated understanding of Smith's Question. However, *An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution* runs to 661 pages, with a reference section of 80 pages. Professor Dasgupta dedicated *An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution* to his father, and wrote in the preface that the book was his response to the question his father initiated many years ago. The book attempts to convey to his father 'This is what I think I know to be important, this is what I now believe, these are my values, this is how I think.' His father read several early chapters, and gave him some positive feedback. However, much to his regret *An Inquiry into Well-Being and Destitution* was not finished when his father died in 1992.

I learnt that Professor Dasgupta was working on this book when he gave the Yan Fu Memorial Lecture at CCER in September 2005. I received an English draft in 2006 and immediately recognized its merit. He introduces the achievements economists have made in regard to Smith's Question in a concise and accessible way, using language with both a litterateur's elegance and a mathematician's accuracy. This is exactly what I wanted to write, but was unable to. I immediately suggested translating the book into Chinese, and promised to write a foreword for the Chinese edition. As the Chinese edition goes to press, I hope it will help readers understand how economists observe the world and analyze problems from a rational perspective, and realize that a primary factor in determining the wealth of a nation are its institutions, while the amount of capital and natural resources, rich or poor, are merely the reflection of a nation's wealth.

January 16, 2008

At Langrun Garden

献给艾莎、沙米克和祖贝达,以父亲的爱

前言

为经济学写一本简介是一件既容易又困难的事情。说它容易,是因为从某种程度上讲,我们人人都可称得上是经济学家。例如,我们用不着别人来教给我们什么是价格——我们每天都要面对它。专家们或许需要解释,银行为什么要为储蓄存款提供利息,“风险厌恶”为什么是一个令人捉摸不透的概念,我们衡量财富的方法为什么在很大程度上偏离了衡量财富这件事的原本意义,但是所有这些其实我们都并不陌生。因为经济学与我们密切相关,当我们觉得事情不对头的时候,也会对于怎么把事情弄好持有自己的观点。我们会强烈坚持自己的观点,因为我们的道德观念会决定我们的政治立场,而我们的政治立场将影响我们的经济学。我们并不会在思考经济学问题的时候怀有疑虑。因此即便当我们试图揭示经济世界的形成途径的时候,我们研究经济学的原因也是一块“绊脚石”。但由于经济学在很大程度上和这些途径**有关**(它是一门尽可能以证据为基础的社会科学),丝毫不该令人感到惊奇的是,人们在经济问题上产生的分歧,最终常常是与他们**对“事实”的理解有关**,而与他们持有的“价值观”无关。因此为经济学写一本简介是一件很难的事情。

起初,当我为撰写这本书草拟计划时,我脑子里想的都是要为读者们展示一幅经济学的“概观”,就像顶尖的经济学期刊和教科书那样。但是,即使经济学的分析和实证核心在近几十年来已经变得越来越稳固,我面对那些教科书上给出的供讨论的话题(贫困地区的农村生活根本未被提到,而这是大约 25 亿人的经济生活),以及那些在顶尖经济学期刊上被作为重点的题目(大自然很少作为一个积极的参与者出现),却丝毫没有感到轻松。我同时完全理解了这件事情——牛津大学出版社要求我为经济学写出一本**非常简短**的介绍,而有的经济学教科书篇幅在 1000 页以上!我头脑中冒出一个念头:我应该放弃我原先的计划,转而描述我们经济学家为了理解我们周围这个社会性的世界而采用的**逻辑推理方法**,再将这种逻辑推理方法运用到我们人类当今所面临的一些最为紧要的问题中去。直到最近我才意识到,我只有将这部著作围绕我两位虚构的孙辈——贝基和德丝塔——来展开,才能够完成这一任务。贝基和德丝塔的生活有天壤之别,但由于她们都是**我的**孙辈,我相信我能够理解她们的生活。更加重要的是,是经济学帮助我理解她们的。

这里提出的观点已经在我的著作《贫富论》(牛津:克拉伦登出版社,1993)中形成并得到探索。在那本书的写作过程中,我意识到,经济学在不断地驱动着我的道德观念,而反过来我的道德观念又激活了我的政治立场。由于这是一种不寻常的因果链条,因此之前的那部著作要更加有技术性,更加“沉重”。自从它出版以来,理论和实证上的进步促使我目前更确定地坚持我在书中提出的观点。与那时相比,我对事物的理解更深,这包括**为什么**我对很多事情还不理解。目前这部著作是我对前一部

的自然拓展。

在这部专著的写作过程中,我从和以下诸位的通信和讨论中获益匪浅:肯尼斯·阿罗、格雷琛·德利、卡罗尔·达斯古普塔、保罗·埃尔利希、佩特拉·哲拉茨、劳伦斯·古尔德、提摩西·高尔斯、拉希德·哈桑、斯莉亚·艾尔、普拉米拉·克里施南、西蒙·莱温、卡尔-戈兰·马勒、埃里克·马斯金、普拉纳布·穆克帕德、凯文·芒福德、理查德·诺兰、塞拉·奥格尔维、克尔斯滕·奥尔森、阿拉克南达·帕特尔、萨布仁都·帕塔耐克、威廉·彼得森、哈米德·萨布里安、丹·施拉格、普里亚·施亚宋达、杰夫·文森特、马丁·维尔,以及嘉文·赖特。这一版本反映了下列人士对前一稿的意见:肯尼斯·阿罗、卡罗尔·达斯古普塔、杰弗瑞·哈科特、迈克·肖、罗伯特·索洛,以及希尔瓦娜·托马斯利。苏·皮尔金顿在这本书准备出版的过程中,从无数方面对我提供了帮助。我对他们所有人表示感谢。

圣约翰学院

剑桥

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