

頂禮 —— 毫無求全毀譽的修行

Bowing —— The Practice of No-Judgement

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頂禮是一種古老的禮儀，它似乎相當古怪而異類，尤其是在美國；但是我卻頂禮我的父母一陣子了。我之所以這樣做，並非因為我信仰這種古老的禮拜，而是因為我衷心感恩我的父母。因為我能理解他們，所以我能真正地尊敬他們——這是一體的兩面。

回顧過去，我想我的成長時期可說是不太如意；我十九歲時父母離婚，可是在這之前，他們已經分居八年了。當我小學五年級的時候，父親說希望我們到美國接受更好的教育；但是我們都知道，真正的原因是他有一個新歡。母親爲了這件事和他爭執不休，但一無所獲，反而加深了彼此間的不信任。

結果我們移居到美國。有很長的一段時間，我不喜歡美國的生活。在九〇年代初期，加州有一股很強烈的反移民風潮；有些同學時常取笑我，因此我感覺很自卑——現在回想，當時我應是非常憤怒的。由於在外無法自我保護，我把氣出在母親和弟弟身上，使他們也很不好過。

上了大學，我原想一切都會轉變。在中國父母的神話故事裏頭，大學是年輕男女永恆的天堂。只要你用功讀書上了大學，你就會遂心滿願。不知道爲什麼，我從未質疑這個說法；但是我很快地就醒悟，事實並不是如此單純。

大一前的暑假期間，我身在國外，母親竟忘記幫我申請學校宿舍；以致開學後，我無法住進宿舍裡。結果，我沒有交到什麼朋友，經常很孤獨。我也被大學裡的競爭



Bowing is an ancient rite. It seems quite strange and foreign—especially in America. But I have been bowing to my parents.

It is not because I believe in ancestral worship but because I appreciate their presence in me. Because I can apprehend them, I can truly respect them – a duality that exists in unity.

Looking back, I guess I can say my childhood and adolescence were not very satisfactory. My parents divorced when I was nineteen but they had already been separated for about eight years. When I was in fifth grade, my father told us that he wanted us to get a better education in America. We all knew it was because he had a new girlfriend. My mother had fought with him over this girlfriend but it only deepening their mistrust of each other.

We eventually moved to the United States. I did not like living in America for a long time. There was a strong anti-immigration sentiment in California in the early 90s. Some students often made fun of me, so I felt very inferior, and in retrospect, I was very angry. Unable to assert myself in public, I gave my mother and my brother a very difficult time.

When I entered college, I thought everything would change. In the fairy tales told by Chinese parents, college is where young men and women go to live happily ever after. Just study hard for college, and you will find everything you wish for. Somehow I never really questioned this belief. But I soon realized that things were not going to be this simple.

My mother forgot to submit my dorm application while I was outside the country. I did not get to live in the dorms when I returned after the summer. As a result, I did not make many friends and was often lonely. I was also shocked by the competitiveness in school. High school was easy but in college, you are with other students who excelled in their high schools. I began to realize that college is not a destination but just another starting point. I still had to work and compete in order to advance. In addition



性所震驚。高中的課業壓力並不大，但是在大學裡，你面對的都是各所高中的佼佼者。我開始覺悟：大學並不是終點站，而是另一個起跑點，我仍舊需要努力和他人競爭來提升自己。除了要拿好成績外，還得去實習；大學畢業後，還有找工作和升遷的壓力。當你跳脫一個環套後，還有另一個等著你，看來似乎是永無止境！

我感到迷失，在更深層次裏，我不知何去何從。就像是畏懼死亡般，這是一種持續的感覺；但是我很早就學會了不去想它。上大學前，我可以常常憧憬未來；上了大學後，照說我該享受人生最愜意的一段時光，然而我卻體認到：未來只有在想像中才美好！

我的轉捩點發生在一艘遊輪上，當時我正和家人度假旅行。旅途中，難免有些日子是在海上；對我而言，則是被困在遊輪上——這不只是被困在遊輪上，還是在一艘載滿興高采烈遊客的遊輪上。我不太瞭解他們興奮什麼？或許在遊輪上本該這般吧？然而，我卻十分沮喪，我開始思索我的問題——當我應該快樂的時候，為什麼我不快樂呢？

經過認真的思考後，我的結論是只有三個可能。第一個可能是，我還沒擁有我想要的東西。這道理似乎很簡單：當人們得到所想要的東西時，他們自然就會快樂。當然緊接而來的問題是：「我真正想要的是什麼呢？」我想，金錢、地位和女朋友都很可能是。不過，看看我的父親和他的朋友，都是事業有成，但是他們當中無人擁有我想要的快樂感。追求是永無止境的，再往深一層的推理，我甚至還懷疑我是否真的想要這些東西？或者它們會真的帶給我快樂？我實在不明白。

我同時也想起了VH1電視台的「音樂的背後」——這個採訪搖滾樂明星生活的節目。在「音樂的背後」常重複出現的一個主題是：人們夢想並努力成為搖滾樂明星，但當他們成功後，發現這並不是所想像的一回事；很快地，他們開始濫用藥物和其他自我毀滅的行爲。或許這聽起來很奇怪，但是我覺得這些搖滾明星的經驗，就像是我生活的寫照。我以為快樂就是去獲得一些東西，或實現某個目標；然而目標實現後，得到的往往並不是我所想像的。任何事物總是有限的，沒有盡善盡美的；因此即使達到目的，我仍然感到失望。

to good grades, there are internships to do, and after college, there are jobs and promotions to get. After I jumped through a hoop, there was another hoop waiting for me. There seemed to be no end to this.

I felt lost. At a deeper level, I felt directionless. It was a persistent feeling, like the fear of death, but I learned very early not to think about it. Before college, I could always look to the future. However after entering college, where I was supposed to have the time of my life, I realized that the future is only better in my imagination.

My turning point happened on a cruise ship with my family. On a cruise, there are certain days when you are stuck on the ship. In this case, it was not just being stuck on a ship, but being on a ship loaded with exuberant people. I am not sure what they were exuberant about, maybe because cruises are supposed to be filled with excitement. Anyway, I got depressed and started thinking about my problems – why wasn't I happy when I was supposed to be?

After some serious thinking, I concluded that there could only be three possibilities: One possibility was that I did not have what I wanted. It seemed simple: people are happy when they get what they want. Of course that raised the question, “What do I really want?” I thought money, status and a girlfriend would probably do it. However, looking at my father and his friends who had successful careers, none of them were happy in the sense that I wanted to be. There was always more to get and no end in sight. Plus, upon deeper examination, I wondered if I really wanted these things or if they would really bring me happiness. I really didn't know.

I also remembered the VH1 TV Show “Behind the Music” where they examine the life of rock stars. One recurring theme on “Behind the Music” is that people dreamed and tried very hard to be a rock star, but when they succeeded, they realized that it was not what they imagined. Soon they began to abuse drugs and engage in other self-destructive behaviors. It may sound strange, but I saw the rock stars' experience as a pattern in my own life. I thought that happiness was about getting something or achieving certain goals. However things were usually not what I imagined them to be. Things are just the way they are: limited and imperfect. Therefore, even when I achieved my goals, I was disappointed.

What was worse is that the belief that happiness can be obtained automatically puts one in a position of being in a state of unhappiness. It implies that I will be happier if I have more. Therefore I will never be happy, just “almost” happy. As a

更糟糕的是，相信「快樂可以獲得」，反而使我不快樂。這想法暗示著：當我擁有更多時，我將會更快樂。如此我將永遠不會真正的快樂，只會幾近快樂。結果，我排除了「快樂源自擁有」的可能性；雖然這個想法與主流社會的價值衝突。

第二個可能性，我認為父母失敗的婚姻大大地傷害了我，它必定對我的潛意識或其他方面造成了大影響。似乎生命中的每件事，你都可以自童年的經驗中追蹤出蛛絲馬跡。在電視上，我看到心理學家如何只是聽一個人現在的問題，就猜測出他童年的經歷。電視節目裏的分析幾乎是百試不爽，因此我覺得這個可能性是十分可信的；而且我能看出，我的父母已如何改變了我的人生。

然而這也有許多問題。當我再往深思考，誰會有十全十美的父母呢？我有一個姊姊和弟弟，我理想中的父母，未必是他們理想的父母。難道就因為父母不是聖賢，就不可能快樂？難道我們已像機器人一般的被程式設定了嗎？雖然這心理學上的論點乍聽下似乎相當可信，但是我必須摒棄它；因為如果它是正確的，世界上沒有人可能快樂的。

第三個可能性，是生命有更深的層面。或許我必須去深思一番，而不是不假思索，就輕易的接受世俗所接受的東西。究竟什麼是快樂呢？或者更重要的，我如何才會快樂？而根本的問題是：我究竟是誰呢？如果我尚且不知道我是誰，以及什麼能使我快樂，我又怎麼可能快樂呢？

乍看之下，似乎很顯然的，我就是這個人。但是，假如我真正瞭解自己，為什麼我不知道如何使自己快樂呢？如果我不瞭解我自己，那誰瞭解呢？我一向認為我對自己的瞭解比別人多，因為他人看不到我隱私的一面。不過我對自己的瞭解，也是來自於有限的觀點，所以我怎麼能保證我比別人瞭解得更真確呢？常看到別人自視甚高，超乎我對他們的評估；到底是他們如同他們自己所想的那麼高明，或是如我所認為的不那麼高明呢？

result, I dismissed the possibility that happiness can come from possessions even though it seemed to go against the values of mainstream society.

The second possibility, I thought, is that my parents really damaged me with their failed marriage. It must have somehow affected my subconscious or something. It seems that you can trace everything in your life back to your childhood experience. On TV, I saw how psychologists can guess a person's childhood experience just by listening to their current problems. Therefore I found this possibility quite plausible because the analysis on the TV shows are almost always correct, and I could definitely see how my parents could have changed my life.

Yet there were also many questions. As I thought more deeply, I wondered, "Who has the perfect parents?" I have a brother and a sister. The perfect parents for me may not be the perfect parents for them. Is happiness impossible just because our parents are not saints? Are we like robots that are programmed for life? Although the psychological argument sounded compelling at first, I had to dismiss it because if it were true, no one could possibly be happy.

The third possibility was that there was something deeper in life. Maybe I needed to examine things more closely and not simply accept what was commonly accepted by most people in society. What is happiness? Or more importantly, how can I be happy? And above all, who am I? How can I be happy if I don't even know who I am and what makes me happy?

At first, it seemed obvious, I am this person. But if I know myself so well, how come I don't know how to make myself happy? If I do not know myself, who does know? I tend to think that I know myself more than others because I have a private side that others do not see. However my knowledge of myself also comes from a limited perspective, so how do I know it is more true? Sometime I saw people who thought of themselves as being higher than I would think of them. Are they as high as they think of themselves or as low as I thought of them?

These questions were much more difficult than I expected. So I began thinking and thinking. Every question seemed to raise more questions so I got quite confused. I kept thinking even after the cruise ended. My family all gathered at my aunt's house, but I kept thinking. We all went to the mall to go shopping, but I kept thinking.

I guess I wasn't really thinking, it was more like I was self-absorbed, and so I wasn't much interested in shopping. I saw a coffee stand and went over to buy a cup of coffee. Since I



這些問題比我所預期的困難多了，所以我開始再三思考；每個問題似乎引發更多的問題，我因而迷惑了。即使旅遊結束後，我仍繼續思索著；我們齊聚在姑媽家，但我仍繼續思索著；大家去逛購物中心，但我仍繼續思索著。

我想我並不是真正地在思考，而是陷於沉思中，所以我根本無心購物。我看見一個咖啡亭，就走過去買了一杯咖啡。因為我已好一段日子沒喝到咖啡了，所以我感覺滿好的，而且陶醉其中。然後有一個想法出現了——這杯咖啡其實不是真的那麼好，為什麼我這麼欣然呢？

我之所以這麼欣然於喝這杯咖啡，想必是因為我已有好一段時間沒喝到好咖啡了。這說來可能有點荒唐，可是當時就好像我頭腦裡面「叮」了一聲似的。在察覺我的心是如何從一個境界轉變到另一個境界之後，我領悟到：我對世界的體驗，其實是一大堆詮釋的結果。我的價值觀是透過判斷和比較而產生的。終究快樂和不快樂，只是來自我對事情解讀的一個念頭；因此我自有這種能力，只要去抉擇，就會快樂，毋需仰賴任何外物。這並不同於外出狂歡，而是在安祥中，欣然賞識當下，知道最終一切都沒有問題。

除了這種自由和喜樂的感覺之外，我頓時覺得整個世界都明亮起來；每個東西似乎都更加美好，每個人似乎都更加可愛。這種感覺相當合理，因為我所經驗的世界是我自己詮釋的；當我的感覺改變時，我所經歷的世界也自然隨之而變。

我的喜樂延續了約兩三天，直到我和人爭吵後才中斷。我試著迅速找回這種感覺，但是它減弱了些；隨著每次的衝擊和中斷，這感覺逐漸地消弱。

我試圖去理解我的轉變，希望能因此而持續我所經歷的感受。直覺地，我就去找宗教書籍來閱讀；我知道我不可能在一般的書籍裡找到答案，因為它們是依據世俗的時、空、人、我等經驗而寫的。我並不是不相信這些東西的存在，而是我相信它們和快樂沒有什麼關係。我相信人們都渴望能快樂，既然現在我領悟到快樂並不是依

hadn't had a coffee for a while, it felt kind of nice, and I really enjoyed it. Then a thought came to me – this coffee is actually not that good! How come I enjoy it so much?!

It seems that I enjoyed it because I haven't had a good coffee for a while. It might sound weird but it was like something clicked in my head. My experience of the world was largely interpreted, I realized after seeing how my mind shifted from one perspective to another. Through judgments and comparisons, I created values. Ultimately happiness and unhappiness were just a thought derived from my interpretation of the situation. Thus I had the power to just choose and be happy, without reliance on anything external. It is not like the happiness of going to a party, but more like being at peace, enjoying and appreciating the moment knowing that everything is going to be OK.

Along with this feeling of freedom and happiness, I felt the whole world somehow brightened. Everything seemed more beautiful and everyone seemed more likeable. This feeling made sense because the world I experienced was interpreted by myself; when my feelings changed, the world I experienced changed as well.

My happiness lasted for about two or three days until it got interrupted when I got into an argument. I tried to return to the feeling quickly, but it was a little diminished. With every shock and interruption, the feeling continued to fade.

I tried to comprehend the transition I had, wishing to sustain what I experienced. Instinctively I looked for religious books. I knew I could not find explanations in typical books because they were written based on mundane experiences: space, time, self and others. Not that I don't think these things exist, but I think they don't matter much in terms of happiness. I believe that people are most concerned about being happy. Now that I saw that happiness was independent of these things, I viewed these things as not extremely important.

I settled on Buddhist books. Growing up with a Buddhist grandma, I already had a leaning towards Buddhism. However, my understanding of Buddhism was only superficial. I gave other religions some thought, but most of them were centered on worshipping a Creator. I was not very interested in the questions relating to a Creator, because it seemed to be a distant question when I did not even know my "self". ☸ To be continued

賴在這些東西上，因而我認為這些東西不是那麼重要。

我決定研讀佛教的書籍。我是在信佛的祖母身邊長大的，所以我原本就靠向佛教，不過我的瞭解是很膚淺的。我考慮過其他宗教，但是他們大部份以崇拜造物者為中心。我對造物者的問題並不是很感興趣，因為當我尚不能瞭解「自己」時，探討有關造物者的問題似乎太遙遠了。

☞待續