

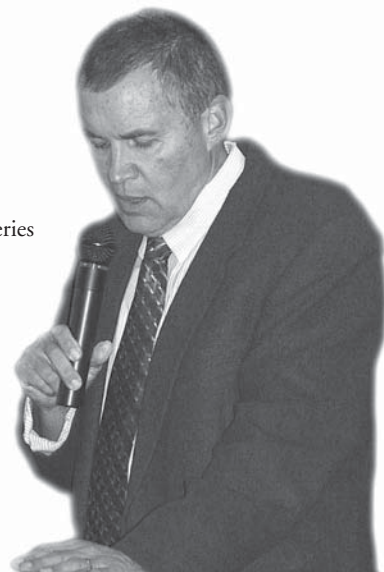
*Buddhism and Modernity:
An Ancient Tradition Faces the Twenty-first Century*

佛教與現代：
面對廿一世紀的古老傳統（續）

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This description of a subtly interconnected universe leads me to a second point about the modern world: its orientation is almost exclusively scientific. Science is grounded in the notion that a rigorous study of cause and effect leads us to the truth and frees us from false and limited ideas. Similarly, Buddhism is committed to the attainment of truth and to observing cause and effect—the impartial and universal law of karma. This is not to say, however, that science and Buddhism have identical views of cause and effect. From a Buddhist perspective, science has a very limited and imprecise understanding of this phenomenon. Whenever science cannot figure out the relationship of cause and effect in a given situation, it falls back on the concepts of “chance” or “randomness” or “probability.”

So, when scientists ask, “Why or how did the Universe first come into being—what was the initial cause?” their answer is invariably, “Chance, the Big Bang, an anomaly of energy somewhere.” “Why was I in a car accident this afternoon? Well, it was just chance, bad luck.” It would seem then, that the entire foundation of science is saved by the concept of chance. In this regard, Buddhism would appear much more modern than science. Buddhism, in fact, would find science somewhat superstitious. As science makes rather insistent claims to the universal validity of its findings, one might say even dogmatic claims, how can it accept such a large element of chance? A Buddhist might suspect that the reason science resorts to such a vague explanation based on the concept of chance is because it has not, or cannot, rigorously investigate the true cause and effect.

The workings of cause and effect as understood in Buddhism occur simultaneously on a multitude of levels—one could probably say there are thousands of different

以上對於宇宙微妙互聯的描述，可以繼續延伸到第二個現代世界觀：絕對科學化的源起論。所謂「科學」，就是主張嚴謹的因果研究有助於找到真理，並且避免錯誤或是局限的想法。佛法，同樣也是探索真理和觀察「因果」——也就是無黨無偏的業力。雖然如此，這並不是說科學與佛教對「因果」抱持相同的見解。從佛法的觀點，科學對現象的理解是非常有限和不精確的。每當科學在某些情況下，無法解釋因與果的關係時，就歸因於「巧合」、「隨機」或是「機率」。

所以當科學家問：「宇宙最初為何或是如何形成的？什麼是最開始的因？」他們的答案總是：「巧合，大爆炸，某處一團異常的能量。」那「為什麼今天下午我會遇上交通意外？」「喔，這是巧合，運氣不好嘛！」好像整個科學的基礎，都可以用「巧合」的觀念來解釋。這一方面，佛法似乎比科學更現代化，而且事實上會發現科學有點兒迷信。如果科學堅稱、甚至斷言所發現的是絕對無誤時，怎麼可能又同時接受像「巧合」這麼大的一個因子呢？身為佛教徒，也許只能推測科學之所以訴諸「巧合」這種模糊概念，是因為它還沒找到或是無法找到嚴謹探究真正因果的方法。

佛教對因果的理解是全面而且多層次的——可以說是數幾千個不同的層面。當我們不明白今生為什麼會發生這種事時，那是因為我們缺乏透視這層因果的智

levels of cause and effect. When we cannot understand why something is happening in our life, it is simply because we lack the wisdom to see into that level of cause and effect, not because any event or condition derives from chance or randomness. So science, though useful and to some extent accurate, offers a limited tool of understanding when addressing the most subtle and significant aspects of phenomena. Yet science holds sway over our modern world.

So does freedom, the third modern concept I wish to address. People place great value on being free and are even willing to die for it. The contemporary notion of freedom traces its roots back to some key intellectuals in the European traditions, most notably Plato, Nietzsche, Locke, Mill and Freud. Western psychology—Freud in particular—developed the concept that freedom means acting on one's desires. In other words, every action allowing for uninhibited expression of desires represents freedom. Thus, many modern people, either consciously or unconsciously, adhere to the belief that acting on their impulses, emotions and desires constitutes an act of freedom or an avenue to freedom.

From a Buddhist standpoint, this notion is totally twisted around. One of the Buddha's first and most fundamental awakenings centered on the insight that to act on desire—on impulse, on instinct—is actually a form of bondage. Desire, rather than expressing our more refined sensibilities, is instinctual or karmic in nature. It's a pattern, an almost involuntary reflex that actually holds us in bondage to a previous habit pattern. Every time we yield to and act on a habitual desire, it becomes more ingrained and consequently harder to break free of. If, for example, I take a drink of alcohol, the first act of drinking the alcohol might seem liberating. But with the first drink, I've set in motion a process of enslavement whereby each subsequent drink renders me less and less free. With each drink I become less capable of sound judgment and self-control. But more importantly, the illusory feeling of freedom the drink provides is located outside my own mind and power, and therefore ironically increases my dependence.

Buddhism has a very important principle to offer to the modern world: the concept of true freedom. True freedom paradoxically comes from not grasping. It exists already within our nature and so is absolute, something we cannot lose. This distinction between the conventional and the Buddhist understandings of freedom is a critical concept and needs to be better understood by everyone. Freedom,

不是因為任何碰巧或隨機的緣故。因此科學雖然有用，並且具有某種程度的準確性，但論及探索事相最微細且最重要層面時，只能做為一種很有限的工具而已，然而它卻支配著現今的世界。

第三個現代概念——「自由」，也是如此。「自由」被視為人生的最高價值，甚至為它而死也在所不惜。近代對「自由」的概念可追溯至幾位重要的歐洲哲人，最值一提的是柏拉圖、尼采、洛克、彌爾和弗洛伊德。西方心理學，尤其是弗洛伊德，提出「自由」就是個人按欲而行的觀念；換句話說，恣情縱欲就是自由。於是很多現代人，有意識或是無意識地堅守著這信念，跟隨著衝動、情緒和欲望行事，這就是自由的表現、通往自由的道路。

以佛法的觀點而言，這種想法完全是扭曲事實的。佛陀最初也是最重要的覺悟之一，就是體認到聽由欲念、衝動和直覺的指揮行事，其實是一種束縛。這裏說的欲望，不是指細膩感性的表達，而是指受業力支配而產生的。它幾乎是非自主性的反射，使我們死死地被綁在過去的習氣之中。每當我們屈服於欲望而任它指揮時，它就變得更牢固，令我們更難以從中解脫。譬如喝酒，第一次喝酒時，或許感覺是一種解脫；但跟隨著這第一杯酒而來的，是一連串被奴役的過程，因為往後的每杯酒都令我們越來越做不得主，漸漸失去正確判斷和自我控制的能力。而更重要也是很諷刺的，就是喝酒不但沒有令我們解脫，反而變得愈加依賴，因為酒帶來幻影般的自由不是源於內心，也不是我們用自己的努力而獲得的。

對於當今的社會現象，佛教提供了一個非常重要的準則，那就是真正自由的觀念。異於一般人想法的，佛法裏講的真正自由並不是來自「得到想要的」，而是「不想要得到」；簡單地說，自由就是能從欲望中解脫，從貪婪中解脫，從習氣中解脫。它不是營求，更不是去贏取；相反地，它是放下，或者說得更清楚一點，就是不要緊抓著不放。自由，本然具足地存在我們的自性裏，所以它是永遠絕對不會遺失的東西。因此，一般人以及佛教徒對自由的理解，兩者間的差別處是很重要的，我們每一個人都需要好好地去認識明白。自由，這個現代人如此努力想得到的東西，其實任何人都伸手可及的；而想獲得這種自由唯一的途徑，就是克服我們的習氣，克服我們的欲望。唯有超越它們，才能到達清淨平和的心靈之境。

第四個佛教與現代化的交集處，就是倫理道德，特別是如何立身處世。世界「進步」以後，其中的一個受害者就是「道德」。「現代化」與「世俗化」攜手

which the modern world is striving so hard to attain, is within the grasp of any person. But the only way to attain this kind of freedom is to overcome our habits and our desires, to get past them and reach a clear, more peaceful place.

Morality is the basis by which we interact with each other in a meaningful way. Without it, we can't trust each other. For instance, if a person tells a lie, that person's trustworthiness is compromised, the character of that person diminished, and the basic foundation of a relationship built on honesty has been damaged. The entire globalized world is becoming increasingly spiritually bankrupt, no longer able to derive meaning from God, traditional religion, or even an ethical identity rooted in family or nation. It is in great need of some sort of morality. There are close to six billion people in the world now, so the situation is critical. What are the shared ground rules for relating with one another? Without a set of principles to engage in moral discourse, we will ineluctably slide into an anarchy not unlike that described by the poet Yeats in "The Second Coming":

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity. . . .*

And it is here that Buddhism potentially has the greatest contribution to make to modernity. With every additional human being, the need for morality increases, if only for the obvious reason that such close proximity and growing interconnectedness requires rules by which we can interrelate with each other in a peaceful way. Buddhism puts forth a concept of morality and virtue that is not based on dogma nor upon a set of rules that comes from outside the realm of human beings. Buddhist ethics make no claims to divine authority or revelation; they derive not from a God or anything outside human existence.



☞ To be continued

而行，因此傳統價值以及宗教無法與這個被科學統治、享樂主義獲勝，以及缺乏道德做為信仰基礎的時代對話。現在的文化就是及時行樂，陶醉在前所未有的財富中。一種陷入心靈焦慮世紀的感覺瀰漫著我們，更甚者是，在欠缺具說服性的宗教傳統時，無節制的市場原則以及反社會的全球化經濟，則權充起「道德」或「價值觀」填補了這個真空——這樣的後果是很可怕的。

有了道德，人類才能以有意義的方式彼此交往；若缺少了道德，人們便無法互相信任。例如一個人如果說謊，他的信用就受損，人格降低，並且以誠信為基礎的人際關係也破壞了。整個地球村的精神生活瀕臨破產，不再能從上帝、傳統宗教、甚至家庭倫理或是國家倫理中汲取人生的意義，因此極需要道德的觀念。現在世界有將近六十億的人口，所以情況是很棘手的。什麼是人我彼此聯繫的基本共同法則呢？社會若是欠缺提倡道德的思想，必然地會陷入像詩人葉慈在《再度降臨》詩裏描述的混亂狀態：

*旋轉又旋轉著更大的圈子，
獵鷹聽不見放鷹人的呼喚；
一切已崩潰，抓不住重心；
純然的混亂淹沒了世界，
血腥的濁流出閘，而四方
淳厚的風俗皆已蕩然；
上焉者毫無信心，下焉者
滿腔是激情的狂熱…*

(詩人余光中中譯)

而這正是佛教能為當今做出最大貢獻的地方。世界上只要每增加一個人，對道德的需求就會隨之增加。理由很簡單，因為人與人之間日漸遞減的距離以及遞增的聯繫，確實需要一些法則來維持和諧的互動。佛法所教導的道德，並不是基於教條所要求，或是世間外的另一套規則。佛教裡所談的倫理道德，沒有提到任何的神權或是神諭；這種道德的觀念，並不是來自某一位神，或是人類以外的任何一種生物。

☞ 待續