

*Buddhism and Modernity:*

*An Ancient Tradition Faces the Twenty-first Century (Continued)*

佛教與現代：

## 面對廿一世紀的古老傳統（續）

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One reason that the world is currently having so much trouble getting secure moral bearings grows out of our changing relationships to the monotheistic religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. All the major religions, of course, have long-standing and admirable ethical codes. But much of their difficulty in providing a common moral ground stems from two factors:

1. They trace their origins and authority to a transcendent divine being—a concept that is under siege in time of widespread secularization and scientific empiricism. As people begin to believe less in a God or a supernatural being, the morality connected to that being simultaneously becomes suspect. Doubt grows into disbelief, and soon the absence of a personal God undercuts any firm sense of morality and virtue.

2. Each religion makes claims of exclusivity for its particular belief system. Even when trying to be open minded and inclusive, each historically and as a matter of dogma believes in its objective superiority to all other religions. Thus, the good points of other religions, such as their moral teachings, are often dismissed outright or seen as incomplete expressions of the absolute truth of one's own faith, which is destined to replace them.

Buddhism, in its humanistic moral voice, meshes with the modern more closely than an ethical system appealing to divine authority. Its morality is something that we find within the human experience and need not go beyond the human realm to be plausible. Its precepts fall within the human experience of karma. The Five Precepts, which comprise the foundation of Buddhism's moral code, exist to deal with the main issues and counteract the real problems of human existence.

The appeal of Buddhist ethics is existential—virtue is reasserted not as absolute or transcendent truth but as a pragmatic ground from which to regulate human interaction. The vinaya (ethical precepts) provides a criteria for human interaction, including both the good and evil inclinations of human nature. The order of the precepts are traditionally: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, and no intoxicants.

The first precept of not killing is basic to existence. Respecting the

現 在世界這麼難以穩固道德觀念的其中一個原因，是人們與基督教、猶太教和伊斯蘭教這些一神論的宗教關係改變了。當然所有世界的主要宗教，都有其歷史悠久和令人敬仰的道德規範，但是基於以下兩個因素，都無法提出一個能為彼此認同的道德基礎。

信仰的起源和權威歸溯於一個超然的神體，因此飽受泛世俗化和科學驗證思想的圍攻。當人們漸漸不再相信「神」或某個超自然體時，與這個信仰體共生的道德觀自然便遭受質疑。於是「懷疑」變為「不相信」，很快地失去對神的信仰後，自然也削去了堅穩的道德感。

各個宗教都主張自己所信仰的系統是獨一無二的，即使嘗試開放與包容，但基於歷史或教條的因素，還是堅信自己的宗旨高於旁人。於是其它宗教的好處例如道德教育，便常常被徹底否決，或者被認為不足以表達吾教所信仰的真理，而最終是要被取代。

比起訴諸神權的道德系統，主張人性化道德的佛教較為吻合現代化的社會。佛教所講的道德是可以在人類的經驗中找到，不需超出人類世界外才顯得具有說服力。佛教的戒律存在人類對因果的經驗裏，而「五戒」為佛教裡所有戒律的基礎，目的就是幫助人類處理世間的主要問題，以及解決人生真正的問題——「生死」。

佛教注重「道德」是有原因的。重複強調道德的重要，並不是為了樹立一種絕對或超然的真理，而是為了奠定人類互動的堅實基礎。佛教的戒律（道德規則）提供一套人類交往的準繩，其中兼顧人性善與性惡的傾向。傳統上，五戒的順序為：不殺生，不偷盜，不淫邪，不妄語，以及不飲酒。

life of others is fundamental to any community. Not killing simply permits other people and animals to exist, thus enabling them to follow their own causes and conditions. Such understanding of a mutual wish to live seems almost innate. In a more developed form, this recognition matures into compassion and empathy for other lives. This respect for life underpins the implied social contract that binds us together and allows us to get along in this world. I have respect for your life; you have respect for my life. As Albert Schweitzer put it, "I am life that wills to live in the midst of life that wills to live." As a minimum requirement for our mutual existence, reverence for life is not based on a faith in a transcendental truth. It issues from the most immediate observation of our environment and constitutes the sine qua non of human interaction.

The second precept is not stealing. Beyond its obvious meaning of not taking what does not belong to you, the word "stealing" on a deeper level refers to the coveting and envy we feel for what other people have. If the spirit of the first precept prevails, then the respect and empathy you feel for others lets you enjoy their enjoyment of what they have. Compassion would not generate a thought to take what others have. On the other hand, the Buddhist precept of not stealing includes not hoarding or consuming more than you need. If people follow this precept, the environmental and economic implications of this concept would be profound. Thus, although the precept relies on the individual to uphold it, the chain reaction of cause and effect touches the entire social and natural web.

The third precept addresses the power and potential confusions around sexual desire. Sexual desire is a major driving force in our lives. If we do not bring this desire under control, we can have no freedom. Sexual misconduct wrecks relationships and destroys families. It can bind people in confused and often abusive relationships—physical, emotional, spiritual. Buddhism is very clear on this point: to master one's karma, one must be in control of sexual desire. This departs significantly from the modern secular view informed by Western psychology: that acting on desire bestows freedom. The freedom of desire that is so emblematic of modern thought, Buddhism sees as a formula for bondage.

The whole development of Western psychology from Freud to the present has confused freedom with the release of desire. This view lies at the heart of the modern free market economic way of life. The promised gratification of desire sustains and propels capitalism. Consumer products are rather coarsely presented as thinly veiled surrogates for sexual pleasure. We seek to increase our purchasing power so as to give free rein to acquisitive fantasies that we believe hold the keys to our freedom. Money derives its power from the access it gives to greater releases of this energy. This trend favors the most primitive instinctual drives of mankind, and any appeal made to nobler purposes meets with immediate cynicism and dismissal. Buddhism bucks this trend by asserting quite

第一條「不殺戒」，對一切生物而言，這是最基本的。尊重他人的生命，是任何團體最基本的要求。不殺，就等於容許其他人及動物的存在，從而讓他們能跟隨自己的因緣。這種對彼此生存意願的理解，可說是與生俱來的；更進一步的，這種理解會形成對其他生命的慈悲心和同理心。對生命的尊重，構成一份維繫眾生共處共容的不明文社會契約——我尊重你的生命，你尊重我的生命。如同艾伯特·史懷哲所說的：「我是想要活下去的生命，與許多也想活下去的生命一起存活。」因此，尊重生命並不是基於對某種超自然真理的信仰，而是維持人我共存的最低要求；它是源自對這個環境最直接的觀察，並是構成人類互動中一個不可或缺的元素。

第二條「不偷戒」。「偷」這個字，除了指不取非己物，更深一層地還包括內心垂涎和妒忌他人所擁有的。如果明白第一條戒的精神，那麼對他人的慈悲心和同理心將使我們能夠隨喜他人的快樂；有慈悲心，將不會生出奪人所有的念頭。另一方面，佛教的「不偷戒」還包括不囤積或是使用超過我們所需的，人類如果遵守這條戒律，那麼對環境及經濟造成的影響將極為深遠。因此雖然只是個人在持戒，但因果的連鎖效應將會波及整個社會及大自然。

第三條「不邪淫戒」，強調淫欲主宰人類的力量和可能造成的困惑。「性慾」是人類生活主要的驅動力之一，因此如果不好好地控制這種欲望，我們將不會得到自由。不正當的性行為破壞了正常的兩性關係，同時也摧毀彼此的家庭，它令人陷入肉體上、感情上，以及精神上紊亂和氾濫的兩性關係裏。佛法很清楚地告訴我們：為自己的因果負責，一定要控制自己的性慾。這和深受西方心理學影響的現代觀有很明顯的分歧，他們主張隨欲而行就是自由。這種象徵現代思想的「欲望自由」，佛法卻視之為一種束縛。

整個西方心理學的發展從弗洛伊德開始迄今，都誤認「欲望解放」就是「自由」，而這種觀點正好切中現代自由市場經濟的生活方式。欲望實現的滿足感支持並推動著資本主義，消費品被很粗俗地包裝為性愛之樂的替代品。人們努力地提升購買力，放肆地以為這樣便是掌握了開啟自由之門的鑰匙，於是金錢讓人得以宣洩更多的欲望，同時也藉此汲取它主宰人類的力量。這種趨勢潮流袒護了人類最原始的欲望，因此任何標榜

unequivocally that genuine freedom is freedom from desire, and that acting on desires simply prolongs dependency and bondage.

The fourth precept concerns honest speech. As any real communication between people is based on honesty, honesty is the foundation of any relationship. A relationship lacking in trust and honesty drifts into uncertainty; everything is indeterminate, unknown. There is no basis for communication, leaving every aspect of the relationship open to manipulation and strategy. If one is dishonest once in a relationship, the nature of that relationship changes forever. There is always a little doubt, a slight scar that never fully heals. This highlights the importance of virtue as providing a place where a person can stand on solid ground internally and be trusted by others. Honesty, however, goes beyond grounding our interpersonal relationships. It also shapes our own narrative voice and identity. It is only through being honest with ourselves that we can make any headway on developing personal wisdom and insight.

The fifth precept cautions against taking drugs and alcohol. This warning does not stem from the puritanical fear that “somewhere, someone is having a good time.” Rather, it represents a nurturing impulse to safeguard clarity of mind, which is so essential to insight and genuine knowledge. Most external chemicals change our fundamental ability to concentrate and penetrate to our essence. Instead of empowering or catalyzing inner energy, they foster dependence on something external. Both the substance and the function become habit forming. Even when the experience of drugs and alcohol brings pleasure, it causes a sense of inauthenticity, because the cause of the happiness is not really our own awareness. The state is caused by something outside that takes us over. Buddhism contends that our nature is basically clear and complete; when we grasp and attach to limited states of mind, we cloud over this natural enlightenment.

Thus, as we enter this unprecedented period of global interconnectedness and material progress, we find ourselves sorely challenged to turn this opportunity to our collective and personal advantage. Many of the very values that have brought us to this historical opening now threaten to undermine its promise. Poverty, environmental degradation, overpopulation, economic maldistribution, civil wars, terrorism and technological power daily outstrip our ethical wisdom to control them. Ironically, one of the most ancient spiritual philosophies, Buddhism, holds out the brightest prospects for addressing the pressing issues of modernity. In terms of individualism, science, freedom and morality, Buddhism offers a unique analysis and creative potential for reinterpreting these key elements so as to advance the human condition rather than degrade it. Its basic ethical code can confront and counteract the more destructive tendencies of human nature, while at the same time liberate its fullest expression: enlightenment.

更高尚人生目標的訴求，都會立即遭到譏諷和否決。然而佛教並未向這一股潮流低頭，反而相當明確地表示：真正的自由就是離欲，恣欲而行只會讓人失去更多的獨立性而受其奴役。

第四條戒，是關於誠實的言論。由於人類間的任何一種溝通都必須基於「誠實」，因此誠實是所有人際關係的基礎。一段缺乏信任和誠實的關係會陷入不確定感——所有的事情都含糊、不可知；溝通缺乏基礎，導致任何事情都可以被操縱和計謀。一旦一次不誠實，這段關係將永遠變質，因為總有一點疑慮，就向一道永遠無法復原的疤。這凸顯出德行的重要，是一個人的立身之基，並且能贏得他人的信任。事實上，誠實不僅構成人際關係的基礎，同時塑造自我的敘事聲音和身份，因為唯有對自己誠實，我們才能在個人智慧和靈性的啟發有所進步。

第五條戒是提醒我們小心毒品和酒精。這種警告不是源於像「某人某處正在享受好時光」的禁慾式恐懼，而是積極正面地希望保持心地清明，這對個人的洞察力和真正智慧是非常重要的。大部份外來的化學物質會改變我們專注和透視內在的本能，因為它們滋長我們對外在事物的依賴性，而不是強化或催化個人內在潛能，結果形成質能性與官能性的依賴。即使嗑藥和喝酒能帶來快感，但這並不是真實的感覺，因為這快樂不是來自我們的自我意識；這種快樂的狀態，是外來物質控制我們所引起的。佛陀的教導是，我們的自性是本然具足清淨的，當抓住和執著於有限的心境時，我們便障蔽了這本然的覺性。

因此，當進入前所未有的全球互聯和物質進步的時代，我們發現自己正面臨嚴厲的挑戰，必須掌握機會創造共同及個別的優勢。許多帶領人類走到這空前時期的思想價值，現在正威嚇著要棄守它們的承諾；貧窮、環境品質下降、人口過盛、貧富不均、內戰、恐怖主義和科技勢力，幾乎日日凌駕於人類所能控制的道德智慧之上。諷刺的是，一種最古老的精神哲學——佛教，卻能最明智的勘驗出當今迫切的問題。在個人主義、科學、自由和道德這四個方面，佛教都能提出獨特的分析和創意，去重新解讀這些現代化的重要概念，從而促進人類的進步而非向後衰退。佛教的基本道德規範能抑制、抗衡人性漸趨毀滅的傾向，同時展現出最極致的面貌，那就是「覺悟」。