

Buddhist Economics

佛教經濟學

A talk given by Professor Clair Brown at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on December 8, 2018

Chinese Translated by Ling ChinBen & Ma ChinXi

克蕾兒·布朗教授2018年12月8日講於萬佛殿
凌親本、馬親喜 中譯



Editor's Note: Dr. Clair Brown is a renowned professor of Economics at UC Berkeley. She has been a Buddhist for years. In 2017, she published a book, *Buddhist Economics* revealing the inequalities in the current economic system and calling on people to care for each other and the environment rather than engaging in overconsumption.

編按：著名經濟學教授克蕾兒·布朗博士任教於柏克萊大學經濟系，她信仰佛教多年，於2017年出版「佛教經濟學」一書，指出現行經濟體系不平等，呼籲人類互相關懷，並關懷地球，而不應過度消費。

Thank you all for coming to care for each other and for mother earth during a period of enormous crisis. We hear repeatedly that carbon emissions are injurious to life on earth. We have lived for four decades with inequality and climate change that has gotten increasingly worse because of carbon emissions. I hope that when you leave tonight, you'll understand the problem from an economic viewpoint, and that there are solutions that will help our economy and all of us.

To understand Buddhist economics, please ask yourself, "What makes my life meaningful?" "What do I need in my economic system to support my livelihood and to have a meaningful life?" After decades of teaching economics at UC Berkeley, my students

感謝所有來賓，在這充滿危機的年代，本著對人類和地球的關心共聚一堂。我們常聽說碳排放危害地球上的生命。我們經歷了四十年的不平等，隨著碳排放的增加，氣候也日趨惡化。我希望今晚能夠幫助大家從經濟學的觀點去理解這個問題，並認識解決經濟問題的方法。

要了解佛教經濟學，請大家們心自問——什麼能讓我們的生活變得有意義？我們需要什麼來維持生計且過著有意義的生活？我在加州大學伯克萊分校任教數十年的經濟

say that the system we teach, based on so-called “free market” economics, doesn’t create a workable economy, only one that’s unequal, where the fruits of economic growth are going to the top 1-5% richest people.

As a practicing Buddhist, I contemplate this question from a spiritual point of view. How would the Buddha teach economics? Actually, the worldview of the Buddhist, the ecologist, or anyone with a spiritual life, is one that regards all people as interdependent with one another and with the planet.

This concept of interdependence was introduced in 1971 by ecologist Barry Commoner, a founder of modern ecology. The Buddha also taught that all living beings are interdependent and that all things are impermanent. This is something every scientist will tell you—that everything is impermanent and always changing, because we live in a dynamic system. With compassion, we can reduce suffering in a world that’s interdependent.

The free market model’s economic goal is to maximize national income, so all it considers is the average income per person. It is unimportant how income is distributed; people just want to keep maximizing it. In Buddhist economics, the goal is to provide well-being for all people in a sustainable world. You can see that these are two different ways of viewing the world and setting up the economy. One is obsolete, and one is what we urgently need in today’s world. But how do we create a healthy Buddhist economy?

It is really important to start caring—not as

學和其他課程，學生們告訴我，我所教的是基於所謂的自由市場經濟，這對經濟發展毫無作用，只會帶來不平等，讓所有的經濟成長都集中在少數1-5%的富人手中。

作為一個潛心修行的佛教徒，我從精神層面思考這個問題——佛陀會如何教經濟學？實際上，任何一位佛教徒、生態學家或有精神生活的人，他們的世界觀裡都會認為，人類與地球都是緊密共生，互依互存的。

這種相互依存性是生態學創始人巴里·康芒納在1971年提出的一條法則。佛陀就教導過我們：眾生相依，萬物無常。這也是每個科學家都會告訴你的——事事無常，瞬息萬變，因為我們生活在一個動態系統中。我們就有責任關心人類的精神，不管有何信仰，我們都應該慈悲互動。有了慈悲心，我們就能在一個相互依存的世界裡減少痛苦。

自由市場模式的目標是盡可能提高國民所得，唯一重視的就是國民平均所得，而非資源分配。而佛教經濟學的目標是為所有人，在可以永續發展的世界中提供福祉。由此可見，有兩種截然不同的方式來看待世界和建

Actually, the worldview of the Buddhist, the ecologist, or anyone with a spiritual life, is one that regards all people as interdependent with one another and with the planet.

實際上，任何一位佛教徒、生態學家或有精神生活的人，他們的世界觀裡都會認為，人類與地球都是緊密共生，互依互存的。

one person, but as an interdependent being who works with all. Actually, it's quite easy to help care for others, because when we care for the earth, we care for our community; when we care for the sangha or our neighbors, we are caring for everyone.

Aristotle said that happiness comes from self-realization and living a worthy and moral life. He discusses the importance of giving back to the community. In fact, many philosophers preach altruistic love, which is the Buddhist's notion of compassion. Buddhism's Four Noble Truths highlight that we all suffer and that this suffering originates from our craving and desires. Buddhism teaches us how to stop suffering and live in a way that allows us to live a happy life gained from caring for each other and for the earth.

Neuroscientists have practiced and experimented with many lifestyles to see what makes people happy. What they found was that people are not truly happy buying a new car, new shoes, or other material goods. Buying these items only gives them temporary happiness. Buddhism says that grasping makes us unhappy. So what makes us happy? Neurosurgeons found that when people help others, they become happier; their brain waves light up with happiness. This sounds like Buddhism in action. Caring for each other makes us happier. Now scientists have verified this, even though, probably for most of us, we didn't need scientific verification. But it's always good to have scientific proof.

The big problems of hunger, poverty, and desperation are found all over the world. We're lucky that everybody in this room can live a spiritual life, help others, and work in the community. We have plenty to eat and a place to live; we have family, support systems, and good lives. We can build happiness from working with others. But, unfortunately, there are billions of people around the world who don't have adequate food, shelter, clean water, sanitation, or enough to provide them a life that allows them to be more spiritual. So, one part of Buddhism and the Buddhist economy is relieving suffering and being compassionate at home and globally as well.

To reiterate my point: **What creates happiness? Helping others and caring for the planet create happiness. Moreover, being in nature, you can see the importance of caring for the planet.** In Ukiah, it's quite easy to access nature, because you're in this beautiful area.

立經濟模式。如你所見，一個已陳舊過時，另一個正是當今世界迫切需要的。那麼，我們該如何創造良好的佛教經濟呢？

最重要的是去關懷別人。我們不僅是一個個體，而是要做為一個與他人相依互存的個體。事實上，幫助照顧他人並不難。當我們關心地球，我們就是在關心社區；當我們關心僧伽或鄰居，我們就在關心所有人。

亞里士多德說：「幸福來自自我實現，以及過著有價值、有道德的生活。」他強調回饋社區的重要性。事實上，許多哲學家都宣揚利他，也就是佛教的慈悲心。佛教的四聖諦強調我們都在受苦，而痛苦是源自於我們的渴求和慾望。佛教教導我們如何離苦得樂，以正確的方式生活並從關心彼此和關懷地球中得到幸福。

神經科學家採用多種觀察和實驗方法去了解什麼讓人感到快樂。研究發現，購買新車、新鞋或其他物品並不會讓人真正感到快樂，購物只能提供短暫的快樂。因此，佛教說執取讓我們不快樂。那麼，是什麼讓我們快樂呢？神經外科醫生發現，幫助他人會讓人感到快樂；會讓腦波呈現愉悅的狀態。這聽起來就像將佛法付諸實踐，互相關心使我們更快樂。現在科學家們已經證實，儘管對大多數人而言，我們不需科學驗證。但有科學證明，總是有益的。

但最大的問題是全世界的饑餓、貧窮和絕望。在座的各位真的很幸運，可以過著在生活中修行、幫助他人，並在社區裡工作。我們每個人都豐衣足食、安居樂業，透過與他人合作而得到幸福。但不幸的是，世界上還有數十億人過著缺乏食物、住所、乾淨用水和衛生條件的生活，或者因為生活過於貧困導致無力關心精神生活。因此，佛教和佛教經濟的目標之一就是減少痛苦，以慈悲心對待家人乃至所有人。

重申我的觀點：什麼創造幸福？幫助他人和關心地球創造幸福。此外，置身在大自然中，你可以感受到地球的重要性，並開始關心它。在瑜伽鎮這個地方，相當容易接近大自然，因為你們就身處在一個美麗的地方。

The results showed that national well-being is not related to total income, but to income inequality. Therefore, as inequality increases, the well-being index decreases.

研究指出幸福與收入多少無關，卻與收入不平等相關。因此，當不平等程度增加，幸福指數就會降低。

According to Robert Kennedy, “GDP(GDP-Gross Domestic Product) measures everything but what makes life worthwhile.” From an economic point of view, one of the things we know with certainty is what we measure becomes our goal. We measure market output monthly. On a yearly basis, we say, “Aren’t we terrific? Our economy is booming. Life is good!” But if you look around you might ask, “Didn’t poverty increase? Did wages go up? Are people able to feed their children, find shelter, and have the bare necessities? Did this improve? No.” As I mentioned earlier, economic growth measured by GDP shows growth captured by the richest 1% or 5% of the people.

Economic performance is based on consuming more and more, even if it’s killing the planet and benefiting only the rich. We need to rethink how people consume, which is unequal and degrades the environment. If we go beyond our focus on consumption, then what we get is the well-being that comes from activities such as communicating with each other, working with the community, and caring for the earth. This holistic way provides a very different measure of economic performance.

Many people actually think that their well-being increases with income, but across the industrial world, this is not true. In the UK, a doctor and a public health worker created a well-being index to see whether people’s well-being increases with income. The results showed that national well-being is not related to total income, but to income inequality. Therefore, as inequality increases, the well-being index decreases.

The United States is an exception compared to other rich countries: we have the lowest well-being and the highest

根據羅伯特·甘迺迪的說法，「國內生產毛額(GDP)衡量一切，卻將讓人生有價值的事物摒除在外。」從經濟學角度來看，我們確知的事情之一就是：我們用來衡量的標準就會成為我們的目標；因此我們每個月衡量市場產值。我們年復一年地說，「我們不是很棒嗎？我們的經濟蒸蒸日上，生活如此美好！」看看四周，我們產生疑問：「貧困不是增加嗎？工資漲了嗎？人們能養活自己的孩子嗎？有地方住嗎？能夠負擔生活必需品嗎？這一切改善了嗎？沒有！」正如我之前提到的，經濟成長基本上是由最富有的1%或5%的人佔有。

經濟效益是基於增加消費，即使它會傷害地球，只讓富人受益。值得重新思考的是：人們不同的消費模式也造就不平等並促使環境惡化。如果我們把這些不良因素排除，我們就能從彼此交流、與社區合作以及關心地球這些行為中得到利益。這種整體考量方式是用一種完全不同的方式去衡量經濟效益。

許多人真的以為個人所得增加，他們的幸福感也隨之提高；但在工業社會裡卻非如此。英國一位醫生和一位公共衛生工作者做了一項研究，並設計了一張幸福指數量表以此觀察一個人的幸福感是否隨著收入提高而增加。研究指出幸福與收入多少無關，卻與收入不平等相關。因此，當不平等程度增加，幸福指數就會降低。

income inequality. The United States is a world leader, but not in a good way. We have high inequality and low well-being. When I was a youngster in the 80s, we were one of the top five nations in well-being and doing our best to get rid of inequality. We did well then and were true world leaders in reducing inequality and achieving well-being.

As inequality goes up, our well-being goes down. We should care about this extremely important economic relationship. We want to measure economic performance differently; we need to care not only about income growth, but also about equity, sustainability, family, and community. We better do it quickly because the climate crisis demands that we start paying attention a great deal more attention to what we're doing to the environment. The world needs to dramatically reduce carbon emissions by the end of the next decade.

In terms of global warming, climate scientists have already told us that carbon emissions are causing problems. It's related to using fossil fuel for energy and to using industrial agriculture. We know alternative ways to an economy based on clean energy and on regenerative agriculture. Emitting greenhouse gases is an immoral act, because these emissions hurt the poorest people on the planet. We can create a low-carbon world economy that supports a comfortable life for all people.

We need the political will to unite, to stop being afraid and to truly embrace change. Historically, the top 10% are responsible for 50% of all global emissions, because of luxurious lifestyles. And the poorest 50% are responsible for only about 10% of total carbon emissions. So, you can see we have this enormous inequity going on globally. Inequality and carbon emissions go together.

☞ To be continued

依目前情況來看，美國是一個特例，我們的福利最差，貧富差距最嚴重。以世界領袖為例，美國人是世界領袖，但卻不是好的領袖。我們的貧富差距嚴重，人民的幸福指數很低。八十年代還我還是一個年輕人時，我們努力擺脫不平等，在世界排名第五位。那時我們做得很好，在減少不平等方面是世界真正的領袖。

當貧富不均擴大，我們的幸福感就會降低。我們應該關心這個非常重要的經濟關係。我們要以不同的方式衡量經濟效益；不要只是目不轉睛地盯著收入增長，而要關心公平性、持續性、家庭和社區。我們要趕快採取行動，因為氣候變遷需要我們多了解人類對環境所造成的傷害。

在地球暖化方面，氣候科學家已經告訴我們，碳排放造成嚴重問題，這與我們使用化石燃料和農業生產方式有關。但是我們知道其他替代的方法，和如何阻止這一切。排放碳是不道德的行為，因為這些排放傷害地球上最貧窮的人。我們應該創造一個低碳的世界經濟體系，讓所有人都過舒適的生活。

我們需要有政治決心，團結起來，停止恐懼，真正迎向變革。從歷史上看，少數10%的富人其奢華的生活方式竟可產生50%的碳排放；而50%最貧窮的人口的碳排放量只佔總排放量的10%左右。由此可見，這種全球的嚴重不公平現象，也存在於貧富差距和碳排放中。

☞ 持續

As inequality goes up, our well-being goes down. We should care about this extremely important economic relationship. We want to measure economic performance differently; we need to care not only about income growth, but also about equity, sustainability, family, and community.

當貧富不均擴大，我們的幸福感就會降低。我們應該關心這個非常重要的經濟關係。我們要以不同的方式衡量經濟效益；不要只是目不轉睛地盯著收入增長，而要關心公平性、持續性、家庭和社區。
