

ON SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION

-by Bhikshu Heng Kuan

In all things there is one common denominator: the mind. Everywhere we look we see the work of the human mind, and every human activity bears its stamp, from the graceful curve of the Golden Gate Bridge, to the power of the atom smasher in the Livermore Laboratory. Philosophies, religions, sciences, all are creations of the human mind.

Buddhism is the study of the mind, to the very core and the farthest reaches of its sphere of activity. The Buddhadharma is just this mind, and so in an ultimate sense, science is a part of Buddhism, a branch of the Buddhadharma.

Just as the mind is capable of harming, so it is with science, because the mind is its source. If the mind is employed well, it can benefit people; if it is employed destructively, it can harm them. If science is employed in wholesome ways, it can do such things as eradicate cancer, build bridges, and light the world with electricity. The beneficial works of science are countless many. But if science is wrongly used, its destructive force is unimaginably awesome, as we already know.

From thoughts come forth words; from thought and words come forth actions. The thoughts, words, and actions develop into habits, and habits harden into personality, character, views, religions, sciences, and political ideologies, making this world that we live in what it is today. Because of the habits of living beings, the karma of the world has become dangerously destructive. How can we not watch each thought with care, and guard against the potential harm it may have? All of humanity must now learn to recognize the mind's thoughts, and to mold them with care so that they spring out of compassion, a compassion that is rooted in respect for all living creatures. We must educate our youth to respect all living beings as they respect their own mothers and fathers. Then the works of science can truly benefit all of humanity.