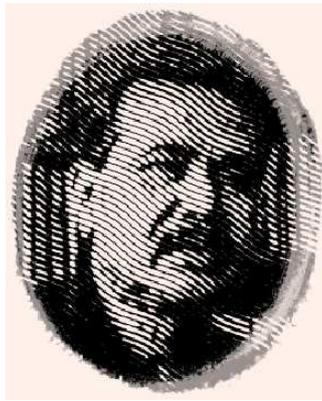
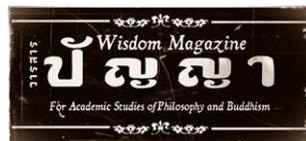


# Love of Wisdom

## An Introduction to Philosophy

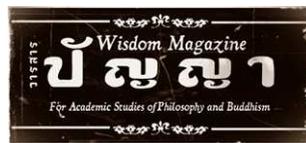


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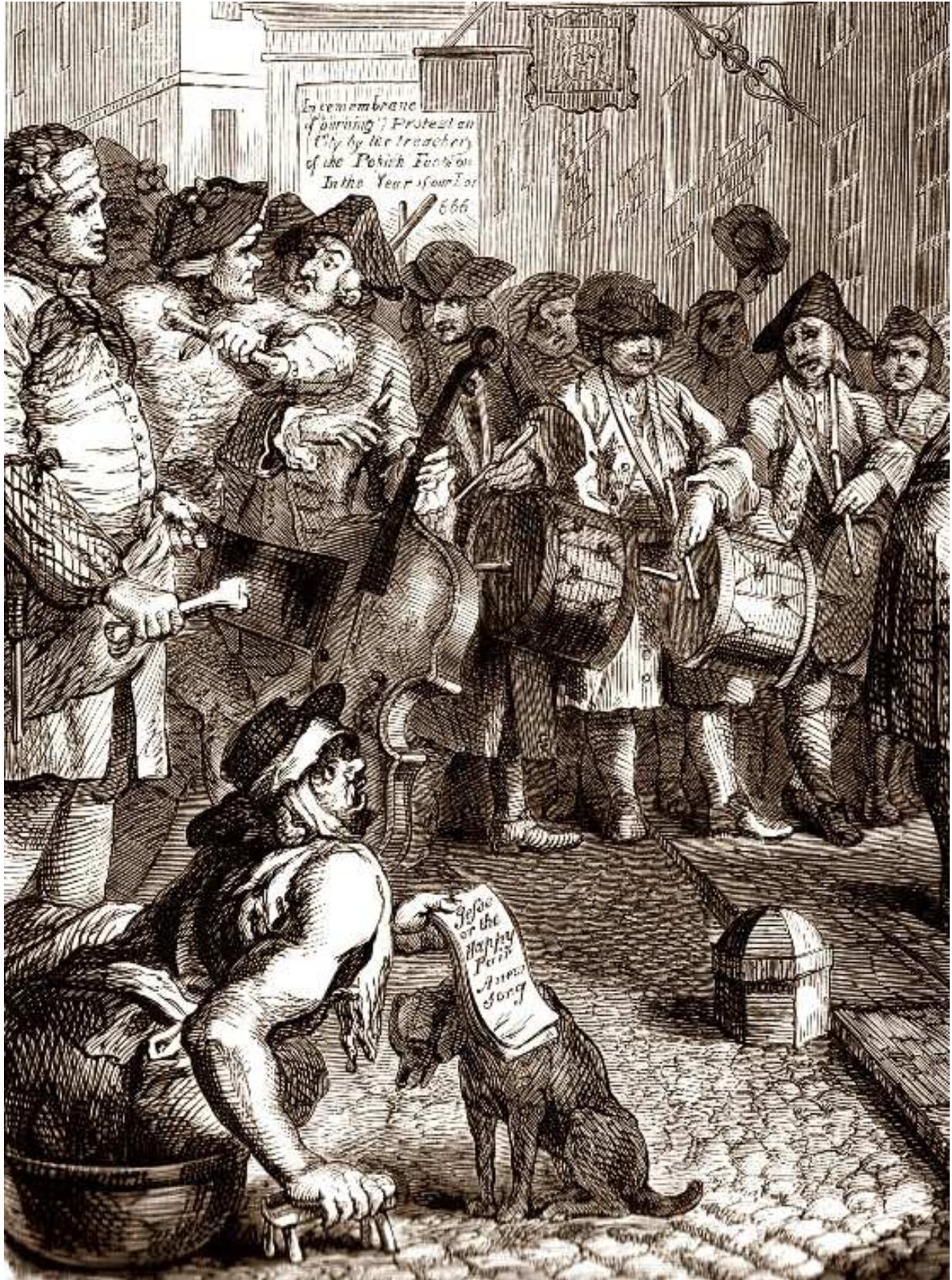
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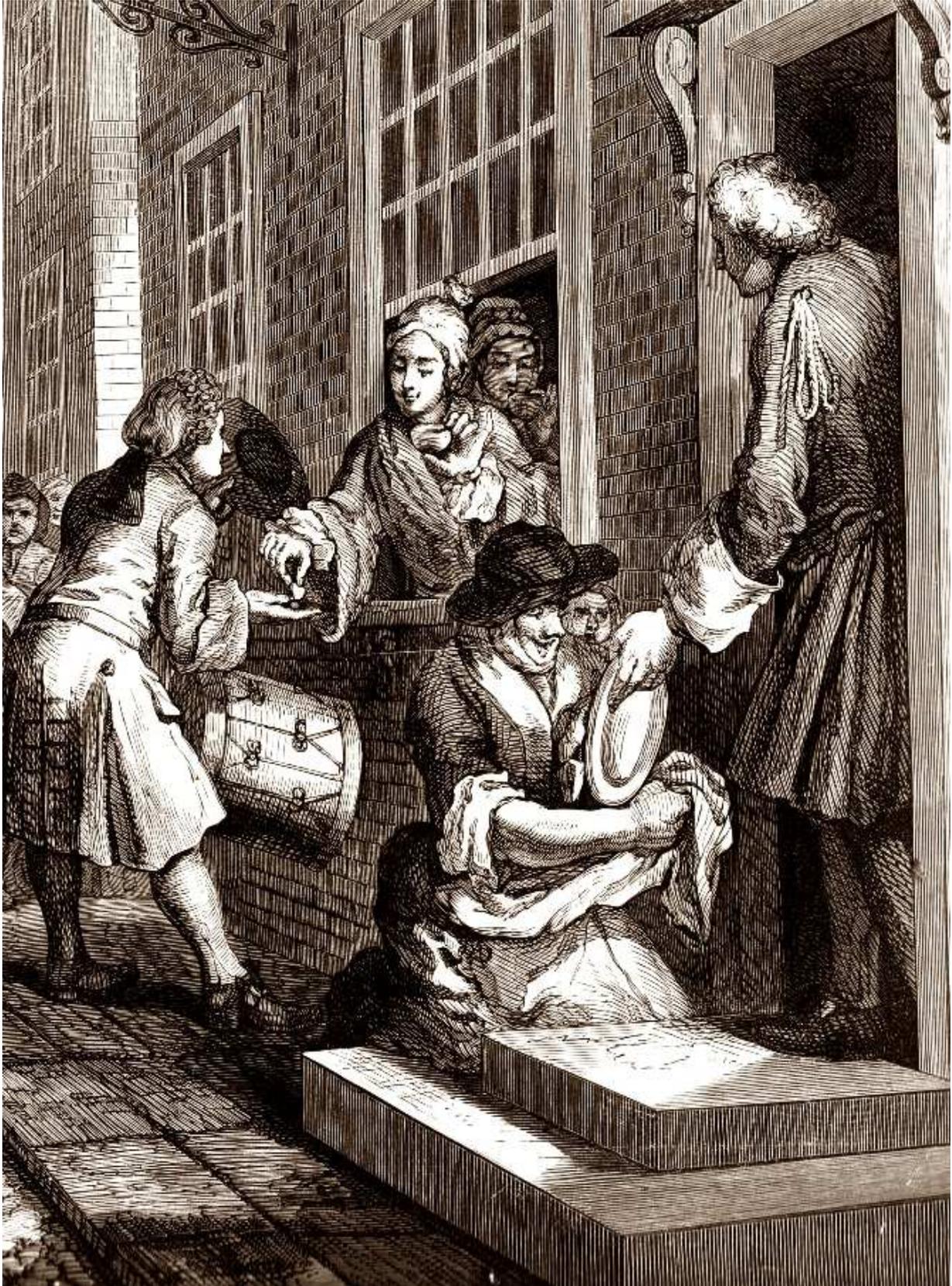


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# Preface

In Chulalongkorn University, we have a course dealing with philosophy in general. The objective of the course is to provide students from various faculties with basic concepts in philosophy. This book is primarily written to use in the course. However, to follow my personal academic rules set up myself for years—academic books written by me should benefit people outside the university if possible—the contents of the book have been designed and written to serve as a popular treatment of the subject as well.

In Thailand, philosophy is a new discipline. Department of philosophy at Chulalongkorn is the oldest one of the country; but it just dates back not more than 40 years. Compared with Western universities where philosophy has been taught for a long time, we cannot hope much for success in teaching philosophy in the country. Fortunately, philosophy is a discipline of thought, meaning that a student can succeed if he or she has a habit of loving to think. Religion in some di-

mensions needs cultural maturity. That is, to succeed in the study of religion, the student needs cultural backgrounds to some extent. We know that the oldest philosophy of the West arose from the Greek thinkers like Socrates. But this does not mean that Greek students in Greek universities have more potential to comprehend philosophy than American or Chinese students. On the contrary, we believe that Indian people might have more potential to appreciate Indian philosophy than non-Indian people; and this applies well to Chinese people when we talk about Chinese philosophy. From above, I want to suggest that compared with Eastern philosophy, which is never separated from religion; Western philosophy does not need cultural backgrounds as needed in Eastern philosophy. And this fact, according to me, is the strength of Western philosophy, in a sense.

In writing a book on philosophy, there can be several ways—depending on we have what objectives. I have decided to write the book as not a history book. There are a number of great books on the history of Western philosophy—for example a classic one by Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*. I accept that Western philosophy in a sense can be considered as a culture and the study of Western philosophy as a

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culture needs to know its history. However, as it is said above, I have deemed Western philosophy as a discipline of thought rather than a culture; the best way to enable the students to appreciate philosophy is to step back to its origin. Philosophers think; so to understand them, the students have to think.

As philosophy is a discipline without faith or dogma; in studying philosophy the students have a freedom to agree or disagree with the philosopher whose ideas are the subjects of examination. However, freedom requires responsibility more or less. Before we have freedom to argue for or against any idea of a philosopher, we need to know what the essence of such an idea is. The book is intended to provide the reader with essential ideas in philosophy.

As the contents of philosophy are extremely vast; to put them in one single book needs selection. Fortunately, philosophy itself is designed to deal with plurality of things. Philosophy in its very essence is the study of the whole universe. How do people deal with such a vast thing? Philosophy says: be not interested in its number, but in its nature or essence. Most philosophers share an idea that if we put the right questions on things, it will help save time; and this makes the study of the whole universe possible.

Traditionally, we have divided philosophy into three major areas—metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. The problems discussed in this book seem to cover such traditional areas of philosophy. However, there are many philosophical problems appearing to people outside the philosophical circle as something very far from our life. Certainly, some of these problems are crucially important, but it is the philosopher only knowing how these problems are of significance. In my view, appreciation of anything is closely related to ‘it is near me and it could affect my life’ more or less. I have observed for a long time that in my philosophy class the students are curious to know the philosophical contents that they feel actually related to human life more than the ones appearing to them as merely an imagination which is hardly possible in the real world. In the book, I have chosen the philosophical problems which are seen really related to human life and most of them might help live a rational life: both social and individual.

I myself was trained in Western philosophy when I tried to get my Ph.D. in philosophy from Chulalongkorn. However, some years prior to that time, I had been trained in a Buddhist monastic university where Eastern philosophy (Indian and Chinese) was a main

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subject taught in the university. I have found some values in Eastern philosophy and many times I have accepted myself that such a Western philosophical concept might be much more profound and meaningful if Indian or Chinese philosophical opinions are added as another tool for thinking. So, in the following pages, I will not hesitate to put Eastern philosophy into the discussion of the subject if it is seen helpful.

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March, 2011



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# Chapter One

## The Brain and the Soul

### *Dialogue: Man Thinks from What?*

—You are medical doctor; and in your view we human beings think from the brain and not from the soul?

—Yes, Father. I believe so.

—Why did people like you, I mean the scientists in general, believe that we think from the brain?

—It is a long story, Father. What I can give you briefly here is: we have some evidence showing that if there is something in human life involved with thinking, it must be the brain more than another. For example, when a person came to us as a patient with some kind of brain disease, we had noticed that there is a close, very close, relation between such a damaged brain and his or her mind. In short, we have observed through several cases that when the brain of the person is damaged from disease or accident and such damage

cannot be recovered 100%, his mind—I mean his ways of thinking, emotions, judgments, and so on—is affected. As you know, in terms of logic, when there is a problem with A there must be the problem with B; from this, we can conclude that there must be some relation between them.

—I understand what you said. But my concern is about the final conclusion that people like you offer: the brain is the final source of the human mind. I understand that medical doctors like you have a number of medical cases pertaining to people who got the brain damage. I accept a fact that when a person got the brain damage, that makes him behave differently from the past. I have read some books and they said in the books that someone used to be a professor of literature and he used to read nearly 10 languages; after he got some kind of brain disease severely, he cannot read anymore. He cannot even speak like a newborn child. But this does not mean: from this, we can conclude that the brain is the final source of the human mind.

—Why did Reverend Father say that?

—I have a reason. Suppose you get a problem with your eyes and you need a new pair of them. They transplant new eyes into you. Unfortunately, the new

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ones that you get have some problems that you never know before. You cannot see some colors—for example red and yellow. In this case, what is to say? You have the problem with the new eyes. Is this correct?

—Yes, Father.

—In the case, can we say that the eyes see things?

—I do not understand.

—I mean: you see things through the eyes; and it is not the eyes themselves seeing things.

—Yes, Father. The eyes are just the tool for seeing; and as the tool we can change them when the old ones cannot be used.

—You accept that the eyes are something used for the purpose of seeing?

—Yes, Father.

—My suggestion is: why we do not consider the brain in the same way as we consider the eyes. I mean why we do not deem the brain as just a tool used for the purpose of thinking.

—Ah, I understand you now. You try to argue that the brain is just a tool used for some specific purpose like other organs such as the eyes, the ears, and so on. I regret to say that your arguments do not follow what we have discovered in medical practices. We have found that all the organs in human life can be divided

into two groups: the ‘center of the system’ and the ‘tools used by such a center.’ The brain is the central unit of the system. The eyes that you have suggested are just the tool used by the central unit. In short, you can never compare the brain with the eyes. Both of them belong to different categories.

—I wonder: how can we put the brain into the category of central unit? Would you explain it to me?

—I do not follow you. What do you mean, sir?

—Here is what I mean. I understand that the way the scientists do in studying the brain is to observe it. That is, some of them may have a chance to see the human brain and undertake experiments on it. I have learned from the books concerning the brain study: from the experiments as said, the scientists have discovered that any area of the brain has the certain relation to major systems of the organs in human life. They say that some area of the brain relates to speaking ability. So, when such an area of the brain is damaged, it results in the damage of the speaking ability of the patient. And the same happens with other organs such as eyes, ears, hands, and so on. To my best understanding, the scientists might use the following arguments to assert that the brain is the central unit of the whole system called human life: *First*, any organ in the human body is

linked to the brain; so, the brain is the center of the human body in the sense that every organ is linked to it as said. If we have 100 subsystems that are linked to the brain, like we have 100 roads leading to the same city, we can say that it is the central unit of the whole system—a very plain truth that anybody can accept. *Second*, however, merely what is said above is not enough to argue that the brain is the central authority of the whole system. From the research, the scientists have found that the brain plays a role as the ‘commander’ of other subsystems in the sense that the signal sent from the brain to the organ, say the hand, is primarily needed for such an organ to work. Without the signal sent from the brain, the hand will not function. This applies well to every organ. So, this makes the scientists believe that the brain plays a role as the final center of the whole system of human life. Do I understand it correctly?

—Yes, sir. You understand correctly. But I wonder: what is your point?

—The point is: even though it may be true that the brain playing the role as the central unit of the whole body-system, this does not mean that everything ends up at the brain. Let me speak of something which Christian teaching teaches. We believe that man con-

sists of body and soul and these entities are not the same. The soul is the master of the body, meaning that without the soul the body can never do anything. The brain is included in the category of body. So, in our belief the brain can never function without the soul as its master.

—I understand that, Father. But the point is—how to prove the existence of the soul? Religions in the world share a belief of the soul. But, I think, the weakness of the belief of the soul is—it cannot be proven by sense experience. A philosopher named *Gilbert Ryle* says that if we can explain a phenomenon with all the evidences that we can observe by sense experience, we do not need to add something that cannot be observed to the explanation process because it is not necessary. I think Reverend Father might know his name and his theory of ghost in the machine. For Ryle, we can explain how the car runs. Suppose primitive men see the car, they might imagine that there must be a ghost in the car as they do not see any material object doing something like the car. But we know that there is no any ghost in the machine. Likewise, man is a kind of the machine—a biological machine created by nature. As the machine, if we can explain how and why man behaves like that, it is not necessary to postulate things like the soul to ex-

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plain human nature. We believe that the brain is enough to explain human behavior especially those pertaining to mental phenomena such as thinking, emotion, desire, belief, and so on.

—I accept that the soul cannot be proven by sense experience; but that is not a problem as we have other way to prove its existence. Before we proceed to the proof, I would like to suggest something about the materialist theory of human mind as you have just presented. Logically, materialism and empiricism are not necessarily compatible; but we have usually found that materialist thinkers like to use sense experience as the ultimate source of knowledge. For them, the soul cannot be tested by sense experience, so this kind of thing does not really exist. There are a number of philosophers in the world do not accept this philosophical inclination and some of them are great thinkers such as *Plato*. For *Plato*, besides sense experience we are endowed with other thing that shares the role no less than sense perception in terms of the sources of knowledge. It is reason. Suppose you have two sons; and when you are dying, you have divided your asset into two parts for your sons. We know without the help of sense experience that if your sons do not have special conditions of life that greatly differ from each

other, you should give them 50-50 % from your whole asset. Why? Because they are your sons and as father you should treat them equally. If you give one of them more or less than one another; you are doing the wrong thing. Note that from above we are talking about a thing called justice. And note that we know this kind of thing without the help of sense experience. For philosophers like Plato, there are so many things immaterial to be perceived or understood through reason and not through sense perception. More importantly, what perceived through sense experience are of lower than what to be perceived through reason in terms of certainty and subtleness. For example, a thing called love cannot be perceived through sense experience. In terms of biology, the scientists may explain that love is just mental phenomenon stemming from reproductive instinct. It may be true that sexual instinct *partially* playing the role behind a phenomenon in which a man and a woman decide to make up a family. But this has nothing related to love. Love cannot be observed in terms of biology. It is something more subtle than being material—I mean you cannot define love from biological data. To understand love you need a way which is not sense perception. It is reason—which broadly covers reasoning, imagination, wisdom,

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feeling, and so on. And as it is well known, the Greek philosophers are those who do not accept that knowledge that gained from sense perception is of highest certainty. They argue that our sense perceptions are sometimes illusive. That is, what really are, are not identical to those appearing in our sense perception. For example, when we put a spoon in a glass of water we would find that the spoon bends. What does it mean from this? It means—we cannot totally trust sense perception. Note that Greek geometry arose from a belief that reason gives more certain knowledge than sense perception. Egyptian geometry is based on sense perception; and when it was brought into Greece it had been changed to be based on reason as said—because the Greek thinkers trust in reason more than sense perception.

From above, I want to suggest that sense perception has the weakness at least in two points. *First*, what we can gain from sense perception is just normal knowledge concerning material objects; it cannot provide us with the subtle ones like love, justice, morality, beauty, and so on. *Second*, sense perception in itself is limited and can be illusive in some circumstances. From scientific research, we know that there are so many waves of light that transcend the ability of human eye

to see and there are so many waves of sound that human ear cannot hear; these things can be perceived by other animals; and this is an example of the limitation of human sense experience. Human sense organs, for example eyes, are created by nature to possess some certain ability differing from those created to animals. Imagine that a man and a frog looking at the same object—say a lotus. Suppose the scientists have researched and found that possibly men and frogs ‘see’ different worlds—the question is, between the man and the frog, who! sees the true lotus. I think this question can never be answered.

What I have said previously is not intended to reject sense perception. I accept that even though sense perception has the weakness as said, it does not mean that we should reject it. We have been created by nature of God to be so; we can never escape from such a fact; so we have to accept it. And I accept further that sense perception plays the crucial role in the search for knowledge undertaken by human beings. Sense perception is the major tool of science and we know that so many of knowledge provided by science greatly benefit the world. But my point is—even though sense perception is highly beneficial as said, it does not mean that sense perception should be the answer for every

kind of knowledge. I mean that there are a number of truths that transcend the ability of human sense perception, for example truths concerning justice, love, and beauty. A fact that there is this kind of truths in the universe suggests that it is not right to use sense perception as the only source of knowledge.

—Reverend Father, I totally agree with you that we should not confine ourselves to only one thing if we have many things to be chosen and used at the same time. But in the case we are discussing now, I afraid we might have a very limited choice. Frankly speaking, suppose I extremely need to know ‘where the soul located in my life,’ how shall I proceed? I see no way to go; and this is the limit that we must accept. For me, if we need to know truths or facts of things, the only way left for us to do is to use our sense perceptions. I do not agree with your separation between ‘normal’ knowledge and the ‘higher’ one. I think every truth must have some sense perception as the starting point. For example, you speak of justice. In the example, you talk about the father giving his asset to his sons. According to the standard concept of justice adopted amongst people in general, the father counts just if he gives each son a half of the total asset. You have pointed out that the concept of standard justice as said

does not derive from sense experience. But in my view, this cannot be free from the influence of sense experience. In short, I think that at least this idea of justice must come from a thinker; and I do not think that his idea of justice is free from his life in the world. I believe that surrounding conditions in the lives of *Marx* and *Hitler* play the significant roles in forming the political ideas of these men. Respectfully, even the masters of religion might not be free from conditions. I think there are two kinds of the conditions—inner and outer. In terms of inner conditions, the masters think from their brains; and we know that the brain of individual can never be free from the universal brain of the species. The masters of religion belong to human species; so, they cannot think outside the universal brain.

—Sorry for interruption, what do you mean when you talk about the universal brain?

—I mean the certain way that a species behaves. For example, the fish are good at swimming. The birds are good at flying. When you are born as a fish, you will be determined to behave as other fish. You cannot behave differently from your species. Human species is special in that our brain has been highly developed so that we can think deeply and profoundly. We do not know how deeply the fish think. However, from observation

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we do not see any fish that do not behave as fish. The masters of religion are normally believed as a kind of superman. That is, even though they belong to human species, they do not think and behave like other human beings. And this is the difference between man and other animals. An animal cannot think and behave beyond genetic determination of the species; but a man can. The masters of religion and their great followers are an example of this truth. In Christian tradition that you well know, they explain that this difference between man and animals as said just comes from a fact that when God creates man He gives him the soul; but does not do so when creating animals. But from biological point of view, man and animals share the same status as species of the world. Their brains belong to the same category—the brain of a species. So, if a member of species in general does not behave beyond genetic determination of the species, we have no reason to believe that man can do such a thing. In short, we believe that even though the masters of religion are holy persons worth highly respecting in the end they remain the members of human species; so their holiness should be deemed the best thing allowed within the scope of biological determination, and should not be viewed as something transcending human nature.

They are not supermen. They are just best men.

—I think the difference between us lies in that we have the different first premise. As you might know, *Descartes* begins his philosophical examination with a thing called the first philosophy—which means something to be undoubtedly trusted from which other philosophical beliefs are derived. I would like to start with the same thing as done by this philosopher—and I think you may begin like this as well as I still feel that the assumption concerning the role of the brain as you have proposed needs more investigation to be the first philosophy as said. As *Descartes* mentions, mental phenomena are self-evident in the meaning that they occur to us so explicitly. For example, you and I now are seeing the hands of one's own. I see my hands and you see your hands. The seeing is something that we can totally trust in the meaning that it is given to us. Do you see your hands?

—Certainly, Father. I have seen them.

—So, you do not doubt the seeing.

—No, sir.

—But you can doubt that actually the hands do not exist?

—Yes, I can.

—However, this has nothing related to the seeing.

Sometimes, we see a thing which really does not exist; but the seeing remains existed because it is given to us. This can be compared to a dream. Suppose last night you had a dream that your wife is dead. After awakened in the morning, you know that it is just a dream. Your wife remains alive. From this, we can say that the contents of the dream are false; but dreaming is true—that is, last night the dreaming happened to you really.

—Yes, Father. I understand that.

—In terms of language, when we have a verb, there must be something playing the role as the subject of the verb. For instance, we have a verb ‘run.’ This verb will be meaningless if it is given without the subject. That is, running must be the action performed by something. There cannot be just a running which does not belong to anything as the subject.

—Yes, I understand.

—Now, my question is: when there is a seeing of your hands, such a seeing must have something as the subject of the verb. What is the subject in this case?

—I think you hope me to answer that it is my soul playing the role as the subject of the verb. But I am sorry to say that my answer is—my brain, Father!

—OK you can say that. But my next question is—normally the subject of the verb must be one single en-

tity; as it is known, the brain consists of complicated networks and this makes it hardly to deem the brain as one single entity. So, how the brain can play the role as the subject of the verb ‘sees’ when it lacks a property as one single entity. Unlikely, the soul is one single entity; so it deserves the position of subject for the verb ‘sees’ more than the brain.

—I do not agree with the rule you have set up that it is only one single object only deserves to play the role of the subject. Actually, we have collective names in the language such as ‘family.’ And this kind of nouns usually plays the role of the subject as found in the sentence: “My family feels sad when we hear that your father has passed away.”

—I know that. But we are now talking about the language from philosophical perspective, and not from the perspective of language usage in the normal sense. As John Locke and David Hume point out, there are two kinds of idea. The first one is simple idea and the second one is complex idea. ‘*Idea*’ according to these philosophers means what to happen in our mind when we hear a word or words. For example, someone says, “That is a bird on the tree.” In this sentence, there are two things mentioned—a bird and a tree. When we hear this sentence, what happening in our mind, is the pic-

ture of a kind of animal sitting on the tree. It should be noted that the words ‘bird’ and ‘tree’ produce a thing called simple idea in the view of Locke and Hume. That is, the picture of the bird and the picture of the tree that happen in our mind derive from one single entity. Besides this kind of word, we have another one which does not derive from one single entity—for example, dragon. We cannot find one single object corresponding with the word. That’s because the word is created from a combination of the pictures of a number of animals. Suppose there are six kinds of animals composing the dragon. Each of them is a simple idea. Human mind according to Locke and Hume has the potential to combine a number of simple ideas into a thing called complex idea. The word ‘dragon’ is an example of a kind of word that produces a complex idea in human mind; and this kind of word is made from a combination of a number of simple ideas together.

Turn back to the word ‘family’ that you have raised. According to Locke and Hume, there is no such a thing called family as one single object. This word is created from a combination of things. Actually, the family cannot be sad. The persons in the family only can be sad; and it could be possible that in this case there are some of them only being sad. So, the sen-

tence “our family feels sad” must be understood as said. In daily life, the usage of human language is done for the convenience of communication. We do not expect the meanings of words strictly as the words say; and this needs philosophical analysis to understand the real meaning when it is needed. At this stage, we can say that the word being made from a combination of simple ideas cannot play the role as the subject of sentence in terms of reality. It is the word that carries simple idea only to play the role as the subject of sentence. If you need to claim that the brain can think, you must prove that the word ‘brain’ carries a simple idea.

—Father, I accept what you just have analyzed concerning the philosophy of language given by Locke and Hume. I myself have adopted such a theory for a long time until now. I afraid you misunderstand the brain when you say that it consists of a number of networks. It is true that the brain consists of complicated parts and each of them represents a certain kind of functions. Some area of the brain is believed to be responsible for the seeing ability of man, and some for the hearing, and so on. But this cannot be used to argue against the brain as something which is not able to play the role as the subject of the verbs such as think, feel, be happy, and so on. Actually, we believe that the

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brain can think, can feel, and can be happy or sad. We claim this because we do not look at the ‘hardware’ of the brain as you have suggested; but look at its ‘software’ instead.

–What do you mean by the word ‘software of the brain’?

–We mean... ah... the total consciousness occurring to a person as one single unity. For example, suppose I am seeing a dog running at the courtyard. In terms of the hardware, there is a part of the brain being held responsible for the seeing. It is the same when I hear, smell, taste, and touch; or feel painful, happy, sad, and so on. However, in the end, the brain as a whole will perceive things as ‘they are occurring to *me*.’ In terms of the software of the brain, we can say that the brain is one single object.

–I think we stand on different grounds of belief; and normally we do not think that among different grounds of belief which one can be said truer or higher. Anyway, in terms of logic, I believe we can say something more. Between you and me, no one has the direct experience with the soul. But this does not mean that a belief that the brain playing the role behind human mind can be trusted more than a belief of the soul. Why I say like that? Because in the end the work of the

scientists like you as regards the brain is based on speculation not differently from a theory concerning the soul. I accept that the view of *Gilbert Ryle*, which states that we do not need to add things beyond sense experience to a theory if everything can be explained with empirical data, is very useful. However, in the case of human mind, I think that mere what we can observe from the brain is not enough; and therefore—we need to add something beyond the ability of human sense perception to explain it. From the perspective of those—whose tradition has been grounded in religion which has the very long history involved with the study of human soul—like me, an attempt to postulate that the brain can think and have emotion needs to answer so many questions. One time, I attended a conference on the problem of the brain and the soul, a scientist, whose later years of his life was devoted to the study of religion, questioned, “Suppose this morning I have received the news from the police that my wife was killed on the street by the robber. The news was given in the form of the voice. The voice in terms of physics is explained to be the waves produced by the police and they entered my ears and then transmitted in to my brain, resulting in my bursting into tears. As my brain is explained by the physicists as consisting of a number

of atoms, I want to know the waves of sound carry the news from the police and hit some area of the brain—after the hitting which atom or group of them producing the tears in my eyes? In such a circumstance, it is *me* crying. It is very strange to say that it is an atom or a group of them crying. For me the atom can never cry, like the stone, the cup of tea, and other material objects.” Notice that the main arguments given by this scientist are—*first*, the brain in terms of physics is composed of atoms which are purely material objects; *second*, from experience in daily life any material object cannot think or have emotion, so the atoms might not have such properties as well; *third*, but he is now crying, this means that there must be something inside the man acting as the agent or subject of the verb ‘crying’ and this thing must not be the brain because the atoms composing it cannot cry as said. This argument in my view is sensible.

—Thank you Father for information about what the scientist said. However, I have another viewpoint from science to share with you and that scientist. I understand that the scientific research undertaken by most of the physicists is confined to one single objective, as regards the structure of matter—what is the ultimate reality that forms material objects? Human body be-

longs to material objects, so what found in the study of the physicists applies to human body as well. I accept that in terms of physics, human brain is not different from the stone or the cup of tea as you said. But I do not hear from any physicist that they believe that atoms in the brain have something related to human mind. That is, the study of the structure of matter has no any meaning related to human consciousness. Actually, we do not need to refer to the brain which is the most complicated organ in human body. Even a simple organ like a finger can raise the similar question and this thing the physicists know well. When I cut my finger, it feels hurt. The question is—my finger is composed of atoms which do not have the property to feel anything; that is, to say that such an atom feels hurt is very ridiculous; how the finger feels hurt? I think this kind of questions is beyond the scope of the study undertaken by the physicists, even though one could argue they cannot avoid the responsibility to answer the question because their study of the structure of matter implies many things.

I think a branch of science that most related to the matter we are discussing now is biology. The strength of biology, compared with physics, is that it looks at human life as a whole system. That is, in terms of biol-

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ogy, a man should be viewed as a biological system like a dog, a tree, or a bacterium. In terms of philosophical standpoint, a biologist does not necessarily belong to some certain school of metaphysics; but as seen generally, most of the biologists adopt the view that they can explain the mysteries of lives on earth with empirical data alone without a need to use the concepts that cannot be tested by sense experience such as God or souls. I need to inform that amongst various kinds of materialism, there is a sub-school named *naturalism*. The best way to understand *naturalistic materialism* is to compare it with *mechanistic materialism*. Man in the view of mechanistic materialism can be compared with a robot. That is, the word 'robot' refers to a number of parts and these parts can be understood as separate entity. Note that the working of robot is *mechanical* in the sense that everything is explained in terms of mechanical relation between the parts. When we drive a car—the key starts the engine and the engine turns the wheels. In the same way, what we have put into the body—food, water, and air—cause a kind of energy and this energy plays the role behind every activity performed by the organs including the brain. In some views of modern materialist thinkers, the working system of the brain can be compared with the working

system of digital computer. According to them, human brain is actually a kind of digital computer. That is—thinking, emotion, judgment, and so on that happen in human consciousness can be explained through logical rules as same as the ones used in digital computer. For example, love can be explained as a kind of calculation. Suppose a girl has two men to be chosen as her husband. She feels that she loves both of them. But finally, she chooses one. The materialist thinkers who believe that human brain works like a digital computer say that—what happens in the brain of the girl is the process of calculation. That is—her brain has put everything known about two men and then calculates which one of them possesses more amount of desirable things. The man whom she chooses is the one the calculation suggests having more desirable things. It should be noted that—when the brain has completed its calculation process and has to report the result, the information sent from the brain will appear to us in various forms such as the feelings like love as in the case of the girl.

Even though the theory proposed by mechanical materialists as said above can explain many things regarding human mind, it is objected not enough to explain something. For example, John Searle, in his fa-

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mous article widely known as the *Chinese Room Article*, suggests that when the brain perceives things—besides the process of perception in terms of the contact between the brain and the perceived objects, there is one thing important: *understanding*. Searle utilizes a metaphor to illustrate that why for him the brain might not work as same as the digital computer. Suppose a man who does not know Chinese language sits in a room. His duty is to give back the board with Chinese words on it to the person outside the room at request. Suppose that every board with Chinese words on it has its number, for example 0000, 0001, 0010, and so on. The man inside the room knows only the numbers. But this is not problematic. He can do his job well. When he receives an order from the person outside the room, say 0003, he just looks for the board numbered 0003 and sends it to the person outside the room. The man inside the Chinese room is compared to the computer, and the person outside the room is human being. The computer is commanded by the man to write some Chinese poem. The computer, after receiving the request, has performed some kind of process that can be compared with the working of the man inside the Chinese room. For the man who uses the computer, it may appear that the computer has written a Chinese poem

for him and the poem is so beautiful. But actually we cannot say that the computer has written the poem *because writing implies understanding*. Like the man in the Chinese room, as he works for years and has enough experiences to send back whatever requested by the person outside the room immediately and smoothly; the person outside the room may imagine that the man inside the Chinese room might be well-versed in Chinese—which is totally wrong!

Searle's arguments above given to show that we cannot compare human brain with digital computer on the grounds that these two things work on the different grounds. And I am of the view that the weakness to be found in mechanical materialism lies in that it cannot explain a group of mental phenomena like understanding. When we read a book, we understand its contents; some books are written so beautifully and sometimes they even move us to tears. This can be hardly explained through the process of calculation as said. Naturalistic materialism looks at human life and other living organisms in the world in terms of a *living system* rather than a machine. Many biologists believe that one time the world might have no any living organism because the surface of the world was so hot for some reason—such as maybe the result of the Big Bang.

But later it became cooler by the very simple law as found generally in daily life such as a cup of hot coffee will be cooler when time passes. After that, there were the clouds making the heavy rains which later formed the ocean of the world. At the bottom of the ocean, when millions of year passed, some material objects had evolved to be something more than non-living entity. They believe that an example of material things turning to be living organism incompletely is the virus. As it is known, the virus does not need food—it does not eat like man, animal, and plant. However, it can reproduce itself, a property found only in living organism. In the distant future, the virus might need to eat to make it complete its transformation. In short, the biologists who believe in evolution are of the view that every living organism in the world comes from non-living material objects through natural process named evolution.

Natural evolution causes one important phenomenon—that is, it gives rise to new properties in things. We know that the thing called water is  $H_2O$ , meaning that one molecule of water is composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen. And we know further that the properties of water do not exist in either hydrogen or oxygen—for example we can use water to

stop the fire; hydrogen and oxygen by themselves alone cannot do that; and more simply, we cannot drink or bathe with hydrogen or oxygen. Human body should be deemed in terms of things which have a number of certain properties that cannot be found at the levels of atoms. Or we can say that—even though it is true that the body of human being, including the brain, is composed of a number of atoms that can be found in other things like the stone, the cup of tea, and so on; the evolution of human body itself makes the atoms that form the human body have certain new properties which include the mental ability to think, have emotion, and so on. In this sense, we cannot compare human body with the stone because these two things do not have the same evolution. At least, the evolution of human body has arrived at some point and this makes it a living organism while the evolution of the stone has not reached such a state yet. To sum up, *in the view of naturalistic materialism, things in nature are of the same kind, but of different evolutions.*

One more important feature of naturalistic materialism is that—the new properties stemming from the evolution cannot be turned back. That is, the arrow of evolution time cannot be turned back. When you kill a dog, you cannot bring it back from death. Life is a

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kind of property that arises from evolution. Anything that arises from evolution seems to be something that human beings cannot create. Science and technology of modern world enable man to create things like the fake flowers. They look very like real flowers; but actually, they are not. We know that the main quality to make the flower real is 'life' and this thing cannot be created by man. It needs so long time for this kind of thing to happen in the world; and the process of natural things to become new ones with new properties such as life—we call evolution. Note that some new qualities found in the combination of atoms are not same as the ones arising from the evolution in that the first ones can be turned to former state. After the chemists have divided the molecules of water into the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen, they can reunite them to be the molecules of water over and over; but we cannot do like that with what stemming from evolution.

I think the best way to understand the working of human brain is to consider it as biological organism which has evolved over millions of years. As the brain is central unit that stores the past history of the species—the history of struggle for survival as mentioned by Darwin; the experience of former generation is passed

to the next generation as the codes called instincts and the brain of the species has its primary duty to keep these instincts to be automatically used by its members. The fish are good at swimming without any instruction from anyone including their parents. The evolutions of species are different, depending on so complicated conditions. However, the differences as said result in the differences of the wisdom possessed by each species. Human beings can be said to have evolved in such a way that makes human species possess some ability more than other species—the ability to think. At the first dawn of human history, human beings had questioned many things concerning the universe. Later, they had turned inwardly and questioned about the inner nature of themselves; and this leads to the happening of a belief that we have the soul. As Karl Marx mentions, it is man who creates God and it is not God that creates man; I would like to suggest the same thing—it is not the soul that enables man to question about the brain; but it is the brain that enables man to think of everything including the soul.

—What you have said, I admit, sounds reasonable. And I admit that it could be possible that the evolution of human species causes the crucial development in human brain. But we should admit as well that the

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problem concerning the brain or the soul playing the role as thinking agent in human life is philosophical problem. Philosophy is needed when sense perception cannot be used as the tool for seeking truth. Let us turn to the basic question concerning what we are discussing. It is—we have observed we think, we have emotion, we see, we hear, and so on. When we see, there are a number of things appearing in our eye-perception. Suppose we are standing at the shore of the sea and what is being given in our eye-perception now is the scene of sunset. Modern science says that what appearing in our eye-perception is nothing but the waves of light; they enter our eyes and are sent to the brain and that causes the seeing. Suppose it is true that there are the waves of light doing such a thing as said. This does not mean that we must accept that the brain is the *seer*. In terms of philosophical analysis, we can doubt—what the waves of light do with the brain is mechanical phenomenon, like the stone falling from the high and hitting the ground. Mechanical phenomena as we understand do not cause things like seeing, hearing, having of emotion, and so on. So, we have the right to question if the brain is the entity that plays the roles as the seer when we see, or the hearer when we hear, or the crier when we cry.

You may argue that what I have suggested—I mean the seeing, for example—is not strange thing because human brain has evolved sophisticated enough to produce such a thing. And, if I understand your standpoint, I may say we should not consider the brain as the seer, the hearer, and so on; on the contrary, we should deem it as the place where the seeing and so on originates. I might accept such an idea if I do not relate what we have said to other subjects. We know that sometimes so beautiful and complicated phenomena arising from some place or something. For example—suppose we go to the movies. We see many things on the screen. They come from the projector. Or we can say that everything we see on the screen has the projector as the origin. I understand that what you have explained concerning the brain results in the image of it belonging to the same category of thing as the projector. But we know the great difference between the projector and the brain. We do not think that the projector has the same experience as we have—that is, it does not see anything; but we do! The study of the brain undertaken by modern scientists has a great utility in providing us with the information that the brain could be deemed as the place in human body where mental phenomena arise. But such information has

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nothing related to a conclusion that human mind and the interaction between the brain and outer signals such as the waves of light and sound are identical. Imagine a person standing 10 meters far from us. Beside us there is a stone pillar standing on the ground. In terms of physics, we can say that the light of the sun shines at the man and reflects to our eyes as same as to the stone pillar. We are inclined to be sure that when the sunlight hits the stone pillar, everything ends up at the points on the stone pillar where the sunlight hits. As the stone pillar does not have the soul, there is no anything in it to turn the sunlight to be the seeing. Suppose the brain is a special material object in the world as it can play the role in turning the outer signals to be the seeing, the hearing, the tasting, and so on. The question is—when we see the man as said above, we see him standing *out there*, 10 meters from the point we stand; note that the point where the sunlight hits our brain is located *here* inside our head; why we do not see the man here in our head? I think this cannot be explained without a belief in the soul.

- Sorry, Father. I do not understand your last point.
- Now you are seeing me, right?
- Yes, Father.
- According to your theory, the light from some

source, say the sunlight, shines at me and then it reflects to your eyes. After that the waves of sunlight which carry the picture of me are transmitted to your brain. Right?

—Yes, Father.

—Suppose the area in your brain where the signals which carry my picture arrive at as the final point is called ‘A.’ We can say that ‘A’ is the point where the signals and your brain meet. The question is if ‘A’ is the point of the interaction between the brain and the signals, why you see me outside your brain? Why you do not see me given at ‘A’? That’s my point.

—I understand your point now. But this can be easily answered. Suppose you cut your finger. According to my theory, the signal from your finger is sent to the brain. Suppose the point in your brain where the signal arrives at as the final point is called ‘B.’ By your logic, you should feel the pain in your head, at position ‘B.’ Unfortunately, You have felt the pain at your finger; and this means your theory is false.

—I insist my theory is not false in this case because it is based on the doubt about the brain as a whole. Actually, you are the person to doubt why we do not feel the pain in our brain when we cut our finger because you believe that the brain is the final answer for every

question concerning mental phenomena. Do not forget that the brain is material object; so the explanation of brain's behavior must be related to physical laws more or less. For me, the fact that when we see something we see it out there and not in our brain cannot be explained in terms of physical laws. So, mental phenomena like seeing must be explained with other theory which does not say that the brain is the final answer for every mental phenomenon.

—Reverend Father, I have seen that your arguments mainly tend to discredit my theory. I need to hear from you that what are the merits of your theory? Do you have any positive arguments to support the belief in the soul?

—Certainly, *we* have. Note that I do not say that '*I have*' because the following arguments are the heritage which has been accumulated through the history of philosophy and Christianity for thousands of year. As we have so many reasons to support the existence of the soul and it is not possible to present all of them, I would to present some of them which in my opinion are of most significance. First of all, I would like to suggest that human mind contains three major abilities. *The first one is an ability to think or know; the second an ability to appreciate beauty; and the third an ability to understand*

*morality*. As it is generally seen, a boy or a girl is trained in school to comprehend disciplines like mathematics, language, history, and so on. These disciplines, even though differ in their details, are alike in that they need only an ability to think or know. When we see a dog, we know that it is a dog. This is an example of this kind of ability of mind; or, suppose now you are imagining how it would be if you are accepted to be a movie star, this is an example of an ability to think as well. The second ability of the mind is concerned with esthetic properties. Esthetic values are something can be hardly described through logic and language, which are needed in the first ability above. Suppose you listen to a song, say *Scarborough Fair* of Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, you feel the beauty of the song directly and not through logic or reasoning. Even though the content of the song is written in the form of language, it is not the main component to provide the esthetic values of the song. The lyrics of the song belong to the objects that can be understood through the first ability of mind. In short, the second ability of human mind plays the basic roles in human perception of arts. Arts as found in music, painting, literature, movie, and so on are intended to move human emotions on the grounds that something in human life needs emotion

to catch, as a Chinese proverb says, “You cannot use a carrot to catch fish, what you need—is something specially designed for that purpose such as hook.” Emotion is designed to ‘catch’ the works of arts; and this is the second ability of human mind. The last ability of human mind lies in the understanding of moral values. Like esthetic values, moral values are special things that are not sufficiently understood through logic and language. There are a number of philosophical ethics that need only language and logic. Such ethical theories, in my view, belong to the subjects to be comprehended by the first ability of human mind; and this thing should be deemed different from the morality that we are considering. Morality meant here is a property that people understand and feel the same feelings irrespective of their differences of sex, culture, nationality, age, and so on. For example, a man, on his way home, listening to the radio announcing that the patient needs a type of blood which he has, drives to the hospital and donates his blood to the patient whom he does not know. I think everybody hearing this story must accept the same truth—this man doing the good thing.

From above, our question is—can the brain be able to do the above actions. I think that it may be possible

to imagine the brain can do things of the first category. But to imagine that the brain can do things of second and third categories is extremely nonsensical. That is—it could be possible to have a robot that understands logic and language; but it seems impossible to have a robot that appreciates the song or understands moral values. The brain and the robot are alike in the sense that they do not have the soul. So, to understand why human beings possess three abilities of mind as said we need a belief in the soul. The soul is immaterial and believed to be part of intelligent beings such as God. So, it deserves the qualities mentioned above.

—Reverend Father. I think ultimately your arguments are based on one single principle—material objects cannot perform subtle activities like understanding language, appreciating works of arts, and having moral senses. I admit that this assumption seems very strong. However, to begin an investigation of something which is highly complicated, the best way, as suggested by Francis Crick—a scientist who discovered the structure of DNA around thirty or forty years ago, is to start with very simple fact. What is the simple fact regarding what we are discussing? I think, as given by Crick himself, the madman is the simple thing to reveal

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the secret of human soul. Father, before we proceed to another topic, I would like to ask you. According to your religion, how to explain madness. The person is mad because his brain is mad or because his soul is mad? It may be well to start here.

—Theoretically, the soul cannot be mad.

—So, the madman is mad because he gets the abnormal brain?

—It looks like that.

—Do you accept that the soul is not needed to explain the madness of human beings?

—I do not say that.

—I do not understand.

—To make it simple to understand, I would like to ask you—suppose you have a computer which functions improperly as its main operational system is infected with a number of viruses. In this case, can we say that the computer is ‘mad’?

—Yes, we can.

—The madness of computer is the result of what—it has infected operational system or it is made mad by electricity?

—There is nothing related to electricity; all depends on the infected operational system.

—To perform mad behavior as said—is it true that

the computer still needs electricity?

—Yes, Father.

—In the same way, can we say that the difference between the dead man and the madman lies in that the former does not have the soul while the latter has, otherwise he will not be able to perform the mad behavior?

—I do not follow you.

—I mean: The computer which is unplugged and does not have the battery cannot perform any kind of behavior normal or abnormal. It can be compared to the dead man. The computer of which main operational system is infected still needs electricity to perform its abnormal behavior. This kind of computer can be compared to the madman. And the computer of which all software is not infected needs electricity to perform its normal behavior. This kind of computer can be compared to normal person. Note that both normal and abnormal computers need electricity to perform their own activities. Electricity is raised here to be compared to the soul. So, in the viewpoint of our religion, the madman still has the normal soul like the abnormal computer which needs normal electricity. Without the soul, we cannot explain the behavior of the madman. So, the example of madman cannot be

used to argue against a belief of the soul.

—Father, respectfully, I admit that your analogy between the soul and electricity is very helpful to understand the case of the person whose brain functions abnormally; but I am afraid that the analogy has nothing to do with what is actually happening in the human brain. In my view, we cannot separate the brain and the life force which gives energy to the brain as two things. Do not forget that the brain is located in the human body which is a living entity. Any living entity has vital force as its part, like greenness being part of the leaf of a plant. In this sense, we cannot compare the human brain with the computer because the latter one is not a living entity—so it needs electricity to give it energy. The brain does not need such energy from outside because, as a living organism, the vital force is automatically given to it as a necessary part. So, madness of the brain according to my theory belongs to the brain as a whole; and there is no soul involved in this matter as something to supply outer energy to the brain. We do not need the soul to explain the madness of the brain.

*Comment and Suggestion*

The dialogue given above has not ended yet. It seems that it can be debated forever. Actually, the debate between the philosophical view which believes that we think from the soul and the one which believes that we think from the brain dates back to the time of Indian and Greek philosophy more than two thousand years. In India, the Buddha was questioned, "There are two views concerning the nature of man; one states that man is composed solely of matter and the mind is just the activity run by the body system; and another states that man is composed of matter and soul and human mind is the activity run by the soul. Of these philosophical opinions, which one is adopted by you?" The Buddha replied, "This kind of question belongs to a number of the questions that I am not interested to be involved in." The position of the Buddha above is interesting in that he claims clearly that he is not interested to discuss the question as found in the dialogue above. His reason is—(a) this kind of question can be debated forever as it needs speculation; the *materialist* needs to 'imagine' many things to claim that the brain is the source of the mind as mere observation of the brain is not enough; and the *dualist* needs to do the

same thing to claim that the soul is the source of the mind as the observation of material body including the brain does not satisfy him; (b) this kind of question has nothing related to religious practice to be good person; that is, we can do good things as religion teaches us to do irrespective of knowing ‘the brain or the soul is the source of mind;’ in short, the Buddha is of the view that this kind of problem is not worth exploring as it does not have any moral values.

The reason of the Buddha above can be divided into two points—*epistemological* and *ethical*. The Buddha, as given in the primitive texts of Buddhism, holds a view that we should confine our enquiry of truth to sense experience. As it is well known, the Buddha has analyzed man as being composed of five parts namely body, feeling, memory, impulse, and consciousness. These five parts are observable. It should be noted that the Buddha does not mention anything amongst the five parts that can be interpreted as the soul or something like this. The last part, consciousness, can be reworded as the mind. But the Buddhist mind is something not being based on speculation as found in the views of materialism and dualism. That is—the Buddhist mind has nothing related to the brain or the soul. As the Buddha usually says, it does not matter that our

consciousness stemming from the brain or the soul, but it does matter that the unwisely controlled consciousness causes suffering to our life. So, what should be done, in the view of Buddhism, is to be interested in training of consciousness; an attempt to seek where consciousness arises—the brain or the soul—is totally useless.

Two Indian religions—Hinduism and Jainism—believe that man is composed of body and soul. In Greek philosophy, three great philosophers—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—share the same view. These philosophical views are known as dualistic philosophies as they adopt the truth that man is composed of two separate entities which are the body and the soul. Modern philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and René Descartes as well are known to hold the dualistic view. It seems that most of the classical philosophies believe that man has the soul. It should be noted that the reason used by dualist philosophers are same as the one used by the Buddha as said above—*epistemological* and *ethical*. For example, Plato says that:

- (1) Material objects as we have seen in daily life cannot move themselves.
- (2) Our hand is material object. But it can move.
- (3) This means that there must be something in our

life that moves the hand and this thing cannot be material objects such as the brain because every material object cannot move itself.

(4) Even though we cannot see the soul, the reason tells us that there must be the soul to move the body; otherwise we can never explain how the body moves. (*Epistemological argument*)

To understand philosophical view of dualism, we should not pay attention to the words like soul, self, person, and so on. What we should pay attention to is the meaning behind the words. Descartes says that:

(1) We can doubt anything including: our body actually does not exist.

(2) However, there is one thing that we cannot doubt. That is—when we look at our body, say the hand; there is the seeing of the hand. We can doubt that it could be possible that the hand that we are seeing does not exist; it is just an illusion. But we cannot doubt that it could be possible that the seeing of the hand does not exist because we are seeing it. From this, we can say that—I do not know whether or not the hand that I am seeing now really exists; but I know that I am seeing it. The seeing really exists.

(3) The seeing is an action. Any action needs something to be the actor. It is not possible to be an action

which does not have an actor. So, when there is the seeing; there must be something playing the role as the seer. Seeing without seer is impossible.

(4) What is the thing to play the role as the agent that sees, hears, understands, or feels in human life? This thing must not be material object as every material object can be doubted as said above. As we cannot observe the thinking entity inside our life, this thing must be immaterial. We can call it the soul, as this term is widely used to refer to this kind of thing in human history for a long time. Suppose we are asked, “What is the definition of the soul?” The answer is—a thing that thinks, feels, doubts, or understands. No matter what is this thing. If it plays the role as thinking entity in human life, we will call it the soul.

In Indian philosophy, the soul is described as essential part of man in the sense that it possesses moral power and this thing is extremely needed to cultivate moral life of the person. In Hinduism, the soul in each person is part of the *Big Soul* which is God. In this light of belief, the soul is good thing because it is part of God. But in Jainism, the soul is believed to be natural entity like matter. In this sense, goodness of the soul stems from its inner nature rather than from its involvement with God. Even though these religions are

different as said, both of them share the similar view that the soul is crucially required in religious training. The person cannot be trained 'good' if he/she does not have the soul. (*Ethical argument*)

Compared with Buddhism, we see that even though all of them (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism) utilize the same arguments, the results are different. For the Buddha, after we see that the body (the brain) might not be enough to use as the ground of consciousness as claimed by Hinduism and Jainism, this does not mean that we have to postulate the unseen things like the soul to replace the body—because the observation of consciousness itself is enough to live a rational and moral life. In short, for the Buddha no one in the world is able to prove that the brain is the thinker. In the same way, no one in the world can prove that the soul really exists. But this fact—a fact that we cannot prove that our consciousness stems from the brain or the soul—is not problematic in the opinion of the Buddha. It seems that the Buddha is a person who believes in the force of nature and the limited potential of man. There is a shared belief adopted among all schools of Buddhism, saying—truths that the Buddha has discovered from enlightenment are already given in nature long before the Buddha was born in the world. Ac-

According to this belief, nature (a word used by Buddhists to refer to natural things and natural laws) can be compared with God in the sense that nature exists by itself and it is not created by anything. However, nature differs from God in that it is not a person (a being with emotions); however, it is intelligent being. Human beings in the view of the Buddha are created by nature to follow natural laws, like other beings in the universe. Within this light of understanding, human beings are the '*chosen*' to have the potential to 'choose' something and have no potential to 'choose' something. For example, death is given to us as a fact of life—meaning that no one in the world can escape from death. We do not choose it; it is chosen by nature to be our fact of life. We cannot choose to not die; it is impossible.

Human body is chosen to be like that as well. More specifically, our brain is designed by nature to be like that. Modern Buddhism accepts that the research of human brain is of very usefulness. And knowledge stemming from the research of the brain is something Buddhists in modern world welcome and do not think that the study of the brain has contradicted the teaching of Buddha. The madman in Buddhist perspective is deemed as being not held responsible for his actions

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that harm other. This belief of Buddhism arises from an observation that consciousness of the madman does not work properly like normal persons. The study of the brain provided by modern science gives more and more details about the brain of such mad person which differs from normal brain. The study says further that the madman has no choice because his brain does not allow such free will. Modern Buddhism utilizes this knowledge to point out that, as free will is extremely needed in doing moral actions, the mad person is not held responsible for his/her actions because he/she does not have the free will; traditionally, Buddhism has utilized plain observation to support this belief; but now we have scientific study of the brain which helps expand our capacity to know more than what allowed by plain observation about the lack of free will of the mad person; there is no reason to reject the brain study.

The strength of materialism on the nature of human being lies in its concrete evidence resulting from modern scientific research. As Francis Crick has pointed out, between materialism and dualism, the former has gradually shown a number of empirical data to support its assumption that the brain is the thinking entity inside human life while the latter has no any progress

since its first origin thousands of years ago. Today, there are a few philosophers believing in the soul. That results from the advancements of brain study more or less. Dualism has the strength in that the belief in the soul used to be widely adopted amongst those who believe in religion. One important characteristic of religion is that it believes in new life after death and this thing can never happen without the existence of the soul. The belief in new life after death found in very religion, including Buddhism, in a sense could be deemed as the result of some more basic beliefs of religion as follows:

(1) This world should not be a place where important values such as justice are just illusions. These things must exist. If they are not existent, we have no reason to live a life in the world. What is the meaning of justice? It means—the good person must be rewarded the good result; and the bad person must be rewarded the bad result as well.

(2) Even though in human society we extremely try to set up the justice system to serve the above purpose, the system set up by man can never be perfect and this makes some bad persons do not receive the proper reward. Imagine that there are two persons living the different lives—one is good and another is bad. The

bad person is intelligent and can use the loopholes in the justice system to avoid legal punishment. The good person is not rich while the bad person is rich. We can say that this is injustice in a sense. Suppose one day these two men are dead and everything in their lives has arrived at the end as there is no life after death. In religious view, if the above thing is really true, what follows is—this world is unjust and this not worth living in. Ultimately, these two men should receive the proper rewards according to their different actions.

(3) Suppose there is a life after death and such a new life is designed specially for the purpose to provide justice as said above; what follows is—this world is just and worth living in. The life after death will be possible if there is something in human life which does not end when the person dies. The soul is believed to be such a thing. When the bad person said above dies; his soul will be judged by God or something similar to God (such as Karma according to some Indian religions) to receive the proper rewards such as to be born in the hell. In the same way, there will be the good rewards for the good person whose life before death seems to receive things that are contrary to his goodness. For example, we will be born in the heaven.

From above, we see that the belief in the soul plays

the important role in religious life. The later form of Buddhism seems to believe in the soul as well, even though Buddhists are of the view that their religion strongly rejects the belief in the soul. For later form of Buddhism, when a person dies, his consciousness still remains and this stream of consciousness will be judged by the law of Karma to be reborn in accordance with what he/she has done in the past lives. Moreover, love and friendship among human beings and between man and animals is one another core teaching of religion. Indian religions namely Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism (in its later form) are of the view that man and animal share the same moral status as they have the same soul—the soul which is part of God. Even though brotherhood among human beings and between man and animal does not necessarily require the existence of the soul in them, the belief in the soul seems to make it easier for the person to feel the sense of brotherhood as said.

Modern biology says that human race is a species among so many species of the world. It is the nature of every species to love its member more than the ones from other species. This is the fact that can be hardly denied. We do not feel anything when we eat the members of other species such as duck, fish, cow, and

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so on; but we will feel extremely sick to our stomach when know that what we have eaten is human flesh. Some members of species could eat the members of same species. This has been explained as the result of its evolution which is lower than man. So, we can say that the more the species has highly evolved the more the love among the members of the species is high, compared with the species of lower evolution. This means that if materialist conception of human nature is true (through biological research above), it is very hard to hope that human beings would extend their feeling of brotherhood to animals.

But—we have seen that so many people in the world are involved in helping animals; and it seems that the modern world is tending to animal welfare more than the past. What does this mean? It seems that what we have said above contradicts biological research as said. For those who believe in the soul, this can be explained that it is the soul in the person, which is properly stimulated, playing the role behind this kind of phenomena. One day in the future, when human soul is totally cultivated and raised from the influence of bodily instincts, we will feel all species of the world are nothing—but our brothers and sisters.

*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) Some modern materialist philosopher argues that the very simple way to prove that the mind is nothing but the activity run by the brain is as follows. When a man works in the hot sunlight, he will feel thirsty. The thirst is an example of mental phenomena. Where the thirst comes from? The answer is—the man's body system has set up security rules that there must be the certain amount of water reserved in the body, say 80% of total number; after working for hours in the hot sunlight, the amount of water in the body of the man has decreased lower than the point set up in the security rules; so the system sends the signal to the brain *in the form of thirst* to command the man to drink. From this, we would see that thirst is the signal sent from the body system to the brain to alert that the amount of water reserved in the body system has decreased lower than the minimum point; and that can harm the system. This can be applied to explain other mental phenomena such as hunger, anger, love, and so on. What do you think about this?

(2) Some dualist thinkers, namely the Jain, the Hindu, and the Buddhist (in later form of Buddhism) of India, are of the view that material objects have the

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nature to tend to their benefits only. For them, it could be possible that the brain can think itself. But the inner reflections tell us that sometimes a man thinks selfishly, and sometimes he thinks for the benefits of others. This means that among mental phenomena that occur in our consciousness, there are some belonging to the brain and some to the soul. Selfishness arises from the brain; and altruism from the soul. The practice of religious teachings in the views of these people is to give the strength to the soul in order to help it overcome the influence of the selfish brain. What do you think about this?

(3) Some religious thinkers argue, “It is very nonsensical to say that the brain, which is made of material atoms, can think or have emotion. To accept that the brain can think or have emotion is to accept that there could be the happy atoms, the sad atoms, or the envious atoms.” Discuss this claim.

(4) Materialism and dualism have their own strength and weakness. Maybe, to some extent, to choose between these two philosophical beliefs much depends on personal inclination that does not need explanation. If this is true, you may have some inclination to believe in materialism or dualism. It does not matter you believe in which theory, the point is how to give the ar-

gument to support your position. Try yourself to find the possible arguments to support your belief.





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# Chapter Two

## Instinct and Morality

### *Journal: Instincts*

As usual, this morning I wake up late because it is Sunday morning. The sound of birds is heard somewhere among the trees outside the window. The morning sun is not seen. The rain clouds hide it behind. The cool wind gently flows through the window, making the thin white curtain at the window move softly. *This is the beautiful side of the world.* My home is located far from the city. Some years ago, I used to live in the city, as the university where I have taught being there. However, I later decided to move from the city life and settled home here—a small village one hour and thirty minutes driving to my university. Life is short, and there are many things we have to question ourselves as related courses of the shortness of life. I decide to settle my home here, in a sense, as the consequence of above thought—where to live as a person on

earth? Man is not a machine—he is the person in the meaning that he has feelings, emotion, hopes, thoughts, and so on. The question “where to live” is not for the machine. However, I have seen so many people in the world do not question this thing. Their lives in the city move closer to the life of the machine. To some extent, I think human beings should decide between being the person or the machine. However, as my family cannot be saved without earning, and our major earning comes from my job as university professor; this forces me to be part of the machine world hopelessly—I mean I have to accept it if I need to live a life in the world. One of the important products of the machine world is the clock. Actually, time is not same as the clock—at least in terms of philosophy. However, in the machine world, time and clock are identical. Every week, I have two days to be not the slave of time—Saturday and Sunday. I love these days as I can sleep on my bed as long as I need. Like other Sundays, this day after wake up, I do not need to leave my bed suddenly. I love to lie down on the bed and *think*. Many of the good ideas, as I have put them in my books, first arise from such a good time.

At the living room, as I sit down on the sofa with a cup of coffee in my hand, a television program is

showing a Buddhist monk giving his Sunday's *Dharma* talk. The monk says the same things that I have always heard from this kind of television programs. He is talking about human selfishness as the root cause of every problem in human society—he means both individual and social problems. In a sense, the television religious programs found generally in any religion tend to do the same thing—to point out that man is born with instincts and these instincts are shared by animals as well; from religious perspectives, these instincts are blind in their nature, meaning that a human life which is led by instincts can be said not human but animal life. The monks in every religion say alike that it is the practice of religious teachings that makes man higher than animals.

Some years ago, I read the book written by Bertrand Russell, I cannot remember the exact title of the book—maybe it is: *Why I am not a Christian*, the author says ironically that—God creates man to have desires and when man does something as desires in his life suggest God condemns it as the sin. Even though Russell's argument is partly based on theistic religion, his thought could be applied to atheistic religions such as Buddhism and Jainism as well. According to these religions, human beings are created by *Nature* and it is

*Nature* itself that creates man to have desires. In this sense, man does not choose to be like this. Anything that person does not choose himself, in terms of ethics, should not be the subject for him to be responsible for. Buddhism and Jainism teach that desires are bad things and the actions performed by man as the results of desires are counted the evils in the views of these religions. Like God, *Nature* in the view of atheistic religion is Intelligent Being, meaning that *Nature* has thought carefully and found it is good to create man to have both desires and some things contrary to desires like wisdom. In this sense, we can say that *Nature* must see some benefits or values in desires. So, the question is—why these religions which believe in *Nature* remain to deem desires as the evils in themselves?

The monk in the television still talks and talks, mentioning that people should be aware of the dark side in their life. The word '*dark side*' strikes some thought inside me. I think one important thing has been long ignored by religion—with or without intention, I am not sure. That is—they never ask a very simple question: *what should be counted a fact of life*. Anything that we accept as a fact of life will be something we should never blame or praise. We have two hands and in some situation some among us would think it may be

better to have more than two hands—which is not possible. Having two hands is a fact of life. So, it is beyond giving any values—negative or positive. I wonder—can we consider the thing, that the monk in the television calls the dark side of life, in terms of the fact of life instead?

Reproductive instinct is one among major instincts shared by man, animal, and plant. Even a thing which we do not know exactly if it is living organism like the virus also has this kind of instinct. In human beings, love and sex cannot be separated. Love itself is something so beautiful. And it gives rise to the works of arts such as poetry, song, and so on. In animals, love and sex cannot be separated as well, even though they appear differently from human beings in some aspects. My home has been designed to be the place where natural birds can come and find their food such as the fruits of some kind of tree which we have planted intentionally for this purpose. I have noticed that some kinds of birds are highly family animals. When a female bird lays her eggs and sits on them for weeks, a male bird, her lover or husband, seems to worry about her. And when their children are born to see the world, both the mother and the father birds have to work hard to seek food to feed their children. I used to

count the days—how long the newborn birds will be able to feed themselves without the help of their mother and father. It is more than three months. And even though their children can feed themselves, some kinds of birds still live together as a family for some months before the children will grow enough to have their lovers. In the kingdom of plants, we see that flowers are so amazing products of nature. The beauty of flowers is something closely related to its reproductive instinct. The color and smell of the flowers are designed to attract insects, and it is the insect that plays the role behind reproduction of plants unintentionally.

From above, we can say that nature, or God—if you like this word, has created sexual instinct for the purpose of reproduction of living things in the world. Why living organisms need reproduction? The answer for this question could be either simple or complicated. The very simple answer would be—because it is a fact of life. We have most basic works to do every second in life such as breathing. In our body, the cells have died and reproduced themselves all the time—this is an example of work to be done to preserve the existence of living organisms. When we talk about living things, we are not talking about them in terms of individual members of the species, but the species as a whole.

Breathing is the work to be done naturally for the preservation of the individual members of the species while sexual activity is for the preservation of the species as a whole. The complicated analysis suggests that the gene of each species has different levels of development. And this makes them differ in terms of intelligence. However, as regards sexual instinct, it seems that all species possess the same intelligence as they all know that they have to reproduce themselves to preserve their species. Human beings reproduce only one 'biological copy' while other animals such as fish need more. The intelligence in the fish knows that to preserve its species they have to reproduce many biological copies. Man does not need such a thing as found in the fish because reproducing only one copy is enough.

I rather believe that nearly everything in human life (and other living entities in the world) can be explained through the theory of *Charles Darwin*. And according to my personal interpretation of Darwin's theory, there is no such a thing called the evils done by man, animal, and plant as far as all of the actions performed by them tend to preserve the existence of species. Every living organism needs food. Do not question—why? It is a fact of life. In terms of logic, I think the need of food might be explained as a kind of necessary condition for

being living entity. The stone does not need food because it is not a living entity. Suppose one day that stone becomes a living thing; the first thing to happen to it is—consciousness. Consciousness is a kind of phenomena that need some energy to run, like the computer needs electricity. Food is the source of energy as said. So, the need of food is necessarily required when such a thing becomes a living organism.

For human beings, foods are animals and plants. Before these things will be our foods, they must be killed. From observation and reflection, we know that no one in the world needs to be killed. Even plant which does not speak or express emotions like man and animal tries extremely to live under the bad circumstance—for example the grasses in the desert try every way to not die under the hot sun. This means that they do not want to die; they love their life—even though it is just a humble life and seemingly meaningless in the view of human beings. In the case of animals, we know that each day a great number of animals in the world are killed to be human food. Some people who have direct experience in seeing what happens in the slaughterhouse feel they cannot eat meat anymore. The only way left for them is vegetarianism. I myself am vegetarian as well. It happened around ten years

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ago. At that time, I had undertaken a research project of which some part needed to know what happens to animals in the slaughterhouses around the world. What I had known from the research was very sad. Even in the countries where the law concerning the killing of animals in slaughterhouse is strictly enforced like the US, in fact animals are not killed morally as it is supposed. According to the US law, animals must be killed as fast as possible to reduce their suffering, and they must be completely dead before their bodies have to be cut off. That is—the animals must have no any consciousness when their bodies are cut off for meat. But the fact is that there are a few slaughterhouses willing to follow that law. Most of them cannot wait for sure that animals are completely dead because the waste of time is the waste of money. This results in—animals are cut off for meat when they are fully conscious. This fact made me feel something that cannot be explained. After that, I do not eat meat anymore.

I understand that meat eating in a sense cannot be deemed an evil. All follows logical rules. I mean—as a living thing we must eat; and what we can eat must be something that can be transformed into biological energy; and such a thing can be obtained from biological entities only. This results in—we cannot eat things

other than animals and plants because these things only are biological entities as said. The car ‘eats’ non-biological food because it is not biological entity. In this sense, it is not possible for human beings to eat non-biological food. We do not design this truth ourselves. Other, which is nature or God, makes it. Following the fact as said, somebody may say that we do not do anything wrong in eating animals because in biological world everything has been created to eat other. The tiger eats the deer; and we never blame the tiger. This applies well to what we have done to cows, pigs, fish, chickens, and so on.

Eastern religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism are of the view that killing animals is the evil in itself—no matter you have what reason behind the killing. According to Buddhism, killing animals for food still counts an evil. We can never claim the necessity to eat as said above. Jainism is more serious about the taking of other’s life. According to this religion, plants have the same moral status as human beings and animals. We can say that in the view of Jainism plants count as the persons like human beings and animals. So—eating plants cannot avoid the evil because even vegetarianism is still involved with the ‘killing’ (in the case the plants are dead) or ‘torture’ (in the case the

plants are not dead as just parts of them are taken) of the plants. It is said that the Jain monks, who feel that life is designed by nature to commit the evils to preserve its existence and they cannot bear it anymore, deny eating and die. *They call this kind of religious practice as the highest victory of man over natural determination!*

In terms of reason and what we have observed, plants as living organisms differ from human beings and animals in that they do not speak and express the signs which tell us that they have feeling, consciousness, and emotion. However, their behavior suggests that they might have some kind of consciousness—as stated by Jainism. We do not know that when we cut the plants, they feel any pains or not. We assume that animals feel pains from the signs such as crying. But this does not mean that a thing, which does not cry, lacks the potential to feel pains. In this sense, I admit that even vegetarianism does not guarantee the absence of evils.

Suppose one day the research reveals the truth that plants also have consciousness, feeling, emotion, and so on like human beings and animals—what should be done? Some people may say—nothing changed. We still eat animals and plants as far as we need to preserve our existence. It is the rule of biological world. We can

never deny it. Anyone who does not accept the rule will be excluded from biological world. The person who thinks like this might question the Jain monks who fast as said—what the benefit of such doing. For them, this may not be the victory. On the contrary, it could be a defeat instead!

I myself respect the religious persons who decide to die for the reason that they cannot bear natural determination that forces them to injure other living organisms. However, I think we can have other perspectives towards life besides the one adopted by Jainism. The following are my personal reflections concerning the matter that we are discussing.

(1) We should not utilize moral concepts to explain or understand what happens in biological world as far as it can be explained in terms of biological rules. When the tiger feels hungry and kills the deer for food; this is not a moral phenomenon, but a biological one. In the same way, when a farmer feels hungry and kills the fish for food; this is not a moral phenomenon as well, it is just a biological one. However, when the rich people from the city come to the forest and hunt for fun; this is certainly a moral phenomenon; and not a biological one at all. Killing for food can be explained in terms of biology, but killing for fun cannot.

(2) When we say that killing for food can be explained in terms of biology and so it should not be deemed as moral phenomenon, this does not mean that we human beings should not have any emotions as regards it. On the contrary, as human beings have evolved to possess moral sentiments to understand the sufferings shared by all living organisms in the world—the sufferings stemming from the necessity of life to preserve its own existence by eating each other; we human beings should learn to avoid the killing for food as much as possible because it causes sufferings to animals. Vegetarianism could be an alternative. In the case that vegetarianism cannot be practiced for some reason, the killing of animals for food must be done in such a way that animals will have less sufferings as much as possible. And we must consume animal meat on the basis of fully awareness that we do not like to do so, but we have to do it just to preserve our life. This could be deemed selfish, but we have no way to choose other than this.

(3) In the long run, the feeling of friendship between man and animal will help much to reduce the killing of animals for food. Man and dogs, for example, have lived together as friends for thousands of year, and this is the reason why we cannot eat dogs. I

myself believe that even though man and animal are created to harm each other for self-preservation, we—I mean both human beings and animals—have the potential to overcome that natural determination. We have found that sometimes under some circumstance two species that have the long history as the enemy of each other, for example cats and dogs, can live together peacefully as friends. Sometimes, at my home, the uninvited guests like the snakes have come and stayed within the area of the home. I have learned that human beings and snakes can live together peacefully. We let them stay at night and in the morning they themselves go to hide somewhere outside our home and come back again at night. We understand that the reason why they come to our home is—to seek food. In this sense, we should look at them through the eye of sympathy. These hungry snakes just need food and what they need—can be found in our home. This is the condition that pushes them to enter our private area. Actually, the lands are natural—meaning that no one can claim “it is mine.” If there is God and it is God creating the earth, the earth should be common property shared by us and the snakes. This means that human beings do not have the rights to use the earth more than snakes. The evidence to show that no one in the

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world can claim the rights over the earth is—one day we must die. Ownership is the idea created by man and some kinds of animals. Ultimately, we will know that such an idea is nothing but illusion. The earth lasts millions of year, while those who claim ownership over the earth last just hundreds of year. This is the absurdity of the idea of ownership.

From above, I want to say that even though human beings are created by nature (or God—if this concept is more preferred) to be under the control of biological rules, there is some mysterious exit from natural determination that leads us to the light of freedom. Someone may say that actually we never escape from natural dictatorship because, for them, such an exit as I have suggested is included in natural determination. That is, it is nature itself that allows such an exit. I have nothing to argue against this. I am not interested in the language. What I need to say is—as a matter of fact, there is some exit to freedom; it is out there! We do not have to kill the snake every time we see it. We (I mean human beings and some kinds of animals that our inner instincts whisper—they are man's enemies, such as snakes) can be friends of each other. We can adopt vegetarianism to avoid the harm to animals; this is a freedom in our hand.

As I have observed for a long time, religion likes to postulate that there are some parts in human life which are the evils in themselves and it is a direct duty of religion to help people destroy these evils. This belief, in a sense, causes the serious problem to religion itself—as mentioned by Russell. That is, if God is the person to create man, why he creates man to have some parts of life which are the evils in themselves. Some religion, such as Buddhism, does not utilize the concept of God to explain the origin and the nature of the universe. For this kind of religion, there are some parts in human life which can be deemed the evils in themselves as well. In Buddhist metaphysical texts, called the *Abhidharma* texts, it is stated that there are a number of evils given naturally in human life. We can group them into three categories—greed, anger, and lust. The practice of Buddhist teachings such as meditation is for the destruction of these evils.

All the evils in human life in the view of religion, in my opinion, can be looked at from other perspectives besides the one given by religion. It should be noted that the perspective of religion over these things are *normative* in the sense that they are judged in terms of value—moral value. One possible perspective over these religious evils is the *descriptive* one. That is—in stead of

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being something that has the value, we can consider them as a fact of life. As I have stated previously, man does not the designer of himself; there is other thing that designs him to be as seen. Anything which is designed—no matter by what, must have some purposes to be given like that. For example, our hands are designed to catch things; our legs for walking, our mouth for taking food. There is nothing in our life which does not have its functions. Certainly, something may have the functions which are needed in the past but such a need is no longer required now. However, the existence of such a thing can be still understandable. For example, in the distant past, we might need the nails for the same purposes as found in the tiger or the dog; but now we do not need such a purpose anymore.

Instincts like greed, anger, and lust might be designed to have the certain functions in man's life. I myself believe that things in nature can be deemed in terms of positive and negative viewpoints. That is, there is nothing that can be counted 100% good or 100% bad. We know that our body needs water; but water that is taken improperly can harm the body as well. In my opinion, the problem with instincts such as anger does not lie in that they are the evils; but in the improper use of them instead.

It is not my purpose to discuss the detail of how instincts can be deemed as not the evils in themselves; the following is an example to point out that what I believe is based on evidences. I think that the important social concepts such as justice are more or less based in emotion and such an emotion is anger in the proper sense. Someone said to me that—*Che Guevara* says that “if you have seen somebody treating other fellow human unjustly and you feel angry—you are one among my friends.” I myself cannot bear some certain things and one among them is injustice. I hate the corrupt politicians and I think I have the right to hate them and my hatred in this case is not the evil because it causes good things to the community.

Greed in its nature is nothing but possessive instinct. First of all, man has the self-instinct which is the feeling that “it is me, and I have my life.” Every person wants the best things for his or her life. If we can choose anything to happen in our life—no one in the world would not choose to be smart, handsome, attractive, intelligent, healthy, and so on. The instinct behind this universal inclination is greed. As far as our greed can be explained rational, I see no reason why this thing should be deemed the evil.

What is rational greed? The very simple answer is—

the one that does not causes the harm to other. As Immanuel Kant and Buddhism point out, we cannot use fellow humans as the means to our end. Suppose I am a businessman who enjoys the making of money on the grounds that it challenges my ability, efforts, and intelligence. I consider doing business as a kind of game; and I respect myself enough not to cheat other businessmen. Suppose again that as I am smarter than other in the game, it results in I can collect a great amount of money—can we say that I am the bad person? I do not think so.

Life in its very nature is designed to compete with each other. Even the plants are competing to survive. Under the surface of the earth, the roots of plants extremely compete against each other to consume water and other necessary things; and we know that this usually results in some that are successful remain living while some that are not become extinct. The competition in man and animal are easier to see. Natural selection in Darwin's theory is based on the competition between species. This means that every living organism in the world is designed to compete with other. The instinct which deeply whispers at the bottom of consciousness that "it is me; and I have my life to protect" plays the role behind all behavior of man and animal.

In the case of human species, I believe that we have evolved up to the level that the competition between us can be compatible with sympathy. The billionaire who gains the wealth from a fair competition and donates some part of his wealth to support the poor can be found in the world. We have no reason to say to this kind of people, “Stop making the money because you cannot bring it with you when you are dead.” (This statement I usually hear from the mouth of religious persons.) For them, the making of money can be compared to playing football. We have the *World Cup* because we find it enjoyable to compete in this big game. It is our nature. Certainly, in the game there must be some to laugh and some to cry; but it is happiness—happiness to win and to lose; happiness to be in tears as the winner or as the loser.

Lust could be seen related to reproduction which is extremely needed to preserve the existence of species. Sexual activity is based on lust; and as far as sexual activity is performed properly, I have no reason why we should deem it as the evil. Religious persons like a monk are usually taught to see sex as dirty thing. The noble life according to religion usually has the close relation to the rejection of sex. Theravada Buddhist monk and Catholic priest cannot have sex. I have a

doubt that why sex, which is given to us naturally as the same tool of survival as food, is deemed by religion as the evil.

Some religious persons may argue that God has created human beings under some conditions; he never creates human beings to be totally free. For example, God gives us the eyes. The purpose behind the giving of eyes to man is to use them as the tool of goodness. So, the person, who says that it is so ironic that God gives us the eyes and when we use them to see beautiful things our actions are deemed bad, is the one who does not understand the truth. God has some purpose in giving the tools for perceiving the world to man. My response to this line of argumentation is—if it is so, why God does not create man to have the potential to receive only things God needs him/her to receive; God can do that because he can do anything.

Many religious scholars, who try to defend the greatness and perfection of God, say that actually God can create human beings to be totally good—meaning that human beings will be the creatures whose minds cannot think about the evils and all of their behavior will follow goodness only. However, God does not choose this way because he needs man to be free creature. It is human freedom to choose between good and

evil. As I understand, what to be counted evil must be harmful to oneself or to other. I accept that a man does not have any right to point the gun at other persons and force them to send him the money. This is the evil because it harms other. In the same way, the person does not have any right as well to take drugs because it harms him/herself. Just the instincts to have pleasurable experiences such as sex which do not harm anyone might not be counted the evils. I admit that God might not create human beings to harm other and oneself; but human beings have the potential to harm other and oneself, and this could be explained in terms of freedom given man by God—to choose between good and evil. But this has nothing related to normal instincts to have pleasure which does not harm anybody. Thank God to give me the eyes. But God should respect my personal freedom as well. Like the father who gives money to the son, the father should respect freedom of his son through letting him use the money as he sees proper. It is not right for the father, after giving money to the son, to spy how the money is used by his son. I think it is my freedom to use the eyes that God gives me in such a way that I consider proper. As far as the use of my eyes does not harm anybody, God should respect whatever done by me.

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*Comment and Suggestion*

There is a branch of philosophy dedicated to the study of moral values—ethics. The main task of this branch of philosophy is to examine at least two questions—when we say that this thing is right or wrong, what is the meaning of such assertion; and what is the meaning of ‘good life.’ Religion seems the oldest institution created by humankind to answer the second answer. Any religion of the world has its own religious belief concerning a good life. The Christian and the Buddhist have the different concepts of good life, for example. Even in the same religion, there could be the different concepts of good life.

As religion is normally based on dogmas more or less, sometimes we cannot find the reason or explanation why this kind of thing is adopted by religion as a meaning of good life. Almost all religions share the view that the actions stemming from instincts are the evils. Sexual desire is a kind of human and animal instincts; and this thing is basically deemed by religion as an evil. This leads to a fact that the religious persons who adopt the higher level of religious practice such as monks cannot have sexual relation with other.

Emotions stemming from instincts such as anger are

other things which religion teaches the evils. In the view of biology, instincts are considered from the different perspective. That is—instincts could be considered as the biological tools invented by the ancestors of species for the reason of survival. According to Charles Darwin, nature has its process to select some species to live and leave some species to die. He calls this process of nature '*natural selection.*' There is no the fixed rule to command that this or that species has to exist or become extinct. There is only general rule stating that it is the fittest only to survive. Emotions found in man and animals are believed to be created as the tools for survival. For example, if a species does not have selfishness to some extent, it is possible that such a species would become extinct. Suppose this is true, the species which are selfish will be selected—while the ones, which are not, will be not selected. We do not know what happening to some species which makes them selfish. May be it is the first ancestors of such species learning from their intelligence that selfishness is needed for the survival; and this has been transmitted to later generation as a thing we call instinct. In its simplest meaning, instinct is something we can do without any instruction from our parents or someone else. Darwin says that instinct is something

that cannot be explained. He gives an example concerning the cuckoo. This kind of birds does not make the nest themselves; they lay eggs in the nest of other birds. We do not know exactly what makes them behave like that. It could be possible that—the first ancestors of cuckoo have made this unintentionally and later found that it works! And this is the example of instinct in terms of the thing that cannot be explained.

From above, we see that instincts play the certain roles in the lives of man and animal. At least, instincts can be explained in terms of the tools of survival. This means that the extinction of some species could be explained as the result of an inability to create proper instincts for self-survival. However, from the religious point of view, the survival of the body, which is the subject studied in biology, has very little meaning for mankind. It seems that sometimes good persons according to religion are those who do not deserve survival. In Buddhist texts, there is the story telling that the Sakya clan, which is the clan of the Buddha himself, was completely destroyed by the army of enemy state. This happened not because of the lack of ability to defeat the enemy. The Sakya soldiers were very versed in the use of weapons and the art of war. The main condition that makes them completely destroyed

is—they are the good persons. It is said that one time the Buddha came to the Sakya state to meet his family and his people, after leaving them to seek the way to enlightenment for a time. In the meeting, the Buddha delivered the sermon; and as the result of the sermon, the king, the leaders of army, and the soldiers are said to attain enlightenment—meaning that their minds had changed completely. The persons who attain enlightenment in Buddhist teaching are those who cannot commit the evils such as killing even for self-defense. In the war as said above, the Sakya soldiers cannot kill the enemies; and this is why they are all destroyed.

The strong person in religious perspective is not defined from bodily strength, and not from the potential to defeat other. On the contrary, he is the one who chooses to be defeated if victory entails a kind of harm to other. Jesus accepts to be killed and before dead he says to God, “Father, please forgive these people. They do not know what they are doing.” This is such a beautiful word, looking from the perspective of religion. The Buddha says, “When someone hits you, do not hit him back. Why? Because the man who hits you has committed the evil himself. You do not have to commit the evil yourself like the man.” In religion, the social concepts like justice are not utilized. Jesus says,

“When someone slaps your one cheek, turn another to him.” According to social concept of justice and right, the saying of Jesus is not valid—no one in the world should be allowed to slap other’s face; and no one in the world would be allowed to let other slap his face. This is not personal matter. It is social matter. Our society must have the law to prohibit people in the community from harming other and letting other harm themselves.

From above, we see again that goodness according to religion has the special meaning which is sound within the empire of religion itself; and may be not sound outside that empire. Consider the case of Jesus or the case of the Sakya. The teaching of Jesus can be summed up into “love and forgive your enemies” and this must be unconditional—meaning that you must love and forgive your enemies without any condition. Why we should love and forgive our enemies? The answer is—because doing so will free your soul from the evils and frustrations. This answer is reasonable if we choose to look at some dimension in human life only. Religious teaching seems to be based on ‘my world’ only. And the religious duty of the person is to keep this world clean as much as possible. When someone hits you, the Buddha says, let him hit you and do not

let you hit him back. Morality according to the Buddha is highly personal matter. Do not consider what other do, even though it is done to you; but consider what you have to do. In Buddhist ethics, what other do has no meaning in terms of 'our' morality because such a thing is other's business. Suppose the man kills you, this is the killer's business; and not your business at all.

As stated in the *Journal* above, the author is of the view that social concepts such as justice are based on instincts. People have the instincts to hate the persons who harm other; and such hatred itself plays the role behind the law which is designed to punish such persons. Religion tries to overcome instincts; and this results in the rejection to use this kind of things to be the bases of religious morality. However, it seems paradoxical as on the one hand religion tries as said but on the other hand some religious teachings could be viewed based on emotion. Every religion believes in heaven and hell. The heaven is the place where good persons will live the peaceful lives after death. In theistic religion, the heaven is designed by God; but in atheist religion, it is given naturally. On the contrary, the hell is designed to be used as the place where bad persons will be punished after death. Suppose we believe in God—does this mean that God hates the bad

persons and loves the good ones? We can question the same with atheist religion—does this mean nature, or natural laws, has emotions? Some religious thinkers argue that heaven and hell in religious teaching are nothing but the expression of the belief in justice. The question is—what is the basis of this kind of justice? Emotions of God? Emotions of nature?

The agent that plays the roles behind moral systems in religion—God in theistic religion and nature in atheist one—is usually explained to possess intelligence. In the *Bible*, it is stated that when God has created the universe, he was pleased with his action. Certainly, God has created the universe from his intelligence, but what about his feeling as said. Does this mean that intelligence of God entails the feeling of some kind? At least, God must have some plan in his mind and such a plan he feels good. In the same way, in Buddhist texts, it is stated that the law of Karma will not permit someone who has done the bad things to be free from the punishment. Such a person would fly in the sky, or sail far away in the ocean. But the law of Karma still follows him everywhere he goes. This kind of statement suggests a kind of emotion?

Biology and religion contradict each other more or less. At least, in biology, moral concepts are not neces-

sary. When the tiger hunts the deer, biology sees this as natural phenomenon in the meaning that it is neither good nor bad. It just happens in the biological world. However, the biological world as said is ironical in that it produces a large number of species under the condition that the food of them is other, sometimes even inside the same species; and at the same time it allows the sorrow to happen in some higher species like human when they have to harm other for the reason of survival. We can accept the fact that biological world creates us to kill and eat animals without any sense of being guilty. But we cannot accept that after creating us to kill for the reason of survival, biological world also creates us to feel bad. This is totally not fair!

It could be possible that some biologist says to us, “The conflict in your mind is illusion. The fact is—in biological world everything is free of value. If there must be some rule in such a world, it is—the strongest will survive. So, try to be the strongest and think nothing.” But this kind of statement seems playing no role in reducing the conflict in human mind as said. Religion is an attempt, in a sense, to solve the conflict in human mind resulting from living a life in biological world. Religion succeeds a lot, but its victory over human nature is not complete. Religion teaches that to

be free from the conflict as said a person must lift his/her life up to the level of 'man' and not 'animal' anymore. Man in religious perspective is a kind of living organism which transcends biological determination.

It could be possible that man can transcend biological determination as religion believes; but this seems to cause other kind of problem. For example, we do not know that why we (humankind, or human species) and other living organisms are created into this world. There are two theories stating that we are created by what—one stating that it is God who creates us, and another says it is nature doing so. No matter it is God or other thing having similar power and intelligence like God that creates us, what we can claim is—our creator might have some reasons in sending us into this world. And it seems that our creator wants us to survive for some unknown reason. Religious beliefs and practices basically contradict the will of our creator. For example, to survive—we have to reproduce ourselves and this causes things like sexual desire; but religion teaches that sexual desire is the evil. We can calculate that if the whole population of mankind attains enlightenment as taught in Buddhism—this will result in the total extinction of human species. At this point,

religious practice, in a sense, could be compared to the suicide of the whole species. Forgiveness, or not fighting against the immoral invader, as taught in some religions such as Christianity, if done under the condition to compromise between two sides which will result in the taking of equal benefits by both sides, is something can be understood. But, if forgiveness results in self-destruction of the forgiver, we can question—why we should forgive?

In the view of religion, what is called ‘defeat’ in biological world is deemed as ‘victory’ and this is the great difference between religion and non-religious knowledge. In India, some monks of Jainism decide to stop eating and die for the reason that to live means to harm other. In terms of biology, this could be viewed as defeat—at least according to the theory of Darwin which states that only the fittest will survive; the monks do not fit, so they deserve being destroyed. But in the perspective of Jainism, this is the great victory—it is the victory over biological determination.

How to choose between religion and non-religious knowledge? There is no fixed answer. All depends on circumstances. Or, we can say that to choose between these two worldviews, there is nothing related to reason as both sides have their own reasons which can be

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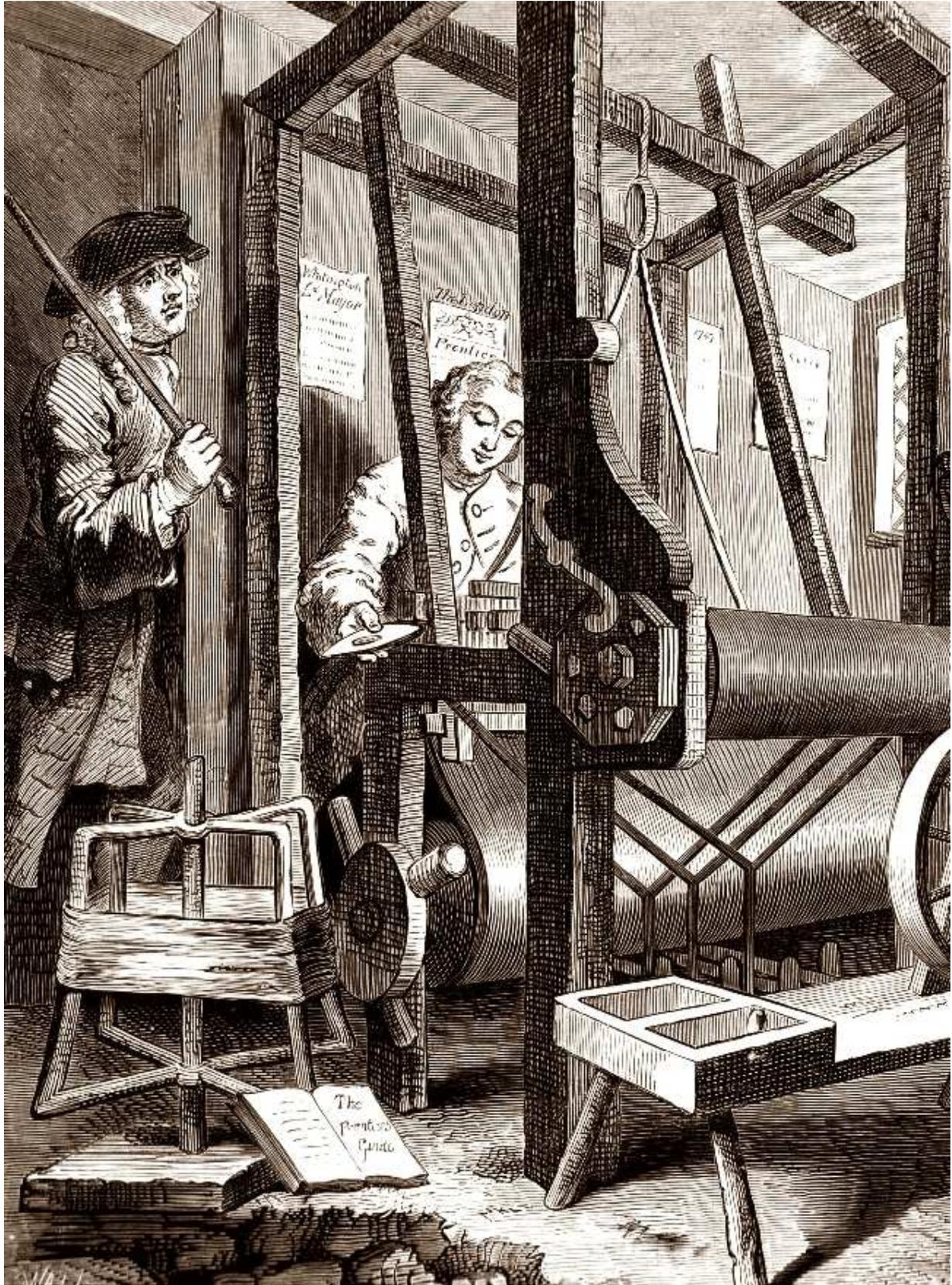
construed as equally reasonable. Arriving at this point, it would be seen that there are two kinds of goodness—religious and non-religious. Religious goodness requires the walking away from what instincts whisper to have or to do. Non-religious goodness does not require like that as it believes that instincts are naturally given to us for some certain reasons; they lie in all we do and all we think. There is no necessity to walk away from them or rebel against them. The proper way to deal with them is to use them in such a way that no one is harmed. Sometimes in the church, among those who confess to priests there are some who actually do not need to confess such a thing because in doing so no one on earth harmed—for example, from your wet dream or your masturbation! This kind of unnecessary suffering should not happen and maybe the understanding of biology might help reduce it.

*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) According to religion, real victory is not over other but yourself. Forgiveness cannot be done by those whose mind is weak. The love of enemy as well cannot be performed by those whose mind does not possess the strength. It is the strength to not be under the influence of instincts. What do you think about this claim?

(2) According to some philosophers such as Ayn Rand, self-interest is the principle of morality. That is, good is anything that promotes your self-interest, and evil is nothing but the one that prevents you from self-interest. This kind of moral doctrine is criticized by religious thinkers as ‘instinct-based’ morality; and for them actually it should not be called moral theory. Rand argues that there are two kinds of self-interest. The first one is rational, and the second one is irrational. Rational selfishness (she calls it like that in her famous book *The Virtue of Selfishness*) is the one performed on the basis of reason and does not harm other. The irrational selfishness is the one that cannot be explained through reason. For Rand, rational selfishness expressed by a great number of people in the community will support good things such as justice and the re-

spect of other's rights. Do you agree with this kind of thought?



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# Chapter *Three*

## Can the Machine Think?

### *Essay: Man and the Machine*

#### I

Human world has been governed by unscientific worldviews for a long time. And one day there was a kind of thing called science happening into the world. Science differs from unscientific outlooks, such as religion and occultism, in that it will not claim any knowledge if such a thing cannot be proven by sense experience. Even though in terms of philosophy we can doubt—there could be something really existing beyond human sense perception, and this could be used as the argument against science as a kind of narrow way to seek the truths; science remains unshaken as the most reliable source of knowledge in the world. Scientific knowledge and findings can be powerfully used in the court. Modern education throughout the world is inclined to promote the study of science and

scientific spirits in people. This has nothing related to magic or miracle. The great awakening of people by science comes from just one single truth—rationality in scientific outlook.

Human nature is created to accept something and deny something automatically if it (human inner nature) is cultivated enough. We cannot accept a claim of truth which does not show that there is a causal relation between two or more relevant events. For example, suppose the fortune teller says to you, “In the next Sunday, there will be some accident happening to you. But don’t worry—this can be changed. In the morning of the next Sunday, wear the white shirt and stay in your house and do not go outside until 11.13 a.m.” In this statement, there are two events described as follow:

(a) There will be some accident happening to you in the next Sunday.

(b) If in the next Sunday morning you wear the white shirt and stay in your home and do not go outside your house before 11.13, such accident will not happen.

From above, we see that there is a relation between wearing the white shirt and staying home (symbolized as  $x$ ) and the absence of the accident (symbolized as  $y$ ).

In the history of mankind, there are so many people in the world believing that this kind of relation of things could be true; and this is why the fortune tellers remain those who have the influence in the modern world. Science does not object that the relation between  $x$  and  $y$  above cannot be possible in itself. The objection of science towards this kind of claim is based on the lack of information which states that there is a causal relation between them and there are a number of evidences supporting such a claim of relation. Suppose the fortune teller explains that there is a demon hating you and it plans to hurt you in the next Sunday; this demon will have magical power in the next Sunday; however, its magical power will not be effective if you wear the white shirt and stay home until 11.13 a.m. This explanation can be understandable. However, this explanation lacks one important thing—the evidences. We can doubt—does the demon really exist; why wearing white shirt and staying home until 11.13 a.m. will prevent the demon from using its magical power.

Rationality is the basic concept generally adopted in science. And rationality meant here is a state of being explainable in terms of cause and effect. Even though science is not necessarily based on any epistemological standpoint, the principle of rationality as

said finally forces science to adopt one epistemological theory named empiricism. Empiricism is a school of philosophy which states that a claim of something will be counted knowledge when it can be proven by sense experience. For example, a claim “God exists” will be counted knowledge when the person who claims this statement can show, “Here is God. See yourself.” As no one in the world can show like that, the claim of God remains a religious belief and not a kind of knowledge according to scientific perspective. Note that science does not reject the existence of God in itself. Science can adopt such claim if there is evidence. Science has no any bias towards religious beliefs. The standpoints of science are solely based on one single principle—rationality. If science is forced to have a kind of bias, it could be said that only one bias that science has is the one against irrational claims.

For a long time, man has observed that inside his/her life there might be something playing the role as the *thinker*. Day after day, we think; and we know that when we think there are a number of things occurring in our inner perception. It can be said that each person has his/her own private experiences concerning perception and thinking. Normally, perception and thinking are related to each other. For example, a per-

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son is watching a television news program. What he is seeing is the political crisis in his country. This is what he perceives. What he perceives makes him extremely bored. He thinks, “This kind of events would not happen in our country if we do not have the selfish politicians.” From this, we see that perception (what seen in the television) is data; and thinking is interpretation of data and judgment (political crisis is caused by selfish politicians). We do not know exactly other species such as dogs possess the same potential to think as human beings or not. But in the case of human beings, we know that we think; and thinking is very special event which has been studied widely by scientist, religious thinker, and philosopher.

For religious thinker, thinking is an activity of the soul. And it is the soul only among things in the universe that can think. Other things cannot think. Some religions such as Christianity and Islam do not believe that animals have the soul; so, for them animals cannot think. Some religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism (note that all of them are Indian religions) believe that animals have the same soul as human beings—so, they can think. Jainism even says that plants can think like man and animal as they have the same soul as man and animals have. The difference between

two groups of religion concerning “can other things besides human beings think” lies in the different understanding of the term ‘thinking.’ For Christianity, the soul is the source of wisdom, morality, and consciousness; and these properties are not separated. It may be possible that animals are conscious beings; but as they do not have wisdom and morality, they count ‘not able to think.’ Indian religions agree that the soul is the source of three properties as said; but for them, these properties are not necessarily compatible. Jainism argues that the most important property that makes such a thing able to think is consciousness. The plants can think within this understanding. In the view of classical Buddhism, thinking requires wisdom more than consciousness and morality. Wisdom in Buddhist perspective is defined as an ability to adapt itself to surrounding conditions. By this definition, it seems that we should accept that plants can think as well because they can adapt themselves to surrounding conditions; and this makes some modern Buddhist scholars say that we must accept that the plants can think as stated in Jainism. However, according to classical Buddhism, the plants cannot think even though from observation there is some sign suggesting that they can adapt themselves to surrounding conditions—for ex-

ample, in the season when water is hardly obtained, the plants throw down their leaves to keep living within such a waterless condition.

The soul as generally believed in religion cannot be tested by sense experience. So, the belief that it is the soul only that can think, in terms of philosophical analysis, can be said groundless. Religion always has some kind of dogmas; and dogma is something people believe true without proof. Some dogmas of religion are useful in terms of practice. Many people in the world cannot harm others, including animals, for the reason that such a doing is the evil in the eye of God. Many Buddhists believe in the law of Karma; and such a belief makes them cannot do the evils such as killing, stealing, taking intoxicant objects. It should be noted that all religions in the world believe in life after death; and this thing cannot be possible without the soul as the moral agent in man to be born again after death.

Turn back to the history of religion; we see that the most primitive form of religion is a belief in the supernatural. People notice that when they sleep, they do not completely sleep as they have experienced a thing called dream. This kind of experience gives rise to a belief that there must be something inside our body playing the roles as the thinker. This thing cannot be

seen as it is non-material. When we sleep and dream, this can be explained that the non-material entity inside the body has left the body temporarily. What we have experienced in the dream is what the non-material entity has experienced when it leaves the body. People also believe that if the non-material entity permanently leaves the body, the person will die.

Note that the non-material entity can leave the body both temporarily and permanently. In this sense, the body is seen as the house where the non-material entity lives. Later, this non-material entity is called the soul; and the soul has been explained as the essence of person, meaning that when the person thinks, it is not his body that thinks—but it is the soul that thinks. In the same way, when the person speaks, it is the soul that speaks; and when the person acts, it is the soul that acts. The body is the tool used by the soul in thinking, speaking, and acting. Moreover, the soul, compared with the body, is immortal in the sense that when the person dies it is his body only which stops functioning, the soul remains functioning—meaning that actually death is not the end of life.

The properties of the soul as said later play the important roles in religious beliefs and practices. When the soul remains functioning after death, this means

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that what the person has done in terms of morality before his/her soul leaves the body will exist inside the soul of that person and this thing will be used as the source of justice according to religious beliefs. All religions in the world teach alike that there is a kind of justice named universal justice for all which states that the good person will receive the good rewards and the bad person will receive the bad ones. This is justice. In theistic religion, it is God that provides such justice; and in non-theistic religion, it is the nature or the law of nature doing so. It is one among many human instincts which says that this world should be just; and this instinct seems to play the role behind the widely acceptance of religion throughout the world because in the opinions of people the system of justice set up by man cannot serve the need of justice in some situation; religion only can provide us with the fullest justice. For example, two men, A and B, live the different lives—A is a good person and tries to do good things when it can be done; while B is a bad person who does not see the reason why he should do good things as taught in religion. As A's mind is governed by religious belief, he rejects to make money through the immoral way even though he can do it easily; and this makes him not a wealthy man. On the contrary, B can accu-

mulate a great wealth, even through illegal ways as he can use his money to avoid legal punishment. Suppose B can live a happy life all his life and dies one day; and A as well lives his simple life and dies one day. During their lifetimes, B can consume pleasurable things more than A as he is richer. The question is—from this, it says that immoral person has a happier life than the moral one; can we say that this is injustice? For religion, the answer is—definitely yes! But this kind of injustice can be solved by religion. After death, God or the law of Karma will provide A and B with proper rewards—and this is justice!

## II

A religious belief of the soul, which plays the significant role in the philosophy of mind in religion, usually opposes the view that it could be possible to create the machine that can think like human beings on the grounds that (a) thinking is a property to be found in the soul only; (b) the machine does not have the soul, so it can never think. As the concept of the soul in religion, as seen above, is not the result of philosophical thinking directly rather than a byproduct of supernatural belief; this makes the concept of the soul does not provide details useful for the understanding of human nature. Actually, we can rationally question—

why thinking must be limited to be the property of the soul only? Why other things besides the soul cannot think? This kind of questions needs the answer from religious thinkers. But we do not have it. Religion just claims a belief without giving justifications.

The study of “can the machine think?” really starts when a number of philosophers and scientists have found that the study of human brain has something that can be used as the ground for the study of the above question. Without any doubt, even religious thinkers admit that the brain has the close relation to human thoughts and emotions. Some modern religious thinkers even admit that the soul could be construed as the source of energy that supports the working of the brain while the brain itself is the thinking machine. They compare the brain to the computer and the soul to electricity. This inclination results in the lesser difference between a philosophical theory which states that “when a man thinks, it is the soul inside him that thinks” and the one which states that “when a man thinks, it is his brain that thinks.”

Suppose we ignore the question “is there the soul inside man’s life” because this question is accepted by some modern religious thinkers as concerning the source of energy to support the brain only; what left to

discuss the question “can the machine think” then aims to one single point—the human brain. Basically, the philosophers and scientists, who think it is possible to create a machine that can think like human, all admit that if we know enough how the brain works such knowledge would lead to the possibility to create the thinking machine which works in the same way as human brain.

Fortunately, during we have been discussing the problem as said, the study and making of a kind of machine called the computer has advanced and this is very useful to understand how the brain works and how to make the machine which acts the same things as the brain. The following are the major ideas concerning the subject—can the machine think?

(a) *Those who believe that the machine can think*

This group of people is seemingly led by a British mathematician named Alan Turing. The beginning standpoint of this group of thinkers is: *thinking in its very essence is nothing but computing or calculating*. The term ‘calculation’ meant here has special meaning. Shortly, calculation means a way of judging events by reducing them into quantities and weighing how to choose between or among them to have the best choice. For example, a girl is deciding—among three men who is the

best one to marry. In terms of calculation, what happening in the brain of the girl is to reduce all qualities of three men into quantities and then choose the best one among them. Note that the ‘best’ one within this context is defined from ‘quantity’ and not from ‘quality’ because quantity can be calculated while quality cannot. The following could be what happening in the girl’s brain.

(1) *Man One*—handsome (1), intelligent (1), and rich (1).

(2) *Man Two*—handsome (1), not intelligent (0), and rich (1).

(3) *Man Three*—not handsome (0), not intelligent (0), and rich (1).

And this is the result of calculation.

(1) The first man gets 3 points.

(2) The second man gets 2 points.

(3) The third man gets 1 point.

So, the result suggests that the first man is the best to marry.

The actions performed by human beings are of moral and non-moral kinds; and the moral actions are usually understood to be based on altruism. Here is the meaning of altruism taken from a dictionary, *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, “Altruism—willingness to

do things which bring advantages to other people, even if it results in disadvantages for oneself.” Normally, when we talk about the action which is based on calculation, it means such an action is judged or weighed in such a way that the person who performs that action will benefit more than other. In this sense, calculation implies selfishness. On the contrary, altruism implies not calculating.

This understanding is rejected by the philosophers who admit that all kinds of human thoughts, including the moral one, are based on calculation. In the case of altruism, they have divided that this kind of action consists of two stages of thinking. First, it begins with the process of calculation; and second, it ends up with the process of decision. For example, A is a student and this morning he has an important class to attend at the university. While he waits for the bus, he has found that an old woman standing near by falls into the ground—she is extremely sick. No one takes any action—they just watch. Suddenly, A calls a taxi and brings the old woman to the hospital; and this results in his missing of the important class at the university. For anybody who reads this story, the action of A is altruist in the meaning that what he acts is for the advantage of the old woman and it is done while he fully

knows that it will bring him disadvantage. However, this does not mean that A does not calculate. On the contrary, we would not be able to explain the event if we do not understand that what happening results from the calculation in his mind. The following might be what happening in A's mind, which shows that he has calculated before deciding to help the old woman.

(1) A thinks—what will happen if (a) he leaves the old woman behind and goes to the university to attend the class; or (b) he brings the old woman to the hospital and misses the class.

(2) This is what occurring in his mind as the answer for the above question. (a) If he chooses this option—what will happen is he can attend the class; but the old woman could possibly die. (b) If he chooses this option—he will miss the class; but the old woman will be saved.

(3) Merely above information cannot be used for making decision. However, A thinks further that—between his disadvantage and the old woman's disadvantage, which one is of more seriousness. It can be seen not difficultly that in terms of disadvantage what the old woman would lose if A does not help her is—she could die; but what A would lose if he decides to help the old woman is—he will miss the class. This is what

playing the role behind A's decision to help the old woman—and it is clearly seen stemming from calculation.

It should be noted that the notion of *calculation* has the close relation to the notion of *quantity*. The above example is concerned with moral feeling which is a matter of quality. However, as we have seen, it can be transformed into quantity. Those who believe that it is possible to have the machine thinking as man are of the belief that all kinds of quality—moral, esthetical, emotional, and so on—can be transformed into quantity. In ethics, there is a well known ethical theory named Utilitarianism which states that the good is judged from its potential to bring about the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. According to Utilitarianism, to judge which is good and which is evil must be done in terms of quantity otherwise we would not be able to make decision which one to be chosen among the given things. In this sense, Utilitarianism seems to support the view that thinking is a kind of calculation.

The notion of quantity has the close relation to the notion of number. That is, we speak of quantity via the language of number. It seems impossible to talk about quantity without using number. Normally, we use a

kind of number system in which ten digits are utilized—0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Actually, we can have other number systems besides this. In some philosopher's opinion, for example Plato, the number is an abstract entity. The symbols like 11, 45, 102, and so on are not the numbers themselves. They are just the signs pointing to the real numbers which cannot be seen by the eye, but can be comprehended by intuition or wisdom. In this sense, we can have many systems of the sign to point at the same abstract numbers.

In the computer, the number system used is the *binary number*—the system in which only two digits are used: 0 and 1. The reason behind this is very simple—first, just two digits are enough as the signs to point at the real numbers as said above; and second, as 0 and 1 can be used in terms of 'no' and 'yes' or 'non-being' and 'being,' this will make it convenient to create the hardware of computer in which the flow of electricity in the forms of 'not having the signal' and 'having the signal' can be interpreted in terms of number—that is, not having the signal can be interpreted as 0, while having the signal can be interpreted as 1. Imagine the long train is slowly passing by. On the train, there are many windows—some are closed and some are opened. From the opened windows, we have seen the light; and

we have seen nothing from the closed ones. In this sense, the closed windows could be given the symbol 0 and for the opened ones we could give the symbol 1—as the signs to describe their different statuses.

Alan Turing imagines that suppose we have the long tape which contains the space in which 0 and 1 can be written and erased continually, we can put the data we need to keep in it. And the quantity of the data to be stored solely depends on how long the tape we have. The computer in Turing's imagination consists of the tape as said and the head for reading the data stored on the tape. In this sense, the tape can be compared to the train and the head is compared to us standing outside the train and watching it passing by and observing what happens at the windows of the train. In the computer that we use today, each 'room' for the storing of one unit of information is given in a set of 8 bits, and we call it byte. This can be conceptualized as a room on the train which has 8 windows. Suppose we have three units of information: I-love-you. Suppose further that we are on the train; and we need to send this information to our friend who stands outside the train but we cannot stop and get off the train—how we can send it. The answer is—we can send such information in terms of the signal; and in doing this we need some

rules known between us and our friend. Suppose we set up the rules as follows.

(1) If the windows of the train are: c-c-c-c-c-c-c-o (c=closed, o=opened), this mean “I.”

(2) If the windows of the train are: c-c-c-c-c-c-o-o, this means “love.”

(3) If the windows of the train are: c-c-c-c-c-o-o-o, this means “you.”

By watching the windows of the train, our friend on the ground outside will know we are saying, “I love you.” In the computer, the symbol c as said is written as 0, and o as 1. So, ‘00000001’ means “I.” ‘00000011’ means “love.” And ‘00000111’ means “you.” When all the digits are put together as ‘000000010000001100000111,’ this can be read “I love you.”

From above analogy, we have two things involved—the long train with a series of closed and opened windows; and the man standing on the ground outside the train. In the same way, according to Turing, the computer consists of the long tape in which a series of 0 and 1 are stored, and the head that can run forth and back on the tape to read information stored in it, and the head also can write and erase the symbols 0 and 1 as commanded. The head works under a set of rules, normally called the program. For example, when the

byte which contains symbols 00000001 is detected—translate it as ‘I.’ According to the commonsense of people in general, it is human that uses the program to manipulate information stored in the computer. The computer itself is just a machine without consciousness, meaning that the computer does not know anything even though it works smartly. However, the philosophers who admit that it is possible to have the machine that thinks like human are of the different opinion. For them, the program can think itself. The following are the arguments given by Turing, generally known as the *Turing Test*, to support that why we should admit that the machine can think. The Turing Test is not actually invented; it is just a thought experiment.

(1) Suppose a man, A, sits in the room and on the table before him is a computer. From his computer, there are two cables leading to two computers which placed in the next room. Suppose further that one computer in the next room is used by human user, B; and the other one is used by the machine user, C. What A has to do is to communicate with B and C; and to observe the difference between them.

(2) Suppose A cannot distinguish between B and C, what we must accept is—C can think.

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Note that Turing's definition of 'think' is based on empiricist outlook. Even though each person among us knows "I am thinking" and believes "other might have the same capacity to think as me," we have no way to know exactly what happens in our mind as 'thinking' is the same as what happens in the mind of other as 'thinking.' That is, thinking is private event. Imagine you are sitting face to face with your wife at the dinner table. You say, "How do you think about the political situation in our country?" She replies, "Very bad, very bad!" You say, "Yes, I think so; it's very bad as you said." Note that you and your wife share the same thought concerning the event; but you cannot know exactly whether or not what happens in the mind of your wife is the same one as yours. What you can know is—she says she has the same thought as mine. You can see her face, her eyes, and her body language; and all of them are outer manifestations. You cannot know what really happens inside her mind.

Looking from the above fact, we can say—"you" appears to 'me' as the robot; in the same way, 'me' appears to 'you' as the robot as well; that's because what we can observe from each other are just external manifestations. Note that—even though you cannot know what really happens in my mind, you have the inclina-

tion to accept that I am a human because my external manifestations suggest so. The Turing Test is based on this understanding. So, if the computer can behave not differently from a human, we must accept that the computer can think. This is a very simple rule: *if we cannot tell them (a thing called human and a thing called computer) apart, we must accept all of them can think alike.*

Turn back to the computer program again. For Turing and those who agree with his thought, the human mind is nothing but a kind of program. Imagine that we have a very wonderful computer program. It can do everything on our request. We must call this kind of machine intelligent. Certainly, at the present, we have not had such a computer yet; but it is a technical problem and not a philosophical one. Ideally, what Turing says is—suppose some day in the future we have the computer program which works so smartly to the extent that no one can distinguish between it and human, we must accept that the machine can think.

(b) *Those who do not believe that machine can think*

John Searle is the leading philosopher of this group who argues that even though the computer could work so smartly, this does not mean that it can think. First of all, Searle has clarified that: for him, some kind of machine can think. Man in his view is a machine; and we

know that man can think. Searle does not believe in the soul. In his opinion, the brain is the source of consciousness, thought, and emotion. However, he does not agree with Turing. The following are Searle's arguments against the idea that the computer can think.

(1) *Thinking requires understanding.* This is very simple rule. Imagine that a man stands on the ground outside the train. Beside him, there is a mirror facing towards the train. When the train is passing by, the man has observed that the windows on the train are: c-c-c-c-c-c-c-o/c-c-c-c-c-c-c-o-o/c-c-c-c-c-c-o-o-o. And according to the rule we have stated above, the man understands that what the person on the train wants him to know is: "I love you." As well, what perceived by the man are given to the mirror. The signals sent from the train also appear on the mirror, as appear on the brain of the man. However, the difference between the man and the mirror is—the former does not just 'sees' the symbols only, he 'understands' what they mean as well; on the contrary, the mirror just 'sees' but does not understand anything. Some years ago, a computer program was invented. Its name is *Deep Blue*. It was invented to play chess. *Deep Blue* had defeated the world's best human players. Now, we have to admit that no human in the world can defeat the computer in playing chess.

However, in the view of Searle, this does not mean that the computer is more intelligent than human—if intelligence entails understanding. Searle says that even personal calculator can do its job more smartly than the great mathematicians. But this has nothing related to ‘whether or not the machine is more intelligent than man.’ Note that in the view of Searle, the computer as a kind of machine does not have special status different from other machines. Actually, it is a machine which works mechanically. We use the pen to write. We cannot use our bare finger to write. In this sense, the pen is more powerful than human finger in writing. But this does not mean that the pen is of higher position than human being.

However, as people do not think the pen can think while some people believe that it is possible that the computer can think; to say that the computer and the pen are not different is something people hardly accept. To give his argument clear as much as possible, Searle says, “Syntax is not the same as semantics.” According to this saying, the working of computer is limited to the level of syntax only and this is not enough to make the computer able to think—because what required in thinking is semantics. When humans use the language, the way we deal with language is not just

syntax. It could be possible that we can create computer program that can write so beautiful poems. But what the computer has done in writing the poems is merely the arrangement of symbols. The human programmers have studied poetry and derived the rules of poetry composition from the real poems written by human poets. When the computer composes a poem, it just follows the rules as said. Searle admits that the computer can write a very beautiful poem. But this poem has no any meaning to the computer itself—it never understands the contents of the poem. In his famous article which later is widely known as the *Chinese Room Article*, Searle uses the Chinese language as an example to point out that it is possible for the computer to behave as being highly well-versed in Chinese, but actually it does not know anything about Chinese.

(2) *What the computer can do is merely simulation of human brain, and not human brain duplication.* Consider the example of the computer which behaves as being well-versed in Chinese again. Looking from external manifestations, the computer can do everything which the native speakers of Chinese do. In some situations, it even does something which cannot be done by ordinary Chinese themselves—such as writing the poems which are so beautiful like the ones composed by Chi-

nese great poets such as Li Po. What does it mean if we have the computer that can compose Chinese poetry? For Searle, it merely means we have the machine that can simulate the working of Chinese poets. And the power of the computer to simulate anything is closely related to its working in terms of syntax alone. That is—even though the computer can write a beautiful Chinese poem, it never understands the poem. It could be possible that we can create a humanoid robot that can write the poem, read it, and express emotions. But all are just simulations in the sense that the robot does not understand anything because its work is limited to syntax only. To say that the robot really writes and appreciates the poem, the working at the level of semantics is necessarily needed; and this is not found in the working of the computer. For Searle, the working at the level of semantics is found in the working of human brain. Looking from outside, the computer can do what humans do, but that is just simulation, and not duplication. A fact that the computer can behave like the bird is not enough to make it become the bird.

### III

Philosophical analysis has its strength in that sometimes it points out to very simple thing that can solve the problem effectively. The different opinions be-

tween Turing and Searle are grounded in the concept of thinking. For Turing, it is possible to create the computer that thinks like human being. But for Searle, it is possible to create the computer that behaves like human being; but it cannot think like human being; it just simulates human behavior. We know that in terms of philosophy, the conflict between two persons counts real conflict when two persons understand the key concepts involved alike, or have the same definitions for those key concepts. If each of them understands the key concepts differently, their conflict is not necessarily conflict. Consider the following conflict of two persons.

–According to you, all crows are black. It is not possible to find some crow which is not black.

–Yes, that’s my theory.

–Look at this picture. This is a crow. But it is not black. How do you explain this?

–For me, any color appearing on the crow is black. So, this crow is black. My theory is still valid.

–I do not understand you. This color is not black.

–But for me, it is black.

From above, we see that the two persons use the same word, but each of them has his own meaning of word which is different from another’s meaning. This

kind of debate cannot be ended because actually they do not debate against each other. They just say different things. The condition required in making the debate real is having the same definition of the term. For Turing, thinking is defined from behavior expressed by *things*. Note that this definition stems from a fact that consciousness, thought, and emotion are private phenomena; we have no way to know what happens in other's mind. I am the writer of this essay. While writing, I know that I am thinking; but I cannot know others such as my wife, my daughter, or my dogs think like me or not. In this sense, others are the robots to me in the meaning that what I can observe from them are just their behavior. Note that there is no difference between man and animal. Both of them can be the robots to me alike. That is because I cannot know what happens in their minds alike. In the same way, the computer or other kinds of machine can be considered as a robot as I cannot know what happens in it. Certainly, I can observe a number of things in the computer; but this is the same as what I can observe in man and animal. Some persons may argue that the computer can never think because it does not have consciousness. The question is—how we know that it does not have consciousness? For Turing, we cannot know both (a)

the computer has consciousness and (b) the computer does not have consciousness.

The only way left to us is to observe behavior of things to understand their minds. And ‘things’ within this context include man, animal, and the machine. It could be possible that all of them have the minds; but the only way to know that they have minds is to observe their behavior. In the Turing Test, if the computer behaves not differently from human, we must accept that they are the same—meaning further that any property given to one of them can be given to another as well. If we accept that man can think, we have to accept the computer can think too—because they behave all alike.

Turn to Searle. For him, thinking requires understanding; and understanding in his view is defined as something necessarily related to semantics. The question is—when Searle says that the computer works within the scope of syntax only, how he knows that. This can be answered easily that—he knows from observation. We know that the working of the computer consists of two main parts, as suggested in the Turing machine. First, there is a hard disk to store the series of symbols 0 and 1. Second, there is a head for reading, erasing, and writing the 0s and the 1s as commanded by

the program. The way the computer deals with the symbols 0 and 1 *as we have seen* can be said to follow syntactic rules. However, we do not know what happens inside the computer beyond what we have observed as said. There is no special mystery in this. It is like the case of man and animal said previously. In terms of anatomy, we can observe human and animal brains to some extent. In the case of human brain, some philosophers believe that it is a kind of digital computer. This interpretation does not result from any observation. That is, what we can observe concerning the brain is not enough to conclude that it is a digital computer. Actually, what we have observed from the brain are lesser explicit than what we have observed from the computer. At least we know that the computer works on the basis of manipulating the symbols 0 and 1 while we do not know the brain works on the basis of what—purely mechanical, or something beyond this.

It seems that in Searle's theory, there are a number of unproved things admitted as dogmas. For example, it assumes that every human being can think alike. It is the commonsense telling us that every person thinks alike. But we know that the question 'how we know other's mind' is a serious one in the philosophy of

mind. Exactly, we cannot know what happening in the mind or in the brain of other. We know only what happening in my mind or my brain. Applying this rule to the matter of syntax and semantics, what we can claim is that when we read a book we know that “I understand the meanings of the text.” But we cannot know “whether or not others understand the text as I understand.” In this sense, the matter of syntax and semantics is private like the matter of what happening in other’s mind. It could be possible that it is me alone in the whole universe that understands the meaning of the text; and it could be possible as well that others (my fellow humans and the computers) merely deal with the text at the level of syntax; but that is not problematic as their behavior suggests that they really understand the text. We can live well together in this world even though our minds work on the different grounds.

Searle believes that the difference between human brain and the computer lies so much in that the brain is biological object while the computer is not. People in general who know modern science believe that the brain is the source of consciousness. For this kind of people, the computer does not have consciousness; so, it cannot understand anything. Note that understand-

ing, according to these people, requires being conscious and being conscious requires being biological organism. However, this line of argumentation is not used by Searle. Once Searle said:

Another misunderstanding is to suppose that I am denying that a given physical computer might have consciousness as an “emergent property.” After all, if brains can have consciousness as an emergent property, why not other sorts of machinery? But Strong AI is not about the specific capacities of computer hardware to produce emergent properties. Any given commercial computer has all sorts of emergent properties. My computer gives off heat, it makes a humming sound, and with certain programs it makes certain buzzing and crunching noises. All of this is totally irrelevant to Strong AI. Strong AI does not claim that certain sorts of hardware might give off mental states the way they give off heat or that the properties of the hardware might cause the system to have mental states. Rather, Strong AI claims that implementing the right program in any hardware at all is constitutive of mental states. To repeat: the thesis of Strong AI is not that a computer might “give off” or have mental states as emergent properties, but rather that *the implemented program, by itself, is constitutive of having a mind. The implemented program, by itself, guarantees mental life.* And it is this thesis that the Chinese Room Argument refutes. The refutation reminds us that the program is *defined* purely syntactically, and that syntax by itself is not enough to guarantee

the presence of mental, semantic content.

From above, it is clear that Searle's theory is very limited to the objection of a philosophical theory called Strong AI (Strong Artificial Intelligence) which claims that "implemented program by itself is constitutive of having a mind." For Searle, it could be possible that the hardware of computer gives rise to consciousness in the same way as the human brain giving rise to consciousness. And his theory has nothing to do with this possibility. In short, being biological entity or not has nothing to do with the possibility to have consciousness or mind. Searle just says that the computer program can never be a mind because its working is syntactical.

Arriving at this point, we have an important question: do those who believe in Strong AI and Searle use the same definition for the word 'think.' If not, they are not debating against each other. In my opinion, they do not use the same definition—so, these people do not argue against each other; they just claim different beliefs as follows.

—The philosophers who believe in Strong AI claim: the computer can think if it behaves not differently from human. No matter the process of computation inside the computer is syntactical, and no matter the

program can understand its work or not; we call it thinking. The computer has a mind even though it does not understand things as we understand. Actually, understanding the meanings has nothing to do with having a mind.

—Searle claims: thinking requires understanding the meaning. Even though the computer can do everything humans do, this does not mean that the computer can think. It just simulates the way human beings behave. No mind, no thinking, to be found in the computer program.

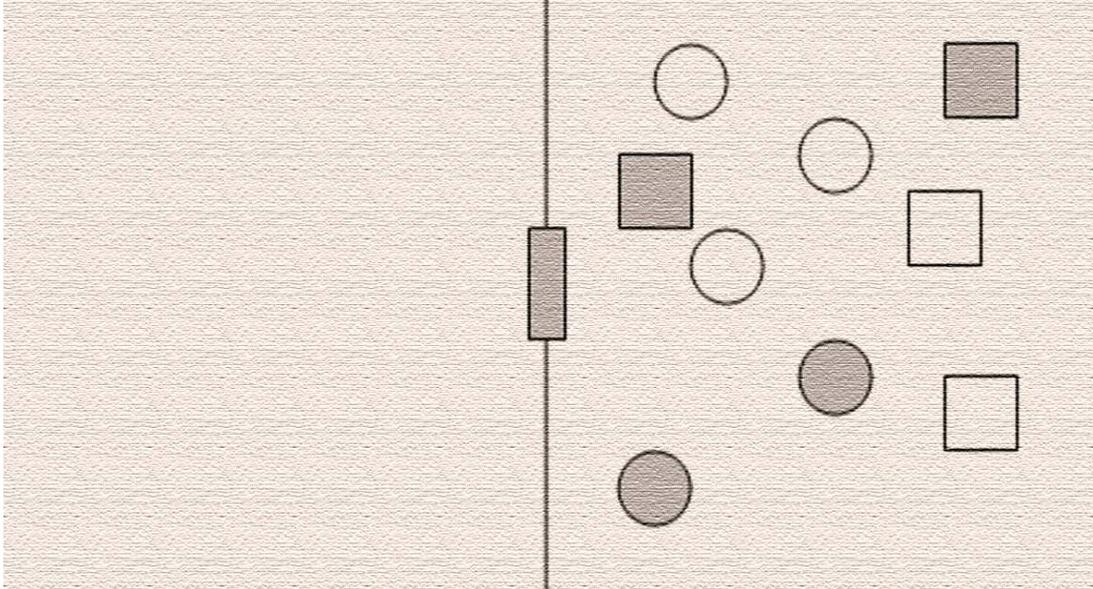
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*Comment and Suggestion*

Indian religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism—are known as having much experience in analyzing a thing called thinking. It may be useful to consider their ideas concerning the subject and find how it could be utilized to understand what given in the essay above. We will use the ideas of Buddhism as an example as follows.

1. Thinking in Buddhist perspective is of two kinds: *conscious thinking* and *unconscious one*. Conscious thinking is the one given to us after we wake up or in the state of dreaming. Now you are reading the book. You are conscious; and you know that you are reading the book. This is an example of conscious thinking. Unconscious thinking is something sounding strange. Normally, this kind of thinking is not allowed, by the nature of human being, to occur in our consciousness. However, there is some situation in which what kept in the unconscious mind is allowed to occur in the stream of consciousness. The examples of such a situation are the state of dreaming, or the state of dying. To understand the Buddhist concept of two kinds of thinking (or two kinds of mind—Buddhism defines a mind as a state of thinking), imagine that there are two rooms as

given in the picture below.



The room given at the left hand represents a conscious mind; and the one given at the right hand represents an unconscious mind. Note that there are a number of things stored in the unconscious mind. Between the rooms, there is a door, which is normally closed. There are two kinds of things stored in the unconscious mind. The first thing is moral entity which consists of the good and the evil. The white circles represent the good; and the gray ones represent the evil. Moral entities in Buddhist teaching are abstract beings. They are called the fruits of Karma. According to Buddhism, the actions performed intentionally and having moral qualities—good or bad—are called the Karma. When the person does the good Karma, such

doing will cause a good fruit of Karma inside his unconscious mind automatically and silently. In the same way, when the person does the bad Karma, it will cause the bad fruit of Karma inside his unconscious mind. Both good and evil in the form of the fruit of Karma are unchangeable. The basic function of them is to be information used by the law of Karma to judge how the person will be given reward or punishment in this life and in the future life. The law of Karma cannot judge the person without information. Note that the unconscious mind is the place inside one's life where personal information concerning the good and the evil done by the person is stored. This thing is needed in the system of justice under the law of Karma.

The second thing stored in the unconscious mind is something that has the potential to cause extreme suffering in one's life; so, the system of mind has kept it in this closed area to prevent the person from its harm. This kind of things is represented by the gray square. Note that some squares are white, meaning that the gray squares, differing from the circles which are unchangeable, can be changed. The white square means the gray one which is changed to be harmless. The door between the rooms is basically closed, meaning that what happening in the unconscious room is be-

yond our sense perception. However, sometimes, this door is slightly open, and some of the gray squares temporarily escape from the unconscious room and come to the conscious one. Sometimes, in a dream especially that occurring during the time we are sick, we have done something so violent. A girl, as reported in the work of some psychiatrists—for example, kills his father in her dream. This happens many times; and it causes extremely pain to her. In her conscious mind, she loves her father. She does not understand why she can do such violence in the dream. In the view of Buddhism, there must be something very bad happening to the girl and his father must be involved in it. This event has the high potential to cause the great pain to the girl. Normally, when someone causes the pain to us, if such a person is not the one we love, what the person does to us will be kept in the conscious room. In the case of the girl, the person who causes her the pain is the one she loves. The greatest pain in human life is being thrown in a state of conflict. The conflict is a state in which the person cannot make a choice. And when we cannot make a choice, we will be frustrated.

In the view of Buddhism, nature (what Buddhism believes playing the role behind the design of things in the universe and this thing is not necessarily one en-

tity—it could be a network of things themselves) is intelligent. Nature knows that the conflicts in man's life should have some way to deal with; and it decides to keep them in the unconscious room inside human mind. The main reason in storing the conflicts in this area of the mind is—to let man keep living. As the squares differ from the circles in that the happening of the squares does not depend on the person (means—he does not choose it like in the doing of the circles); to be fair to the person, they should be changed if the person has the strength enough to overcome them. It is believed that the practice of mind-cultivation to some certain extent has the potential to turn the gray squares to be the white ones.

2. Why nature provides man with two kinds of thinking? The answer is—the conscious thinking is basically based on one's self-instinct; and in some dimensions of human life, self-instinct is not suitable to be used. Normally, Buddhism argues, any person thinks he or she is right, even though other people say that he or she is wrong. Self-bias is common phenomenon found in human beings. Suppose a man steals other's money. Stealing is a bad action in the meaning that it causes suffering to the owner of the money. The man who steals the money may defend himself, "I know

stealing is an evil; but I have some reasons. I am a poor man. My family needs money. I have no way to choose.” Buddhism accepts that in some cases, the person who commits the evils could have some good reasons to explain that why he/she has to commit those evils; but in some cases their reasons are unacceptable. From this, we see that personal reasons do not necessarily lead to the sound conclusions. This implies that to be fair to all involved, there should be some moral agent in the universe to play the role as the *universal judge* to point out that actually what the person has committed must be counted good or evil. Buddhism believes that the unconscious mind is such universal judge of morality.

Turn back to the case of the man who steals other’s money again. When he has committed such an action, his conscious mind would explain to himself, “I have the reason to do that.” And it could be possible that by such explanation, he could feel a little guilt. However, his unconscious mind, which works silently inside and knows everything, will keep all the man has done in the unconscious room in the form of Karmic information—the information in which certain moral qualities both good and bad are clearly given. It could be possible that some bad actions—according to the conscious

thinking of other observer, when judged by the unconscious mind inside the person himself, also have good moral qualities. A doctor, who decides to stop the serious pain of the patient whose sickness cannot be cured by euthanasia, has committed both good and evil. So, in detail, some circles stored in the unconscious room may have one part white and other part gray.

3. The above theory of human mind of Buddhism is based on religious beliefs. In terms of epistemology, we can doubt, “How we know there really exists the unconscious room in human mind as said.” The answer is: we do not have a direct way to know this thing; like we do not have a direct way to know whether or not there really exists the unconscious mind given in Freud’s theory. However, the point is not—can Buddhist theory of unconscious thinking be tested by sense experience. Rather, the point is—according to Buddhism, there can be another form of thinking besides the conscious one. Actually, Indian religions have a way of understanding of human thought wider than Western thinkers like Searle. In the view of Jainism, a tree can think; a stone can think; a river can think. Note that thinking to be found in the tree could be of two kinds—conscious and unconscious. But the one to

be found in the stone or the river is of the latter kind only. When we hit the stone, it will hit us back. The law of action and reaction, given by Newton, states that the stone will give back reaction force in proportion to your action force. This means—if you hit the stone slightly, it will hit you back slightly too; if you hit it violently, it will hit you back violently as well. The question is—how the stone knows how to react to outer things. For Jainism, the answer is—the stone can think, so it *knows* (via unconscious thinking) well how to react.

4. In the case of the stone above, does its knowing to react to outer condition follow syntactical rule? It seems that the answer is no. Syntactical rules have the meaning only in the system where the language is concerned. When the raindrops fall from the clouds to the earth, they just fall. No language concerned in the falling of raindrops. Normally, the language is the product of human mind; and it could be possible that some animals also have the language which is simpler than human language. The use of language needs grammatical rules which will tell us that how to arrange the order of words. We call the rules as said syntax. The role of syntax is to provide the meaning. In English, the following arrangement of words has the meaning: “a boy is smiling.” But this has no meaning: “boy is

smiling a.” The last arrangement of words does not have the meaning because it does not follow syntactical rules accepted in English. Language usage of animals might have syntactical rules as well. Language without syntax might be impossible—because language is a kind of convention. When the computer is invented, its working is designed to be ‘language-based.’ Like human being, the computer would not work if it does not know how to use the language. Natural language used by human is transformed to be digital language in the computer. In natural language, the use of language in terms of syntax is mechanical. Consider the following example.

(1) Dog.

(2) This word consists of three symbols: D/o/g.

(3) When our eyes look at the word, what they see is: ‘D’ and ‘o’ and ‘g’ respectively; and this can be compared with any mechanical event such as the writing of words on the paper by human hand.

(4) Suppose the word ‘Dog’ is digitalized as ‘○○○○○○○  
○I=D’ and ‘○○○○○○○II=o’ and ‘○○○○○○III=g.’ When the head in the computer scans ‘○○○○○○○○I○○○○○○○II○○○○○  
III’ what happening can be said not differently from what happening when our eyes ‘scan’ the word ‘Dog’ said above—as both of them are mechanical events

alike.

From above, we see—as far as syntax is concerned, there is no difference between natural language and digitalized one. And in terms of mechanical events, the work of computer as said is not different from the falling of the raindrops. In a sense, the symbols 0 and 1 in the computer could be seen as entities like the raindrops. According to Jainism, the raindrop can think, like other things in the universe. The raindrop has its ways to deal with surrounding conditions; and in this sense, we call it intelligent. In the same way, the computer can think as it has its ways to deal with surrounding conditions. Certainly, maybe the computer does not understand anything. But that is not the problem. It can think in some way—a way of unconscious thinking as found in the stone or the raindrop.

According to Buddhism, intelligence can be found in the network of things as well as in individual objects. This view of Buddhism might be explained through what Darwin presents in his theory of natural selection. The word ‘natural selection’ does not denote one single entity. However, it is not just a name; it really exists. In natural world, there are a number of species. In each species, sometimes there occurs a new change; and this causes the varieties inside the species. Some

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changes later make some members of the species not fit to survive, while some changes make some members fit to survive. The fittest will be chosen to exist and the unfit will not be chosen. Natural selection will not appear if there is only one single entity in the world. We can say that when things exist together, they play the roles as surrounding conditions of each other. These surrounding conditions have the power to choose or not choose some members of species to survive as said. Note that the work of natural selection is intelligent in that without it the world might be in the state of chaos. On the contrary, this world is well arranged. Natural selection knows how to keep the world balanced. Sometimes, some species or some members of species would be destroyed to keep the whole world balanced. This is an example of the intelligence of natural selection.

The computer, like man, can be considered both in terms of individual and in terms of the network. Searle's argument seems to work well at the level of individual computer. Actually, Buddhism is of the opinion that even one single object such as a man can be viewed as a network. A man is the network where the body and the mind mutually interact. In this sense, Buddhism never thinks that the brain is the only source

of consciousness. It may be a part which plays the leading role in causing thought, emotion, and so on. However, it alone cannot work. We can imagine that suppose the computer that we are talking about is not just one single computer, but a vast network where millions of individual computers that have their own identities are united; what will happen? In the view of Buddhism, if other networks in the world give rise to a thing called 'intelligence of the system,' why this would not happen to the network of computers?

A tree, as well, could be construed as a network. Its branches, in terms of individual, compete against each other, for individual survival. However, ultimately the tree as one single entity has the intelligence to keep the whole balanced. We do not know whether each branch of the tree has its own intelligence. Maybe, the competition found among them is just mechanical phenomenon in the sense that each of them does not know or understand anything. But, as a whole, there is some commonly used intelligence playing the role to keep the whole system balanced as much as possible. This intelligence seems to be something more than mechanical event. Could it be possible that—this is a kind of semantics or the intelligence that understands the meanings like human mind?

*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) How can we define the term ‘thinking’? When we ‘walk’ we know this is walking. When we ‘speak’ we know as well this is speaking. But when we ‘think’ it is not clear what kind of action called thinking. Religion in general admits that thinking is a property of the soul. In religious perspective, man consists of body and soul. The brain belongs to the body. As the body cannot think, the brain is not the thinker. According to religion, it is the soul that thinks, using the brain; like it is the soul that sees, using the eyes. Thinking in religious perspective is rather clear as it is believed to be the property of one single entity—the soul. The soul could be compared to the candle and thinking the light shining from the candle. Imagine that the candle emits the light; and while emitting the light, it knows that “I am emitting the light.” This is the working of the soul, called thinking. What do you think about this?

(2) Are ‘thinking’ and ‘language’ necessarily connected? Could there be some kind of thinking which is not related to language. Imagine that in the distant past there was a primitive form of human species which did not have the language yet. But at that time, we might have the potential to think. Even now we have

discovered a kind of thing that cannot be counted exactly living or non-living entity. It is the virus. The virus does not have metabolism which is needed if such a thing will be counted living entity. In this sense, it seems not different from a pen or a car. However, when the virus enters the body of living entity, it duplicates itself. This property is not found in non-living entity such as the pen. In this sense, the virus behaves like living organism. We can say that the virus is intelligent; it can think. The question is—the virus might not have any form of language, but it can think; does this mean that thinking and language can be separated? If thinking and language can be separated, could it be possible that the computer can think in some way; and the debate concerning syntax and semantics is no longer necessary?





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# Chapter *Four*

## Religion and Humankind

### *Confession of a Man: Why I am Religious?*

#### I

Someone says that the modern world no longer needs religion. This type of people sometimes says there was a time in the past that religion did not occur in human community; but that is not a problem—we can live peacefully without religion. They even say that the world without religion is more peaceful than the religious one. There were violent wars happening in the history of humankind as the results of religious conflicts. I fully accept that religion used to harm humankind severely in the past; and even today there still remains a sign suggesting that such a pain could happen anytime. However, I think, religion should not be deemed as the evil. What said above, in my view, should be construed as an evil stemming from exploitation of religion rather than the evil of religion itself.

Religion in its primitive form was far from institutional. It was a personal way of life. To prevent people from the harm possibly stemming from religion, we must return to the real position of religion—*religion as yourself*.

I fully believe in God; but—my God is not the same as God that the priests talk about. My personal conviction is: God is private phenomenon—meaning that if you need to face God, do not go to the church. There is nothing there but a shadow of God. Rabindranath Tagore once said that: God can be found only in places where people live a real life; and not just a fake one. Day by day, the farmers have worked at the wide fields—there you can feel God amidst the cool winds, the falling rains, the murmuring of streams. Even in the cities where the poor workers live their hard lives by the streets under the hot sun and in dusty air, you would find God walking among them as well. In the past, I had wondered why God of Tagore could be seen among the poor rather than the rich; now I think I have the answer. This world is created by God to be common property shared by all. But the rich take it for granted that the world is their personal property. No one has the right to use the earth more than other because the earth is not created by him or her. But some

of us do not respect this rule; they have accumulated wealth; and when the great portion of natural resources has been in the hand of a few people, what left in the hand of the majority who are poor are few and not enough. I believe that God is a kind person. He might be sad seeing that his world is governed by just a few rich people; and this is why you cannot find God in the palaces of kings or in the luxurious mansions of the billionaires.

God is love and hope. In the *Bible*, Paul said that “God is nothing but love. Those who do not feel love all their lives do not see God.” In *Matthew 25*, Jesus said that “When I am hungry, you give me food; when I am naked, you give me clothing; when I am alone in the jail, you visit me. Whatever you have done to the least of my brothers—you do it to me.” This is so beautiful word! I do not think that priests who live in luxurious place, be it called monastery or anything else, belong to Jesus’ brotherhood. It is sad to know that the church becomes the place at which the poor look and feel hopelessness.

Karl Marx had criticized religion as spiritual opium. In my inner feeling, maybe Marx is religious person of some sort. He said that as the world is common property of humankind—it is not right to allow a few per-

sons take it in their hand. This is injustice. He said further that religion should encourage the feeling of justice in the poor, giving them strength to fight for it. Unfortunately, religion does not do what that should be done. Priests and the rich rulers conspire with each other to exploit the poor. Priests said to the poor that it is God's intention to make you poor—to test your belief in Him. Moreover, they said to the poor that wealth is just illusion—meaning that they should accept such poorness. Certainly, there could be some poor people who are innocently convinced that poorness is godsend and they can be good persons in the eye of God by accepting such a thing. In the view of Marx, religion, being used as said, becomes the opium in the meaning that it sends people who have suffering into the world of illusion, rather than to awaken them to the world of reality. In the world of illusion as said, people will feel happy; but such happiness is not different from happiness stemming from using drug.

One time, a Chinese writer named Lu Xun raised the question. Suppose there is a burning house. Many people are sleeping in the house. This house is strongly locked. No one can escape from it. As they do not know that the house is burning, so they will die peacefully within some minutes. The question is—we should

awake them to know the house is burning or not. This is a dilemma. If we let them continue sleeping, the good is—they will die without pain. If we awake them, they will die painfully; but the good is—before death they will know the truth. So, the essence of the dilemma is: between having a happy life in illusionary world and having a painful life in the real world, which one more preferable?

It seems that for Marx and Lu Xun, the latter one is of more value. And I believe that actually the masters of religion might endorse the latter one as well. The Buddha once said, “A short life which knows truths is more valuable than a long one which is in illusionary world.” And I believe further, like Lu Xun himself, that when people in the burning house are awakened, it could be possible that ultimately they will die in fire; but before death, they might try to fight—and this is the value. In some cases, the death is not defeat but victory because they have tried extremely to survive.

Arriving at this point, it seems that we have at least two kinds of life. The first one is a happy life in illusionary world; and the second one is a painful one in the real world. The first kind of life is said to be found generally in religion, at least Marx said that. Or, religious life belongs to the first kind of life. I do not ac-

cept this claim. There must be something wrong in viewing so. However, I admit that institutional religion is the source of such blame. But real religion—religion as yourself—can never provide us with happy life in illusionary world. Happy life is good thing, but living a life in illusionary world is not good. The painful life is not good as well, but living a life in the real world is good. In my conviction, true religion might provide us with a happy life in the real world, instead!

Now we have two key concepts to clarify: *happy life* and *real world*. I would like to begin with the latter as it seems to be the ground for understanding the former. This world is a fact. I mean the physical world is something that contains a number of facts; and facts here are what people can perceive alike irrespective of their differences. As the facts of the world are so complicated, to understand this world as completely as possible requires a use of some theory. One of the oldest theories of the world is a religious one which states that this world is created by God; and everything has been designed by God to be as it seen now from the first moment of creation. That is, man has had characteristics as seen now from the distant past to the present. Others, both animals and plants, as well have these characteristics from the first moment that God

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has created them. No evolution in the past and the future. Everything is designed to have fixed manner by God. This theory, for me, is less attractive than the one presented by Darwin. The creation of the universe as described in the *Holy Bible* is not based on any evidence. I myself am born in a Christian family; but I do not think that this must result in that I have to believe in everything appearing in the *Bible*. The scholars who study the history of the world as recorded in the *Bible* have calculated that if God has really created the world as stated in the *Genesis*, the age of the world would be around 4,000 years. And this is greatly different from the scientific evidences. I myself accept that the evolution theory presented by Darwin, in itself, does not contradict the belief in God. Certainly, it could contradict some parts of the *Bible*. But for me, God and the *Bible* are different things. The weakness of the *Bible* does not necessarily lead to the weakness of belief in God. We should distinguish between these two things.

There are different interpretations of Darwinism in terms of philosophy. Some of them states that the very essence of Darwinism is—the world has been created without the blueprint. And for those who think like this, Darwinism is a philosophical theory which opposes a theological argument well known as ‘argument

from design.’ A theologian, William Paley, says that the watch needs the watchmaker. The world, according to him, can be compared to the watch in the meaning that both of them are designed by something. To understand what Paley means, we have to look at the universe as a whole. The universe is beautifully designed. Mere our solar system says so many things. As I do not want to talk about other things but the world, I would like to limit our discussion to the earth only. The question whether or not this world is designed, in my view, can have several answers, depending on how we look at it. Those who believe that Darwinism does not accept that the world is designed argue that according to Darwin’s natural selection, things in nature have blindly evolved and are selected by nature to survive or not depending on whether or not they are fit to survive. I believe that God may not be involved in designing things to be like so. God does not need to do that. God can let things happen and then let them to evolve by themselves. In this sense, the evolution of things does not imply the non-existence of God.

I do not think that the world can be compared to the watch. I mean, in making the watch, the watchmaker is the only one who has all authority to design the watch. Certainly, so many people in the world be-

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lieve that God is the only one who has all authority to design the whole universe. Unfortunately, this belief does not accord with the facts of the world. The evolution of things is undeniable. And this, for me, shows that God does not design things as the watchmaker designs the watch. The best way to understand the roles of God in creating things is to look at what the good parents do to their children. The good parents let their children grow as their inner nature suggests. Even the good rulers never command their people to be as they need them to be. In a sense, the picture of God as the Almighty One who has total authority to command things in the universe to be as He likes them to be—would be the picture of tyrant, rather than God who loves humankind and everything He has created. What is love? For me—love means freedom. *You cannot count to love someone if you never give them freedom.*

Someone may question—if God loves everything, why does He create something to be weaker than others and then such a thing will be destroyed according to Darwin's natural selection? I admit this is one of the questions that are difficult to answer. However, to be fair to God, we should accept that the weakness found in something as the result of evolution has nothing related to God. Like the children who are born differ-

ent, things in the world should be viewed like that. God lets evolution work; and sees something surviving and something not. This world is not a perfect place where we would see only good or beautiful things. There are some things bad and ugly. As everything is the result of evolution, we should accept all of them as facts. The good are fact as same as the bad; the beautiful are facts as same as the ugly. Things have to be so; and, I believe, if God can feel like human, He might be sad to see something bad and ugly—but that is what to happen inevitably as far as God wants go give freedom to things that He has created.

Arriving at this point, I want to say that the real world is not a perfect place like the heaven that many people usually dream about. In this sense, a happy life in this real world might be something given under some conditions. Eastern religions like Buddhism talk much about the facts of life. Actually, they call them the truths of life which are: birth, old age, sickness, and death—for example. Buddhism is a naturalistic religion in the sense that everything in the universe is explained by Buddhism as either natural objects or natural laws. Certainly, Buddhism, as religion, teaches that there is something existing in the universe which cannot be seen directly by human ordinary senses such

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as life after death. But this kind of things is categorized as natural and not supernatural. Buddhism admits that there are a number of gods; but gods in Buddhist perspective are not supernatural beings. They are just natural beings of some sort. The definition of supernatural being employed by Buddhism is: a thing which does not follow natural laws; or a thing which has some unknown power to be beyond the hand of natural laws. Actually, there is nothing which has such property. Gods may do something that human cannot do. But this does not mean that they have supernatural power. They just know some natural laws which human do not know; and this makes them able to do such things. In short, gods and humans share the same position as natural objects that are regulated by laws of nature. Gods are mortal like humans. As naturalistic religion, Buddhism teaches us to accept two important truths. The first is—nature has its own way. The second—to live in natural world, the best way to attain the most peaceful life is to adjust ourselves rather than outer conditions. To understand this position of Buddhism, the tale of Sisyphus as told in Albert Camus' essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, may be of usefulness. The story is: one time Sisyphus had done something and gods were very disappointed with his doing. In a gathering, someone

among them questioned, “How to punish him in such a way that he must receive the heaviest pain?” Someone replied, “There is no pain in one’s life higher than being cursed to do a work that can never be finished.” So, Sisyphus was condemned to carry the heavy stone to the top of the mountain; and when he reached the mountain’s top, the stone will fall down to the ground and Sisyphus had to come down the mountain to carry it to the top again. Sisyphus had to do this over and over; and he could not die to escape from the curse. Sisyphus was extremely frustrated—we know that sometimes suicide is used by people as an exit from frustration resulting from no hope; Sisyphus was not given freedom to exit from his suffering, and this is the greatest pain. One day, Sisyphus thought while carrying the stone to the top of mountain as usual, “Gods can have the influence over my body only. My soul remains mine; and how to think about my life is totally my freedom.” From the reflection, he had found that the pain that he had received before that mainly comes from ‘*how he thinks about his destiny*’ rather than ‘the destiny of life itself.’ Finally, Sisyphus had found the secret that gods can punish his body only. After realizing this truth, Sisyphus still carried the stone to the top of the mountain day by day—but with new mind, new

soul, and new understanding of life. He had found the joy in doing such absurd work.

Humankind, according to Buddhism, in a sense is like Sisyphus. We are all condemned to do the absurd things in life—we are born and those who choose this are not us but others; after that we will try every way to survive; and when we are seen to die some years in the future, instincts given inside us will warn us to reproduce ourselves in the form of offspring; and then we will die. Our offspring will do everything we used to do. This is absurdity of life. Buddhism began when the prince named Siddhartha had realized the absurdity of life and tried to find the way to overcome it.

In terms of biology, we are the products chosen or designed not by ourselves but other which we do not know who and why we are created. It seems that the things called the basic truths of life in Buddhist teaching, which are birth, old age, sickness, and death, are biologically given. In this sense, the struggle of Buddhism to overcome these basic truths of life is to deal with biological facts of life. The Buddha never teaches that we can change what happening in biological world. The Buddha himself was old, got sick, and died like other human beings. However, the Buddha differs from ordinary people in that even though his physical

life remains under the 'curse' of biological determination; his mind is totally free in the meaning that he can manipulate it not to be under the influence of the biological curse as said.

## II

Religion is one of the big institutions created by man. Even though religion in its primitive form is personal attempt to deal with human life and human experiences with surrounding world, later it has become institution; and religion in the form of institution has lost nearly all important elements found in its primitive form. The wars between different religions or sects of same religion are mainly caused by group instinct. Modern biologists have pointed out how this instinct plays the role in the survival of species. In short, man and animal are created to have group instinct. It is the source of the feelings: this is my nation; this is my football team; this is my school; this is my family; and this is my religion or the sect of religion to which I belong. In terms of survival, the species which has stronger group instinct is more inclined to survive than the species that has the weaker group instinct. Group instinct found in animals plays the role behind self-sacrifice of some members of the species for the welfare of the whole species. It should be noted that self-

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sacrifice found in animals is stronger than the one found in human beings. However, as human beings have more potential to create tools for anything including the making of war, group instinct found in man, even though weaker than animals, more causes the harm to human beings themselves and to the world. Someone suggests that the best way to protect this world in terms of ecology is—the absence of human race from the earth. This is so irony; but it is really the truth. It could be possible that some day in the future, the whole world could be destroyed by the nuclear weapons. And we can imagine that if this really happens, it must be the group instinct playing the roles behind the World War III, as found in WW I and WW II.

Group instinct alone could be compared to the seed of tree. Religious beliefs in themselves are highly powerful as they touch the deepest side in human mind. So, religion is the best soil for the growth of the seed of group instinct. Someone may question, “You said you believe in God; please tell me why God has created man and animal to possess destructive instincts like the group instinct?” To answer this question, I think we need to understand something concerning the nature of things in the world. I have heard for a long time that

one of basic arguments against the existence of God says, “There are a number of bad things in this world—for example, cancer. God is believed to love humankind. If God really loves us, why He creates such bad things and gives them to us?” The essence of this argument is to prove that God does not exist. In terms of logic, I admit that this argument sounds very strong as follows.

(1) If God really exist, He must give us only good things.

(2) It is not true that God gives us only good things.

(3) Therefore, it is not true that God really exists.

The above argument can be symbolized as.

(1) If there is P, then there is Q.

(2) It is not true that there is Q.

(3) So, it is not true as well that there is P.

Note that the above argument sounds strong because it begins with the sentence “If God really exist, He must give us only good things.” I do not see any reason why this statement must be true; because the existence of God is one thing and the existence of bad things is another one. These two things are not necessarily related. In my view, the following statement might be better: “If God really loves humankind, He must give us only good things.” Jesus says in the *Bible*

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that it is impossible for God to give bad things to man; no father in the world would give a snake when his sons ask for bread; God is the father of humankind, so it is not possible for Him to give us the bad things. Suppose we put this sentence as the first premise, the result will be as follows.

(a) If God really loves man, He must give us only good things.

(b) But it is not true that God gives us only good things.

(c) So, it is not true that God really loves man.

It seems that the first premise is not used by those who do not believe in God, even though it is better as there is a passage in the *Bible* supporting it. That is because what they need to prove is “God does not exist” rather than “God exists but He does not love man.” From above, we see that the strongest argument against God, generally known as ‘*argument from the evils*,’ cannot be used to deny the existence of God; it just says that it could be possible that God really exists but He does not love us as we understand.

The next point to be examined is: how can we know God loves us or not? As seen above, the argument from the evils does not happen from emptiness; on the contrary, it stems from a religious belief as found in Jesus’

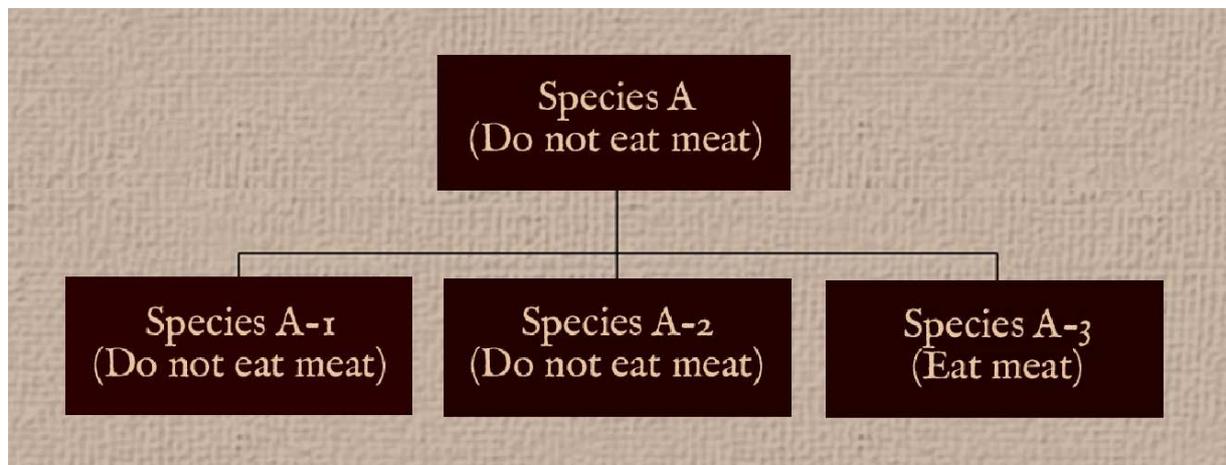
saying about the father's love toward his sons. I would like to take Jesus' saying as the ground for my argument. That is, what I want to say is: (1) I believe that God loves man; (2) I believe as well that the bad things really exist in the world; (3) but this does not mean that God does not love us. To make my argument more understandable, I would like to use the most serious case as the tool for discussion. Suppose a man is dying with cancer. He extremely suffers from it. The question is— if God loves this man, why He creates cancer to exist in this world? If God does not create cancer into this world, the man would not suffer from it.

First of all, I do not think that God intentionally chooses this man to die with cancer. The happening of cancer to the man is the result of the long chain of cause and effect. In terms of biology, the existence of cancer can be explained as what stemming from the complicated conditions in organic world. It could be possible that when God has first created the world there was not the cancer. At that time, there were only pure natural objects. Later, when things have complicatedly evolved; such evolution has created destructive things like cancer. I am not sure that whether or not cancer has the close relation to eating behavior of man. They said that cancer has the close relation to meat

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eating. If this is true, we see that man himself is the main condition of the happening of cancer in this world. God does not create animals to be meat-eater; it is the complicated condition that makes some of them the meat-eater. In man, we have found that the person who eats meat has a lifetime shorter than the person who does not eat meat. I believe we would find this fact in animals as well. This means that the evolution has divided living organisms into two main groups: those who live on killing and those who live on natural resource only. The plants in general belong to the second category; and it might be this fact that makes plants have a longer lifetime than animals. Some trees have a lifetime up to a hundred years or more.

What I want to say here is that the evolution theory of Darwin or others just say that all species are created from the same origin; and they do not say anything about how the members of same species differ from each other. In my view, the following picture could possibly happen in the past.



Note that—initially, species A do not eat meat. Later, there are three subspecies namely A-1, A-2, and A-3 evolving from A. The two former remain vegetarian, while the latter one becomes the meat eater. How to explain why A-3 becomes the meat eater? The simplest way to explain this variation is—one day some members of A have found that the meat from the dead body of animal is more delicious than the plants. Since then, they have changed their eating behavior. When the meat from the dead bodies is rare, they try to kill the weaker animals and eat their fresh. The practice of this eating behavior over and over is the starting point of a thing called meat-eating instinct found in later generation. And this is the beginning of A-3.

Even though in terms of biology there is no such thing called good or evil; we see that between the meat-eating species and the vegetarian one, the latter

causes the lesser harm to other. We do not need anybody to tell us that killing is an evil, we know from the inner sense that no one in the world likes to die. A tiger might not know that when it kills a deer, that is an evil. But when the tiger is hunted by man, it must know that it does not want to die. The attempt done by the tiger to escape from human beings within such a circumstance shows that the tiger loves its life; and this might happen to the deer when it is hunted by the tiger as well.

What I want to say is—even though we do not use the moral language, we know that some actions performed by man or animal cause something which is not wanted by other. It could be problematic to say that when the tiger kills the deer it is doing an evil because the tiger may not know anything about morality; but we can say without a doubt that when the tiger kills the deer, it is doing what unwanted to the deer. I believe in God partly because I have noticed a thing called justice in the universe and this thing might not be seen if there is no God. What is justice that I am talking about? In short, *justice means no one in the universe can cause the unwanted to other and do not have something as the payback of such an action.* This sounds very like a thing called Karma in Indian religions such as Buddhism. It

could be possible that there is no hell waiting for the tiger in the next life. But that is not a problem. There could be other form of the payback for the tiger. Compared with vegetarian animals, the tigers may have a shorter lifetime. This could be seen as a kind of the payback provided by God's justice.

Turn back to the man who suffers from cancer again. Suppose it is true that cancer found in human has the close relation to meat eating. That is, our ancestors had changed their eating behavior from vegetarian to meat-eating; and such instincts later have been transferred into us. The happening of cancer in human species would be deemed as what required by the law of justice given by God as the compensation for the harm that we have done to other animals. In this sense, cancer is not the evil created by God; it is what created by man to himself. We can apply this principle to understand other evils in the world as well.

Turn back to the group instinct again. As it is the cause of wars, it could be seen as a kind of evils. I believe that group instinct and other instincts found in man and animal are not necessarily the evils in themselves. I believe that everything created by God to His creatures has been designed to be initially neutral. I would like to call it 'natural default' provided by God.

For example, the group instinct as a kind of natural defaults is merely a feeling, “I am not living alone in this world; there are other members belonging to the same species as I belong.” From this pure feeling, we can derive either creative or destructive actions; all depends on how we are educated and cultured. The example of creative sides of group instinct is love. Imagine that what plays the roles behind Gandhi’s struggle against the British for the liberation of India. I believe that Gandhi, as an Indian, must feel that he was fighting for his country and his fellow Indian people. Even the love of Jesus towards humankind, I believe, must stem from the group instinct given inside his body from the first moment of birth as well.

### III

Some readers, after reading what I have said above, may say, “You have talked about God all the time; but I do not see the word ‘God’ refers to what. Actually, the word ‘God’ is not necessary in presenting your ideas as everything can be explained as natural phenomenon.” There is a philosophical rule saying that “if mere what perceivable can be used to explain the phenomena, we do not need to add the unperceivable to explain such phenomena. I personally accept this rule— if we can explain the truths of the world by empirical

data alone, we have no reason to add a belief in God into the system of human knowledge. Certainly, there are a number of scientists in the world believing that they can explain the truths of the universe by empirical data alone. No need of God or any kind of supernatural entities.

We, human beings, live in the same world and see the same things. Isaac Newton writes in the last pages of his great work, *Principia*, that everything in the universe has been arranged so beautifully. The fact that the whole universe has been arranged so beautifully is commonly known among scientists, including Newton himself. But some of them believe that they do not need other things besides what can be observed by sense experience to explain how the universe appears so orderly and beautiful as such. But Newton did not think so. For him, it is true that nearly everything can be explained without referring to something beyond empirical data; but to explain all of them completely, we need to postulate that there must be some missing link otherwise our knowledge concerning the universe would not be complete. Such missing link, for Newton, is nothing but God.

I myself belong to a group of those who believe that just what appear to our sense experience are not

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enough to explain how the universe is as we have seen it. Different thinkers have different arguments to support their beliefs in God. I am not thinker. I have no profound philosophical arguments to support my belief in God. What I have is just a feeling. It is the feeling of wonder, humbleness, and joyfulness. The universe is endless and full of amazing things. Even now I still do not understand how the ring of Saturn has been formed. Some night, I look at the sky and ask myself, “Why I am born into this world.” In terms of possibility, it is possible that I am not born; but the fact is—now I am born as a human having the mind and sensory organs to perceive the world. Nature in its initial form is pure and wonderful. The cool winds from the mountain, the streams of rivers, the white clouds in the blue sky, the sunsets, the stars, the rains—these are wonderful things given to us as the free gifts. The universe will last so long time, while my life just lasts not more than a hundred years. Sometimes I wonder how it would be if I have a lifetime lasting thousands of years. However, I never regret having a time to see this beautiful world just around 80 years. That is enough. When I die, the whole universe, for me, will become darkness—no time, no space, nothing! But for others who live, the universe will be something which will be meaningful or

not solely depending on how much they have the inner eye to see the secret of the universe.

It could be possible that at one time in the distant future the whole universe will become just empty space (again?). As the universe used to appear at least as seen now, I have some reason to believe that the new universe will be formed again—by something so powerful. Lao Tzu says that name is just name. So, it does not matter we call the thing which exists forever to make the appearing of the new universe possible in what name—God or other names. This thing can exist even though there is no one to give it name!

My last words: I feel that the whole universe is one family. Everything has some links to each other under the same rule of justice. No one can take more than other; and no one can lose more than other as well. The tyrant rulers of the world come into this world and go away one by one; and none of them can take anything with their dead bodies. Sometimes, we, the poor people who are poor because we are born as the subjects of tyrant rulers, do not need anything special to reduce our pains caused by the evil rulers; what we need is just wait and wait. When the time has come, the evil rulers will become the passing winds. And this is justice—no one can harm the world forever.

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*Comment and Suggestion*

Religion in its very primitive form is human emotion expressed towards the supernatural. There are a number of sociological and anthropological theories concerning the origin of religion. Some of them state that religion is originated from fear and lack of knowledge. Religion stems from fear in the sense: because our ancestors saw many natural phenomena that frightening such as storm, thunder, lightning, and so on; these things had frightened them; and when men feared, it is natural for them to protect themselves in such a way that they saw most proper. When men see it is impossible to fight against something, they will submit themselves under the power of such a thing. This applies well to our ancestors. They imagined that there must be something playing the roles behind those frightening phenomena. Their submission aimed at such a thing—later more evolved to be gods and then God. Note that the fear of our ancestors is caused by the lack of knowledge. If they know, as we know now, that the above phenomena are just natural; they would not have submitted themselves to the supernatural as said.

Sometimes, the above theory concerning the origin

of religion is used by people to point out that religion is a false ideology of humankind. Marx seems to claim like that. Actually, the sociological theory of religion is one thing and the truths claimed in religion is another one; and these two things are separated in terms of logic. Consider the following argument.

(a) A belief in God is caused by fear and lack of knowledge.

(b) Anything originates from fear and ignorance does not exist.

(c) So, God does not exist.

It is clearly seen that the above argument is false. It may be true that a belief in God is created from fear and lack of knowledge; but this has nothing suggesting that God does not exist. What we can draw from the sociological theory of religion is just: religion stems from human fear and lack of knowledge. It could be possible that God really exists and God plays the roles behind the above phenomena. In terms of possibility, God could be either 'exist' or 'not exist.' Suppose God really exists, His existence has nothing to do with a fact that men have created religion from fear and lack of knowledge. On the contrary, suppose God does not exist, His non-existence, as well, has nothing to do with a fact that men have created relig-

ion from fear and lack of knowledge.

Formerly, a concept of God plays the very significant role as the center of religion. Moral systems of religions are based on a belief in God. One time in the past, the circle of religious studies of the West did not accept Buddhism and Confucianism as religion for the reason that they do not believe in God. However, the present tendency is—to be a religion, such a system of belief is not necessarily based on a belief in God. It seems that what mainly required in being religion is a thing called the spiritual dimension. Philosophy, science, and religion, in a sense, share one significant thing—the interest to explore deeply into the nature of things. There are so many metaphysical treatises given by philosophers saying that the natures of things are A, B, C, D, and so on. In the same way, modern physics gives us the picture of physical world in which ultimate realities of things are claimed. But philosophy and science are understood different from religion, even though their activities as said are the same as religion. There is one thing missing in philosophy and science; making them differ from religion. That is—there is no spiritual dimension found in philosophy and science!

Spiritual dimension could have several meanings; but one important meaning is—being suggestive of

something which is the source of moral inspirations. For example, we know that all men must die some day. The above truth is known among philosophers, scientists, and religious thinkers. But from the perspective of religion, a fact that everyone must die some day is suggestive of something morally beautiful. According to Buddhism, one of the basic virtues to be practiced by Buddhists is loving-kindness, called in Pali as *metta*. In short, *metta* (a word derives from ‘*mitta*’ which means ‘*friend*’) means the feeling of friendship. In Mahayana Buddhism, meat eating is not allowed for the reason that we cannot eat the flesh of our friends. Why Buddhism looks at animals as the friends of human beings. What is the reason used by Buddhism in claiming so? The answer is—man and animal are subject to the same laws of nature which are birth, old age, sickness, and death; we are friends, relatives, brother, and sisters under this truth.

As seen today, we have two kinds of religion. One, the oldest, states that God has created the universe including man. Besides the physical universe, God has created the abstract universe as well. The abstract universe is a collection of immaterial entities or powers to regulate the physical universe. In Hinduism, after God has created the physical universe, He has created a

thing called in Sanskrit as '*rita*' which means the law of universe to keep things orderly. According to Hinduism, laws of nature which are called in modern science as physical law, biological law, chemical law, and so on are believed to be the machinery of the universe set up by God. Other sort of religion, a newer, is the one which does not utilize the concept of God to explain how the universe begins and how things in the universe are regulated. Buddhism could be cited as an example of this kind of religion. As known, Buddhism teaches that the universe is originated by nature, meaning that we do not need God as the creator of the universe. In Mahayana Buddhism, they said that at the beginning, there were some things uncreated and one of them, the ether, has evolved to be the physical universe. The process in which the ether has evolved to be the physical universe cannot be lawless. Besides the ether, there were other uncreated things such as the law, called in Pali as '*dhammaniyama*.' The Buddhist '*dhammaniyama*' and the Hindu '*rita*' convey the very similar meanings. The difference is just the Buddhist law of nature is not created by God.

Religion has been part of human civilization for a long time. There are both positive and negative aspects of religion. The case of Mahatma Gandhi could be

cited as an example of the positive aspect of religion. Gandhi is well known throughout the world as a man without any weapon and political power but strong enough to shake the British Empire. The strength of Gandhi comes from his deep belief in religion—Hinduism. The case of Galileo could be cited as an example of the negative aspect of religion. During the time that Catholic Church completely dominated the whole Europe, no one could say that there were other truths besides the ones given in the dogmas of the Church. Galileo had confronted a misery of life because he said that there was some truth outside the holy teachings of the Church. The *Inquisition*, an organization set up by Roman Catholic Church whose main purpose was to find and punish people who opposed its beliefs, is a word we have remembered even now as one of greatest tragedies in human history.

In the West, it seems that what happened in the Middle Ages had been the main reason in rejecting religion to be found in the age of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment in Western society was mainly based on science and new kind of philosophy which differed from Greek philosophy. In its essence, science is a kind of human activity aiming at knowledge and the definition of knowledge used in scientific community is:

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what can be tested by sense experience. Philosophy, in its essence, is a kind of human activity aiming at knowledge, like science; but the definition of knowledge accepted in the community of philosophers is wider than science; that is, for philosophers, knowledge can be based on either sense experience or reason. Note that some kind of knowledge accepted by philosophers is not based on sense experience. Mathematics and logic are an example of knowledge which is not based on sense experience. Even though science and philosophy differ as said, they share some important thing—faith is not allowed. We know that faith is basically required in religion. And this is the great difference between religion and science/philosophy.

As knowledge, according to science and philosophy, is defined as what can be tested by sense experience or based on reasoning; the teachings of religion are questioned whether or not a kind of knowledge. This question is of importance because in some Western countries people have said that in educational institutions which are run by the state, anything to be allowed as a subject for study must have a property of knowledge. That is, if X cannot be tested by sense experience or based on reason, X does not have a property as knowledge; so, it should not be allowed to be

studied in the state-run educational institutions. The reason behind this demand is—we pay tax to the government; so we have the right to demand that when we send our children to the state-run educational institutions, our children will have knowledge, and not merely beliefs.

During the Middle Ages, some Catholic thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas were of the view that a doubt concerning the epistemological status of religious teachings given by those standing outside the Church is something religious thinkers might not overlook. Actually, Aquinas did not need to make religious teachings sound reasonable because the Church had the full power to punish those who opposed Christianity. But it may be his foresight that plays the role behind his attempt to present the Christian teaching to be a kind of knowledge. He knew that true religious feeling cannot be the result of external force or fear. As a belief in God is at the heart of religion, Aquinas had presented a set of arguments to prove that God must exist necessarily. This set of arguments is well known as: the five proofs of the existence of God. We would consider one of them, which is claimed by Aquinas himself the best, as follows.

This argument is well known as the *argument from the*

*motions of things in the universe.* Here is a simple version of this argument. Our world is orbiting around the sun; and the sun is moving along some certain path in the space. Modern astronomy tells us that there is nothing which does not move in the universe. Turn to our planet again. We know that the earth is composed of mass, like a stone or a cup. Something we see in daily life moves—for example, the clock. We know that the hands of the clock move as the result of the machine inside it. The world differs from the clock in that the world does not have the machine inside. Anything which does not have the machine inside cannot move by itself—for example, the stone cannot move from one place to another place by itself. If we see the stone moving, we can conclude without any doubt that there must be something making the stone move. In the same way, our planet is moving. The earth belongs to the category of things that cannot move by themselves. So, there must be something making our world move, like the stone said above.

Actually, we cannot separate between a thing that can move by itself and a thing that cannot move so. The clock is made by man. So, its motion needs something outside. It could be possible that in the future we would create some machine that can move itself for-

ever as it has intelligence to repair itself when needed and it can produce energy to be used as long as it wants. In this sense, the machine still needs something external to start its system. At the beginning, it cannot move by itself like other things in the universe. The stone and the clock as given above are just used to make the discussion about the motion of the world easier to understand only. In their very essence, they are the same—things that cannot move by themselves.

Turn back to the earth again. Suppose we know that A is the thing which moves the world. In moving the world, A itself must move first; like before we use our hand moving the chair, we must move our hand first. So, A, which moves, must be moved by something external. Suppose again that we know B is the thing which moves A. Like the world, A, and other things in the universe—B must be moved by other thing external. The question is—can the chain of things that moves our earth be endless? For Aquinas, the answer is no. There must be some point where the chain ends. God is the end as said—meaning that actually it is God that moves our world!

One of leading cosmological theories of the origin of the universe these days states that it is highly possible that the universe is the result of the big bang. Ac-

According to this theory, in the beginning, there was only a very tiny 'point' which contains the mass of the whole universe. This point is called '*singularity*.' The singularity has the potential to bang and become the universe as seen. The current universe is being in the state of banging. And it is due to the force of the big bang that everything in the universe is in the state of motion. The question is—how the singularity was exploded? According to Aquinas, the singularity cannot explode by itself, even though it has the potential to explode so violently—like the bomb we see generally in the world which cannot explode by itself. The big bang theory seems to suggest that there must be something playing the role as the '*hitter*' of singularity. Without this thing, the singularity would remain silent forever.

Other well known argument to support God's existence is the *argument from design*. William Paley is known as the name associated with this idea. In his book, *Natural Theology*, Paley argues that suppose during walking we see something dropped on the ground—it is a watch. Suppose further that we do not know this watch was made by whom and when; but this cannot prevent us from reasoning that there must be someone or something making this watch. We could

call such a thing the ‘watchmaker.’ It does not matter what is the thing that the word ‘watchmaker’ denotes; the point is: there must be the watchmaker playing the role behind the existence of the watch. The watch cannot happen from emptiness and without the designer. Paley points out that we know there must be the watchmaker mainly because the watch is designed to perform the certain function—telling the time. The watch itself does not know anything. So, its intelligence, telling the time, must stem from other thing which is intelligent—the watchmaker.

Everything in the universe, according to Paley, can be compared to the watch in that it is designed to perform some function. For example, we have three things: water, earth, and fire. These three things have their own different properties. Water is designed for drinking; earth for setting our home; and fire for cooking—for example. In our commonsense, water differs from the clock in that the former is natural and the latter manmade. This difference, according to Paley, is just illusion. That is—really they do not differ. We would see no difference between them more clearly if we replace water with human body. Note that everything in human body is designed to have some certain function not differently from the parts of a clock. Our

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eyes are designed for seeing; ears for listening; nose for breathing; and so on. Note that human body is sophisticatedly and beautifully designed much more than the clock. This means that who creates human body is much more intelligent than the one who creates the clock. We know that these days science and technology have much advanced, resulting in the high potential of man to create amazing things such as the computer and the robot. However, science and technology as such cannot create just simple things such as natural flowers. Fake flowers may look like natural flowers; but there is great difference between these two kinds of flowers. The design of computer today tries to simulate human brain. But we know that human brain is so complicated; and the most advanced computer of today is very far from complete, compared with human brain. Many theologians believe that it is not possible for scientists to create the computer which can work so complicatedly like human brain—because human brain is a work of God; no man in the world can play God.

Even though religion in its primitive form could be deemed a belief in the supernatural and in terms of epistemology we can doubt if religion under this definition can be counted knowledge, later the develop-

ments in religion have provided us so many things that we can count knowledge without any doubt. For example, Jesus said that God is love and forgiveness is happiness. This kind of assertion is very self-evident. Initially, God in the *Old Testament* is mainly meant to refer to a supernatural being, like a ghost or a spirit. God as a holy ghost can be doubted whether or not exists. But God as the love and joyfulness in the mind of the person who does not see any person in the world as his or her enemy is something we can test by ourselves. The Buddha, as well, said that his teaching can be compared with things given in the person's hand. When the person opens his/her eyes and looks, they will see. The Buddha said that the giving mind is happier than the taking mind. This is a truth which does not need any proof. The selfish action never brings us joyfulness. On the contrary, when we give—for example, donate our blood to the person very in need—we will taste deep happiness inside.

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*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) Some persons, for example—Bertrand Russell, say that they do not need religion for the reason that religion has a harmful tendency. They mean that all religions always claim that those who do not believe in religion are the evil persons. From this, we see that religion takes it for granted that the good can be found in religion only. So, a person who does not believe in religion or opposes religious teaching is the evil in the sense that this kind of person will never find the good as he/she stands outside religion. This is an example of the harmful tendency of religion. Do you agree that this is a harmful attitude of religion?

(2) Miracles are always part of religion; there is no religion in the world which does not talk about miracles especially those of the masters of religion. Is it possible to believe in religion but not believe in miracles?

(3) Religion was first created in the history of mankind around 5,000 years ago, meaning that before that we did not have religion but we lived peacefully and did not have any special problems. Some person argues that as one time in the past humankind could live without religion, why not we would live without it now or

in the future? What do you think about this?

(4) Some religious thinkers argue that there could be other kinds of goodness besides the ones given in religion. But the problem is: non-religious good can highly provide us only the paths to be good animals. They mean that good persons made from non-religious good remain ordinary members of human species and human species belongs to animal species. It is religious good only that can raise human animals to be really human—the person who transcends animal instincts. Do you agree with this view?

(5) In your view, does a belief in God need the proof? Why?





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# Chapter *Five*

## Human Nature

### *Diary of a Buddhist Monk: the Way to Loneliness*

#### *Day One*

Finally, I have left Bangkok, one of the evil cities in the world, to stay here—a small monastery located in the area of small village of the North. I live in a small hut. Nearby is a little stream flowing from the high mountain, standing around five km from here. During some silent nights, I used to hear the sound of the mountains murmuring some secret things that even now I do not understand yet—however I have tried to understand them. The village is downstream. A small path leads us from the monastery to the village, around two km from here. In the morning we, four monks, go down to the village for food and visit the villagers. All of them are the poor farmers. Their food is simple; but I have noticed that what they have given us is better than what they have eaten themselves. Religion and

poor people are friendly towards each other. Some monasteries in Bangkok can be said having the door open to the rich people only. That is a sad fact as, I believe, Buddhism, especially at the time of the Buddha, has had the long history concerning poor people. I myself come from the rich family, and that makes me know the problem of the rich—especially psychological problem. They have a lot of money and that makes them think they can buy everything. Shopping is religion of the rich; and department stores are their temples. The true temple is a place where true holy things can be found and such holy things have the true potential to solve problems in our life. At department stores, there is no any holy thing as such. They are just empty temples. Empty temples can provide only empty hopes. One day when momentary pleasures resulting from the shopping come to the end as they have felt so bored silly; what left for them, the rich people, is merely emptiness.

I myself have passed such a thing. Fortunately, some friends of mine gave me something very valuable during my time of great bore. It is the books on the teachings of the Buddha written by the great master whose name I do not need to mention—now he has passed away. Even now I can remember a statement

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placed on the first pages of a book, “What are we born for?” I am not sure that whether it is the influence of my youth or my riches making me never think about that question. The books led me to the land of strangeness. The Buddha, as the books described, said that this world is nothing but the idea. Later I have learned that there is a saying of the Buddha in the *Dhammapada* stating that everything in one’s life stemming from his/her thoughts. This reminded me of my past. I have spent my 34 years of age without knowing that the world that I had lived a luxurious life is nothing but my idea. Basically, the Buddha said, the idea is a blindly force aiming at pleasurable things over and over. Everybody tries extremely to create ‘my’ beautiful world. Everyone has his/her own personal world. We create it, putting the meanings to it as we think, “By this I will be pleased most.” As the world as said is based on the person’s idea or desire and not on the facts of the world, one day the persons will realize that they just live in an illusionary world. The millionaire might understand what really his life means when he is lying on the bed of death and waiting for the last minutes to depart from the world and from his wealth. The Buddha said that life is conflict in the sense that our idea projects to something and such a thing always

has its nature which opposes our projection. For example, we need to look young and not old forever; but the fact is such a thing is not allowed by nature. Suffering in one's life simply occurs from not acceptance of such a conflict.

Some years ago, I had noticed one thing that I could not explain to myself. That is, sometimes a kind of feeling happened at the depth of my thought. When this feeling occurs, I will feel deeply sad, but do not know sad about what. I can remember that one night I was on my way home, around 2 a.m., from a café which I regularly visited, I had noticed that the street was so empty—such a strange street. My car ran slowly. Outside the window was the moon appearing in the clear western sky. Suddenly, I turned down the car's windows, letting the fresh cool wind pass through my face. Some hours ago, I was at the café, drinking alone. Before that, I used to be surrounded by friends; we usually drank together and talked. One day, my inner feeling told me that I should spend my private life alone. I am not sure what happened; I just felt a need to be alone. Drops of the rain fell through the windows. The cool wind and the raindrop brought me back to the world of reality. What happened to me? I am not sure. I only know that during that time, a time

before I had read the books and finally decided to be ordained as a monk, my mind always sunk into the stream of consciousness, which sometimes did not have any contents!

My master, the abbot of this monastery, always said that man's greatest enemy is nothing but his thought. He said further that it is not him to say this. The word is of the Buddha. I think I start to understand the meaning of this word. My main suffering now is that I cannot control my thoughts. I have read books on suicide. They said that one of the major causes of suicide is the person cannot stop thinking and that causes pains to him. During my time as said above, some nights I lay down on my bed, could not sleep because my brain was not able to 'shut down.' From this experience, I have learned that why some people in the world commit suicide because they cannot stop thinking. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a great Russian writer, once said that being unable to stop thinking is a serious disease. After being ordained, I have found that Buddhist meditation is designed partly to deal with the disease as mentioned by Dostoyevsky. However, I want to say that actually it is not easy to stop thinking. In practicing meditation, one of the pains to happen is frustration resulting from being not able to control our

thinking.

Anyway, I think I have passed some important development of mind. Now, I have been able to control the mind to some extent. At least, the pain resulting from frustration as said above has been much reduced. Meditation is amazing medicine, especially the one practiced in a peaceful place like forest monastery. Next month will be a rain retreat of this year. On the sky over the high mountains, there appear the gray rain clouds. I like to lie on bed and listen to the sound of raindrops before asleep. My life here can be said, "This is what I imagined to meet for long. I think I do not need anything else."

#### *Day Seven*

Last night, I had practiced meditation as usual. The method used here is claimed by my master the oldest one and perhaps invented by the Buddha himself. The master said that there are two kinds of meditation in the world. The first kind is called '*calm meditation*' and this has existed before the Buddha's time. The second one is called '*insight meditation*' and this is said to be discovered by the Buddha himself. Calm meditation had been widely practiced in ancient India before the time of the Buddha; and the Buddha himself initially used to have practiced it under the guidance of two

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masters and it is said that he succeeded very well—he attained the highest level of calm meditation. However, the Buddha noticed that there must be something wrong in this kind of meditation. Certainly, his mind, during the state of highly absorption, did not feel anything but joyfulness; but when such a state passed, the mind turned to its formal state. The Buddha thought that in its very essence calm meditation could be compared to the state of sleeping or hibernation. To understand this position of Buddha, the words of Karl Marx may be useful. As it is well known, Marx said that religion is opium in the meaning that instead of teaching people to stand strong in the real world and fight against the problems to occur, religion leads people into the world of dream and gives them pleasurable things in such a state of dreaming. Marx did not reject a fact that in religiously dreaming the people feel good. But the point is no one can stay in the state of dreaming all the time. The Buddha thought it is true that calm meditation could provide people with peacefulness and joyfulness of mind during the state of absorption; but the point is—such a state is not real life. How people would have a happy life while walking, eating, working, and so on—this is the question happening in the mind of the Buddha and this question re-

sults in his departure from his two masters to seek the meditation to serve such a purpose.

In the view of the Buddha, the mind of human being can be considered from two perspectives. First, we can look at the mind as a kind of physical entity. The physical manner of the mind could be compared with the hardware of computer. The Buddha analyzes that calm meditation is designed to train the mind in terms of physical manner. The main purpose of calm meditation is to enable the mind to fade away from this world and enter the world of mind itself. This can be compared with the process of hibernation found in the computer. Human mind is designed naturally to hibernate via sleeping. However, this natural hibernation has its limit in that sometimes when the person has confronted serious mental problem, this natural hibernation cannot work. As said previously, some of the people, who commit suicide, do so just because they cannot stop thinking. Imagine that a computer cannot shut down or hibernate itself. This is the stress. In the same way, sometimes human mind has faced the similar problem. This kind of problem, according to the Buddha, belongs to the category of physical manner; and calm meditation is very useful to solve this kind of problem.

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Second, we can look at the mind as consciousness. This manner of mind differs from the first one in that the second meaning of the mind could be compared with the software of computer. Consider the following example. A man has an unhealthy daughter. This causes him suffering. This suffering comes from the feeling that the girl is his daughter. Note that this kind of suffering differs from the above suffering in that the person who has experienced the latter pain still has the normal consciousness. That is, he can sleep, work, and spend his normal life; while the person who suffers the former pain cannot.

The way to control the mind according to calm meditation has nothing to do with a thing called understanding; while this thing is necessarily needed in the practice of insight meditation. In a sense, calm meditation could be compared with the taking of medicine. When you get a headache, what you need is aspirin. When you take aspirin, you do not need anything more than eat it. After that, the medicine will work itself alone—your help is not needed at all. When you practice calm meditation, you will be advised to fix your eyes to some objects such as the flame of candle. What you have to do is to control your mind to ‘see’ the flame of candle continually. They said that at some

point, if your mind is controlled properly, when you close your eyes the picture of candle's flame will remain seen. The image of the candle, seen when you close your eyes, is not real; it is illusionary. However, it could be called 'real' in the world of absorption. If your mind is trained higher along the path of calm meditation, they said that you will find that you can manage the image of candle to be anything you want. For example, you can increase its size to be the big flame that can destroy the whole universe; or you can add properties like color, shape, number, and so on to it. It is recorded in the Buddhist texts that the person who is very skillful in calm meditation is compared to the artist. In the illusionary world as said, you can 'paint' anything you want; and there is no limitation as far as your imagination remains usable.

The state of mind to occur as a result of calm meditation starts from the most basic to the most advanced. To understand this, imagine a long tunnel leading to the mountain. The tunnel has only the entrance and does not have the exit at another end. The sunlight shines into it through the entrance. As it is so long, the light cannot shine throughout the tunnel. Where the light cannot go, the dark prevails. Suppose we walk along the tunnel, what we would see is there is the light

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at the entrance; and the more we go inside the more we will see lesser light. At the end of the tunnel, we would see nothing; it is completely darkness. The practice of calm meditation can be compared to walking along the tunnel. The light is compared to consciousness; and the dark is compared to unconsciousness. Note that the final aim of calm meditation is the state of unconsciousness. They believe that as pain happens in the conscious mind; so, the most direct way to eliminate pain is to turn it to be the unconscious one.

Insight meditation discovered by the Buddha begins with different assumption. For the Buddha, any problem which occurs in the conscious mind should be eliminated within that conscious mind. To use a metaphor of the tunnel as said, the problem occurs in the light, so we should solve it in the light. Walking into the tunnel to escape from the light is not the solution of the problem. Certainly, the light discloses a thing that we do not want to see; and the dark helps hide that thing. But the problem is not solved; the dark just temporarily hides it. The difference between the conscious mind and the unconscious one is that in the former the person can think while in the latter it is not possible for the person to think. As thinking is needed to understand things and understanding is needed in

the solution of suffering; in the practice of insight meditation, thinking is deemed as the main device.

Thinking cannot be separated from the person who thinks. In this sense, it is very hard to find the pure thinking because every thinker is naturally equipped to think from his personal bias. And this is the reason why human beings always face unhappiness. In one of his famous sermons, the Buddha has analyzed that inside the mind of the person, there are two basic instincts—the ‘*me*’ and ‘*mine*’ instincts. When a person thinks, it is naturally for him to think from the perspective of ‘*me*’ and ‘*mine*’ as said. Insight meditation is very simple—letting the stream of consciousness flow without ‘*me*’ and ‘*mine*.’ The man, whose daughter is always sick, has been confronted with pain for long because he thinks, “She is my daughter.”

In practicing insight meditation, no format is required. You can sit, walk, or lie on bed. What needed is just—let the stream of consciousness flow like the stream of river without the feeling of ‘*me*’ as the thinker and ‘*mine*’ as there are things belonging to me. As I am not trained to sit meditating; my favorite is lying down on the bed and letting the stream of consciousness flow freely. I can feel mysterious happiness stemming from such doing. I feel free like the cloud

freely journeying across the vast sky. More importantly, when your mind is free as the cloud, you will taste a new kind of experience. Before this, my life is limited to something only—my life, my family, my job, my lover, etc. The joyfulness of life within this circumstance can be compared to the water in the pond. The water is cool; but it cannot go to other place to have a new experience. When the water is burnt by the sunlight and becomes a cloud; it will have endless joyfulness—because it does not belong to anything anymore. Insight meditation provides us with freedom; and freedom is nothing but deeply happiness.

*Day Twenty-Three*

This morning, the telephone call from my sister at Bangkok says, “Mom dies today.” This short word has the power to make me feel many things that I never felt before—at least, it makes me first aware that suffering in one’s life can happen anytime irrespective of how much he or she was trained in meditation before.

Tears flow from my eyes. I do not know they come from where. Maybe—from my deepest part of my mind which is never be affected by meditation. The tears make me aware as well that I am not strong; and now I start to be confused if it is shameful to be a monk but cannot prevent the tears from flowing like that.

*Day Forty-Five*

Coming from Bangkok, after mother's funeral was held, for days; my mind still feels deeply sad, a state of emotion that used to happen in my life some years ago before my ordination as a monk. During this time, I have noticed that there are some questions occurring in my mind. First of all, I have questioned myself—my love towards my mother is good thing or bad thing. I cannot accept if somebody comes to me and says, "It is an evil because it causes you pain." Certainly, the suffering that I am experiencing now results from my love of mother; but this is not the point. The fact that X causes you pain does not necessarily mean that X is an evil. I accept that there might be two kinds of suffering in human life. The first one is suffering that we have no reason to welcome it; I would like to call this kind of suffering '*unnecessary suffering.*' An example of this kind of suffering is a pain resulting from a broken heart. The proper way to deal with this kind of suffering is to let it go. Why?—because it has no any value worth keeping. The second kind of suffering, which I would like to call '*necessary suffering,*' is the one worth keeping. I think that my love for my mother belongs to the second category. I accept that my love for my mother causes both positive and negative emotions. I

can remember my past life in which the memory for my mother is still vivid. I believe that the main reason that makes the Buddha allow the ordination for his step-mother is his personal feeling towards her. This woman had taken care of him after his mother died. Moreover, the death of my mother does not cause only pain; it also causes me some kind of joyfulness. Life without beloved persons means nothing.

What I am not sure about is—what I should do concerning my memory for my mother: try to forget her or keep her in the memory forever. In choosing the first choice, it could be possible that one day I would succeed—meaning that there will not be the picture of my mother in my memory forever. And this means further that the pain resulting from such a memory will be extinct forever too. Suppose I choose this option, it seems that insight meditation would be very useful. Most of the Buddhists believe that insight meditation has been designed to solve this kind of problems. In practicing insight meditation, what I have to do is to analyze ‘what is my mother.’ According to the metaphysics of Buddhism, actually there is no ‘my mother.’ The feeling that ‘this woman is my mother’ is grounded in the ‘me’ and ‘mine’ instincts. The pain that I have confronted would not have occurred if I do

not allow the feeling ‘this is my mother’ to dominate my mind.

Holy persons in Buddhist perspective are those who transcend their personal history. I understand the logic behind this belief; and one time in the past I myself was convinced this is valid ideology. Some Buddhist community in Thailand advises its disciples both monks and lay persons to change their names to delete their history. They said that personal history is the cause of attachment and attachment is the root of suffering. Family is one of important components of the person’s history. The more it is of significance the more it is the root of attachment. It is recorded in Buddhist texts that the Buddha’s state was completely destroyed by other state. And the cause of this is that the army of the Buddha’s state consisted of holy persons—they could not kill anybody even for self-protection. Moreover, they did not feel, “There is my nation to be protected and I must try every way to protect my people.” Holy persons in Buddhism are those who transcend even nationality.

Suppose it is possible to have the holy persons as said, does this kind of holiness deserve admiration? This question has stirred my thought. Buddhism teaches that this world can be seen through two kinds

of perspective. First, it can be seen through conventional viewpoint. Second, it can be seen through realist viewpoint. Everything invented by human mind and has the possessive meaning like ‘my mother’ or ‘my country’ is conventional. Conventional objects are the root of bondage. As human mind is the cause of conventional truth, to see the world as it is can be done through not using our perspective to perceive it. For ordinary people, this can happen only in theory. In practice, only holy persons can see things as they really are. We know that to be holy person, insight meditation is necessarily needed.

Arriving at this point, there are two alternatives left for me as follows.

(1) To have a free life, I have to try through insight meditation to transcend my history. In adopting this option, I will receive one thing—total freedom; and I will lose one thing—my history.

(2) To have normal life, I do not have special thing to do. I do not need to practice insight meditation. What I need is just to be good person in general sense—the one who does not harm other and oneself. In choosing this option, I will receive one thing—a normal happiness as the person with personal history; and I will lose one thing—I will not have total freedom

as the person who transcends the world.

From above, I have said that some pain is valuable to keep it with our life. The images of my mother in my memory are valuable things and this needs no any explanation as everybody has mother and he or she can feel by themselves what the word 'mother' means. Now, I am rather sure that I want to have the pain resulting from the keeping of my mother in the depth of my mind. And I know further that this pain can be eliminated from my mind by the practice of insight meditation. However, I do not want to eliminate it; so—it seems that the practice of insight meditation that I have undertaken for a long time so far could be changed in the future. What I am thinking now is—what the value of practicing insight mediation if what to result from it ultimately is the empty mind with no personal history anymore? The master used to speak with me that the highest result of insight meditation is a very subtle happiness. Such a thing may really happen if I keep practicing. But, I am not sure I want to do so. It could be possible that at some point of the practice, my mind could attain some kind of blissful emotion. But such a state of mind might be a private experience, like closing the door of the room and stay inside alone. I do not want to be inside the room alone, I need my

mother being there too. But this is not possible. Finally, spiritual freedom taught in Buddhism could be compared with walking into loneliness. The question is—I should go ahead to such loneliness or return to what I have left for years. I don't know.

*Comment and Suggestion*

Religion, especially Indian religion such as Buddhism, has been well known for very long times an attempt of human beings to struggle against one thing—the evil. Different religions have different concepts of the evil. We can categorize the evils into two main groups—internal evil and external evil. External evils are something existing outside our life and it has the power to corrupt our soul. Sometimes, this category of the evil includes the bad angels like Satan (in Christian tradition) and Mara (in Buddhist tradition). Internal evils are those placed inside human life and they have the power to corrupt the soul of mankind as well. Of these two evils, the latter one is considered being of more importance. That is, the inside evils are deemed as the doorkeeper who allows the bad guests coming in. In Buddhist tradition, a thing called meditation basically aims at the training of human mind. (Buddhist mind in a sense has the same meaning as the soul in Christianity; the difference is just Buddhist mind is not permanent; in one life the person has a so long series of the mind, not only one single soul as taught in Christianity.) And the training of mind, to use a metaphor, is to teach the doorkeeper how to deal with the

bad guests who try to come in.

The doorkeeper, or the mind, is weak by its normal nature. Its weakness can be summed up into one single sentence—it can be corrupted by the bad comers. In Christianity, Satan has the power to corrupt the man's soul. However, there could be some men in the world who are not corrupted by Satan because they possess the strong souls. In this sense, it is the weak soul that allows Satan coming in. In Buddhism, the external evils are not Satan—even though there is the Mara who could be compared to Satan. The external evils according to Buddhist tradition are the world that human beings perceive through their eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and inner reflection.

Note that the physical world in its essence is morally neutral in the sense that it is neither good nor evil in itself. Buddhism is well aware of this. To say that the physical world is the evil just means that the physical world has the great potential to corrupt human mind. Ultimately, Buddhism is of the view that everything centers on the mind. That is—if the mind is not trained strong, the physical world would be the evil; on the contrary, if the mind is trained strong, the physical world would not be the evil anymore. And this is why meditation is of significance in Buddhism. It is be-

lieved that meditation is the only way to train the mind. In Buddhist texts, there are so many stories telling that the persons with normal minds had been trained by insight meditation and later become the holy persons. Holy persons in Buddhist perspective are those whose mind is completely pure. The world cannot be the good or the evil for them.

Good persons according to religion are usually found in the texts; and the religious texts are known to be composed under a kind of tradition—the tradition in which faith plays significant roles more than fact; or in term of literature, religious texts are not realistically but romantically composed. It is very hard to find the living religious person to be cited as an example of really holy person according to religion. In each religion, there usually are some leading persons who have the religious training more than other. It is interesting to find that the conflict between the religious leaders of the same religion can be found not difficultly. Sometimes religious bias towards other religions or non-religious institutions such as science is found so violently. Galileo was sent to the Inquisition by the pope; so many people, during that time, were killed for the reason that they opposed religious faith—all of this comes from religious persons who were long

trained in religion.

One undeniable fact is that man creates religion; and man in terms of life sciences is a kind of animals. This fact is seriously taken by some philosophers in the world. There is one ethical position generally known among philosophers stating that before we say that “You should follow X” we should be sure first that X can be followed by people. This argument is known under the name the naturalist principle of ethics. The shortest content of this principle is: ‘ought’ implies ‘can.’ It seems that this principle is widely used to argue against religion. That is, for those who use this principle as said, religion does not consider that ‘what is the nature of human beings.’ Religion starts from setting some ideological goodness and teaches people to follow such a thing without questioning that such a path fits the nature of people or not.

A well known Chinese proverb says, “Cut the shoe to fit your foot; do not cut your foot to fit the shoe.” Suppose it is true that religion starts from the setting up of moral rules and then teaches people to follow such rules without a study that the rules as said fit human nature or not, what done by religion could be compared to “cut the foot to fit the shoe.” And this is a mistake. However, in terms of logic, it could be possi-

ble that the shoe and the foot may fit each other by accident, implying that it could be possible as well that what religion teaches and human nature fit each other. So, the naturalist principle does not necessarily prove that religion is at fault.

The way to prove whether or not religion is ‘cutting the foot to fit the shoe’ is empirical one. Modern Darwinist thinkers, those who are convinced that what provided by Charles Darwin can be used to explain behavior of man and animal, are of the view that one major thing ignored by religion is: human species can be divided into two subjects of study—human as individual and human as the whole species. Consider the following example. We have three persons: A, B, and C. A is father of B; and B is father of C. In terms of genetics, there is a genetic link between these three persons. Some modern Darwinist thinkers such as Richard Dawkins are of the view that when we look at A, B, and C; we can consider them as human individuals. Every human individual shares the same truth—no one is immortal. This applies well to A, B, and C. However, among the situation in which the mortality of these persons is found, there appears the ‘immortality’ of something. Suppose we name the genetic information shared by A, B, and C as X; it could be possible that

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even though one day these three persons are dead, X still exists. We can imagine that C has D, E, and F as his children; and his children will have their children *to carry X* forever. From what said above, we can conceptualize the picture of human species as a long chain consisting of the great number of human individuals. Human individuals are mortal, but human genetic information is immortal as far as it needs to exist.

Human genetic information, or human genes, is something mysterious, astonishing, and so powerful. Dawkins is of the opinion that the gene plays important roles in human; and he has put this idea into his popular scientific book, *The Selfish Gene*. In short, Dawkins argues that the gene plays the roles behind instincts of man and animal. As we have observed, the members of the same species have the inclination to ‘love’ each other more than the members of other species. This can be explained that the members of the same species share some genetic information that cannot be found in the members of other species. For example, suppose human species has A, B, C, D, and F as genetic information—meaning that every human has these things inside; and suppose the dog species has A, B, C, D, and G as genetic information. We see that between the members of human species, there are five

genetic components shared; while between humans and dogs there are only four. And this is why from human perspective we *must* love each other more than the dogs; and from the dogs' perspective they *must* love each other more than human beings.

Most of the Darwinist thinkers believe that morality is nothing but the instinct to act for the welfare of the whole species. Altruism is explained as the actions run by that instinct. In his works such as *The Descent of Man*, Darwin clearly states that morality can be found both in man and animal. This claim is not strange if we accept that morality is the instinct to act for the welfare of the whole species. Modern Darwinists, such as Edward O. Wilson in his book *On Human Nature*, have pointed out that a thing called 'hard-core altruism' (the devotion of life of some individual members for the welfare of a great number of species' members or the species as a whole) can be found in animals more than human beings; altruism found in human beings is generally a thing called 'soft-core altruism' which means an action which benefits other and the performer is not required to sacrifice his/her life.

From a biological point of view, the acts of the masters of religion are basically based on the instinct as said above. Note that the morality found in religion in

general is focused on the benefits of human species. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, their morality is clearly seen being mainly designed for human benefits. Killing human being is a great evil; but killing animal is not. Even though in Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism) their morality is extended to animals and plants, the moral status of these things, compared with human beings, is not the same as found in human beings. Normally, the masters of religion, especially the ones of Indian tradition such as Buddhism, are said to have the universal and unbiased mind. The Buddha is said not distinguishing between things. However, the morality of Buddhism seems to place human beings higher than animals; and they said that it is because human beings possess moral quality higher than animals—so, the same good performed to man is of more positive values than animal and the same evil performed to animal is of lesser negative values than man. Some critics of religion said that if animals would have set up religious morality themselves, be sure that the position of human beings under animal's moral system must be lower than animals; and this clearly shows that religion can never be free from biological determination.

The assumption that religion cannot be free from

biological determination is of very significance. However, general attitude towards this assumption found among the adherents of religion is—this cannot be accepted. The strength of biology lies in that it tries to remind us that man is biological entity. The soul does not exist as something separate from the brain. Man thinks from the brain. In this sense, religion is the product of the brain. Human brain does not work freely. On the contrary, it works as being programmed by the gene. The gene inside a man's body will suggest what to be done. Between the monk in the above story and his mother, there is a special genetic link as she is his mother. It is believed that even highly religious persons like Mahatma Gandhi might be not free from the influence of the gene. Gandhi himself has a son. We believe that Gandhi loves humankind, meaning that when he looks at a son of other person it could be possible that we cannot distinguish between the love he gives to his son and the one he gives to the son of other person. But this cannot guarantee that Gandhi is free from biological determination. Biological determination to be found in the case of special persons like Gandhi could be seen in special circumstance only. Suppose the son of Gandhi, be his name B, has a friend named A. A always comes to Gandhi's home. As A is a

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good boy, Gandhi loves him very much. The son of Gandhi is a good boy as well. One day, these two boys are extremely sick. The doctor says to Gandhi, after the process of medical exploration, that the boys need a type of blood otherwise they will die. The doctor has found that such a type of blood can be obtainable from the body of Gandhi only. The sad news is the amount of the blood that can be drawn from the body of Gandhi can be given to one of them only. So, Gandhi has to decide which one between A and B must be 'the chosen.' For general people, if this dilemma happens to them; they will not hesitate to give their blood to their sons. And for them, it is not moral dilemma at all. We do not know exactly Gandhi will choose to protect his son or the son of other person. But what we know is suppose we, ordinary people, are forced to confront the same situation as Gandhi, we will choose our son. Many people are of the view that finally Gandhi will choose his son because not choosing his son is something so strange and not understandable. The Buddha himself has done something special to his relatives. For example, the person, who used to be ordained as a priest in other religion, must adopt a kind of religious practice at least four months before being accepted to join the community of Buddhist monks. But this rule

does not apply if such a person is a relative of the Buddha himself.

Actually, what biologists say concerning the nature of human beings does not oppose religious faiths directly. That is, the adherents of religion can utilize biological knowledge to make religious faiths productive. The good point in religion is that they try to overcome human instincts. We know that some instincts in human life should be eliminated or cultivated—for example, instincts to accumulate natural resources to be used privately and let others suffer from the lack of such resources. This kind of instincts in the view of biologists is something should be cultivated as well. In this sense, biology and religion share the same belief.

Suppose the masters of religion are not free from biological determination—does this affect our faiths in them? For me, the author of this book, the answer is no. Even though the Buddha is not free from biological determination, I still believe in him as my beloved master. On the contrary, between the Buddha as man and the Buddha as superman, I think I respect the former Buddha more than the latter Buddha—because the Buddha as man has tried more than the Buddha as superman in overcoming instincts. In Buddhism, we

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respect the person from his attempt to transcend the blind instincts. It could be possible that finally no one in the world can transcend human nature because the gene inside us is more powerful than us as the tools used by the gene for its survival. But this has nothing related to the value of attempt to transcend the power of the gene. If a man tries extremely to fight against his tyrant enemy, that is enough to respect him; his victory over the enemy notwithstanding.

*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) Some modern biologists are of the view that the enemy that religion tries to fight against ultimately is nothing but the gene. The gene has its long history in struggling for survival; it has accumulated so much experience, and this makes it so wise and smart. It could be possible that some members of human species succeed in rebelling against the gene, for example the Buddha and his holy followers. But this does not cause any problem to the gene as the rest of human species are under its control. Darwin says in his book, *The Origin of Species*, that any harmful variation occurring to the species will be rejected by nature. That is, the members of species which carry such a harmful variation will be extinct from the world. What is a harmful variation? It is the one that does not support the existence of the species as a whole. At least, the members of human species must reproduce themselves to show that they 'love and worship' the gene. Holy persons in Buddhism are believed not having the instinct to reproduce themselves; so, they are not valuable in the eye of the gene. According to theory of natural selection of Darwin, this kind of persons will not be chosen by nature to exist because they are useless—the gene

cannot use them to protect itself anymore. *Nirvana* in Buddhist teaching has been explained as the absence from the universe. We can say that the Buddha and his holy disciples are the members of human species who can rebel against the gene completely. Looking from the perspective of religion, this is the victory over the tyrant gene. However, looking from the eye of the gene, this can never be seen as victory. In the past, the gene has dropped its useless members again and again. There is no reason to keep them, the useless. Moreover, victory should result in the existence while defeat should result in the non-existence. The gene still exists, and those who rebel against it are absent. So—who wins? What do you think about this?

(2) It seems that the great distinction between religion and biology, in general, lies in that religion believes that there is something non-material existing in man and this thing is not under biological determination. This thing is the soul. The body, according to religious belief, could be compared to the jail and the soul the prison. Religion accepts that normally the soul is not strong enough to rebel against the body, even though naturally it has the potential to do that. Whenever the soul is evoked or enlightened, it will see no reason to be under the body—and this is the starting

point of spiritual revolution. On the other side, biology believes that there is no soul separated from the brain; actually, the soul is caused by the brain. As the brain cannot be free from genetic determination, human soul cannot be free too. Some modern philosophers who call themselves, or are called, empiricists or positivists are of the view that the two metaphysical theories that say different things cannot be proven which one is true and which one is false. In this sense, if we accept that both religion and biology hold some kind of metaphysical belief, what we must accept further is—none of them can be proven true or false. Do you agree with this? The positivists say further that the best way to judge the philosophical problem is to bring it down from the level of metaphysics to the level of epistemology. That is—we should question religion: “How to prove that the soul really exists?” And to be fair on religion, we should question biology as well: “How to prove that the brain is totally governed by the gene?” Even though we cannot observe a metaphysical entity such as the soul or the tyrant gene, this does not mean that we cannot do anything. We can observe human behavior. Suppose religion can change human behavior to the extent that the influence of the body, or genetic determination, is not found; could

this be used as an example of religious teaching's strength? And could this be used to infer further that the soul must exist otherwise we can never explain how people can change their behavior like that?



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# Chapter Six

## Who Has the Right to Rule the Country?—All or Some

### *Two Philosophical Treatises on Politics*

#### *Treatise One*

I do not believe in democracy. I have the reasons to say that. To go to the point, the following are my reasons.

(1) Like other area of human activity, in politics there are two things to be considered—the *means* and the *end*. Anything in the universe has to play the role as either the means or the end at a given time. It is possible that a thing can play both of them. But within a given time, it must play just one of them only. It is not possible for a thing to be both the means and the end at the same time.

(2) The definition of the means is very simple. If ‘A’ leads to some destination, we call ‘A’—a means. For example, we use a knife to cut; the existence of the knife

is for cutting. Something in the universe seems to exist as a means only. The knife can be hardly the end in itself. What is the meaning of the end? According to Immanuel Kant, the end is something that possesses some intrinsic value and such a value makes that thing cannot be used by other as a means. In the past, slavery was widely accepted. But today it cannot be accepted. What's wrong with slavery is that it allows treating some fellow human beings as the means of other. In his *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre divides things in the universe into two categories—*being in itself* and *being for itself*. Being in itself is something which can morally be used as a means of other while being for itself is something we cannot do so. It seems that most of the philosophers agree that material object is being in itself and this kind of thing can be used as the means of other; and man is being for itself and this kind of thing cannot be used as the means of other. Between man and material objects, we have animals and plants that share an important property with man—being living entity. In some tradition of thought—for example, Indian philosophy—these things cannot be used as the means of human beings. So, according to Indian philosophy, material objects only can be used as the means of human beings.

(3) Man has wisdom and intelligence. Aristotle says that man is rational being; and moreover, man is political being as well. It seems that for Aristotle, it is human intelligence that causes a thing called political society. What is a political community? We would understand its meaning if we look at a non-political community such as the one of animals. It is highly possible that one time in the past human beings had lived a wild life among other animals in the jungles. We see that some animals are social beings in the meaning that they like to live together as a group. Human beings are social animals; and it could be possible that as we are created not strong, compared with lions or tigers, this causes man to live together—the more a group is big the more a chance of survival is high. Later, man's intelligence has educated them that in living together some rules are needed. The rules will guarantee that some bad persons will not harm others because there are the rule-keepers to punish such harmful persons. In the community of animals, it could be possible that there are the rules found in some of them—for example, it is found that in the community of elephants there is a rule to respect the elders. However, such a rule is not complete, compared with man. Political community set up by man consists of some basic properties such as

persons in the community are divided into the rulers and the ruled and between them there are laws for both parts to follow; the violation of laws is prohibited and those who do so must be punished.

(4) What is the main purpose in joining a political community? There could be several answers for this question—depending on we have what assumption in the mind. For me, *happiness is what we need from living in a political society*. Someone may argue that the purpose of the living in a political community can be seen from the constitution. There are some important things being mentioned in the constitution as the good things for every person such as freedom, equality, and justice. We call these things the common good. For those who suggest these things, it could be possible that these common good are the purpose in joining the political community. That is—we decide to live together in a political society because we need freedom, equality, and justice. Outside political community, we cannot have these things. Note that according to this view, we do not see a thing called happiness. In the constitution, there are no words mentioning happiness as a common good.

(5) My reply to this suggestion is—what stated in the constitution as said are not the ends in themselves.

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That is—freedom, equality, and justice are the means to happiness. I accept that some philosophers in the world are of the view that these things are the ends in themselves. They argue that to be test whether such a thing should be deemed as the end in itself or not is to question—how it would be if our life does not have such a thing. It does not matter you are poor or rich; if you do not have freedom, your life is nothing. In this sense, freedom is the end in itself. This could apply well to equality and justice. What I need to suggest as regards this claim is—sometimes something is seen as the end in itself as far as we have a happy life. Note that a word ‘happy life’ meant here is a normal life as generally found in any political community. Imagine that a man is lost in the big forest. There is no food and water. He is now extremely hungry and thirsty. We can say that he is now having a not-normal life. What he needs at that time is food and water. In a sense, we can say that he needs happiness. Note that the man has absolute freedom in the forest—he can do anything he wants without interference from other. But freedom within such a circumstance is totally meaningless. We see that freedom will have the meaning when the man has a normal life. In this sense, we can say that happiness is primary good, while freedom is secondary.

(6) Another criterion to judge between happiness and those called the common good which one is more basic is as follows.

(a) Between A and B, what is the most wanted irrespective of conditions?

(b) From above, we see that it could be possible that some people in the world do not want freedom, equality, and justice as they do not understand what it means. However, it might not be possible that there are some people in the world saying that they do not need happiness.

(c) In this sense, the need of happiness is more basic than the need of freedom, equality, and justice—because the need of happiness does not require any medium. The need of freedom, equality, and justice requires education. That is—a person will feel he needs these things after he understands what it means; and to understand it, he must be educated.

(7) If you accept my postulation concerning happiness as the ultimate end of political community, other things could be counted the means to such the end. As said above, the need of happiness does not require any medium; this means significantly that it is the moral objective of any political community to provide all people with happiness. However, as there could be a

difference between two or more political societies; the means used effectively in one political community could be unusable in another political community. For example, Thailand has borrowed democracy from the West. As it is known, democracy is a political ideology which states that (a) all people in the political community *equally* share the ownership of the nation—meaning that no one has ownership of the nation more than other; (b) so, the right to rule the country must be given to everyone *equally*; (c) such a right must be protected by the state, meaning that each has equally *freedom* to say, “I need this thing from the state.” We see that ultimately democracy believes in one single value—freedom. A, B, C, and D are citizens of the US, for example; and as the citizens, they have equal freedom to choose the future of their nation as they think most proper. Note that the concept of freedom comes along with the concept of responsibility—meaning that *freedom without responsibility is just empty word and may be harmful*. Responsibility closely relates to education. In this sense, we find that before a person, as a citizen of a country, will be given freedom, we have to be sure that he can be held responsible for it; education is the key factor to judge whether or not the citizens of the country should be deemed ready for responsibility as

said. In the West, people in general are educated enough to handle freedom given. But in Thailand, things are greatly different. Over 80 % of Thai population are villagers. They are low-educated. They do not know what freedom means. And this is the main problem of Thai politics—the majority of Thai people are not ready to handle political freedom given to them.

(8) Some hundreds of years ago, slavery was abolished in Thailand by King Chulalongkorn. There were some slaves being unhappy with this law. They needed to remain slave as they feared their life could be unstable in the future. Note that sometimes some people have to be forced to be free. What I need to say from this is that: (a) first, freedom is not absolute value—meaning that in some situation freedom can be violated if there is explainable reason; (b) second, freedom can be violated for the reason that it is just a means to something more valuable—in the case of the abolition of slavery in Thailand, we see that the law had enforced some slaves to be non-slaves; and this could be deemed as the violation of freedom as the slaves could say it is their freedom to choose being slave; being non-slave does not imply freedom, actually it implies happiness; that is, the law of King Chulalongkorn mainly aims at happiness of the slaves and not free-

dom; freedom in this case is just a means to happiness.

(๑) Moreover, politics can be considered as a kind of activity that needs expertise in some way. When you are sick, what you should do is coming to see a doctor. When the doctor has diagnosed your sickness and found that what happens to you; the process of healing is totally up to the doctor—because he knows best what to be done. We cannot heal the sickness by majority vote. This is not possible! I accept that in some countries in the world, people have been educated—there is no great difference among them and this makes them understand what to be done as responsible citizens. For this kind of political community, the concept of expertise as said is not needed. People can have self-rule. The difference between normal people and the politicians just lies in that the former do not choose to be politician as they have some works that they love more. The latter are not of political expertise more than the former; they just choose to be politician as it is a thing they love and find they can do it well more than other things. But in some countries, especially the third-world countries, we need political experts to act on behalf of people. A Buddhist thinker-monk of Thailand, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, says that his country does not need democracy. For him, Thai democracy

gives poison to the villagers as it convinces them, “You have freedom and right—use it!” Unfortunately, people do not know how to use the things given by democracy. There is a very popular song sung among the villagers of Thailand. Its name is *The Sunlight Eaters*. And the following are some parts of the song.

*We live in the poor villages*

*No education here*

*Like the buffaloes, we work hard*

*When we are sick, we have no any hospital*

*When we want to learn, we have no any school...*

*Perhaps we are born as the unwanted of the country*

*We suffer; we struggle, hoping to have a better life some day*

*But now we are old and never have a happy life just for a moment...*

*A time for new political election comes again*

*They come to our villages with things*

*They say “choose me and I will protect you”*

*They give us things...*

*It might be good to have political election every month of year*

*It might be good to have political election every month of year*

*If this really happens*

*We, the sunlight eaters, must be happy*

This is a great irony—poor people and their freedom! Recently, a Thai political scientist has proposed a political theory that describes what happening in Thai democracy. He calls it as the *Tale of Two Democra-*

*cies*. In this, he points out that democracy of the villagers and the one of the city people are not the same. As a result of two democracies, the villagers have chosen a number of politicians as their representatives which usually become a government as their political parties win majority vote. In this sense, the villagers are those who choose the government. As the villagers do not have qualities in terms of politics and political morality, the government chosen by them is viewed by the city people not proper to rule the country. This feeling later will cause the stress in the mind of the city people. When the stress comes to its peak, the city people will do something which later results in the end of the government. According to the theory concerning the tale of two democracies, the villagers choose government to be later abolished by the city people.

(10) What said above is a sad story. The sad story is something we can accept if it is just imaginary or fiction. But the above sad story is real. It happens in our country over and over. Someone says, "We have to wait. Democracy is the best form of ruling theories." I could accept the latter sentence. Maybe democracy is the best form of political patterns. But its best is one thing while its real effect is another. What I want to say is—democracy is not suitable to be used in some

political communities for the reason that its starting premises, such as ‘the right and freedom to rule the country must be shared equally by people irrespective of their qualities,’ do not accord with real things in the communities. The question is—how do we handle this? Certainly, we can wait; but during the time of waiting, should we use it, or we will not use it; this question needs the answer! For me, we have no reason to use democracy while we have evidences showing that the majority of people in the land are not ready.

### *Treatise Two*

(1) I believe that democracy is the best political theory. I have two reasons. First—in terms of *ideology*, democracy proposes the most reasonable principles. Second—in terms of *practice*, democracy is the best in the meaning that if we do not use democracy we will greatly suffer, meaning further that there could be some another political theory besides democracy which looks beautiful, but can hardly be used or cannot be used. The following are the details of my two reasons as given above.

(2) As mentioned by Aristotle, there can be several forms of government. *First*, one person rules the whole country—this kind of government can be seen in the

country where one king rules the whole country. In the past, this form of government was widely adopted throughout the world under the name absolute monarchy. *Second*, a group of persons rule the whole country—this kind of government can be seen in the country that uses communism as political form. According to communism, there is only one political belief and practice being allowed in the country. In China today, no political parties other than the Communist Party are allowed. *Third*, people rule the whole country—this kind of government can be found in the countries where democracy is adopted. In terms of logic, what said above concerns just the *form*. There is no any implication concerning the *quality*. That is—all of them can be good or bad, depending on details inside. Suppose we have the good king who does everything for his people and not for himself—this is a good absolute monarchy. The same applies to other forms of government as well. Note that, in terms of the form, democracy is not better than the other. Any form of government can provide people with happiness if the ruler of that system is the good person and knows well how to rule.

(3) The question is—if democracy does not differ from other forms of government as said, we have what

reason to endorse democracy? This question needs an understanding of democracy in detail. In short, democracy is based on a set of political premises as follows. *First*, human beings are born different; and such differences make them differ—some of them are wise, some are not; some are rich, and some are poor. This kind of difference is natural; and cannot be changed because the root of difference is biological. In terms of biology, no one can predict the future. Even the wise parents cannot be sure to have the wise children. However, this natural difference can be not problematic if we have some political theory that does not take the difference among people as its basis. Democracy is such a political theory. According to democratic philosophy, even though people are naturally created different, such difference will be meaningless when people decide to live together in the same political community. Everyone is counted as an owner of the country. In terms of owner, everyone will be given the same right to say, “I want our society to be like this.” A rich person and a poor person have the same right; a wise person and a foolish person, as well, share the same right. *Second*, as people are born different, what is good for Mr. A could be not good for Mr. B. Some idealist thinkers of the world would say that between people

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who say different things there might be some who say the right thing. According to Plato, in his *Republic*, only the wise and moral persons deserve to rule the land because they are only persons who know what is good and what is bad. Democracy does not utilize this kind of argument. It may be true that there are some persons in the country wise and moral; and it may be true that if such persons are given the position as the rulers of the country, they would provide people with good things. But such good things are good *according to them*. The question is—why the unwise and amoral persons do not have the right to say, “This is good thing in my view.” The second principle of democracy states that persons have the right to say different voices and such voices must be respected by other as far as it does not harm any person in the community. Imagine that the wise rulers in Plato’s political philosophy might not allow things like alcoholic drink or gambling for the reason that they are bad things; but in the view of some common people these things are needed as they give them pleasure. As far as these things are consumed privately, we have what reason not to allow them. Democracy is a political theory which accepts the right to act unwisely and amorally as far as it does not harm the doer seriously, or harm other person. Why the voices

of foolish or amoral people deserve respect? The answer is very simple—because they are the same owners of the country as others.

(4) Some of the critics of democracy say that the weakness of democracy lies in that it lacks objectives especially the ones to moral good. This criticism is partly true and partly false. We know that the person as one single organism should have objectives in life. To have objectives in life is not problematic if there is only one person to determine this life should be devoted for what. Community consists of a vast number of people who think differently. So, it is not easy to determine the whole community should go along which direction. In absolute monarchy or communism, it is not difficult to determine the objectives of the society as the rule of the country is in the hand of some leading persons who share the same political ideology. A fact that in democratic society it is not easy to determine the objectives of the community can be deemed either weakness or strength, depending on how we look at it. In my view, this could be considered as the strength. Normally, in democratic philosophy, we usually talk about a thing called the ‘general will’ of the community and we usually think this term denotes the good. The good for the community under the rule

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of absolute monarchy, in a sense, is at risk as it is under the consideration of one person only. In terms of statistic, one person has the chance to think right or wrong 50-50%. So, the good for the community according to the king in absolute monarchy can be 50-50% right or wrong. In the case we have the wise and moral king, it could be possible that in practice our society has more chance to have the common good. However, in terms of statistic in which only pure numbers are considered, the decision coming from one person is at risk more than the one coming from a group of persons or a vast number of people. The strength of democracy lies in that the general will of the community is required to come from the opinions of the vast number of people. A man has limited knowledge. But such limit can be solved by the sharing of knowledge between or among people. It can be said without any doubt that among the possible forms of government democracy is the best as it utilizes the shared knowledge that comes from every person in the community. Absolute monarchy utilizes knowledge from one person; and communism utilizes knowledge from a group of persons. In terms of number alone, we see that 'all' can be trusted more than 'some' or 'one'—this is a very simple truth!

(5) In its very essence, democracy believes in human nature. In the history of philosophy, we have found that there are two groups of philosophers to give the different views concerning human nature. One of them is of the view that man is good by nature; while in the view of another, man is created evil by nature. Democracy belongs to the first group. Those who believe that man is bad by nature point out that selfishness can be cited as an example of the evil nature of man. Everyone is selfish. A thing called altruist action is just a modified form of selfishness. Some democratic thinkers such as Ayn Rand argue that democracy is not necessarily based on the assumption concerning the good nature of human beings. In her famous book, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, Rand says that what we need from other in democratic society is not the love, but the respect. It seems that for her, it is not possible to require real altruism from other because everyone is created by nature to be selfish; but this is not a problem as we can set up the rules for living together and by the enforcement of the laws no one will be able to harm other—the just laws will enforce other to respect your rights, and certainly the just laws come from self-interest of everybody. Note that what Rand calls selfishness differs from the term used by people as she says

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that it means rational actions performed to protect one's benefit. In this sense, democracy according to Rand must be based on rationality which is a positive nature of human beings. Democracy can never stand firm without rationality and morality.

(6) Those who argue against democracy usually say that in some political communities especially the third-world countries democracy is not suitable because it assumes responsibility which people do not have. I fully accept this fact. However, we should distinguish between the theory and its practice. Certainly, in some case, it is very hard to separate between these two things. However, I think in the case of democracy, to be fair on it, we should look at its doctrines as one thing and its practice as another one. It may be true that some people in the third-world countries, such as the poor farmers in Thai villages, do not have responsibility as the result of the lack of education. But this does not mean at all that they should not be given the political right and freedom. As far as they are counted human beings, they must have the same political right and freedom as other. What I want to say is—being human is primary property to have the same political right and freedom as other; while being not ready to use it is secondary property. This can be compared to

what we have done to the criminals in our society. The criminals are those who commit crimes. In this sense, they differ from other in that they have done the bad things. But being the person who has done the bad thing is secondary property, while being human is primary. Because the criminals possess primary property as human, we cannot punish them as if they were animals. Surely, we can punish them according to the law; but the punishment must not violate primary property existing inside them. The poor farmers in the villages may not have educated enough; and from this they are possibly used by the bad politicians as the means to their political power. I fully accept this is one of important political problems in some democratic communities. But this does not mean that they should not have the political right and freedom as other. In the past, the slaves were seen not human, and thus they were cut off from the common good to be shared by the citizens of the country. What's wrong with slavery lies in that it treats some human beings as not human. What's wrong with not giving some people in our community the political right and freedom, as well, lies in that it treats some human beings as not human.

(7) In some sense, democracy can be considered as both means and end. That is—democracy should not be

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deemed as a system which is complete in itself. Consider the case of an unhealthy man. The man needs good health. So, he starts from exercise. Exercise can be seen both as means and end. Actually, the man needs good health. He does not need exercise. But the exercise is a long process. It can be divided into steps—for example 10 steps. From step 1 to 2, we see that 2 is the end; but after it is reached, 2 will be the means to 3. This applies well to 4-10. In the same way, democracy can be divided into steps. Suppose we divide it into 10 steps; some countries could be said having reached 7 or 8, while some just 2 or 3. Note that each step plays the roles as both end and means. Suppose in a political community there are a vast number of poor people who cannot handle their political rights, step 2. What we need, step 3, is: these people understand their political right and freedom and can use it wisely. To reach step 3, step 2 should be deemed as the means. Note that there are two kinds of means—positive and negative. Some may argue that if we see that these people are the obstacles of reaching 3, they should not be allowed to have political right and freedom. This clearly cannot be done as it opposes democratic principles said above. So, what we can do is letting these people learn from what they have done. At the outset, they may not

understand that what they have done will cause what. But in the long run, they will continually understand it. This process is generally called learning from the past wrong. Sometimes, people know what is right after they have done something wrong. In this sense, letting people learn from their wrong is inevitably needed. So, step 2 is the negative means to step 3.

(8) Toleration is another important principle of democracy. Toleration normally implies the direction from the top to the bottom. For example, suppose you are the wisest student in the class; you have to tolerate learning ability of your friends who are not wise as you. Sometimes, you may feel bored to hear your teachers repeating the same things over and over. But you have to tolerate because there is not only 'you' in the class; exactly, the class belongs to everybody. The majority's inclination is the middle way to deal with a community which naturally consists of different people. Those who argue against democracy are usually wise and genius. I think I understand how and what they feel. However, this world belongs to everyone, and not only the wise and the genius. You have nothing to do except to tolerate it.

(9) Lastly, in terms of practice, I see no way to go if we do not give political right to every person irrespec-

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tive of their differences. In theory, you could say, “Let the wise and the good only rule the country.” But when this comes to the level of practice, we can question, “How to have the wise and the good? Who is the person or the group to judge and choose the wise and the good as said to rule the country?” Democracy does not face this problem because ‘who’ in the above question is—everybody!

*Comment and Suggestion*

The debate concerning “who deserves to rule the country” is one among important issues in political philosophy. As it is seen, some philosophers state that it is not every person deserving such a position. For them, politics is a kind of work needing the expert to handle. It seems that for philosophers of this kind, there is no work in the world which does not require some kind of expert. We need a chef for cooking; and it is not true that any person can cook well. Even the simple thing like cooking needs an expert; so, how much politics, which is more complicated, needs the expert to run it—this is understandable. In the view of these philosophers, a fact that there is only some kind of persons deserving the position as the ruler of the country is one thing, and the political benefits to occur to all people in the country is another one—these two things are not related. That is, even though a few people only deserve the position as the political leaders of the country, this does not mean that those who do not have such a position in the country, the majority, will necessarily lose their benefits. What we are talking about is just the division of duty.

Plato and Hinduism may be an outstanding example

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of this school of thought. According to Plato's political philosophy as found in his great work, the *Republic*, people in the community can be divided into three main groups. The first one is the person whose soul is governed by wisdom. The second one is the person whose soul is governed by brevity. And the third one is the person whose soul is governed by desire. People of the third group compose the majority; while the second and the first just compose the minority. It seems that the portions as said, in the view of Plato, are naturally fixed—meaning that in any community at any time the majority must be those whose souls are governed by desire. It is said that Plato never appreciated democracy; and this seemingly stemmed from his bad experience with democracy at his time. We know that Socrates was punished to death on two counts—for not belief in gods and the corruption of Athenian youth. And those who accused him were Athenian people. The picture of Socrates could be compared to a light in the dark. His role as said can be seen by a few leading people in the community, according to Plato's theory of three kinds of persons in the community above. Those whose mind is governed by desire do not need the light—they see the dark is good thing. Normally, we can have different opinions and live peace-

fully together in the community. But those Athenians did not choose this way. They did not like the way Socrates had done to their children for the reason that in the long run the youth of Athens could be of outlooks concerning the meaning of life and good community different from their parents—and this, for them, was totally unacceptable. The law of Athens then allowed people who were unhappy with someone in terms of social stability to accuse such a person; and it was known that the more the number of the accusers was big the more their accusation was strong.

In a sense, democracy adopts an ethical principle: “The wrong performed by many people could be right. And conversely, the right done by fewer persons could be wrong.” And in the view of Plato, this is very strange principle. Between Socrates and his accusers, we know that the latter is of selfishness and ignorance, while the former is of wisdom and goodwill. Or we can say that Socrates was a good man, but he was executed just because his enemies were so many. The majority can do everything, even changing right to be wrong or wrong to be right, in democratic community.

Plato’s philosophy is purely based on reason and argumentation. On the contrary, Hinduism is religion. So, its political theory is mainly based on religious be-

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lief—or, to make it narrow, a belief in the creation of this world and humankind by God. Like God of Christianity, the Hindu God is said to create the world and humankind from His wisdom. It is said in the *Bible* that God has created man from His image. And this implies that God as the person might have the body that looks like the body of man. The same belief is found as well in Hinduism—God uses His body as ‘the blueprint’ in creating humankind. However, the difference is—the Hindu God uses his body to create humankind both in macro and micro scales, while the Christian God has done things only within a micro one. In terms of the micro scale, the Hindu God has created a man from His image—like what is done by the Christian God. And in terms of the macro scale, the Hindu God has considered that the person like Himself has a number of parts that compose the whole body. Any part has its own proper role—for example, feet for walking and mouth for taking food and medicine. The whole body needs different parts to perform different duties; and when all the parts have performed their duties well, happiness and stability will occur to the body as a whole. It should be noted that according to Hinduism, the body needs different parts not because there is some part higher or lower than other. The body needs

the head to be the thinker because the head is proper for this job; and this does not mean that the head is the best part of the body. In the same way, the body needs feet to carry other parts when walking because they are proper to do this job; and it does not mean at all that the feet are the lowest part of the body. In creating humankind, God has to create them to live in a society. The question is—how to create human society? For this question, God has found that the society is a kind of living organism. So, the society must be created using human body as the blueprint. That is—there must be some men to act as the head, some as the hands, some as the stomach, and some as the feet. The ruling class in Hindu political philosophy consists of the head and the hands—the Brahmins and the kings. The kings are those who exercise the political power as the rulers and the Brahmins are those who play the role as the moral and political advisers. Actually, the Brahmins are religious scholars and all political treatises, such as the *Artha Sastra*, in the history of India are composed by them. The essence of Hindu political philosophy in regard to “who deserves the position to rule the nation” is not different from what presented by Plato. Both of them believe that the minority must be of highest quality because this is natural (Plato) or the de-

termination of God (Hinduism). In the class of any subject, those who get “A” are in the minority, and those who get “C” are in the majority. This is natural, and can be seen throughout the world.

It should be noted that in modern political philosophy, it seems that Communism adopts the similar view—at least in a sense. In the communist countries, there is only one single political party allowed—the Communist Party. This results from a belief that for the benefits of people as a whole, there must be some chosen people to act as the rulers. The communist ideology considers the nation as a kind of organism, a position similar to what adopted by Plato and Hinduism. The concept of equality is not used in communist community because it is meaningless if we accept that the nation can be compared to the body. We cannot treat the head and the feet in the same way—so, the claim of equality between the head and the feet is not understandable. Instead, the different needs of different people are viewed as the most important concept. In Marxist political philosophy, there is a famous maxim saying, “From each according to his/her ability, to each according to his/her need.” This maxim, when transformed into practice, means that every person in the community is required by the state to do the job

suitable for his/her ability—some required to act as the workers, some the teachers, some the governors, for example. It is not possible for every person to act as the rulers because men are born different. The duty to rule is viewed like other duties—all require suitable persons. Even though men are born different in terms of outer manners such as bodily strength and inner ones such as intelligence, all share one basic thing and this should be provided justly by the state. That is—every person needs the best living as much as possible. A man who is born without any talent and thus the work suitable for him is the worker needs the best living not differently from the man who is born with talent and thus the work suitable for him is to rule the country. But, as the need for best living is the end in itself, every person should be given a fair means of living—meaning that what given to the worker and the ruler must not be different without explanation.

The differences found in people in the views of Plato and Marx is determined by nature; in Hinduism by God. For Plato and Marx, when the worker has a son, it could be possible that his son is born with some talent and this makes him deserve the social position different from his father. In Hinduism, for the convenience, God has created people different and put

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them into four classes. The caste system is fixed in the meaning that the next generation of any class must belong to the same class forever. In this sense, social mobility, which is possible in the theories of Plato and Marx, is not possible in Hinduism. However, Hinduism argues that this is not a problem as far as the ruling class takes it as a duty to protect and serve the lower classes.

Some philosophers in the world do not agree with Plato, Marx, and Hinduism. They argue that the ruling class is a kind of interest group in the meaning that they have something in their mind unique and different from other groups in the community. In this sense, it is not reasonable to hope that the ruling class will act to protect and serve other classes. This is not because the ruling class lacks a thing called morality—because this has nothing related to being good or bad ruler. For example, sensual pleasure is not good thing for the philosopher king, but common people see it as the good thing. So, the question is—how to deal with such a conflict. If we accept that the philosopher kings can be compared to the good father, so the bad thing in the view of them must not be allowed in the community; this would be a kind of the violation of people's freedom. We accept that sensual pleasure like drinking al-

coholic substance is not good thing in the sense that it supports the development of intelligence when compared with reading good books. But, as the commoners see that it is good for them; why they cannot have such a thing? John Stuart Mill argues in his book, *On Liberty*, that when some persons in our community do something which people of higher moral standard do not accept; if such a thing does not harm other person in the community, the only thing that the state can do is to allow such a thing as personal free choice. If the state or people of higher moral standard want the person do not do such a thing, they can convince the person through the means such as education or religion. But the state cannot use the way of legal enforcement to prohibit the person from such doing because that cannot be defended by reason. According to Mill, the community belongs *equally* to everyone. In this sense, the person has the moral right to commit a personal sin which does not harm other if he/she thinks that it brings about pleasure in life.

For the philosophers who do not agree with Plato, Marx, and Hinduism; the political society is not an organism in the meaning given in the works of Plato, Marx, and Hinduism. The main reason that they use to reject such a belief is—the acceptance of the idea that

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political community is an organism tends to bring about the violation of rights of some people especially those being placed in the lower positions. Jean Jacques Rousseau says in his book, the *Social Contract*, that the political community is made up from the contract between the people. As the members of the community, every person shares the same right and freedom—including political right and political freedom. Looking from this perspective, it is not possible to let only some person or group of persons rule the community—because doing so entails the limitation of political right and freedom of some persons in the community who carry the same membership of the community as those who rule the community.

A belief that political society is made up from the contract between the people has the weakness in that no one sees such a contract in real life. When we are born, we see that we are in the political society already. And as the citizens of the country, we are given political right and freedom because the constitution says so. Actually, the political community has naturally evolved and what to be seen in the process of evolution says the different things from the social contract theory. The beginning of human community, as the history tells us, starts when a community of human beings has to fight

against other for survival and this naturally needs the strong and brave leaders. The community which does not have the strong and brave leader will be destroyed and later becomes a part of the community which has the strong and brave leaders. The leaders of the community later become those we call the kings or under other names. In this sense, the happening of the political community naturally distinguishes between the ruler and the ruled already at its beginning stage. So, the idea of the political community as something being made up from the contract between people is just imaginary and has nothing to support from the real history of mankind.

In Thailand, sometimes when the political crisis happened as the result of bad behavior of politicians, there usually are those who say that “we should give back the political power to the king.” For those who say like this, democracy is wrong in that it gives the political right to every person equally including those who in the past never took part in making up the nation. They argue that in the distant past, Thai society has tried extremely to fight against the enemies and those who mostly took part in this are the past kings and their soldiers. As the leaders of Thai community, the kings knew best how to rule and lead the people;

and this truth applies well to the present king. The politicians are those who do not have any history related to the making up of the country. Moreover, they do not have experience in leading the people to the common good like art, religion, education, tradition, and so on which in the past were in the hand of the kings. Democracy ‘steals’ the political power from the kings and gives it to the hand of the commoners who know nothing except money, worldly pleasure, and political power. It is true that sometimes in the past there were some bad kings. But averagely the Thai kings were good and had brought about happiness to the people. And this is the reason why we should give back the political power to the king.

Note that those who say as seen above adopt the political theory to be seen in Plato and Hinduism. Democracy presupposes many things *imaginary* and *ideal*. It starts with a presupposition that the political community is made up from the contract between the people. Some political scientists are of the view that democracy cannot be considered separately from the history of Europe. In short—for them, the happening of democracy should not be seen as purely happening of political philosophy which highly appreciates human freedom and equality as said. On the contrary, the

Enlightenment mainly caused by the advance of scientific knowledge had produced the middle class; and this class had tried to take the political power from the kings and the leaders of religion. In this sense, democracy could be seen as a new religion to legitimize what done by the middle class. The new religion says that every person shares the same political freedom and right; and to make this concrete they give the people the same political right to vote for the political party that they like.

From above, we can reasonably question—does democracy give people real freedom. In some countries which are claimed as examples of the lands where democracy well flourishes, the people have two or three political party. In terms of sociology, it could be possible that one family has the political tradition to adopt one political party as the ‘family political party.’ This sounds not differently from an acceptance of religion; and so, we can question about freedom. The politicians are in the minority compared with the whole of country. But they are those who think and choose on behalf of the people. This can be questioned in terms of freedom as well.

‘Number’ plays an important role in democracy; and this can be questioned in terms of rationality. Sup-

pose two men are arguing. We accept that they play a reasonable game as far as they try to give arguments to support their views. Suppose again that during the time A and B are arguing, no one can convince the other; and the third person, C, has joined. Actually, B and C have the same arguments; and in terms of logic we never think that B and C can defeat A just because their side has more number. But this thing is always used in democracy! Looking from this, democracy could be irrational. And the government chosen from the majority vote possibly consists of the bad politicians who are supported by the bad majority.

The use of number as a criterion: “which one among many to be given the political power” could be reasonable only in the case that the majority of people are good and wise and the minority are ignorant and immoral. The present king of Thailand says that “it is not possible to make all the people of any country to be good—but that is not a problem if we have the political system in which only the good persons are allowed to take the political power.” The word of the king cannot be applied in the democratic community where the matter of number plays an important role as the criterion for taking the political power.

Those who believe in democracy usually argue that

even though democracy has the problems as said, this does not mean that we should not use it as the political theory. Democracy, for them, is the most *natural* in the sense that finally everything will disclose the truth that democracy is the political theory closest to human nature. They accept that we used to have the good kings in the history of humankind. But as this form of political theory—the absolute monarchy—does not follow human nature; finally this political theory is not selected by nature. The weakness of absolute monarchy lies in that it believes that the good parents will produce the good sons—which is not true according to biological law. Political legitimacy should not be hereditary. This can never be defended by reason. Democracy believes in human nature—that is: man is born to be good if he has been educated properly. In this sense, education is basically needed in democratic community. People should be given a political theory which they feel being based on self-rule. This feeling is naturally given. People do not need only happiness, but also need that such happiness should come from their freedom to choose. In this sense, political freedom is one among political values which are the ends in themselves and cannot be compensated by mere economic benefits given by the ruler.

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Sometimes democracy is viewed as a process of learning along with being a political theory. John Dewey's great book, *Democracy and Education*, could be cited as an example of this kind of understanding. For the philosophers who think that democracy could be seen as a process of learning, there are some moral elements in democracy that could be hardly found in other political philosophy. One example of these moral elements is—everyone shares the potential to be educated and free. The final aim of democracy is to educate people to be the free men; and it is being the free men only that can determine the future of the community.

Those who oppose democracy might say—education is one thing and political theory is another. Education is needed in every political theory. Sometimes to have the best educational system in the community, dictatorship is needed because some people do not need to be educated; and in such a case the people of this kind must be compelled to be educated and free finally. Religious community could be cited as an example of the free society which is free because of compellation. In the community of Buddhist monks, there is no freedom to act as the monks like; on the contrary, there is only the religious discipline to be followed without a

question. Muslim community seems to be a community which is based on this kind of belief as well. The things that oppose religious teaching such as gambling or alcoholic drink cannot be allowed in the Muslim country. The claim of personal freedom to have personal sin which does not harm other is meaningless in the Muslim community.

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*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) Between *freedom* and *happiness*—suppose we have to choose only one thing, which one is more preferable and why? The answer of this question is important because the difference between the political theories as regards the question “who deserves the position of ruler—some or all?” partly depends on how we choose freedom or happiness as the starting point of political belief.

(2) Sometimes democracy is criticized as a kind of dictatorship. They say that it is the dictatorship by the majority—you always win in everything if you are in the majority. Do you agree with this opinion?

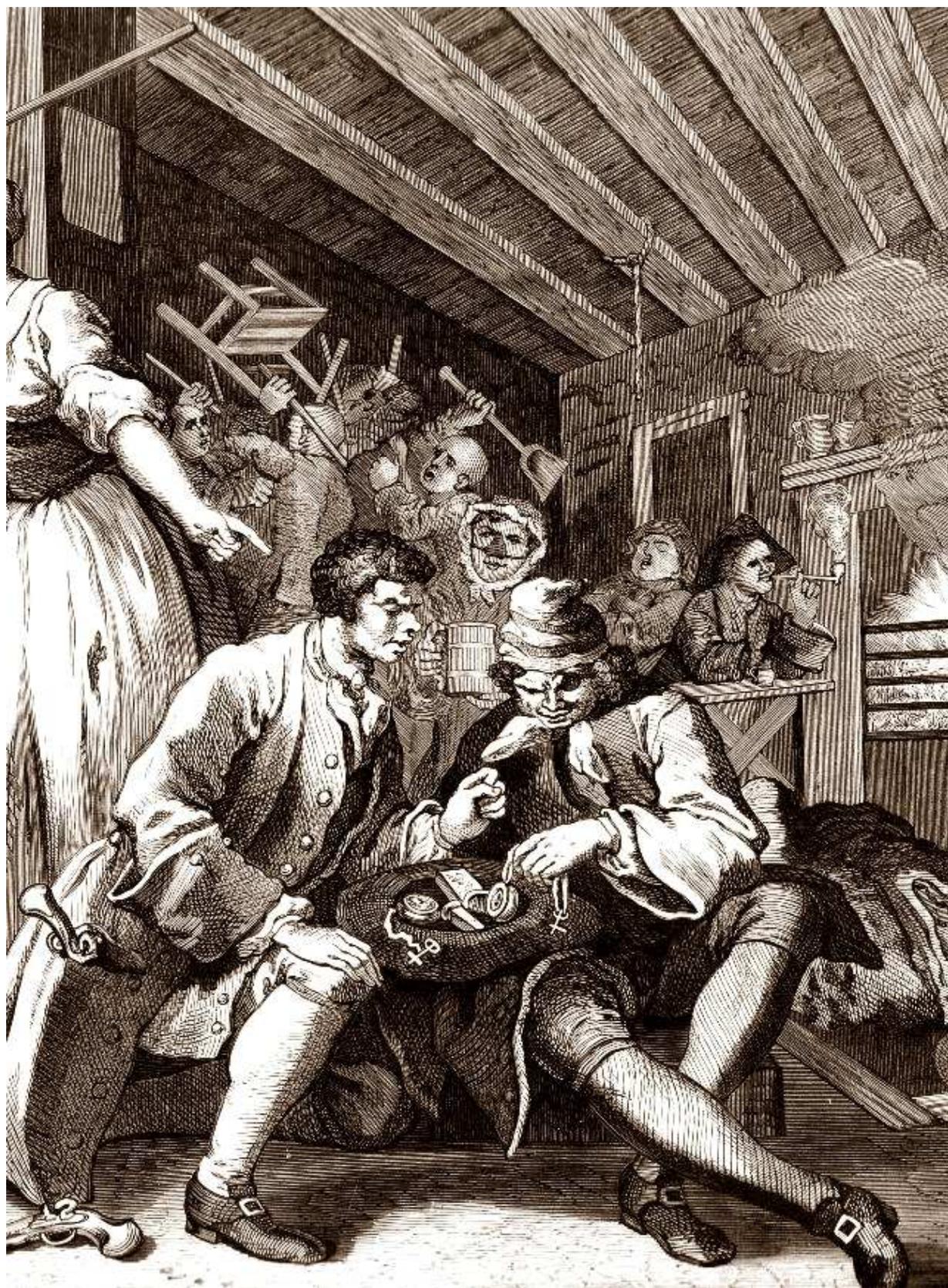
(3) In your opinion, what is wrong with absolute monarchy? Suppose you have the good and clever king in your country and he tries extremely to act for the benefit of people; he himself allows even freedom to criticize his actions and never uses his power as the king to harm anybody including those who do not love or respect him. Do you have any problem in accepting him?

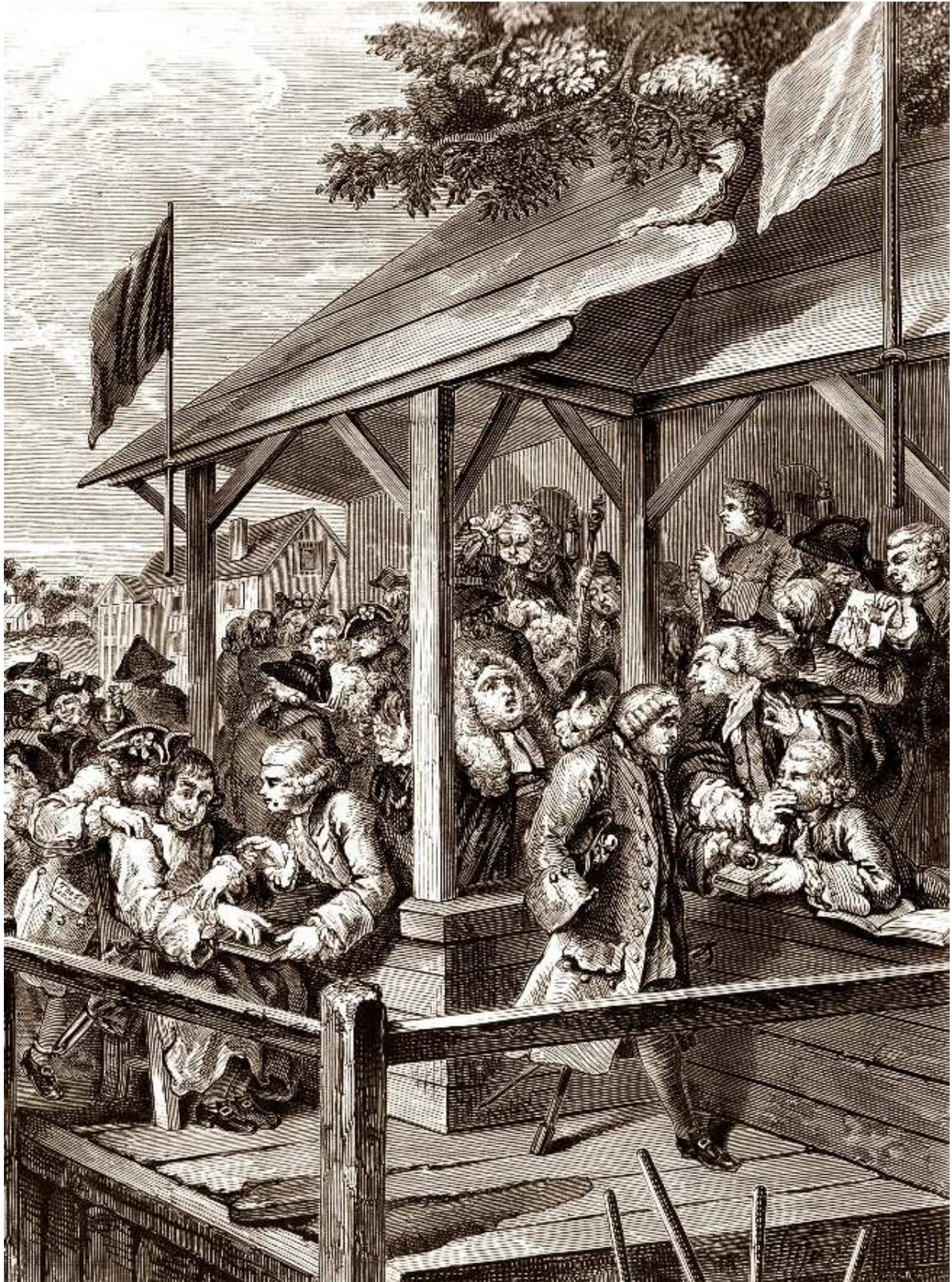
(4) What does political freedom mean? Do you think the American people have this thing as they have only two political parties to be chosen? In some devel-

oping countries like Thailand, political power is in the hands of a few rich families. Can we say that we have political freedom within this situation?

(5) What is the political right in democracy? Does it mean just the right to choose the name of the politician in the election card and drop into the election box? Someone says that this kind of right can be called the '*ten-second right*' in the meaning that every four or five years you are allowed to have the political right within ten seconds as said. After that everything will be in the hands of the politicians and you cannot do anything. If this is true—what is the value of political right?

(6) Some people are of opinion that what we really need is the good ruler; any form of politics can be equally accepted if the ruler is the good person. That is—if we have the good ruler in democratic system, the people will be happy; on the contrary, if we have the bad ruler, the people will not be happy—so being happy or not does not at all depend on the system rather than the person who uses the system. This can apply well to other political systems including the absolute monarchy or Communism. Do you agree with this?





# Chapter Seven

## What Justice Means?

### *Three Views on Justice*

#### *One: Universal Justice under Nature*

I am a Buddhist monk. And I believe that my religion, Buddhism—especially the primitive version of it, teaches that there is a kind of justice for every person irrespective of their differences. We call it the justice under the law of nature. According to Buddhism, there are five kinds of natural law namely the law of season, the law of seed, the law of mind, the law of action, and the law of morality. The first two laws concern the physical and biological worlds respectively and the justice to be found under these laws could be explained like this. We have the body and our body can be considered both in terms of physical and biological object. In terms of physical object, our body could be different. Some have strong body, some weak, some beautiful, and some ugly. For those who have the weak and

the ugly body, this can be seen as injustice—why I do not have the strong and beautiful body like other? Even though having the weak and ugly body can be related to the law of action, which is called in other name as the law of Karma—this still can be explained under the law of season alone. The law of season says that every physical object is related to other and no one can be seen as isolated object. And as part of the whole, everything has its own role and deserves the proper result from such a role. For example, two girls are born different—one has a beautiful body and other a not beautiful one. The first girl later becomes a movie star because she has the beautiful body. The second girl has her job as journalist. The first girl can make a lot of money from being movie star while the second girl just earns a normal salary from being a journalist. It could be possible that the second girl would question: is this fair? She works harder than the movie star but gets lesser money. According to the law of season, there is justice in the differences between the two girls. That is—the beautiful girl deserves being the movie star and so deserves a lot of money resulting from such her being; and the non-beautiful girl deserves her job and so deserves the salary as the journalist which is lesser than the first girl. Note that justice

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here means being explainable how and why the person deserves different position and what to happen from such difference. However, the Buddhist theory of justice as found in the law of season would be problematic if it does not say the following things. The movie-star girl takes a lot of money—this is a positive side of her being. However, as a movie star, she has very few chances to have a private life and that causes her pains—this is a negative side of her being. The Buddhist theory of justice says that there are always two sides of things: positive and negative. For the girl who is a journalist, the negative side of her life, compared with the movie-star girl, is that she takes lesser money. However, the girl can live a private life—there is no one to watch her when she goes to the beach or movies; and this is a positive side of her being. I myself am an Asian man. As Asian man, I have a smaller body compared with the Westerners. Asian people sometimes are negatively affected by the having of smaller body—for example we cannot play basketball well, compared with the Westerners. However, I myself have found that the having of smaller body sometimes has a positive side. When boarding a plane, my smaller body makes me more comfortable than my fellow Westerners. This can be considered as justice provided by na-

ture.

The law of seed in Buddhism says that under biological law people are naturally born different. It seems that this law has a closer relation to a thing called nowadays as economic justice than the law of season. We know that in terms of biology differences are natural. Some are born wise, some not wise, some with talent, some without talent. And this mainly causes economic differences among the people. Those who are born without talent could say, "Why we are born like this?" Like physical difference, this biological difference could be explained through the law of Karma. However, even under the law of seed alone, we can find the justice hidden behind. We shall take a serious example. Suppose a man is born with biological potential to become cancer in the future. One day, he has a kind of cancer. He questions, "Why this thing happens to me?" He could think that it is unjust for him to have cancer while others do not. Certainly, someone may say to him, "It is biological accident. And it also happens to other besides you even though they are in the minority compared with the majority." Still, the man can question further, "I accept it could be biological accident. But why it happens to me and not you?" It seems that for the man, he is given injus-

tice.

The law of seed says that there is biological link between the parents and their children. In this sense, we can explain to the man that his having cancer is something understandable because the potential to have cancer is hereditary and he is the man descending from the ancestors who carried this thing. However, the Buddhist theory of justice does not say only ‘how’ cancer happens to the man; it also says ‘why’ the man should see justice in having cancer. Firstly, the man is advised to consider that everyone must die some day. In this sense, what happens to him will lead to the death. As everyone has to die one day, what he is facing will be faced by other as well. And this is justice—men must die some day irrespective of their biological differences. Death in Buddhist perspective is a fact of life; and it is always used by Buddhism as a criterion of justice. It is the justice of having the same amount of time in life. Some men would be billionaire. They can buy many things except time in life.

The man could argue that cancer causes him the severe pains. He accepts the truth that some day he will die. But he wants to die peacefully. The law of seed in Buddhism suggests that human body has been designed by nature to bear some level of pain. Death will

occur if the pain goes beyond that level. In this sense, as far as the man has not died yet, this means that the pain occurring to him can be bearable. As everybody must die some day; this means that while dying the pains occurring to them have developed more and more, and then when the level of the pains has gone beyond the line set up by nature—they have died. In this sense, the man would see justice. It is the justice of having the same experience of pain before death.

The rich and the poor are subject to biological law's justice. First of all, as said above, we have the same lifetime—approximately 70 years. This is given to everybody irrespective of being rich or poor. We need food, water, clothing, and housing; and as far as the basic needs as said are found, there is no difference between the rich and the poor. Exactly, what eaten by the rich in one day is not different from what eaten by the poor in terms of amount. This means that even though you are the billionaire, you still eat like other. Your wealth may be meaningful in terms of the symbol indicating how much the wealth you have accumulated. But in terms of real use, it is meaningless.

The third law—the law of mind—says that every person has been given the *same* mind. Note that according to Buddhism men are born different in terms of body;

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but in terms of mind we are born equal. In this sense, we see that there is justice equally shared by humankind as a whole. Mind in Buddhist teaching is the potential to think rationally; and thinking rationally means thinking in such a way that suffering in life will be reduced more and more. Or we can say that thinking rationally in Buddhist perspective has nothing to do with intellect. On the contrary, a person who is less intellectual (for example, a farmer) could be considered to think rationally more than intellectual person (such as a philosopher) if he thinks in such a way that his life would be peaceful more than the intellectual person. Many philosophers of the world suffered a hard life. And their hard life is nothing but simply a lack of potential to find happiness in the world. In Buddhist teaching, a person who is able to see happiness even in very simple things like simple food, simple house, simple clothes, and so on—is lucky person. Many rich people cannot find happiness in their luxurious life. It seems that the first two laws and the third law function together in providing people with justice. That is—if the person is lucky in terms of physics and biology, he has inclination to be not lucky in terms of mind. The rich persons are those who are blessed with physical or biological talents such as bodily fineness or intellect.

To say that those who are lucky in the first two laws are inclined to be unlucky in the third law does not mean that there is logical link between them as said. It just means that those who are blessed with the physical or biological talents have the more chances to accumulate wealth; and being wealthy persons has the potential to corrupt their mind. The person whose mind is corrupted will lose an ability to see happiness in simple things or happiness resulting from a peaceful mind. Jesus says, “It is very hard to push the rich people into the heaven.” This does not mean that the rich person is stupid. On the contrary, they are wise otherwise they would not have collected such wealth. It is the wealth that corrupts their mind and makes them not able to enter the heaven.

The fourth law—the law of action or the law of Karma—sometimes is viewed as the most important law to show that there is the universal justice under nature. This law says that “man is what he has done.” As we have seen from above, men are born different under the law of season and the law of seed. But under the law of action, like the law of mind, men are born the same—they have the free will to choose and act; and what they have done will become the essence of their life. At the time that the Buddha was born in India, In-

dian society was dominated by the caste system. According to the caste system, God has created men into four classes; and among them some are higher and some lower. The Buddha had rejected this religious doctrine, stating that if a man will be higher or lower—that solely results from a very plain truth: he has done what?

The fifth law—the law of morality—states that there is a moral link between man and nature, and between man and man. For example, when man badly exploits natural resources such as the forest and the river—even though he may think he takes some benefit from that action, actually there is something he loses in doing that. It is a moral happiness which can be sensed only by inner feeling. Buddhism believes that as city life is based on the exploitation of natural resources more than the village life; as the result of this—city men have to have a life which is of lesser happiness in terms of inner feeling than the villagers. We can say that those who live in the land surrounded by the forests and the mountains will be protected by them more than those who live in the land where the forests and the mountains are destroyed. This is natural justice. In the case of the relation between man and man, the same is claimed by Buddhism. That is—some rich people may

think they cannot help exploiting their fellow human beings as it is the only way to collect wealth; and they think in doing so they have benefited. Actually, there is something they lose—it is a moral happiness as said. Buddhism believes that no one in the world would be happy from taking. On the contrary, happiness stems from giving or sharing only. The more you take from your fellow human beings the more you lose your inner feeling of peace. And this is natural justice—you cannot take material benefit and peaceful mind at the same time.

Exactly, I do not want to give the detail concerning the five laws of nature taught in Buddhism rather than the implication that can be drawn from the belief in these natural laws in terms of justice. What I want to say is—there are two kinds of justice: one is provided by nature and another by man. Buddhism believes that nature is primary entity while man is just secondary. By ‘primary entity’ we mean what stands permanently in the universe. Man and natural resources such as the ocean and the forest are secondary in the meaning that they are not permanent and originated from the primary. The primary can be of several kinds. The five laws of nature as said previously are included in the primary; and the universal justice as well.

The primary has perfect wisdom, even though it is not necessarily sentient. The working of natural justice is more perfect than what provided by man. However, to say that there is a kind of justice which works more perfectly than the one created by man does not mean that Buddhism rejects manmade justice. We just want to say that whenever you have felt that there is no hope in life because you have been treated unjustly by your fellow human beings or the state—be reminded that there is another kind of justice that you can utilize; and actually this kind of justice is the best. The following would be the reason why this kind of justice is the best in the view of Buddhism.

(1) Human life is short. So, the first question to be asked is—how to live this life as most happily as possible. There is no reason to live an unhappy life. Normally, unhappiness stems from conflict. Among many sides of human life, a political life is included. So, one among the conflicts to be faced by man is a political one. Buddhism supports an attempt to have political justice. But we should know that even though our attempt is successful—we have the society which is based on political justice and the rule of law; this does not mean that our life will not be faced with the conflict because any system set up by human beings always has

some loophole. Moreover, political justice does not guarantee happiness as far as people have felt they are born lower than other and this thing cannot be healed by having the just laws. There must be the poor and the rich on earth forever—because it is natural. So, the question is—how should the person, who is born lower than other, consider his/her life? Buddhism believes that this question can be answered by a thing called natural justice.

(2) In its essence, natural justice says a very simple thing—*you are the person to provide justice for yourself, and not other*. In this sense, the person can heal his/her pains stemming from a thought that he/she is born unlucky. According to a Buddhist belief in the universal justice, nature never gives someone more than other or gives someone less than other. However, to see what stated above is not easy. In a sense, to practice the Buddhist teaching includes an attempt to see justice among the differences of people. Note that natural justice is metaphysical concept, and not political as justice set up by man. To understand a metaphysical concept, we need another kind of wisdom besides the one used to understand political concept. In short, an understanding of natural justice requires a root in religion. As we know, Buddhism as religion stresses the inner nature of

life more than its outer aspect. What is the inner nature of life? As said previously, we have been equally given a life which lasts not more than 100 years. This is the starting point of universal justice—no one has the time in life more than other, meaning that it does not matter you are rich or poor, when your time is over you have to leave everything in life and go to the end alone.

(3) Happiness in life, according to Buddhism, basically depends on how a person thinks, rather than how much a person gets. Or we can say that there are two concepts playing important role in Buddhist ethics—*having* and *being*. As people are naturally born different, it is impossible for them to be equal in terms of the potential to accumulate wealth. Differences as said lead to different economic status. From this, we can say that in terms of having—people have to be different. However, this is not a problem as Buddhism considers that having is not essential part of human life because it comes and must go away from our life some day. Buddhist ethics says that we should seek things that will come along with our life forever. Being means what we have done to ourselves; and it is different from having. For example, you have one old car, given to you some years ago by your father. This car and your life are not

the same thing. So, the car can be said a kind of having. Some of your friends have the new and expensive cars. Sometimes you looked at your car and said to yourself, “Why I do not try to have a new one?” However, one day you said to yourself again, “The utility of the car is just for traveling; and the one I have serves well this purpose. I do not need another one.” Your thought as said has changed your life forever—the pain from having the old car has been solved. It can be said you *are* the new person—and this is an example of *being* taught in Buddhist ethics.

(4) The purpose of teaching ‘having’ and ‘being’ is to show that according to Buddhism it is natural for people to be born different (biology might support this claim of Buddhism), meaning that it is not natural to hope that all people are equal in terms of inner properties such as intellect and outer properties such as the possession of wealth; but there is one thing equally given to every person—the potential to think in such a way that happiness will occur in life. The latter thing is more important than the former one—that is, being is more important than having. As being can be cultivated in every person, this shows that nature treats people justly. Sometimes political justice has caused suffering to humankind as we have seen that the peo-

ple of the same nation even killed each other and said, “This cannot be avoided to have the just society.” In the political revolution seen in many parts of the world, a great number of people died in fighting. Buddhism understands this. But as life is short, the advice from Buddhism that “is it right to sacrifice the whole life to political justice alone” is something understandable. Some political activity is valuable—for example, fighting for the just society. But we should know that life consists of other dimensions besides this. In the case we see that political activity could harm our life because political stream is so violent, Buddhism advises us to get back to save our life which is of more value than anything even political freedom and justice. If we die, we will have nothing—both political and natural justice. But if we are still alive, at least we can have natural justice. The tyrant comes and goes away. But nature remains forever. Sometimes the best way to fight against the tyrant is—waiting. Waiting for what?—for natural justice. Every tyrant as human being must die some day—and this is the act of natural justice.

*Two: Liberalist Justice*

I consider justice as something to be achieved here and now. Justice to be attained after death is meaning-

less. Let us start with the most fundamental question—why we need justice? If we understand why we need this thing, we would see its value and see further why people of the past could die for it.

Man can be viewed as many things. Sometimes we are told by some philosopher that man is rational being; and by other philosopher we are informed that man is political being. I do not try to begin with any definition, but want to go straight to some of the facts concerning man which, in my view, makes man and animal different. Suppose you put a bird in the cage and feed it as your pet. The bird would be happy and does not have any problem with being kept in the cage. But you cannot do the same to man. In the prison, the man may be fed and allowed to have many things such as watching television, playing football, and reading books. There is only one thing not allowed—going outside. We have found that no one in the world preferring such a life even though sometimes they know that they are possibly hungry outside the prison. For me, this explicitly means that man is born as a free animal; and without freedom—we would feel very frustrated and then would try to do anything to be free including fighting to death.

Some religious persons say that political freedom is

just illusion. For them, it is illusion because no one in the world could have such a thing permanently. I accept that political freedom could be changed in the sense that even though it is true that today we are free, but this does not guarantee that we cannot be slaves tomorrow. Moreover, I think it is wrong to claim that if you are religious person you have nothing to do with political freedom. Mahatma Gandhi struggled against the British Empire for what if not the political freedom for the Indian people. We know that Gandhi is deeply religious. On the round table discussion about the possibility to free India, he was informed by some of the British high officials that India might be safe under the British rule. Note that what said by the British officials is like a saying to the bird, “You will be safe in my cage.” It might be true that India is safer under the British rule—Gandhi accepted this truth. However, he said to them finally, “Thank you; but let the Indian people have a freedom to choose their destiny themselves.”

If we accept the truth that man is a free animal—what follows is that freedom must be placed as the highest value in political society. As Isaiah Berlin points out, freedom means two things: First, it means a state in which the person is not blocked. Berlin calls it

*negative* freedom—freedom from something. Second, it means a state in which the person can do something as he needs. Berlin calls it *positive* freedom—freedom to do something. In the view of Berlin, freedom must consist of both positive and negative aspects. However, it should not be understood that freedom is absolute concept in the meaning that it can never be affected by anything. Such being absolute is not possible—because every person has both positive and negative freedom and the positive one of Mr. A may be the obstacle of the negative one of Mr. B. So, there must be some rule to make freedom of everyone equally possible. For example, Mr. A says that it is his (positive) freedom to smoke. And Mr. B says it is his (negative) freedom not to be disturbed by A's smoking. Our society must have the rule to tackle the conflict between two freedoms.

I used to hear a Buddhist monk saying that political freedom is exactly not freedom. He argued that the person who demands freedom is under the influence of his desire; and looking from this, he is not free. This kind of argument, in my view, is very stupid. Man and his desire is one thing. You cannot separate between them. An American philosopher, Ayn Rand, argues that egoism is the essence of man—meaning that without it the person should not be called a man. I accept

that the way of political thought sometimes is not compatible with the religious way of thought. For example, I cannot accept the saying of Jesus, “When someone slaps your one cheek, turn another one to him.” This is not right. Those who slap other do not have the right to do so; giving another cheek is nothing but to support the doing of evil twice. The proper way to tackle the situation is saying, “You do not have the right to slap me,” and then calling the police to protect our freedom.

There are a number of concepts associated with freedom. They are, for instance, right and equality. The most basic right of the person is the right to his life. This means that the person is the sole owner of his life—no one in the world can be the owner of other. In this sense, slavery is wrong in itself because it violates the right to life of other. Note that this kind of right, as being the most basic in the meaning that it cannot be reduced down into other below, cannot be transferred to other. Mr. A consents to be the slave of Mr. B—this is not possible because the right to life of Mr. A cannot be transferred as said. John Locke, a famous liberalist thinker, says that as a person is the owner of his body, when he uses his body to create something—such a thing is morally his. And this is the origin of the

right to personal properties which stems from the right to life.

The Marxist thinkers usually argue against the ownership of private properties. For them, this is the origin of political evils. In his great book, *Capital*, Marx shows that there are some people in our society who do not work but are rich because they have a lot of money and use their money to exploit the workers. For example, the worker is paid 10 dollars for making a chair. Suppose the material used in making the chair costs 5 dollars. The owner of money sells this chair 30 dollars. This means that he can take 15 dollars without doing a job. Marx points out that there are two classes of people in modern society. The first is the person who has a lot of money; and the second is the person who does not have a lot of money. The person of first class uses his money to set up the factory or business; and pays the person of second class as the worker. Normally, the person of first class tries to pay the person of second class as little as possible. And this is the reason why the person of the first class becomes richer and richer.

Private properties are the evils in the meaning that when they are collected much in one person, they will give him the power—the power to use other people working for you and make a lot of profits from that. In

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my view, before we judge anything evil we should question, “Is this thing moral?” Certainly, ownership of private properties is moral as far as the person deserves it. People are born different—this is natural. Those who are born with talents such as intelligence are inclined to collect wealth more than those who are born without talents. The duty of the state is not to make people the same—this is not natural and thus not possible. There must be the rich and the poor and the middleclass in our society—because this is natural. I myself am not the rich person. Actually, my parents are the farmer living in a small village. But fortunately I am born with some talent—intellect. This makes me win a scholarship and get Ph.D. in economics. Now, I am a professor in the university. I believe that my son might have a better life than me, compared with when I was his age, in terms of chance as his father is not a poor person like mine. Liberal society, in my view, is not the place where people are forced to be the same; but the place where you have freedom to choose. Someone may argue, “Freedom is the concept that has the meaning if you are not the poor.” For them, a poor child from a poor family may have a dream. It could be possible that he is a wise boy. But amidst such a condition, we can doubt—can the boy be free to choose what

he needs because *freedom costs some amount of money* and he does not have it!

John Rawls says in his great book, *A Theory of Justice*, that (1) justice means fairness; and (2) fairness for every person in the society consists of two principles as follows. First, everybody has the right to private properties. Any political system which does not respect this right is not fair. Second, in general the state must treat every person equally; however, in the case that the state sees that there is some reason to treat people differently—such doing can be done if the poor people will benefit. The first principle is not problematic as it is a core concept of liberalism. We have only the problem with second principle which says that the state can treat people not the same if such doing will benefit poor people. Note that—according to Rawls, sometimes to be the fair state the government has to treat people differently. Poor people are special persons in our community. As special persons, our political rules can be adjusted to meet their needs. Rawls argues that every person in the society cannot know what will happen to him and his family in the future. Some day the rich person could be the poor. And the poor could be the rich as well. Having poor people in our community is not a problem in itself—if we have a reasonable sys-

tem to tackle it. What presented in Rawls' theory of justice can be compared to the safety net to catch people falling from a height. All of us are like people who play on the height. There is no reason to reject the safety net. In a sense, having the safety net for all can be seen as justice or fairness. It is fair in the sense that— whoever falls down will be protected.

Long time ago, liberalism has been viewed by some people as a political theory that adopts the rule “the fittest only will survive.” This kind of liberalism is vulgar and irrational. Liberalism is not necessarily associated with individualism. I used to hear some liberalist thinkers, for example—Ayn Rand, saying that what we need in liberalist society is not ‘love’ from other but ‘respect’ for our rights. I am not sure this kind of liberalism conveys the real spirit of liberalism or not. Certainly, in liberalist community, we must respect the rights of each other—especially the right to private properties. But this does not mean that our society should be the place where the houses of people are located inside the walls and no one allowing other enter the door or opening the window to see how other live.

Another concept, equality, means sharing equal rights and freedom as man and not other's slave. In this sense, equality does not mean sameness in terms of

physical and biological aspects, or even economical. To make it clearer, we can say that equality when transformed to be concrete or practical would mean having equal opportunity to access public good. I believe that the concept of equality belongs to the same family as the concept of right, freedom, and justice. So, in the case that the poor people would be benefited we can limit some public good to be accessible for the poor first. Scholarship provided by the state can be cited as an example of this. Normally, the poor people are the first persons to be given scholarship. The rich people cannot argue against this as inequality. Why they cannot?—because equality means having the same or nearly same opportunity. Without the help of society, the poor cannot have this thing while the rich can even without the help of anybody.

### *Three: Marxist Justice*

Political ideas can never be separated from history. So, before I will go into the detail of Marxist idea of justice, it may be well to start with history. I believe in Thomas Hobbes who says, “There are four faculties in human life—*bodily strength, experience, reason, and passion.*” Some men are born with these faculties which are strong; while some not strong—and this makes men

different in the possession of wealth and power. In the history of humankind, they—I mean the Christian—said that God has created this world to be shared by His sons who are all men on the earth. But there were a few sons of God who possessed wealth and power more than other. These a few sons of God were the kings and the priests! Note that these people are closest to religion. We can say that their wealth and power comes from religion. In this sense, we have the reason to take religion as something possibly being the origin of inequality of humankind.

The very primitive political theory stemming from religious teaching is the *divine right theory*. According to this belief, God has created the world; in this sense God can be said the owner of the world—and as the owner God has the fullest rights to do with the world as He feels pleased. They said that God gives the right to rule the land to the king. As the right of the owner is transferred from God to the king, the king counts automatically the lord of the land. In India, they have the four classes of people created by God and one among them is the king. Note that in Indian language the king is called ‘*kshatriya*’—a Sanskrit word literally meaning the lord of the land. The essence of the divine right theory, in my view, lies in that it states that the

earth is personal property of some people only. Even though it seems that the whole land of the world might be common property to be equally shared by all men as God has created it for His sons, actually God does give it to some chosen people only—the kings. For me, this is so absurd and so sad. But it had really happened in the history of mankind.

We the Marxist do not believe in God and His creation of the world. Rather, we believe that the world was created naturally—maybe by the Big Bang. As natural object, every person residing on the earth has the moral right to be the co-owner of it. Or we can say that no one on earth can say that the world belongs to him. Suppose the word ‘owner’ can be used in this case, what we can say rationally is—everyone is the owner of the land, meaning that the whole world should be equally shared by all men. However, what really happened in the history of humankind does not accord with such plain truth. There are a few people to which natural resources in the world such as land have belonged. In our view, this is injustice. It is injustice because natural resources should be equally accessible to every person, but it is not so.

In a sense, what given in Marxist theory of justice is very simple—just back to fundamental truths. What to

be done first to achieve justice is to abolish the right to private property. This does not mean that we do not respect the moral rights of people. Some critics of Marxism state that the abolition of private properties proposed by Marxism is nothing but the violation of natural and moral rights of people. They even say that man has the right to his body—so, when he uses his body creating something such a thing must belong to him as his property and other has to respect his right to such private property. We accept the claim that man has the right to his body and so has the right to what created using his body. But this has nothing to do with natural resources like the land. Imagine that a man has planted a mango tree on the land. The tree belongs to him as his private property—this truth is fully accepted in Marxism. But the problem is—how to consider the land? Certainly, no one in the world creating natural resources—they are natural. In this sense, the claim of rights over these things is not reasonable because those who claim so are not the creators of them.

Note that ‘private properties’ to be abolished according to the Marxist theory of justice covers those being created naturally as natural resources only. In every country, more than 50% of the land belongs to a few rich people—around 5% of total population. As

Marx points out in *Capital*, those who are the owners of natural resources are inclined to be richer and richer—and this means that those who do not possess natural resources are inclined to be poorer and poorer. I do not believe that actually liberalism aims to protect freedom of humankind as the liberalist philosophers try to explain. The poor farmers in the far villages who do not have their own lands might be given a political freedom to vote for the politician of the political party that they like. But this kind of freedom is very meaningless because their life never changes from such a political freedom. Actually, the most important thing in human life according to Marxist philosophy is economic life. The claim of any freedom would be meaningless as far as the people are poor.

There could be several versions of justice. And this depends on we start from what as the most basic value in life. I understand that political freedom is counted as the most important value in human life. I accept that in some circumstance political freedom is far valuable. However, as far as economic life is concerned—it seems that political freedom is of not much significance. The slave who has been well looked after by the master could be cited as an example of a happy life without political freedom. But note that the happy slave is

happy for what reason? I think he is happy for the economic reason. And we see in this case political freedom plays very little role in the life of the slave. Rather, in Marxist philosophy, we stress *distributive* justice. According to this kind of justice, every person is required to do the assigned job that he/she can do best; and earns a living as he/she really needs. Certainly, as people are born different by nature; the best jobs for two or more people could be different. Some needs to be university professor; some bus driver; and some farmer. The country needs a variety of works. In a sense, the country in Marxist viewpoint can be compared to a family. The government is the father; and people are members of the family. All are required to work for the family—the best that each can do. Marxism is always criticized as lacking a concern for political freedom. In China, they cannot have political ideologies other than Marxism; they cannot have political parties other than the Communist Party as well. This is the limitation of political freedom. However, such limitation is necessary for obtaining the other thing which is of more significance—the just contribution of wealth.

The weakness in liberalism lies in that it does not solve the problem at its root cause. The Buddha says

that the best way to solve the problem is to eliminate its cause. We think that between poverty and political freedom the former is of more importance. Or we can say that political freedom is not the end in itself, but the means to good economic life. So, what we should question is, “What is the root cause of the poverty of people in the land?” The answer for the question is very clear—it is the right to private property that mainly causes poverty in the land as it gives a large amount of natural resources into the hands of a few persons whose history of family dates back to a small privileged group hundreds or thousands of years ago. The most direct and relevant way to solve the poverty of the majority in the country is to eliminate the ownership of natural resources as private properties of the individuals.

One among many objections to the Marxist theory of justice states that it may sound good, but may be hardly practical. Some of those who argue against the Marxist theory of justice could cite what happens in the communist countries like Russia and China as the example of the failure of Marxism in terms of practice. In these countries, the people of high competence are not inclined to work hard as they think that those who are not competent receive the same rewards from the

state as they receive. To make this kind of people work hard, the state has to allow more reward and the right to collect private property. The essence of the argument lies in that the Marxist theory of justice does not encourage people of high competence to work hard for the country; and the only way to solve this problem is to allow ownership of private properties, which is a coming back to what it strongly rejects at the outset.

It seems that the entire problem stems from a very basic nature of man: selfishness or self-interest. I accept that liberalism has its strength in that it is very compatible with man's selfishness—you do more you have more. Essentially, the Marxist theory of justice says the opposed thing. It says that you do your best and have what you really need. Sometimes you may have done 100 and what you really need is just 20. According to Marxism, the reason why you should do 100 is: to give 80 for those who are less competent in your country. In this sense, the effectiveness of the Marxist theory of justice much depends on the moral sense of individuals in the community. In Buddhist monasteries, no right to private property is allowed. Each monk is required to do his best for the community and gets what he really needs. It should be noted that the community of monks, especially at the time of the Buddha,

is very successful in doing work and sharing what happens from work. In Thailand, a group of Buddhists named the *Santi Asoka* can be cited as an example of a living community that follows the Buddhist way of working and sharing as said. I fully believe that Marxism and Buddhism share the similar view concerning justice or just community—and, in addition, both believe that the idea of just society can stem from the good people only.

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*Comment and Suggestion*

Any idea happening in the mind of man must have some cause. We call these causes psychological conditions. The idea of justice plays an important role in the history of human thought. As what man thinks of consists of either fact or value, the idea of justice should be understood as a kind of value. Fact and objectivity are compatible; while value and subjectivity seem to come with each other. As the idea of justice is based on the subjectivity of the thinker, this results in the difference of thought. To judge among the different ideas which one is most reasonable cannot be given in terms of formula. It does not differ from the judgment of the songs, paintings, movies, and so on. Maybe the inner feeling is the best tool. However, as philosophers never claim something without giving the arguments; the ideas of justice presented by philosophers are usually based on some reasons and these reasons are useful as the tool for judging such an idea of justice. In general, man is born with inner feeling which will tell us if such an explanation for anything is reasonable. It could be possible that Mr. A who basically adopts the liberalist idea of justice can accept that the explanation of justice made by Mr. B who is Marxist is reasonable

in the meaning that suppose he himself is put under the circumstance where the Marxist idea of justice is applied he would not struggle against it—even though he does not agree with it. In this sense, all ideas of justice could be the same in terms of practice. If something to be called justice, it must have the quality to make people feel that it is fair to be put under such a situation. On the contrary, as far as people remain unsatisfied with the rule of the community; this could be inferred as a sign of injustice.

Looking from religious perspective, the concept of justice can be considered as ‘ego-based’ concept, meaning that selfishness or self-interest plays the significant role in it. Some religion such as Buddhism, which stresses being free from the influence of egoism, is usually of the view that we should not devote the whole of life for political justice—which is outer thing of life and not life itself. What we should devote our life for is life itself or something more valuable than life—if there is such a thing. In the view of religion, if the community has all the members who are good; we do not need any idea of justice. This can be compared with: if there is no crime at all, the law is not necessary. However, the if-sentence is largely not real in the real world; and this is the reason why we must have the law

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or the theory concerning justice. All of the social tools like the law are designed primarily for the purpose of preventing the bad people from harming the good people. It is true as religion usually says that the mind is the source of human action. If people have the good mind, their action will be good as well. Our society should have the ideal to have all members of community who are good. However, meanwhile we have some necessity to set up the rule for living together in such a way that the good persons will be protected from the harm done by the bad persons.

It seems that there is a kind of injustice which religion might not know. This kind of injustice does not stem from the selfishness or the bad mind of people. That is, this kind of injustice could be possible even though all the members of community are good persons. We are talking about a thing called *structural* injustice. The story written by Leo Tolstoy, *Master and Man*, could be taken as an example of this thing. The story tells us about two persons—one is the master and another is the servant. The relationship between them is friendly—the master loves and treats his servant well; and the servant also loves and respects his master and seemingly can do anything for him. The highlight of the story lies in that one day on the journey through

the heavy snow, the master and the servant are stuck on the road and waiting to die. At the critical time, the master tries to protect his servant by throwing his body on the slave's lying body to make him warm and alive. The attempt of the master results in his death while the servant is alive when they are brought out of the heavy snow. This story, in a sense, is very romantic. And in the view of religion, the story may suggest the universal love between men irrespective of the social position. It is true that this kind of universal love could be seen among people of different social position—sometimes in the history of humankind the kings of the countries devoted their lives to protect their people. But this has nothing related to a thing called structural injustice. By 'structural injustice' we mean injustice caused by the unjust structure of society. At the time of Plato, slavery was accepted as a normal phenomenon. Plato himself had given a theory of justice, as found in his book the *Republic*. His theory of justice does not raise the slavery as a moral subject because in his view this is not a moral problem. We can say that even though Plato could be successful in presenting a theory of justice, his theory is valid as far as slavery is not concerned. In terms of structural injustice, slavery cannot be morally accepted. And this

means that looking from the view point of structural injustice—Plato’s theory of justice is totally meaningless.

The suggestion about structural injustice mainly comes from Marxism. The capitalist structure of society, in the view of Marx, is deeply unjust as it allows the greatest sin—the ownership of private property. Religion in the world is inclined to accept the right to private property for some reasons. In Buddhism, even though the Buddha teaches that there is nothing can be claimed as our ‘self’ or our ‘property,’ this assertion is known being made under metaphysical discourse. In terms of social philosophy Buddhism accepts the right to private property as far as it is gained righteously. Stealing other’s property is an evil taught in Buddhism. It is clear that this teaching is based on the acceptance of the ownership of private property—otherwise the claim that ‘stealing other’s property is an evil’ would be groundless. Marx has criticized religion as a false ideology. He accepts that religion tries to make mankind happy. But the kind of happiness provided by religion is a feeling of peacefulness caused by a dream or illusion. There is no God to save man. It is man only to save himself. And the only way to save humankind is to have the just society. Note that the difference between

Marxism and religion like Buddhism as regards the idea of justice lies in that while Buddhism teaches people to avoid the sins such as stealing, Marxism is of the view that there is far greater sin than such stealing which is the great stealing done by those who have possessed natural resources such as the land. The landowner, who lends his lands to the poor farmers, has been stealing. The society which allows such great stealing is immoral. And this is why Marxism tries to eliminate the ownership of natural resources as private properties. The reason is—to prevent society from being immoral. We can say that religion is interested in individual evils, but Marxism social evils.

Religious idea of justice, in a sense, is rather more universal than the one given by political thinkers. Physics is universal because it claims the truth to be found anywhere in the universe. Likewise, religious idea of justice is universal as it can be seen anywhere and anytime. And to see this kind of justice, a person does not need anything but wisdom. As wisdom has been given inside a person's life already, he does not need to fight against anything or anyone to have it. In a sense, political thinkers seem to agree that the religious way is something that is hard to reject. Sun Wu, a great Chinese political thinker, says in his the *Arts of*

*War* that war should be the last thing to do and the best victory is the one gained without fighting. The Buddha says the best warrior in the world is the one who defeats desire in his mind, and not the one who defeats the whole world. Religious justice as universal truth is something cannot be denied. Those who own properties far more than other will die some day—they cannot own forever. After death, what used to be their private properties will be transferred to other and this will be so over and over from generation to generation. From religious point of view, ownership is just illusion, occurring temporarily like a dream. We do not have any necessity to fight for illusion.

Liberalism is a political philosophy which tries to set up the minimum rules for living together in society. There is one basic question has been asked for a long time—a person should be deemed as what between a property of the state and an owner of it. By ‘a property of the state’ it is meant the state has the right to determine the life of people not differently from the gardener determining the trees in the garden. By ‘an owner of the state’ we mean the reverse. Consider people walking in the park. The park, as a public property, can be compared to the state. According to this understanding, the existence of public properties is

solely based on an agreement between the people. John Locke says that in the beginning there was no state. There were only people. The state in which people just lived together without law is called by Locke as the state of nature. People within such a state felt that there was no security of life and properties. To eliminate this feeling, they decided to join together under the rule which stated that what could be done and what could not. And this is the origin of the state. Note that according to Locke's theory, the state is secondary entity while the people who joined together under the rule as said are primary entity. In this sense, people can be compared to those who walk in the park while the state the park. The state is not the owner of people; on the contrary, people are the owner of the state.

When we walk in the park, we need to be as free as possible. Sometimes we need to sit alone under the tree and think. Sometimes we need to lie on the green grasses and watch the white clouds on the blue sky. We do not need to be ordered by the park keeper to do things that he wants us to do. For this purpose, when people have decided to set up the political society, they said to each other, "We agree to accept personal freedom as the most important value in the person's life. The rest are secondary and have to follow personal

freedom which is the primary political concept.”

The stress of personal freedom in liberalism is something understandable if we accept the above imaginary tale. That is—if it is true that people have joined together and agreed to set up the political community under the rule of law, and it is true that people who have joined as said are all intelligent and possess similar competences; the stress of personal freedom as the primary political concept is right. Unfortunately, we do not have any historical evidences to support such a dream. In short, there was no contract between the people as said. The origin of the state has been run by the force of nature. It begins from a family, a clan, and any kind of group in which the strongest men are naturally selected by nature to be the masters or the rulers. The relationship between the ruler and the ruled is fear, rather than agreement as peers. The past history of humankind seems to be best explainable through Darwin’s theory of the struggle for survival of humankind as a whole in which the fittest only has been selected. The concept of struggle rather suggests the use of power than the use of agreement. However, political and social philosophy as a kind of normative thought can be totally free from the facts. That is—even though it is true that in the history of

humankind we never utilized the way of agreement, this does not mean that at the present we should not utilize it. The history of new-created countries like the US might be seen to follow the liberalist theory of justice. They set up their country by an agreement named constitution in which personal freedom is given as the highest value in a person's life which cannot be violated by the state. Even the older country could be seen to have the periods of history that can be separated according to philosophical backgrounds playing the roles behind. For example, Thailand in the past had been ruled by the absolute monarchs. But now we rule our country by democracy. The fact that in the past our country used to be ruled by absolute monarchy does not imply that we cannot have other form of political pattern. In this sense, the liberalist idea of justice which is based on the theory of social contract is valid when it is applied to the modern stage of Thai politics.

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*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) Justice is a kind of value, meaning that people can have different opinions about “what should be called justice.” Some philosophers are of the view that among different ideas concerning justice, we cannot say some one is truer or truest because there is no truth inside the empire of values. For them, any value must be based on some personal prejudice. So, the idea of justice is *subjective*; and anything being subjective means you cannot prove its truth in terms of *objectivity*. Do you agree with this claim?

(2) Some religions such as Buddhism analyze that justice stemming from the human mind. In a sense, a demand of justice could be considered as a kind of demanding mind which in the view of Buddhism may cause suffering in our life. Ultimately, Buddhism believes that no one in the world can take justice away from your life. What they can do to you is just taking your properties or even your body; but they can never take your mind. In the view of political philosophers, when the tyrant state violates your rights and freedom, this can be said they are giving you injustice. Buddhism accepts such a claim and accepts further that it is your duty as the person to struggle against that violation.

However, as your life does not consist of political dimension only, the struggle against the tyrant state should be done in such a way that your whole life must not be totally affected by it. The advice from the Buddha is that during the time that your struggle has not yet completed, you should know that there are other things besides this to be done in life. The injustice given to you by the state is just physically. Your mind can be completely free from it—meaning that during the time of struggling you can have happiness resulting from other dimensions of life. And suppose finally your struggle against the tyrant state is failed; know that there is another kind of justice that the state cannot take it away from you. It is the justice to live a life as you wish in this world; and inside your personal world you can create anything beautiful—this totally up to you alone. What do you think about this opinion of Buddhism?

(3) A man has two sons. One day he brings them two shirts—one is bigger and another smaller. The big one is for the elder son and the small one for the younger son. The younger son asks why he gets the small one. The man says, “Because it fits you.” The son says, “I understand that; but I afraid that my brother’s shirt might be more expensive than mine because it is big-

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ger. Is that true?” The man replies, “Yes, son—but what’s your problem?” His son says, “My problem is: I think I have been treated unjustly by you. How much is my brother’s shirt more expensive than mine?” “Two dollars,” the father replies. And then his son says again, “To be fair on me, you should give me additional two dollars.” Do you agree with the younger son of the man and why?



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# Chapter *Eight*

## Crime and Punishment

### *Objectives of Punishment*

#### *A Judge's Diary: We Punish to Retain Justice*

##### I

Today, I have sent a man to death. I think he deserves it; and I do not feel any guilty doing so. I used to hear some Buddhist monks saying on the television program that Buddhism strongly rejects any kind of killing including killing under the command of law. As well, I used to hear some social activists saying that they strongly oppose capital punishment. These people, even though oppose death sentence on different grounds, share the same idea that human life has some value which makes it wrong to kill the person including the very bad person. According to these people, the person is the end in itself, meaning that no one in the world can use him as the means to any goal. Death sentence is believed by those who support it as a means

leading to social stability. That is, to make our society stable we need to kill somebody whose life has been proven extremely harming other person in the community. The man whom I have sent to death today has been proven to kill a number of people intentionally and cruelly. As the judge, I have to follow the law. When the law states that the person who kills other intentionally and cruelly must be sent to death—there is nothing left to me to do other than sending him to death. However, even though I am not a lawmaker especially the one concerning capital punishment; I agree that our society needs it. I have served as the judge for over thirty years; and I fully know that if we do not have death sentence to be used with some kind of people in the community, we will never explain one thing—what justice is?

Those who oppose death sentence usually say that this thing is useless because it has nothing to do with educating the criminal. Sometimes some of them argue that suppose Mr. A kills Mr. B and our law kills Mr. A and says that this is justice. For them, this saying is nonsense and useless. It is nonsense because justice is meaningful for those who are alive only. Mr. B is dead, meaning that his existence to receive justice no longer remains in this world—so, justice for him is meaning-

less. It is useless in the meaning that before we kill Mr. A there is one person killed—Mr. B; as soon as we have killed Mr. A, what happening is there is one another person killed and now we have two persons killed. This is uselessness.

I understand that the philosophy playing the role behind the above view is the one called utilitarianism which states that what the state must do is the one that promotes people utility. Death sentence is viewed by some people in our community as useless because it does not produce any utility. So, it should be abolished. We know that utilitarianism has the weakness in that it does not consider any value, for example justice, to be included in the criteria of good actions. It just considers if such an action promotes utility. In the view of some criminologists, in the case that the criminal is useful person, for example he/she is medical doctor—we have no reason to send him/her to death even though they have committed a serious crime.

I would like to call the above saying as the heartless opinion. Imagine that your father is killed by someone and other people say to you that unfortunately your father is killed by the very useful man and we do not need him to die—how do you feel? It could be true that the man is very useful for people in the community in-

cluding you. But this has nothing to do with ‘how to punish the man.’ My point is—any criterion which is based on empirical facts cannot be used as the ground of punishment because it has the potential to *cause conflicts* and it *loses certainty*. Let me explain this more a little bit as follows. In terms of utility, we can debate if death sentence is useful. For some people, the answer may be no; while for some other people, the answer could be yes. Imagine the following case. A medical doctor has committed a serious crime—he has killed his wife intentionally and cruelly. There could be some people who are of the opinion that suppose we put him to death—this will result in nothingness in terms of social benefits. If he is still alive, his life would be useful for others. That is the society could benefit from his ability as medical doctor. If we accept that goodness of the action is determined by utility, we should not put him to death. In short, in the view of these people letting the doctor alive is more useful for the society than sending him to death. However, there could be other people who doubt that letting the criminal alive as said could harm the society in the long run. First, this could raise a *theoretical* question, “Does this mean that the bad person who commits a serious crime could be punished less (compared with the crime) if he/she possesses

some useful experience or knowledge? If so, how to explain the punishment given to those whose lives are considered not useful?” Even in terms of *practice*, suppose we do not send the doctor to death—why we think this would be more useful? Maybe sending him to death could produce utility more than what to be found in the case he is not put to death. It could be possible that when the doctor is punished to death, the society would understand that the law does not treat well-educated people differently from low-educated people; and this is justice. This would lead to the widespread respect of law, meaning that in the community where people respect law crimes might be lesser than the community where people do not feel like that concerning law. In short, in the view of these people, sending the criminal who commits a serious crime to death will play the preventive role to reduce crimes. Or, we can say that the reason why we punish the doctor to death is to give a moral lesson to the community. And this could be more beneficial than not sending him to death.

Punishment is an action performed by the state. As the state’s action, it must have one important property, like other state’s actions—that is, it must be performed justly. The concept of justice relates to three things.

The first is the state; second a member of society; and third another member of society. Actually, justice is something stemming from the conflict between the members of society and such a conflict has to be solved by the state. In this sense, the state has the duty to consider when there is a conflict between people in the community, how all of them will be given justice as much as possible. In a crime, there are two sides of people—one is the harmed and another is the one who harms other. In my conviction, the balance between the crime and the punishment is the starting point of justice. Without it, we cannot say anything about justice.

Suppose a man kills his fellow man. How to punish him? My answer is—what to be done by the state to provide both of them justice is to weigh how much he has committed the crime and provide him with punishment that fits such a crime. And this can be done basically in terms of quantity. The victim of the crime has given death. So, we would initially see that the death seemingly most fits the crime. However, the details such as how he kills—intentionally or not; cruelly or not—would significantly affect the amount of the punishment. Suppose he kills unintentionally. We have the reason to argue that the man should not be put to

death. The reason is: the person should not be given greatest punishment for his unintentional bad action because in committing such a crime we cannot say he is the bad man. On the contrary, if he kills intentionally and cruelly; we have the reason to put him to death—because in committing such a crime we can say that he is the bad person. Justice in my view should be equally given to both the victim of crime and the criminal.

Modern people, I mean some of them, are of the view that punishment should be done as a kind of education. For them, punishment should not be related to the revenge even though in the past people were punished as if they were given the revenge. In ancient law of humankind, we used to have the law which allowed an eye for an eye. I think this kind of law, even though can be considered as being based on the concept of justice, can hardly be accepted these days—not because it is unjust but because of its cruelty. In terms of justice, I personally accept that such law has nothing wrong. However, as we have seen, justice must come along with not cruelty. In terms of education, I fully agree with those who say above things. The criminals are our fellow human beings; and we should have the positive view about their committing of crimes. I mean we should not view them as the bad persons rather than

those committing something which undesirable in the community as it harms other. If we look at them like this, we have the reason to think that when they are punished, there must be something useful for them in terms of educating.

However, the state must not be overly optimistic about human nature. In my view, there are some people in our community who are actually bad. Certainly, I do not believe that man is put to be good or bad eternally. This means that I consider man to have a dynamic life; and the person can do bad or good things throughout his lifetime—those who do the bad things this day can do the good things some day in the future; or those who do the good things this day are able to do the bad things some day in the future. In this sense, when I talk about those who, in my view, are actually bad—I just mean that there are some grounds to say that they have committed the bad things from their inner nature; and that is enough to hold them responsible for that bad action.

Some criminologists are of the view that man is naturally born good; or morally innocent—to say lower than that. For them the criminal is not a bad person. He just has committed a crime as the result of outer conditions. I do not agree with this claim. However, I

do not use the time arguing it. I will take it for granted that it is possible that man is born 'good' and it is outer condition that makes man commit a crime. My point is—following the above claim, all people in the world are born 'good;' the question is why some people do not commit the crime even though they are raised in the bad conditions? What I need to say here is that the debate about the nature of human beings can be done endlessly. But our society needs to punish the persons who harm other. You can say, as you believe, that men are created with the good nature. And you can say further that those who commit the crimes are not bad in their nature. As far as there is a fact that among people of the world (who are all created with the good nature—as you believe), some have committed the crimes while some do not; and this sometimes cannot be explained as the influence of outer conditions—we must treat them differently. That is, those who commit the crimes must be punished. The fact that man is created naturally 'good' (if it is true) cannot be used as the ground not to be held responsible for the crimes. We punish the criminals on the grounds of their harmful actions.

## II

Man has been created by nature to have emotion;

and I have noticed some kind of emotion playing the role behind the matter of crime and punishment. When your father is killed, you feel that the killer should be treated by the state in such a way that it is just. In this sense, justice relates to human emotion. The success or failure of political practice depends much on the emotion of people. The French Revolution is believed to happen as the people had felt they were under the unjust political structure. In the same way, the success or failure in legal system depends much on the emotion of people as well. I do not mean that the matter of justice should be based on people's emotion rather than legal principles. I just mean that legal justice would be failed if the people, especially those whose life is involved in the case, do not feel that they are given justice. And this has nothing to do with the legal principles—meaning that such a feeling could happen even though people know that the justice given to them is strictly based on the legal principles used in the society.

In my view, the legal principle of justice which says that the purpose of punishment system should be designed for the educational purpose could cause the feeling of injustice in some case. To say this does not mean that I reject the educational theory of punish-

ment. I just need to say that when we try to treat the criminal in such a way that it would benefit him, we should not forget the victim of the crime. Some of them are treated cruelly before killed. The suffering of the victim—both alive and dead—can never be ignored by our legal system. The punishment theory which stresses only how to benefit the criminal can be said having ignored the suffering of the victim of the crime; and when the victim of the crime is ignored we can never say that is justice.

Many people like to say that the state should not punish the criminal on the grounds of revenge. For those who say like this, it seems that the revenge is a bad thing. For me, we can think that the revenge could be seen as a very primitive form of justice. And we usually find that the teaching of religion in the world is based on a belief in this thing. In Christianity, God will send the bad person to the hell after death. In Buddhism and Hinduism, they say the same thing. The hell in religious perspective is nothing but a state in which the person who does the bad things that harm others must face. This can be deemed as a kind of revenge. In the case of Hinduism and Christianity, this can be considered as the revenge given by God. But in the case of Buddhism which does not teach about God but about

Nature, this could be seen as the revenge given by Nature as well.

Why does religion teach like that? We can explain this through the concept of justice. For religion, if the bad person is not given such a punishment for his actions the universe will be just the physical one and we have no reason to believe in religion. On the contrary, the universe should be the moral and physical one at the same time—meaning that the moral phenomena occurring in the universe must follow the moral rules of the universe. The existence of the hell for punishing the bad persons is included in such moral rules of the universe.

Even though I am Buddhist and I personally believe in what the Buddha teaches, it could be possible that all taught in Buddhism concerning things beyond human observation such as the hell do not exist. But this is the very reason why we need the legal justice. I accept that religion teaches the good things and among the good things taught in religion the concept of justice is included. It could be possible that the hell taught in religion never exists; but I myself respect the belief in the existence of hell because it represents human imagination of justice. Such imagination should be appreciated because it is based the good intention

of its inventor. Suppose the hell does not exist; I think this does not mean that the universe is an absurd state as far as we have the legal system invented by man to keep justice possible! In this sense, the legal system aiming at the same justice as mentioned in religion could be viewed as the hands of God or Nature to keep justice possible forever.

The essence of religious justice in my view lies in the following formula: the person who commits the certain amount of evil must be given the punishment of the same amount—meaning that the one committing ‘10’ must be given ‘10’ as the reward. The principle “an eye for an eye” found in some religious law can be cited as an example of the formula that I am talking about. However, this formula practiced in our modern time does not need to follow what practiced in the ancient time in terms of the outer manner. I do not agree that we need an eye of the criminal for an eye of other that he has destroyed these days. I think they would have some reason to require an eye of the criminal for the eye of other that he had destroyed in those days. But at present we have to punish the criminal on the basis of morality. The taking of the criminal’s eye can be seen as immoral action as it causes unreasonable pains to him. However, this has nothing to do with

capital punishment. In my view, death sentence can be performed as it will cause a little pain to the criminal; and this can be said we have punished him morally.

Some of those who oppose capital punishment argue that this thing plays no role in educating the criminal. I fully accept such a truth. However, sometimes we should accept that if death sentence is the only way to give the justice to the victim of the crime, there is no reason to turn away from it just because we think that the criminal does not benefit anything from it. Suppose we accept that Adolf Hitler had committed the great sin to humankind and because of this God had sent him to the hell after death. Some people said to God, "Dear Sir, please do not send him to the hell because he will not benefit anything from that." How will God react to this? I think all of us would realize ourselves how God will do. In my conviction, in any legal judgment we have to distinguish the persons involved into the *primary* and the *secondary* ones. The primary one has to be given the first priority by the legal system. The criminal cannot be the primary one because he is the one who harms other. On the contrary, the harmed person only can be such primary person. Hitler in the above example is secondary person in the law of God. The people harmed by Hitler are pri-

mary—so God has to protect them and give them justice first. The legal punishment which says that “we punish the criminals just for educating them” is wrong in that it takes the secondary person to be given the first priority—and this can never be explained why?

### III

No legal punishment in the world that does not cause the pains to those who are punished. Actually, in terms of logic punishment in itself means causing the pains—otherwise that should not be called punishment. Punishment as the causing of pains to the criminals can be deemed as both the end and the means at the same time. That is, as the end, we punish them to keep justice; and as the means, we punish them to educate them. Note that sometimes causing the pains is more proper to educate people. Between these two aspects of punishment, the first one—punishment as the end in itself—is more basic, while the second one—punishment as the means—is supplementary. So, in practice, when we have to punish the criminals, the first thing to be considered is: how it will give justice to the victims of the crimes. And then: how it will benefit the criminals in terms of educating them. I believe that Confucius is right when he says that the society must be based on good tradition. It is the *gentlemen* that form the good

tradition of the community. For Confucius, the gentlemen are those who fully accept the punishment when committing wrong things. Good tradition will teach us to accept the rules that when you have committed the crimes you have to be responsible for that. Sometimes, a gentleman would accept even death sentence if he has considered that the crime he has committed is so great. Note that a gentleman is not a good man who cannot do any wrong, but the one who respects the law and is fully responsible for the wrong that he has committed.

Sometimes I have wondered if it would educate the criminals if he feels that what he has received is less than what he has done. Certainly, the criminal might feel it is unjust if what given to him is more than what he has done. In this sense, to educate the criminal we need to cause him the sense of justice. And the best way to cause such a feeling in him is to convince him that what he has received and what he has done are equal.

I used to hear someone saying that death sentence is irrational because the state does not bear the criminal so it has no right to kill him. This argument is very strange, and I hear that those who say like this claim that such a statement is of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

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Suppose it is true that Rousseau says this. This still sounds strange. This argument accepts that if we have born someone we have the right to kill him. In this sense, the parents have the right to kill their children. We have seen that this is nonsense. If the truth that the right to punish is entailed in being the parent of the criminal, we can never punish anybody. On the contrary, the very ground to punish the criminal is: because he has committed the crime. Why we have to punish those who have committed the crimes? The answer is—to keep our society just. Imagine you are the victim of the crime—for example you are a girl being violently raped and killed. The criminal is arrested. At first, he tries to deny it; but later, as he cannot deny because there are some witnesses saying they have seen the event, he accepts he is the killer. How to punish this man—the man who rapes you violently and then kills you regardless of your asking for life? I think the answer is so clear—if we adopt that what the law has to provide you as the victim is nothing but justice! How the criminal will benefit from the punishment is totally notwithstanding.

*Punishment as Education*

## I

I am a social activist who works for the rights of the criminals for years. In my view, all kinds of punishments are nothing but the crimes. Or we can say that the punishment given by the state is a kind of crimes. I have the reasons to say that. As all crimes are the evils, so when the state has to punish the criminals it should be done in such a way that the punishment must be of the least amount and most effective in terms of educating the criminals at the same time.

Long time ago, if my memory is not wrong, it is Plato who said that when the person has committed the *first* crime—for example beating a man, and the state used the power punishing him—for example beating him; the action of the state is nothing but committing the *second* crime. For Plato, this is not right because the *person* can do the wrong thing but the *state* cannot. The state represents the political and social virtues; and this is why it can never do the wrong things.

To fully understand my thought, let us begin with the definition of crime. There are so many legal thinkers who distinguish between ‘*crime*’ and ‘*punishment*.’ For them, the former conveys the negative meaning while the latter the positive. They say that when the

person has committed the crime—for example Mr. A killing Mr. B; such a thing is the evil. And then when the state has punished him—for example sending Mr. A to the jail or putting him to death; such an action of the state cannot be deemed as a crime. They argue that the meaning of the crime is using the *unauthorized* power to harm other. But the state has used the *authorized* power in putting the man to death, so the action of the state cannot be a crime. On the contrary, the punishment provided properly by the state should be viewed as virtuous action as it brings about happiness and stability to the society.

I accept that the above definition of crime and punishment sounds reasonable as far as *one thing* is not involved. That thing is—there is a great difference between the state and the person. In the above definition, we do not find the distinction between these two things. I am trying to point out that one time in the past we human beings used to live in natural state. In such a state, there is no law. We had learnt that living within such a state of nature is suffering. So, we decided to make a thing called the political society to avoid such suffering. The political society can be of several types; but the best one is the political society in which people live together as noble persons. Noble

citizens form the noble state. The basic meaning of the noble state is that *the actions of the state must be virtuous in the sense that it cannot do the same bad things as the persons.*

Why do we need the state to be like that? The answer is—because this is necessary. Imagine that we have the father and the mother in the family. Ideally, the parents should differ from their children in terms of morality. The children could do the wrong things as they are the children. When the children commit the wrong things to the parents—for example stealing the parents' money; the way the parents treat their children must be virtuous. I accept that the parents could punish the children for that wrong-doing. But such punishment must not have anything involved with violence. As soon as the parents have utilized the violent means to punish their children—for example beating them; they will lose their moral reputation as the parents. The parents have to be patient to educate their children because they are young. In the same way, there are a number of persons in the political community who are 'young' as said; and they could commit the crimes because they are 'young.' For me, it is *natural* to have some persons in our community committing the crimes including the very serious ones; but it is *unnatural* to have the state punishing this kind of persons

violently. In this sense, I strongly reject death sentence because this thing is the highest sign of the immorality of the state!

Someone might argue, “Suppose you have a daughter and one day she is raped cruelly and killed. You mean that the killer must be punished as least as possible?” I accept that this kind of questions is very hard to answer as it is involved with human emotions. However, to be honest to myself—I have to say ‘yes.’ I accept that in terms of practice, we hope there might be only few people in this world able to do that. But ideally, this thing should be accepted to make our society noble. Suppose your daughter is killed by a mad dog; how to treat such a poor dog—killing it? The criminals could be deemed as the mad dogs. Certainly, they have harmed other and such doing must be corrected by the state. I accept the punishment done for the purpose of correcting the behavior of the criminals.

## II

Some legal philosophers are of the opinion that the spirit of punishment is to keep a just balance between the victim of crime and the criminal. For them, we punish the criminal to give the justice to the victim of the crime. And in some case, to give the justice to the victim of the serious crime, the criminal has to be put

to death. I have some questions concerning this theory. First, why the concept of justice plays such an important role in punishment? I mean that, like other social and political matters, punishment can be approached from various ways. Why the way tending to justice should be preferable to others? At least, we know that there is an approach to this matter from the utilitarian perspective which is adopted in some countries in the world. According to this approach, punishment should be undertaken in such a way that it would be of greatest utility for the society as a whole. Note that within this approach the concept of justice is not used at all. In a sense, justice could be an illusion. I mean that ultimately justice could be something *psychological* rather than *empirical*. However, those who argue that punishment must be undertaken for the reason of justice seem to believe that a thing called justice is not just a psychological state in which the person feels good about that thing. That is, for them justice really exists out there!

I believe that there are two kinds of justice: psychological and empirical. Suppose a drunken driver injures you. The court rules that he must pay you some money and you are fully satisfied with it. This can be said that you are given the justice. Note that the justice in this

case is of both psychological and empirical meanings. In terms of psychology, you are satisfied with what you are given—this can be called psychological justice. The money which the man pays you is enough to compensate your injury and related damages—this can be called empirical justice. Note that between these two dimensions of justice, the latter one is of more basic. That is, you must receive the empirical justice first then the psychological one will follow.

From above, it could be possible that it is the case concerning civil law only that we can discuss if the person is given justice. In criminal law, there is no justice to be discussed. Suppose a man kills your father violently. And the state has put him to death. You may feel that you are given justice. But this case greatly differs from the above case in which you are injured by the drunken driver. Justice should mean something positive. In the case of your father, you do not receive anything. The death of the murderer cannot be considered as something positive in terms of empirical justice. Certainly, in terms of psychological justice, you may feel you are given justice by the state.

Of two kinds of justice stated above, I believe that the empirical one is of more importance because it is objective and real. Psychological justice is dependent

upon the person's feeling—meaning that two persons could be of the different views concerning the same case. Recently, there was a British girl murdered and raped in Thailand. The police had arrested a man and he finally accepted that he was the murderer. According to the law, it could be possible that the man has to be put to death. It is interesting that the parents of the girl said to the media that they did not like the murderer to be killed even though this man had committed the violent crime to their daughter. They said: the death of the murderer cannot bring their daughter back from death—so, it is useless. Note that according to the parents of the girl, justice means something positive such as the coming back from death of their daughter—not just a psychological state stemming from the feeling that the murderer has been given the same thing as he gives to the girl: death! It could be possible that for some parents whose daughter was raped and killed violently like this, the death of the murderer is the only thing to give them justice. I personally respect such a feeling. But my point is—such psychological justice is subjective as it depends on how people think about it. In my view, the concept of justice, like other political and social concepts, should be developed to be something existing beyond human

psychological states. We need the real justice that can be positively examined. Why do I say like that? The answer is so simple—because the justice which is based on the psychological states of people could be just an illusion; and more importantly, this kind of illusive justice used to greatly harm humankind in our history under the illusions of thought such as: justice means an eye for an eye. We gain nothing from this. What we gain is: the first eye was destroyed and then the second eye is required to be destroyed too—is this to be called justice!

### III

We have arrived at one important finding concerning the concept of justice—that is, there are two kinds of justice: *negative* and *positive* justice. And we have found that in terms of practice negative justice is mainly used in criminal law while positive justice plays the important roles in civil law. My suggestion is—as negative justice is useless and unexplainable, *why don't we change it to be the positive one as found in the civil law?* Imagine the following example. A man borrows my money, say 100 dollars. But later he rejects to give me back. From this, we can say that I am treated by the man unjustly. And it is the duty of the state to bring me justice. In terms of the civil law, when the state forces

the man to give me back my 100 dollars, that can be said—I am given justice. And justice here is positive. Suppose we consider that the action of the man should be deemed as a crime because he intentionally harms me by rejecting to give me back my money; how to deal with the man as regards the latter. Normally, when the person has committed a crime; even though the crime has been committed to a person such an action is deemed as something against the state rather than the person. Following this understanding, even though the man harms me as said, his action is not deemed as something against me but against the state. In this sense, when a person has committed a crime, the justice to be seen in criminal law is not between a person and a person but between a person and the state. As the state is nothing but an authority which acts on behalf of the society as a whole; the justice to be seen in criminal law is something between the criminal and the society. I think that if we accept the analysis as I have given above, it may be easier to turn negative justice in criminal law to be the positive one as found in the civil law.

Suppose again that a man kills my father. As he is the poor person; in terms of civil law, he has nothing to ‘pay’ me under the name of justice. This is the thing

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to be accepted by me. So, the rest will be in the hands of the state. As said previously, the justice in criminal law is something to be found in the relation between the criminal and the society; what required from him is some kind of the 'paying' to the society. In the past and even present, we require suffering from him. We send the criminal to jail for the purpose of giving him the lesson of suffering; and death sentence to be found in some serious crime has been explained as the highest suffering required from the criminal. The logic behind our treatment of the criminal as said is: because you cause suffering to other, you must have the same thing as you have done. This is a thing I call negative justice from which essentially the society does not take anything at all. On the contrary, if we replace 'suffering' with something positive such as 'being a good member of the society' the latter one could be deemed as the positive justice. Suppose we think that the criminal has committed the bad thing to the society because he lacks education and morality, it might be of more benefit to teach him to be the good member of the community. Certainly, during the time of educating him, he must have limited freedom; but this can be explained in terms of the price to be paid for the bad thing he has committed to the community. Note that

punishment under this light of thought is not based on a retributive idea: you must be given pains because you have caused the pains to others. On the contrary, it is based on the good will: you have committed the bad things because you lack education and morality, so you have a responsibility to change yourself; we will support you and help you change yourself. Note that under this light of thought, *capital punishment can never be accepted because it contradicts the chance to be educated of the criminal.*

Ultimately, my theory still requires some kind of the paying from those who have committed the crimes; but such a thing is positive both for the criminals themselves and for the society as a whole. Justice in criminal law should be judged from: whether or not the criminals have paid the things that we require. We do not require the pains from them; but a good life of them.

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*Comment and Suggestion*

There are a number of theories concerning punishment. Crimes are always done by man and the society has the necessity to deal with the crimes. The oldest theory of punishment is known as the *retributive* theory. According to this theory, the person is punished because he has committed the crime; and the things to be received in the punishment must be of the same amount as he has done to other in the crime. A human institution which has utilized this kind of punishment theory seems to be religion. In every religion, there must be the teaching of hell and heaven. The hell is explained as the place for the bad people; and the heaven for the good people. In theistic religion like Christianity, it is said that those who commit the bad things do not please God; so what deserves them is the hell. On the contrary, those who do the good things please God; the heaven then is given to them by God as the reward. In atheistic religion like Buddhism, even though they do not talk about God—they actually employ some concept playing the roles very similar to God. The Buddhists say that there is a law of nature called the law of Karma to judge the different actions of people. The law of Karma will send those who com-

mit the evils to the hell; and those who do the good things to the heaven—not differently from God. So, we see that in all religion there are the teachings concerning the punishment for the evils and the reward for the good actions. The essence of punishment adopted in religion is—you are punished because you have done some evils; the pains that you have received are things that you deserve.

At the outset, a religious concept of punishment seems having nothing related to the concept of justice because those who are punished by God or by the law of Karma are usually the persons who have committed the lesser evils but given the greater pains. For example, in Buddhism they have many stories in their holy texts saying that a man kills a dog and has been sent to the hell for hundreds of years. If justice means you have committed ‘10’ you have to be punished ‘10’—the above story tells us nothing about justice. Later when the law of God has been used as the model for human law, the concept of justice under the form of ‘an eye for an eye’ happened. From above, we see that punishment in religious perspective is something can be best explained as ‘emotion-based.’ It depends on emotions of God or even the law of Karma—even though the latter concept has been explained as not a Person

like God. Emotion here means ‘not based on reason.’

Considering the subject from the perspective of those who do not believe in religion, we can question: why God or the law of Karma prefers painful punishment to educating them? They usually say that God is the father of humankind; from this saying, it seems that the best way to deal with the sons who commit the evils is to educate them rather than sending them to the hell forever. Why God does not choose such a way? For Marx, the answer is—because the concept of God was invented by those who looked at the matter from emotions and not from reasons. At the time of Moses, there were many people being stoned to death. A well known Christian saint, Stephen, was stoned by the Jews. They had punished people in the name of God. For Marx, these people had punished people themselves—from their emotions.

As it is known, the earliest human law was originated from religious law. Even now most of Muslim countries still have this kind of law. In some Muslim countries, the old-fashioned punishment such as stoning is still practiced. And certainly, this kind of religious punishment has been violently criticized by those who see it as a kind of cruelty. Looking from religious perspective, it seems that punishment and cru-

elty must come together—otherwise it should not be seen as punishment. Some religious thinkers say that what we give the criminals such as stoning cannot be compared with the pains provided for them in the hell by God. And they say further, “Do not look at the stoning; but look at the law—everyone is advised to obey the law of God and everyone knows that this kind of crime counts serious in our community. We cannot punish any person if they do not commit the crime. So, these people punish themselves.” In the past Thailand, we had adopted the Hindu law in which cruel punishment such as beheading was practiced. Buddhist monks did not oppose the practice of the law as said. In their view, those who were punished—punished themselves. The law could not do anything if the persons did not commit the evils.

The view that “*punishment must cause the pains to those who are punished otherwise it should not be deemed as punishment*” is one important idea among many ideas concerning punishment of the world. More importantly, it is the oldest idea—meaning that it is interesting at least in terms of the history of human thought. I am personally interested in this idea in terms of logic. Every word or concept in human life must have the meaning; and the meaning of unnatural entities such as ‘*freedom,*’

*'right,'* and *'justice'* is much dependent upon how we think. When a man hits a fellow man and the society has considered this kind of action should not be seen—how to deal with the man who hits other? First, the man has committed an evil—in this sense we have something to do with that existing evil. Secondly, we imagine that this kind of the evil could be committed by other people—in this sense we have something to do to prevent this kind of evil from happening in the future. For the existing evil, we have several ways to deal with it. But the way chosen by religion is—it is the evil; so the doer has to be held responsible for it. The evil in religious perspective does not necessarily harm other—certainly many of them are harmful to others. The evil is judged from its inner nature rather than its effects to others. In Buddhism, sometimes they argue that the evils such as killing can be compared to the poison—meaning that those who take it must be responsible for *'that'* themselves. When you eat poison, you may die. Suppose you have died because you have eaten the poison. No one in the world including nature (Buddhism teaches morality as a kind of natural law) benefiting from your death. Why nature provides such a thing as the result of eating the poison? The answer from Buddhism is—because it is inner nature of poison

to cause the death to a person who takes it.

From above, we have seen that one of the most basic assumptions adopted among religions of the world is that '*punishment*' and '*benefit to be found from punishment*' are totally separated by God or nature. To use the words of Kant, punishment is the end in itself. It is well known that Kant accepts that in some case capital punishment must be given to those who have committed the very serious evils. He says, "Why we should put someone who commits the serious evil to death? The answer is—because it is not right if we do not do so!" Note that in Kant's view, we see no any mentioning of benefit to be found from punishment. The best way to understand the views of religion and Kant concerning punishment is to consider it under the category of morality. That is—punishment is a moral concept. As it is usually found in morality, sometimes to be a good person requires acting against one's benefit. A poor beggar is eating his food. Meanwhile, he sees a hungry dog watching him eating. He stops eating and gives the food to the dog. In doing this, the beggar well knows he must be hungry because that is the last food for him that day. From this example, we see that in giving food to the dog, the beggar is acting against his benefit. But we call his action good. In moral actions, we shall al-

ways find some kind of sacrifices. The society in the views of religion and Kant is a kind of the persons—an artificial person. Like natural person, when the artificial person needs to retain the moral standards in its life—it has to sacrifice something, as found in the case of the beggar above. The punishment in terms of morality is something to be done to retain the right things: those who commit the evils must be punished. In the case of capital punishment, the death of those who have committed the very serious evils should be deemed as the moral sacrifice of the community. We know that we do not benefit anything from this in terms of material utility. But we have to do it because it is not right not to do that.

Even though morality has been accepted as a sign of human civilization, sometimes human beings have wondered if it is right to be solely led by a thing called ‘pure’ morality. There are thinkers who are of the view that religion in its nature requires a belief in something beyond human perception such as God or Karma. Punishment as a moral concept is something can be accepted for them—but morality as said must not be based on religious beliefs that cannot be observed by human experience. To send some people to death and say, “This has to be done as it is the right thing ac-

ording to God's will or the law of Karma," cannot be accepted as it cannot be proved if God or the law of Karma really exists. Punishment including death sentence should be based on reasons or arguments that do not refer to anything beyond human observation.

For these thinkers, when a man kills his fellow man, this is the problem to be solved by the community. We accept that the killer has committed an undesirable thing for the society. We can also say that he has done the evil. But the approaches to the evils can be of several kinds. One among these thinkers, John Stuart Mill, is of the opinion that the very simple question that we can post when we are confronted with 'how to deal with such a situation' is: what the benefit we would have from such doing? Suppose we have considered initially that the man who kills other man as said above should be put to death—we can question: what the society would benefit from such doing? Mill does not claim anything about the benefit from capital punishment. He just points out that if we can show that the society would benefit from this, death sentence can be performed in the community.

In the views of some criminologists, death sentence does not cause any benefit to the society; so it should not be performed in the community. It may be true

that when the killer in the above example was killed by the law, the relatives of the victim of the crime such as the father, the mother, the sons, or the friends would feel satisfied; but that is just a psychological matter. It does not concern the real benefits as meant by them. For them, the benefits of punishment must be something testable by sense experience objectively and not just subjectively personal feelings.

More importantly, the punishment of a person has to be done under the awareness that those who commit the evils also have other parts of their life that do not concern the evils committed by them. For example, a man is deemed as the killer as he has killed somebody. Suppose further that he has killed that person so cruelly. And because of this, some people in the community say he deserves death sentence. It may be true that considering from his action, he seems to deserve the death as said—because you have destroyed the life of other, your life should be destroyed as well to be fair to the person that you have killed. However, if we consider all the crimes in terms of accidents in the meaning that *no one in the world enjoys doing the evils* except the mad persons; the view towards the killer might be much softer. We respect the life of the person killed; and we feel sad to see this thing happening

in this world. But if we think it is a kind of accidents like other accidents in the world such as car crashing, those who are mainly involved in this should be deemed in some positive ways. For example, we should deem the criminals as not the evils persons in their nature; but those who are ‘infected’ by some badly social conditions. In this sense, we should look at them as the ‘sick’ persons rather than the evils.

Some may argue that we can accept that the criminals could be deemed as the sick persons; but this has nothing to do with their punishment. Some sick persons have committed the very awful evils such as raping and killing an innocent girl. OK, we shall accept the killer is a sick man. But what this sick man deserves? We think—the death!

The problem with this argument is that they do not accept that the killer is really a sick person. Sickness here conveys a moral meaning. Plato once said that when a man killed other in the community, we called his action not right. Suppose the community killed this man for the reason of giving justice to the person killed—we must accept that the community’s action is not right as well because both the killer and the community used the same way: killing. For Plato, the state or the community must have morality higher than the

persons living in the community. That is, the person can be deemed as sick; and it is the duty of the community to heal him or bring him back to a normal state. *The community can never do that if it acts as a sick person itself. Death sentence cannot be accepted in Plato's philosophy because it is a sign of acting as a sick person of the state.* Cruel punishments such as cutting off the hands of the thief cannot be accepted as well and for the same reason—the state cannot act as the sick person because the state must have moral standard higher than its subjects.

In short, according to Plato, we have to distinguish between the state and the people. The state is a name given to the political authority acting on behalf of people and for the goodness and welfare of the people as a whole. The difference between the state and the people lies in that the state must have some moral rules to follow higher than the people. This can be compared to the father and the sons. The state can be compared to the father; and the people to the sons. Normally, the father is naturally required to have the moral standard higher than the sons. The sons can behave badly; but the father cannot. In the same way, we can compare the state and the people to the doctor and the patients as well. It is the duty of the doctor to bring the patient back from illness to a normal state.

When the peoples behave badly, it is the duty of the state to bring them back from such illness to a normal state. In this sense, the role of punishment in the view of Plato is to ‘heal’ the sick people or ‘educate’ them rather than giving them the lessons of suffering. And this is the origin of the punishment theory known as the *healing theory* or the *education theory*.

Actually, the latter theory of Plato, in a sense, conveys a lot of religious connotations. Some may wonder why religion in general does not look at the subject of punishment in the same way as Plato. Plato himself talks much about justice. But justice in his view is not the same as given by religion. In Judaism, justice means: an eye for an eye. In Buddhism, justice means: the evil-doer must suffer in the hell. In religious-inspired punishment theory, justice means: sometimes the death of the criminal is needed to be fair to the victim of crime. But for Plato, *justice means acting right*. Suppose we accept that killing is an evil; we must accept further that the state cannot kill anybody because the state cannot act wrong.

Some people may question Plato—suppose a man kills my father cruelly and you say that the state should not kill this man because the state cannot act wrong; do you know that this is injustice to my father? For this

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kind of question, Plato would reply—we have the different definitions of justice. However, we can change the point. Suppose we temporarily ignore the word ‘justice’ and go straight to the point: do we accept that the criminals are sick people? I think if you start from this point, you would understand my thought. That the man kills your father is the sad event. We never need this thing to happen in our community. However, I believe that no one in the world is created to be the evil. So, there must be some unknown conditions that cause the man killing your father. I call this kind of people the sick persons in the meaning that they behave differently from normal persons and such behavior should be corrected by the state. In my opinion, the state is mainly supported by the good persons in the community; and I personally believe that the good persons as said must accept that the actions of the state including the duty to punish those who commit the wrong things must be of the moral standard higher than those who commit the evils. In this sense, even though it is true that the man kills your father and this is the evil, the state cannot kill him; and the good persons in the community should be of the same view as the state because they are the supporters of the state. We have the duty to heal these sick people; and before

they will be healed they must be alive. Killing, in a sense, is an easy work. As well, to give the lessons of pain to the criminals is not difficult. But to bring the sick people back from illness to the normal state is hard. But we must do it—because we are human and our community is human.

*Questions for Further Reflection*

(1) Sometimes teachings like ‘love’ and ‘forgiveness’ are said to be at the heart of religion. From this, it seems that religion might oppose the meaning of justice which says justice means you have done what to other; the state must provide you with such same things—an eye for an eye, death for death. But religion is known as the source of punishment theory which states the above things. Do you think this is self-contradiction in religion or not?

(2) Hell and heaven are taught in all religions in the world. Suppose there are really these things in the universe. And suppose there are really God and the law of Karma playing the roles behind the existence of the hell and heaven. What does God, or the law of Karma, think in creating such things for humans? Discuss!

(3) Some people think that the role of punishment is to cause the fear to the criminal and people in general—when they fear they will not do the bad things. In some countries, religious-inspired laws are used to cause the fear as said. Sometimes, they cut off the hands of those who steal other’s things. Do you agree with this principle—we punish to cause people the fear?

(4) Kant says, “In some case, the state needs to kill

some criminal who has committed the very serious crime because if the state does not kill him the state is doing the wrong thing.” Plato says, “In every case, the state cannot kill anybody even though he has committed the very serious evil because the state cannot do the wrong things.” Can we have the middle way between these two extreme opinions?

(5) Suppose there was a person thinking, “The punishment in the society is designed for healing the sick people rather than giving the lessons of suffering.” And from this, he derived, “Suppose I have done the bad things, my life in the ‘healing place’ might not be bad.” This thought later caused him to commit a crime and be sent to the jail which acts as the ‘school’ or the ‘hospital’ rather than the ‘punishing house.’ One day, the man was released. He did not think that the jail is something to be feared. Some years later, he was sent to it again. Do you think that this could be the weak point in the education theory of punishment?





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# Postscript

Sometimes, I feel that writing a kind of book is not different from singing a song, making a film, or painting a picture—all of them need artistic expression. When I wrote this book, such a feeling occurred inside; and as the result ‘it’ forced me to do something. As we know, emotion is very needed in artistic creation. I write this book from emotion. In many cases, the expression of emotion causes improvisation. As I understand, improvisation means—do not follow general rules. I believe that this thing happened during the process of writing this book. I enjoyed the writing, feeling each day I was singing a new song.

When the time to publish the book came, I finally decided to publish it as a draft. My previous English books were edited by native-speaker editors. I have found that when the book returned to me from the hands of the editors, it was much better in terms of language. However, I usually found that it lost its soul. I need this book having its soul. And this is why I do not send it to my editors.

This kind of book, as an experimental work, might have some errors and imperfectness in terms of language. I request the native-speaker reader to be patient. It is my imperfect song, or unfinished film. English is not my mother tongue. Please consider its contents and fill what is not complete by yourself.

*Somporn Promta*

