

# 內在的生命

## The Interior Life

易象純博士講於萬佛聖城漢堡州立大學及舊金山大學座談會1998年9月26日  
A talk by Dr. Ron Epstein to students from Humboldt State University and  
the University of San Francisco on September 26, 1998

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Editor's Note: On September 26, 1998, the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas held a panel discussion on "The Interior Life" for over ninety students from Humboldt State University and the University of San Francisco. This is Dr. Ron Epstein's talk. Talks by other panel members will be printed in future issues. Dr. Epstein is currently Research Professor at the Institute for World Religions in Berkeley and Lecturer in the Philosophy Department at San Francisco State University.

When Dharma Master Heng Shun called to invite me to speak, he didn't tell me that I was supposed to speak on the interior life. If he had, I would have said no, because here we have so many experts on the interior life, who are real professionals. I think that's one of the great contributions of Buddhism to the world—a kind of professional curriculum on the interior life. Although we also have explorers of the interior life in the West, I don't think there's the same kind of systematic dedication to that exploration as is found in ancient India and in particular, in Buddhism.

I didn't really approach Buddhism from an academic view, and sometimes I wonder how I got involved in academic Buddhist Studies altogether. I grew up in a fairly wealthy, upper middle-class community in the Middle West, where there were—just like anywhere else—good people and bad people. But, to be fair, I think the main value of the community was money. Your status in the community had to do with how much money and what kind of material goods you had, and I think because of the good ethical values that have been instilled in me by my family, I realized that there was something rather hollow and not very satisfying about this. Unfortunately, when I was growing up, I didn't meet any truly spiritual people from any religious tradition, and so religion for me—from what I learned from the community—was not about the spiritual nature of human beings, but it was about religious institutions and social status. Usually the people who were most revered in the churches and temples were the people who had the most money. I hope that very few of you had this experience when you were growing up.

Then I went off to college at Harvard. It was very confusing for me, because the motto of Harvard is *veritas*, which means truth, and I naively assumed that people at Harvard would be concerned with the truth. Probably there were some there who were concerned with the truth, but most of them were concerned with fame, power, and,

編按：1998年9月26日萬佛聖城為漢堡州立大學及舊金山大學學生九十餘人舉辦座談會主題為「內在的生命」。本文為易博士所講；其他各文整理後亦將陸續刊出。易博士為加州柏克萊世界宗教研究所研究教授並任教於舊金山州立大學哲學系。

當恆順師邀我上來講的時候，沒有告訴我講題是「內在生命」；如果他當時告訴了我，我不會上來的。因為讓我來講這個題目，無異是班門弄斧，在座有許多這一方面的行家。我認為佛教對於世界最大貢獻正是這種內在生命的教導。雖然在西方也曾有內在生命的探索者，但是沒有像古印度那樣，尤其是在佛教裡，那種的精誠專一與系統化。

我不是從學術研究上踏入佛門的，所以有時我也常問自己怎麼會轉到佛教的學術圈裡去呢！我生長在美國中西部一個相當裕的中上層家庭。那兒也像其他的地方一樣，有好人也有壞人。不過說老實話，那個社區的主要價值觀還是個「錢」字。你在那兒的地位取決於你有多少錢，有些什麼樣的財物。因為小時家訓有方，使我意識到這些東西總有些兒空虛，令我有一種不滿足之感。但是很不幸，在我成長的歲月裡，任何一個宗教的真正講究性靈精神的人士我都沒有碰上。所以對我來說，我從我那社區裡所學到的宗教，不是關於人類的性靈，而是關於宗教機構與社會地位。在教堂與寺廟裡，最受人尊敬的通常都是最有錢的人。我希望在你們沒什麼人在成長的過程之中有這種經歷。

當我上哈佛大學時，覺得很迷惑；因為哈佛的座右銘上寫的是——真理，所以我很天真地認為在哈佛大學的人都是很關心真理的。也許真有一些人很關心真理，但是絕大多數的人關心的是名譽、地位、金錢；只是錢的程度輕

a lesser extent, money. There were some very brilliant people there, and I felt awed by them. Interestingly enough, the first really spiritual person I came into contact with was a Christian. His name was Paul Tillich. He was a well-known Christian theologian in the fifties and sixties and had a tremendous amount of charisma. He would lecture every day to one or two hundred students, and I literally sat at his feet and drank in a kind of spiritual energy which I had not experienced before. I was also awed by his incredible intellect and education, which was of a scope I had never experienced before. He understood not only the whole Western tradition of philosophy and spirituality, but also something of Asian traditions. It was from him that I first learned of Buddhism. Because I had the tendency, I was interested in the interior life, although I didn't have much interior life.

I didn't have much interior life because I grew up in a society and an educational system that doesn't teach us anything about the interior life. Unfortunately, most people, although they may be very good people and some of them may devote themselves to very good causes, have no interior awareness. Their attention is always focused out there in the world. To the extent that they are aware of what's going on inside their minds, their awareness and interest lies in intellectual thoughts. It never occurs to most of them that those very thoughts are getting in the way of their own self-understanding.

When you go to college what is of value is thoughts and ideas. Your ability to remember and organize them is the basis on which you are evaluated during your university career. (I think you are lucky that at Humboldt State and at the University of San Francisco you have some professors who realize that there is something to learning beyond that.) This weekend you're coming into contact with a tradition that says those thoughts and ideas can have some value—depending on what they are, they can guide us in our life—but if we really want to understand who we are, we have to look beyond them and realize that they cover over what is really valuable about us and about our understanding of the world.

I was in college in the early sixties, which must seem a very, very long time ago to most of you. I'm sure you've read in the history books that it was a rather turbulent time. Some of you may even have some rather bizarre parents from that era. My son is always telling me that all the sixties people are just weird, and he's probably right. Anyway, when I was at college, I took a course in Asian art, and I began to realize that some of the art of Asia contains keys to an inner consciousness that is beyond ideas. By looking at the art, I could intuitively feel that there was something remarkable there.

One day during my senior year I was in my room looking at a medieval Japanese Buddha image on the wall, and I began to realize that the image was a guide to the inner consciousness. I began to realize that to the extent that I concentrated on the image, the

一些罷了！哈佛確是很有一些智力超凡的人令我傾倒。有樁有趣的事是，我所接觸的第一位真正追尋精神的人士是位基督教徒，名叫羅羅·提立克。他是五、六十年代著名的基督教神學理論家，有著驚人的魅力。他每天都面對著一、二百位學生演講。我差不多可以說是恭坐座下，如嬰兒得乳般從他那兒汲取精神能量。他的才智與教育境界，也令我崇敬異常。他不僅瞭解整個西方的傳統哲學與精神領域，而且還懂得亞洲的一些傳統。我是從他那兒開始接觸到佛教的。雖然我自己沒有什麼內在生命，但我有這種對於內在生命深感興趣的傾向。

我之所以沒有多少內在生命，是因為我生長在一個不教導什麼內在生命的社會和教育體系下。非常不幸，大多數人都沒有對內在生命的意識。雖然他們可能是很良善的人，有的人還可能致力於崇高的事業，但是他們沒有內在意識；他們的精神總是向外奔逸，奔逸到他們都意識不到自己心靈裡到底有些什麼事。他們的思想意識、他們的興趣，都放到世智辯聰上去了。他們大多數人根本想不到這些世智辯聰，正是他們對自我真正瞭解的阻礙。

在大學裡著重的是思想與概念。大學評鑑你的標準在於你的記憶及組織這些思想與概念的能力。我覺得你們在漢堡州立大學和舊金山大學很幸運，因為你們有一些教授認識到在這些世間的思想、概念之外還有其他的東西。這個週末你們接觸到了一個傳統；這個傳統認為那些思想與概念也可以有其價值的，要看是什麼樣的思想，什麼樣的概念。這些思想概念也可成為我們的生命中的指南；但是我們如果想真正明白自己是誰，我們的眼光就要超越這些思想，去認識到正是這些世間的思想，遮蔽了我們作為人真正的價值，遮蔽了我們對於這個世界的瞭解。

我哈大學時是六十年代早期，對你們大多數人來講那似乎是一個很遙遠的時代了。我想你們一定在歷史書上看到那是一個動盪不安的時代。也許你們有一些比較怪僻的父母親，就是那個時代的產物。我兒子常跟我說六十年代的人都是很怪僻的，他說得也許對。不管怎麼說了，我在大學時選了一門「亞洲藝術」的課，我開始意識到在亞洲的一些藝術中，含藏著通往超越思想的內在意識的鑰匙。在觀賞藝術的時候，我本能地感覺到那裡面有一些很不平凡的東西。

distinction between what is inside the mind and what is outside began to break down. I saw that the distinction between what is me—subject—and what is object is phony, restricting and painful. And so I got a first taste of understanding that art could be a guide to a whole new world of inner consciousness. That's how I first got interested in Buddhism. It had nothing to do with studying Buddhism academically. When I learned that, naturally I wanted to seek out people who had wisdom—not knowledge, but wisdom—about this pathway to a whole new world of experience, which is beyond the pain of alienation that comes from cutting ourselves off from other people and from the natural world.

To make a long story short, I came to San Francisco to study Chinese and was very fortunate to meet the founder of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua. He had not put up a sign saying that he was a famous Chinese Chan Buddhist Patriarch. He was living very quietly with almost nobody around. But gradually, being around him, I began to be aware that he was somebody who was very, very different from anybody else I knew. It was a very low-key kind of thing. I began to be aware that he never did anything selfish. I began to be aware that when I looked at him, I didn't have the same kind of, "Oh, there's another person there, with his own agenda for me to bounce off of," feeling that we always have when we meet another person. And I became aware that he was a very, very compassionate person. In very quiet, concrete, and unobtrusive ways, he was always trying to help—materially, emotionally, spiritually—everyone around him, without making any kind of claims for himself. As I began to sit and meditate with him, I became more and more aware of his special qualities.

The fact that he was a Buddhist was, in a sense, almost irrelevant to me. He himself always used to say that Buddhism is just a label, that Buddhism should not be called Buddhism, that Buddhism is the true heart, the true nature of the minds of all sentient beings. And so, when we study about comparative religion and make all of these categories: "I'm a Buddhist. You're a Christian. He's a Muslim. She's a Jew," there's something very artificial about it. Those categories sometimes may have some usefulness for sincere people on their own spiritual path, but they also become a hindrance and can be counterproductive. I often feel a great sense of kinship with people who come from other spiritual traditions; I feel that we are really on the same path insofar as we can understand it. Now, whether that same path is ultimately the same, who is to say? But to all of us who realize that what is truly important about human life lies beyond our own selfish egoistic considerations, then these distinctions about doctrines, about ideas, are not so important and don't tend to get in the way.

大四時，有一天我在房間望視著牆上一幅日本中古時代的佛像時，意識到這幅佛像是通往內在意識的指南針。隨著我對這幅像注意力的集中程度，我意識到我自己身心內外的分界線開始模糊起來。我們對主客二體的區別不僅虛假、礙手礙腳、而且能引起痛苦。我因此開始瞭解到藝術可以導引人進入內在的意識，一個全新的世界。我由此對佛教產生了興趣，這跟我作佛學的學問一點關係都沒有。我有了這個認知之後，很自然地就想找尋那些有這方面的智慧，而不是有這方面知識的人，能在我走向一個全新的經驗的道路上導引我。這種新的經驗可以將我們由因與他人分割開，與大自然分割開而引起的這種孤立的痛苦中提拔出來。

長話短說，以後我就到舊金山來學習中文，有幸遇上了聖城的創建人——宣公上人。他沒有自掛招牌說自己是有名的中國禪宗祖師或什麼的。他靜悄悄地獨居著。但是慢慢地跟在他身邊之後，我開始意識到他跟我所有認識的人都大不一樣；他很不惹人注意的。我開始發現他從來沒有為自己做過什麼打算。我又意識到當我看他的時候，我沒有那種「又碰上一個有自己主觀思想的人」的感覺。我意識到他是個非常慈悲的人。在物質上、精神上、感情上，他都是默默地在，很實在地，不加為難地幫助每一個人，但卻從不居功。當我跟他在一起打坐時，我越來越意識到他的這些特殊的素質。

事實上，他是不是佛教徒對我來說幾乎沒什麼關係。上人一向說佛教只是一個名詞；佛教不應該叫佛教，因為佛教是所有有情眾生的真心、真性。所以在比較宗教學裡，我們分門別類，說：「我是佛教徒；你是基督徒；他是回教徒。」這都是人為製造出來的東西。這些分類對一些在精神領域探索很有誠心的人或許會起些作用，但也能造成障礙，對人的創造力起反作用。對來自其他精神傳統的人士，我常有種親屬感；我感到就目前我們所能明白的而言，在這條探索的道路上我們是同路人。至於到最後還是不是同路，誰能說呢？但是對於我們每一個人，凡認識到我們生命中真正重要的東西，是遠遠超越在我們自我的計度心之外的，則上述這些教義和思想上的差別都不重要了，對我們自是造成障礙了。