



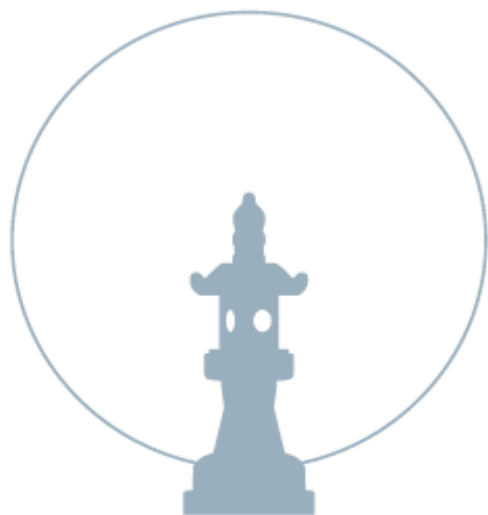
静心学堂丛书

The Mindful Peace Academy Collection

中英双语 Chinese-English Edition

# 认识自我的意义

The Significance of Understanding the Self



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人生在世，什么关系才是最重要的？我觉得有三类：一是人与人的关系，二是人与自然的关系，三是人与自我的关系。儒家重视人与人的关系，强调君臣、父子、兄弟、夫妇、朋友五伦，并以忠、孝、悌、忍、善作为相处准则。西方文化探讨人与宇宙的关系，关注人对自然的认识，进而加以征服。而佛法是以认识自我为核心，认为只有看清人与自我的关系，才是人与人，乃至人与自然和谐相处的前提。

如果一个人看不清自己，就难以降伏其心。这样的人，自然不容易接纳他人，善待他人。儒家讲究人伦，几千年来，对中国民众和社会有着巨大影响，渗透在生活的方方面面。但我们也看到，当这些伦理不

是依托于对人性的认识，又缺乏公共道德的约束时，人际关系反而变得复杂，甚至虚伪。一方面，人们视人伦为面子，多少需要顾及；一方面，又视人伦为负担，不愿真正投入。所以在与人相处时，更在乎的，往往是做给别人看的表面文章，于人于己都没有真实利益。在物质高度发达的今天，这种人伦的空心化，又使利益趁虚而入，成为人与人之间重要甚至唯一的链接，所谓“没有永远的朋友，只有永远的利益”。

西方文化强调二元对立、主客分离，以人类为主体，世界为客体。人对世界的认识，无非是为了使之更好地为自己服务。所以这种探索往往是单向、短视且不计后果的，在资源被大量开发和利用的同时，也造成生态环境的急剧恶化。

今天，我们常常感慨“现在的人怎么了，社会怎么了”，抱怨“不是我不明白，这世界变化快”。是的，人与人有着前所未有的疏离、防备和敌意，而人对世界的破坏，也到了难以逆转的地步。为什么会这样？原因固然很多，但根源在于，不能处理好人与自我的关系——我们不了解自己，没能使自己成为具有健康

心态和品质的人。当这些充满迷惑和烦恼的个体相遇时，必然会因迷惑而相互纠缠，因烦恼而彼此冲突。进一步，还会引发团体、民族、国家的对立。所以说，由认识自我造就健康人格，提升生命品质，对未来社会极其重要。只有这样，才能从根本上优化人与人的相处，修复人与自然的裂痕。





# 一、认识自我的重要性

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从学习来说，这是成才的基础

从工作来说，这是成功的前提

从心理学的角度

这是造就健康心理的保障

从哲学的角度

这是生而为人必须具备的认知

从佛法的角度

这是破迷开悟的关键

说到“认识自我”，有人可能觉得是形而上的概念，是哲学、宗教才会关注的。事实上，这也是现实人生的重要问题，关系到学习、工作等各个方面。

## 1. 学习方向

在学习过程中，我们需要认识自己，发现自己的先天禀赋和爱好是什么。尤其是基础教育以外的部分，这两点尤其重要。因为禀赋是更高的起点，可以使你领先一步；而兴趣是最好的老师，可以成为持续的动力。

从佛法角度看，生命是无尽的累积。我们来到这

个世界，只是今生的开始，但并不是一张白纸。在此之前，我们还有着无穷过去，做过很多事，学过很多知识，拥有过很多能力，这些都会成为现在的起点。如果了解自己的禀赋在哪里，是擅长科学、管理，还是人文、艺术，再选择喜爱的专业，接受相应的教育，成长必然更快，更不容易留下人生遗憾。

当然，这种认识并不简单，更不是随心所欲的选择。尤其在心智还不成熟时，未必知道自己擅长什么，爱好的方向也会出现变化。这就需要保持开放的心态，在实践中多方尝试，反复探索。若能遇到指点迷津的伯乐，更会有事半功倍的效果。还有人担心自己输在起跑线上，其实道路不止一条，人生也不止起跑，而是生生不息的接力跑。所以最重要的，是找到属于自己的道路。

## 2. 工作选择

走上社会，同样需要认识自己，才能确立发展方向。很多学生毕业后，不知将来该做什么，一片迷茫。

包括很多人想创业，也要面临种种选择，患得患失。

究竟做什么更适合自己？更容易成功？必须了解，什么是自己的长处，什么是自己目前拥有的条件，什么是自己的理想所在。然后才能结合社会需求，找到相应定位，否则就容易高不成低不就。事实上，这正是目前很多人的现状。包括内卷和躺平，都是对自己认识不足造成的。

如果对这些问题有清晰的认识，就能审时度势，有步骤地次第前行。因缘不具时，可以自我充电，蓄势待发；因缘具足时，立刻把握时机，所谓“机会都是留给有准备的人”。如果只是盲目地卷，必定会后继乏力，甚至使身心受损。比如过劳死和猝死的年轻化，在很大程度上，就是因为看不清自己，没有量力而行造成的。而没有目的地随意躺平，更是在蹉跎时光，浪费难得易失的宝贵人身。

### 3. 心理治疗

近年来，随着心理疾病的增多，越来越多的人开始重视这个问题。过去，人们以为只有明显异于常人的“疯子”才要治疗。现在发现，养心和养身同样，要学习相关知识，在疾病尚未出现时加以防范。同时还要定期体检，在疾病初起时及时干预，否则就会积重难返。这就必须关注：自己有哪些负面心理？人格存在哪些障碍？如果缺乏认识，不仅会延误治疗时机，还会使治疗出现偏差，治标而不治本。

怎么从根本上解决心理问题？我们知道，心理学起源于西方，只有 200 多年的历史。而佛法自古就被称为心学，不仅对心性有着透彻的剖析，还涵盖了不同层面的需求，所以在 2500 多年的流传过程中，被无数人奉为修心指南。依此践行，既可调整心行，造就健康心态；还能明心见性，彻底断除烦恼，具有养心、治病、根除病因等多重功效。

相比之下，心理学只是解决贪嗔痴过度发展导致的疾病，而把贪嗔痴本身视为正常心理。事实上，只

要不熄灭贪嗔痴，就不能解决疾病隐患。所以自上世纪以来，西方心理学界就开始吸收佛法教义，借鉴实修技巧，用于完善自身的理论建设和治疗手段。

从某个角度说，生命也是一个产品。其中有正向心行，也有负面心行。认识自己，正是通过对内心的观照，看清自己处于什么状态，需要解决哪些问题。只有去除负面杂染，增长正向因素，人格才会日益健康。究竟的健康，是成就佛菩萨那样的生命品质。

#### 4. 哲学思考

哲学又叫爱智，即爱智慧。相对日新月异的知识来说，智慧关注的不是现象，而是本质，包括对世界本质的认识，对生命本质的认识。其中最根本的，是对自我的认识。所以古希腊哲人早在 3000 多年前就提出——认识你自己。

如果不认识自己会怎样呢？斯芬克斯之谜记载，有个怪兽每天在路口问人：什么东西早上四条腿，中午两条腿，晚上三条腿？如果猜不出，就会被怪兽吞

吃，很多人因此送掉性命。后来，俄狄浦斯王子说出了答案，那就是“人”。因为人在婴儿时手足并用，像四条腿；长大后站立起来，是两条腿；老来又撑起拐杖，像三条腿。

这个故事的深意在于，如果一个人不了解自己，将付出最惨重的代价。可能有人觉得，这不过是个与自己无关的寓言。但从另一个角度看，不知道生而为人的价值，不知道自己为什么活着，只是浑浑噩噩地虚度，和失去性命又有什么本质差别呢？

## 5. 迷和悟

佛法告诉我们，每个众生都有佛性，即觉醒潜质。在这一点上，佛和众生是平等的，所谓“心、佛、众生三无差别”。为什么从显现看，佛和众生有着天壤之别？究其根本，无非是迷和悟。

迷，是被内心的无明遮蔽。就像我们身处黑暗时，难免胡思乱想，担惊受怕。生命也是同样，当我们因无明而迷失，就会制造颠倒妄想，无量烦恼。悟，就

是拨开迷雾，亲见本性。这是修行的核心目标，立足于此，才能使我们所做的一切往道上会。反之，不管做什么去道远矣。对于大乘学人，我们不仅要认识自己，从迷惑走向觉醒，还要自觉觉他，引导众生从迷惑走向觉醒。

以上，从不同角度说明了认识自己的重要性。从学习来说，这是成才的基础；从工作来说，这是成功的前提；从心理学的角度，这是造就健康心理的保障；从哲学的角度，这是生而为人必须具备的认知；从佛法的角度，这是破迷开悟的关键。



## 二、何为自我

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认识心的本质  
前提是看清现象的假我  
人之所以有那么多烦恼  
根源就是被假我迷惑  
这个假我是没有根基的  
因为空洞，就会四处寻找支撑  
问题是  
我们能找到的所有支撑都是无常的

说到认识自己，究竟什么代表着“我”？

## 1. 世人的认识

在人们的印象中，自我通常有以下几种内涵。

第一，我们会把自我等同于自私。比如“你这个人特别自我”，说的其实是“你很自私”“你只考虑自己”。在佛法看来，这种自我类似我执，是对自我错误解读造成的执著。

第二，我们会以自我代表相应的身心状态，代表某个生命现象。当我们说到自己时，是指向我的五蕴；说到某人时，是指向他的五蕴。

第三，我们会以自我体现自己和他人的区别，代表属于自己特有的部分。每个生命都有不同的个性，都是独一无二的存在。在西方人本主义思想中，就是通过解放个性，来实现自我价值。

第四，从心理学的角度，是把心灵当作多元、复合的系统。就像飞机能飞得起来，是由众多零件乃至燃料决定的，不是单纯靠哪个部分。自我同样如此，不是单一的实体，而是系统的作用，由众多因素构成它的存在。

以上，主要立足于现象层面来定义自我。

## 2. 其他宗教的认识

我们知道，现象是变化不定的，身体会消亡，意识会消解。所以宗教追究的，是本质性的自我，可以成为生命的终极依赖。

基督教认为，肉体在尘世几十年就会结束，而灵魂是永恒的，会继续上升天堂享乐，或堕落地狱受难。所以灵魂才是生命更本质的存在。

印度婆罗门教认为，宇宙有一个大我，即梵我；个体生命有一个小我，即阿特曼。通过修行，可以使小我和宇宙大我融为一体，达到梵我一如的境界。相对现象的自我来说，大我才具有永恒的意义。

以上，代表了一般宗教的看法，即肉体以外还有更高的本质。

### 3. 佛法的认识

佛法对自我的认识，既关注现象，也关注本质。现象的自我，佛法的定义叫作“假我”。那本质又是什么？我们知道，佛法和其他宗教的最大区别是“无我”，所以对本质的认识，其实讲的是心，认为每个人都有空明不二的心，这才是生命究竟的存在。

认识心的本质，前提是看清现象的假我。人之所以有那么多烦恼，根源就是被假我迷惑。这个假我是没有根基的，因为空洞，就会四处寻找支撑。问题是，我们能找到的所有支撑都是无常的，非但不能让假我变得恒常，还会在各种变故中，转而对假我形成冲击，

带来烦恼和痛苦。这样的烦恼和痛苦，又会进一步加深迷惑。

所以，对现象和本质的认识不可偏废。关注现象的自我，是为了去除迷惑，不被假我欺骗，从而认识本心，开启内在的觉醒潜质。

### 三、迷失自我带来的问题

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不认识自己  
生命就会产生原始的匮乏感  
不断建立需求  
伴随这些需求，又会向外追逐  
然后在追逐过程中产生依赖  
在依赖过程中，需求又随之增长  
使我们进一步强化依赖

如果不认识自己，究竟会给人生带来哪些不良后果？

## 1. 无法踏实

安全感，是现代人特别关注的。比如近年来持久不衰的考公热，就反映了人们对安全感的执著追求。我们来到这个世界，把身体、事业、财富、家庭当作“我”的依托。但在瞬息万变的今天，我们比以往更清楚地看到，这一切随时都在变化，没什么可以靠得住。生命的方向在哪里？意义在哪里？如果把价值寄托于外在事物，必然会觉得不踏实，觉得自己是没有

根的。

从另一方面看，随着科技的飞速发展，人类使用的工具越来越先进，拥有的武器越来越具有杀伤力。与此同时，道德素质并没有相应提升，人性并没有变得健康，反而出现更多问题。这就对世界构成了双重危险，想想现存的核弹，想想世人的对立，确实会感到当下的处境岌岌可危。在这样的背景下，佛法智慧显得尤为重要。只有认识自己，我们才会知道，什么是安身立命的所在，什么是于己、于人、于世界真正有益的，才不必担心被共业的洪流带向毁灭。

## 2. 错误认定

不认识自己，意味着我们会对自己产生错误认定，这是一切烦恼的根源。执著身体为我，就会害怕我随着身体败坏而消失；执著身份为我，就要为维护种种身份费尽心机；执著情绪为我，就会被“我高兴，我不高兴”的感觉左右，颠倒妄想。不论执著什么，必然被什么所控制，成为失去自由的傀儡。



生活中每天会发生很多事，这些事能对我们产生什么影响，关键在于认识。从我执出发，每件事都会和我产生深度捆绑，带来无尽的烦恼和伤害。以智慧观照，看到一切都是缘生缘灭的，才能得之泰然，失之坦然。

### 3. 迷己逐物

不认识自己，生命就会产生原始的匮乏感，不断建立需求。伴随这些需求，又会向外追逐。然后在追逐过程中产生依赖，在依赖过程中，需求又随之增长，使我们进一步强化依赖。这种依赖不仅体现在物质，也包括精神。所以今天的人几乎没能力闲下来，安安静静地和自己相处，而是让各种电子娱乐和社交媒体占据生活、工作以外的每一分钟，让自己在漩涡中越卷越深，迷失方向。

这种迷己逐物，正是生死轮回的根本。轮回，不一定是从今生到来世，也代表心理现象的重复。有人在权力角逐中轮回，有人在事业拼搏中轮回，有人在

财富积聚中轮回，有人在艺术追求中轮回……可以说，轮回就是周而复始的希求和追逐。如果看不清自己，我们时刻会在各个领域轮回，在自己制造的心理模式中轮回。然后，把这些重复从今生延续到未来。认识自己，找到生命真正的立足点，是超越轮回的关键。

#### 4. 三种感觉

生存之外，人们基本都在追求三种感觉，即自我的重要感、优越感和主宰欲。

所谓重要感，在中国传统文化中，就是要光宗耀祖，成为人上人。西方哲学强调个性解放，张扬个体的独特性，同样是在追求重要感。所谓优越感，主要是通过比较获得的。在过去，人们可参照的范围很小，还容易获得这种感觉。但在今天，我们随时可以在媒体看到全世界的精英，以及他们的生活、享乐，要在这样的参照体系中保持重要感和优越感，无疑是在自找苦吃。至于主宰欲，那就更辛苦了。想想看，我们很多时候连自己都控制不了，怎么能控制其他人？多少

亲子和夫妻关系，不都是因为主宰欲恶化的吗？世间最亲近的关系尚且如此，何况其他？

那么，这三种感觉究竟是谁的需要？其价值是什么？如果用智慧的眼光审视，它们是经不起分析的。但我们把自己丢了，所以要借助这些感觉，来维持外强中干的自我。

人生的价值来自哪里？一方面，是提升生命品质；一方面，是利益更多众生。如果单纯追求重要感、优越感、主宰欲，即使再努力，能得到什么呢？重要感，会让人平添压力，不堪重负；优越感，会导致攀比和竞争，甚至是恶性竞争；主宰欲，则会破坏人际关系的和谐。

## 四、佛法对自我的认识

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每个人都希望成就更好的自己  
什么是更好的自己  
世人往往只看到外在形象、功名利禄  
也有人会内外兼修  
重视兴趣爱好、文化修养  
但这些只是表层的精神活动  
更深层的，是我们的心态和生命品质  
这两点才决定我们是什么样的存在

佛法中，“我”只是假名安立的概念。那么，佛法对自我是怎么表述，又是怎么看待的呢？

## 1. 我执和无我

我执，是对自己的错误认定，认为生命中有独存、不变的“我”。事实上，生命和世间一切现象同样，是由众多条件决定的。离开色受想行识五蕴，“我”是什么？“我”在哪里？但凡夫因为无明，就会把四大假合的色身，以及各种心念活动，执以为“我”，对此产生坚固的执著，由此造业、轮回，带来无尽痛苦。

佛法中，与“我”相关的另一个概念，是无我。说到无我，很多人会感到费解，“我”明明在这里，会说会笑会动，怎么就无了呢？其实佛法所要无的，并不是缘起生命的显现，而是对自我的错误认知。只有撤除误解，我们才能透过现象，找到内在的生命本质，那就是觉醒的心。

## 2. 缘起的假我

缘起，即生命现象由众多条件和合而成，主要有物质和精神两类。所谓物质，如西医所说的骨骼、肌肉、内脏，中医所说的经络、穴位等。所谓精神，如唯识讲到的八识。其中前六识为眼识、耳识、鼻识、舌识、身识、意识，是我们能感受到的部分。此外，还有我们感受不到的潜意识，即第七末那识和第八阿赖耶识，后者储存着生命延续过程中的全部经验。我们的所思所言所行，都会在阿赖耶识留下种子，形成力量。一旦条件成熟，又会生起现行，并由现行形成新的种子。这些都是遵循因缘因果的规律在发生，由

如是因感如是果，并没有作为主宰的“我”。

可能有人会说：既然是假我，何必要管它？何必要修行？要知道，“假”并不是没有，所以我们饿了要吃饭，病了会难过。如果不能正确对待，这个假我会实实在在地干扰身心，给生命带来无尽痛苦。唯识宗讲到三性，是以依他起为中心，将认识缘起作为修行的分界点。正确认识缘起，就能通达空性，成就解脱；错误看待缘起，则会导向烦恼，轮回生死。所以“我”虽然是假的，但也是借假修真的重要工具。

每个人都希望成就更好的自己。什么是更好的自己？世人往往只看到外在形象、功名利禄，也有人会内外兼修，重视兴趣爱好、文化修养。但这些只是表层的精神活动，更深层的，是我们的心态和生命品质。这两点才决定我们是什么样的存在，是无明、烦恼、颠倒的存在，还是智慧、慈悲、善良的存在？是自己痛苦，也给别人制造痛苦；还是自己欢喜，也给别人带去欢喜？

我们是什么样的存在，取决于假我的成分。如果由不良心行组成，就会持续不断地制造痛苦。比如那

些贪心很重的人，没钱痛苦，有了钱依然痛苦，因为他还想得到更多，永不满足。不解决贪心的话，这种苦是没完没了的。就像体内感染病毒之后，随时都在制造问题，引发疾病。所以说，对假我的认识和改善非常重要。

### 3. 觉醒的心

除了看清假我，更重要的，是认识觉醒的心。怎么认识？法门虽然很多，但主要可归纳为渐修和顿悟两类。这是基于学人不同根机施設の。有些人尘垢很厚，必须“时时勤拂拭”，以戒定慧扫尘除垢，次第深入。有些人根机很利，尤其在禅宗盛行的时代，有明眼师长引导，才能在特殊机缘下令学人打破能所，直接体会本心。之所以这么直接，因为觉性是众生本来具足的。虽然目前被无明遮蔽，但只要开启它，一切现成，无欠无余。

所以《六祖坛经》开篇就指出：“菩提自性，本来清静，但用此心，直了成佛。”告诉我们，生命内



在都有觉醒的心，这个心在凡不减，在圣不增，能生万法，能容万法，像虚空一样空旷、无限，又具有了了明知的作用。修行所做的，就是体悟这个与诸佛无二无别的心。这个心，禅宗又叫作本来面目，那才真正代表着你自己。

可见，佛法对自我的认识是多层次的。既关注现象的自我，更引导我们由修行体证觉性。这也正是佛法和其他宗教、哲学最大的不同。

## 五、自我的价值

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说到解脱  
我们往往理解为  
从此岸到彼岸，从此世到他世  
似乎是与普通人无关的宗教修持  
其实，解脱的重点  
是解除内心的迷惑和贪嗔痴  
从这点来说，每个人都需要解脱

一个人来到世界，怎样实现自我价值？

## 1. 解放和解脱的价值差异

西方人本主义思潮主张个性解放，由此激发创造力，实现人生价值。这是对中世纪神权统治的反抗，由此带来科学、艺术、哲学的全面发展，以及物质文明的极大繁荣。但这种解放也使人的欲望被过度激发，导致一系列的社会和生态问题。

佛法修行的核心目标是解脱，和解放同样有摆脱束缚的内涵。不同在于，解脱是立足于对心性的透彻了解。因为我们当下的生命状态还是凡夫，虽有佛性，

却隐没不见，占据主导的，往往还是魔性，是贪嗔痴，是负面心行。如果不加辨别地盲目解放，很容易失去控制，泥沙俱下。

所以解脱是有特定对象的。说到解脱，我们往往理解为从此岸到彼岸，从此世到他世，似乎是与普通人无关的宗教修持。其实，解脱的重点是解除内心的迷惑和贪嗔痴。从这点来说，每个人都需要解脱。当我们对治了一种烦恼，就能从这种烦恼中解脱；当我们平息了一种痛苦，就能从这种痛苦中解脱。进一步，还要张扬慈悲、智慧等良性潜质。只有这样，才能实现人生的终极价值。

## 2. 实现人生价值的原则

佛法所说的价值包含现实和究竟两类，不管哪一种，都要遵循以下几个准则。

第一是因果的准则，即价值观要经得起因果的审视。儒家重视立功、立言，往往是从某时某地的标准而言，并没有考虑这种功绩和言教对人类的长远意义。

西方倡导个性解放，也不太关注个性被张扬后，究竟给自身和社会带来什么。但佛法认为，自我价值必须经得起因果的审视。不仅对现在有利，还要对未来有利；不仅对自己有利，还要对众生有利，而不只是考虑眼前的个人利益。

第二是道德的准则。很多人觉得，道德只是社会的诉求，并不是个体的需要。所以当大众不遵循道德时，自己那么做就会吃亏。但佛法认为，我们所有的言行，乃至起心动念，都是造就生命的材料。就像盖楼离不开砖、木、水泥等建材，身口意三业正是人格的基本材料。良性心行会造就健康人格，不良心行会形成不良人格。我们想要实现自我价值，就必须遵循道德。否则就会像劣质建材那样，搭起一座注定坍塌的危楼。

第三是智慧的准则。理性是双刃剑，既会给社会带来发展，给民众带来福祉，也会带来破坏和痛苦。而智慧是对生命和世界真相的认识，有了智慧，我们才知道什么对生命发展真正有益，才能从根本上改造自己。否则，连自我是什么都看不清，怎么实现自我

价值？即便实现了一部分，也是不完整的，甚至会有种种副作用。

第四是慈悲的准则。慈悲是人格的重要组成，也是世间的温暖所在。我们要让自我提升，让社会和谐，让众生受益，慈悲是不可或缺的。我曾在《企业家的慈善精神》中讲到，很多人把慈善等同于捐钱，其实更重要的，是我们在接受相应文化后，建立慈悲大爱之心。本着这样的爱心行善，不仅能使对方得到帮助，还能使自己的心态得到调整，生命品质得到提升，以此实现自我价值。

## 六、结 说

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世人都活在自我中  
处处为自我考虑，被自我左右  
但最不了解的，恰恰也是这个我  
因为不了解  
为我所做的一切  
往往会产生偏差

世人都活在自我中，处处为自我考虑，被自我左右，但最不了解的，恰恰也是这个我。因为不了解，为我所做的一切，往往会产生偏差。就像火中取栗一样，明明想要得益，结果却吃了苦，受了伤。可以说，这是一切问题的根源所在。所以，认识自我是人生的重大课题。以上，从普通人、心理学、哲学、一般宗教及佛教五个角度，对自我展开探讨。希望通过这些解读，尤其是佛法对自我的剖析，使大家看到认识自我的重要性，开启美好人生，造就和乐世界。









# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

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What are the most important relationships in life? I believe there are three key types: interpersonal relationships, our connection with nature, and the relationship we have with ourselves. Confucianism attaches great importance to relationships among people, highlighting the five cardinal relationships—ruler to subject, father to son, elder brother to younger, husband to wife, and friend to friend. It also takes loyalty, filial piety, fraternal respect, forbearance, and kindness as principles of interaction. Western culture explores the relationship between humans and the universe, focusing on understanding nature and then conquering it. Buddhism, on

the other hand, centers on understanding the self, believing that only by clearly understanding the relationship with oneself can harmonious relationships among people and with nature be achieved.

If a person cannot see themselves clearly, it is difficult to subdue their own mind. Such people naturally find it hard to accept and treat others kindly. Confucianism emphasizes human relationships, and for thousands of years, it has had a profound impact on Chinese people and society, permeating all aspects of life. However, we also observe that when these ethics are not based on an understanding of human nature and lack the constraint of public morality, interpersonal relationships can become complicated and even hypocritical. On the one hand, people regard human relationships as a matter of preserving social reputation, something they must take into account; on the other hand, they view these relationships as burdensome and are unwilling to fully commit to them. Therefore, when interacting with others, people often care more about superficial acts meant for others to



see, which brings no real benefit to themselves or others. In today's world, where material wealth is abundant, the genuine substance of human relationships often erodes, allowing personal gain to become the important and sometimes the sole bond between individuals. As the saying goes, "There are no permanent friends, only permanent interests."

Western culture emphasizes dualism and the separation of subject and object, taking humanity as the subject and the world as the object. Human understanding of the world simply aims to make it serve us better. Therefore, such exploration is often one-sided, short-sighted, and reckless, causing severe ecological degradation during the massive exploitation and utilization of resources.

Today, we often reflect, "What's wrong with people nowadays? What's wrong with society?" and complain, "It's not that I don't understand; the world is changing too fast." Indeed, there is unprecedented alienation, defensiveness, and hostility among people, and the damage

humans have inflicted on the world has also reached an almost irreversible level. Why is this happening? There are many reasons, but the root cause lies in our inability to manage the relationship with ourselves—we don't understand ourselves and have not cultivated a healthy mindset and character. When individuals filled with delusion and afflictions interact, they inevitably become entangled and conflict with each other due to their delusion and afflictions. This further leads to opposition between groups, ethnicities, and nations. Therefore, fostering a healthy character through self-understanding and enhancing the quality of life is crucial for the future of society. Only in this way can we fundamentally improve interactions between people and mend the rift between humans and nature.

# I

## THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

When it comes to “understanding the self,” some may think it’s a metaphysical concept that only philosophy or religion concerns itself with. In fact, it’s also a critical issue in real life, relating to various aspects such as learning, work, and more.

### **1. Learning Path**

In the process of learning, it’s essential to understand ourselves: to discover our innate aptitudes and interests. Especially in areas beyond basic education, these two

aspects are particularly important. This is because aptitudes offer a higher starting point, giving you a lead, while interests are the best teachers, providing continuous motivation.

From the perspective of Buddhism, life is an endless accumulation. Our arrival in this world marks the beginning of this life, but we are not a blank slate. We have an endless past in which we have done many things, learned much knowledge, and possessed many abilities—all of which become our starting point now. If we understand where our aptitudes lie—whether we excel in science, management, humanities, or arts—and then choose a field we love and receive appropriate education, we will grow faster and are less likely to have regrets in life.

Of course, this understanding is not simple, nor is it a matter of arbitrary choice. Especially when our minds are not yet mature, we may not know what we excel at, and our interests might change. Therefore, it is important

to keep an open mind, try different things in practice, and engage in continuous exploration. If one can find a mentor to provide guidance through uncertainties, the results can be significantly amplified. Some people worry about losing at the starting line, but there are many paths to take, and life is not just about the start but an endless relay race. Therefore, the most important thing is to find your own path.

## **2. Career Choice**

Understanding the self is equally important for establishing a direction of development when we step into society. Many students feel lost after graduation, unsure of what to do next. Even those considering starting their own business face various choices and often feel anxious about potential gains and losses.

What is most suitable for oneself? What makes success more attainable? It is essential to find out our strengths, the resources we currently have, and our aspirations.

Only then can we align these with societal needs to find the appropriate position; otherwise, we will struggle to fit in, aiming too high but unwilling to settle for less. In fact, many people find themselves in this situation today. The phenomena of “involution” (intense and futile competition) and “lying flat” (giving up on trying to be competitive with others) both stem from insufficient self-understanding.

With a clear understanding of these issues, we can assess the situation and proceed step by step. When the causes and conditions are not right, we can recharge and prepare; when the causes and conditions are favorable, we can seize the opportunity immediately. As the saying goes, “Opportunity favors the prepared.” Blindly getting caught in unhealthy competition will lead to burnout and even harm our physical and mental health. For example, the rising incidence of sudden death among young people, especially death from overwork, is largely due to a lack of clear understanding of themselves and an inability to act within their means. On the other hand, aimless “lying

flat” is wasting time, and squandering the rare, precious, and fleeting opportunity of human life.

### **3. Psychotherapy**

In recent years, with the increase in mental health issues, more people are starting to take this problem seriously. In the past, it was believed that only those who were noticeably different from the norm—the “insane”—needed treatment. Now, it’s recognized that nurturing the mind is as important as nurturing the body, requiring us to learn relevant knowledge to prevent issues before they arise. Additionally, regular check-ups and early intervention at the onset of illnesses are crucial; otherwise, conditions can become difficult to reverse. Therefore, it’s essential to be aware of our negative psychological tendencies and any obstacles in our personality. A lack of awareness can delay treatment and lead to ineffective solutions that address only the symptoms rather than the root cause.

How can we fundamentally solve mental health issues? As we know, psychology originated in the West and has a history of just over 200 years. In contrast, Buddhism has long been regarded as the study of the mind. It not only offers a thorough analysis of the nature of the mind but also addresses various levels of human needs. Over the past 2,500 years, it has been revered by countless people as a guide for cultivating the mind. By practicing its teachings, one can adjust their mental conduct, foster a healthy mindset, and even realize the true nature of the mind, thereby completely eliminating afflictions. It offers multiple benefits, including nurturing the mind, healing illnesses, and eradicating their root causes.

In comparison, psychology primarily addresses illnesses resulting from the excessive development of greed, aversion, and ignorance, while considering these traits as normal psychological states. However, as long as greed, aversion, and ignorance are not eradicated, the potential for illness remains. Therefore, since the last century, the Western psychological community has begun to incorporate



Buddhist teachings and meditation techniques to enhance its theoretical frameworks and therapeutic approaches.

From a certain perspective, life can be seen as a product that encompasses both positive and negative mental conduct. Understanding ourselves involves introspection to see our current state and identify issues that need to be addressed. Only by eliminating defilements and cultivating positive qualities can we become increasingly healthy in character. The ultimate health is achieved by attaining the qualities of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

#### **4. Philosophical Thinking**

Philosophy, also known as “philosophia,” means the love of wisdom. Compared to ever-changing knowledge, wisdom focuses not on phenomena but on essence, including understanding the nature of the world and of life. At its most fundamental, it is the understanding of oneself. Therefore, over 3,000 years ago, ancient Greek philosophers declared: “Know thyself.”

What happens if we do not know ourselves? According to the legend of the Sphinx's riddle, a monster would ask people at a crossroads each day: "What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?" If they couldn't guess, the monster would devour them, causing many to lose their lives. Later, Prince Oedipus solved the riddle by answering: "Human." Because as a baby, a person uses both hands and feet, like four legs; as an adult, they stand upright on two legs; and in old age, they lean on a cane as if they have three legs.

The profound lesson of this story is that if a person does not understand themselves, they will pay the heaviest price. Some may think this is merely a fable unrelated to themselves. However, consider this: if we do not know the value of being human or why we live, and merely drift through life aimlessly—how is that essentially different from losing our life?

## 5. Delusion and Enlightenment

The Dharma teaches that every sentient being possesses Buddha-nature, the potential for awakening. In this regard, buddhas and sentient beings are equal, as expressed in the saying, “The mind, the buddha, and sentient beings—these three are no different.” So why, in appearance, are buddhas and sentient beings vastly different? Fundamentally, it’s simply a matter of delusion and enlightenment.

Delusion is the state of being obscured by inner ignorance. It is like being in the dark, where we inevitably have wild thoughts, worries, and fears. Life is much the same. It is filled with distorted thoughts and countless afflictions when we are lost due to ignorance. Enlightenment is like clearing away the fog to see one’s true nature. This is the core goal of Buddhist practice; only by grounding ourselves in the pursuit of enlightenment can all our actions align with the path. Otherwise, no matter what we do, we will drift further from the path. For

Mahayana practitioners, it is not enough to understand ourselves and progress from delusion to awakening; we must also help others awaken, guiding all sentient beings from delusion to enlightenment.

The above highlights the importance of understanding the self from various perspectives. In terms of learning, it is the foundation of personal development; from a career perspective, it is the prerequisite for success; from a psychological viewpoint, it ensures mental health; from a philosophical angle, it is the essential understanding for being human; and from a Buddhist perspective, it is the key to dispelling delusion and achieving enlightenment.

## II

### WHAT IS THE SELF

When it comes to understanding the self, what exactly represents the “self”?

#### **1. Common Understanding**

We usually think of the “self” as having the following connotations.

Firstly, we often equate “self” with selfishness. For example, saying “you are so self-centered” actually means “you are very selfish” or “you only consider yourself.” From the perspective of Buddhism, this kind of self is similar to

“attachment to self,” which is an attachment resulting from a wrong interpretation of the self.

Secondly, we often use “self” to represent a certain physical and mental state, or a specific individual. For example, when we speak of ourselves, we are referring to the five aggregates that make up our being; when we speak of someone else, we are referring to the five aggregates that make up their being.

Thirdly, we often use “self” to represent the unique aspects of our identity, thereby distinguishing ourselves from others. Every living being has a distinct personality and is a unique existence. In Western humanist thought, self-value is realized through freeing individuality.

Fourthly, from the psychological perspective, the mind is seen as a multifaceted and complex system. Just as an airplane’s ability to fly depends on the interplay of many parts and the fuel, and not on any single component alone, the self operates in a similar way. It is

not a singular entity but rather a systemic function, composed of numerous factors that contribute to its existence.

The above primarily defines the self from a phenomenal perspective.

## **2. The Self in Other Religions**

We know that phenomena are constantly changing—our bodies will perish, and consciousness will dissolve. Therefore, what religion seeks is the essential self, something that can serve as the ultimate reliance of life.

Christianity holds that the physical body will perish after several decades in the earthly world, but the soul is eternal. It will either ascend to heaven for everlasting joy or descend to hell for eternal suffering. Thus, the soul is considered the most essential aspect of existence.

Brahmanism in India believes that the universe has

a Supreme Self, known as Brahman, and individual life has an Individual Self, known as Atman. Through spiritual practice, the Individual Self can merge with the Supreme Self, achieving the state of unity of Brahman and Atman. Compared to the phenomenal self, the Supreme Self is what holds eternal significance.

The above represents the views of common religions, which hold that beyond the physical body, there is a higher essence.

### **3. The Self in Buddhism**

Buddhism's understanding of the self focuses on both phenomena and essence. The phenomenal self, according to Buddhism, is called the "false self." But what about the essence of the self? We know that Buddhism's greatest distinction from other religions is the concept of "no-self." Therefore, the essence of the self that Buddhism discusses refers to the mind. Buddhism believes that everyone possesses a mind that is non-dual in emptiness



and clarity, representing the ultimate existence of life.

To understand the essence of the mind, the prerequisite is to see clearly the false self of phenomena. The reason people have so many afflictions is that they are deluded by the false self. This false self is rootless; because it is hollow, it seeks support everywhere. The problem is that all the supports we can find are impermanent; not only can they not make the false self permanent, but in various changes, they instead impact the false self, thus bringing afflictions and suffering, and further deepening our delusion.

Therefore, understanding both the phenomenal self and its essence of the self is equally necessary. Focusing on the phenomenal self is meant to eliminate delusion and avoid being deceived by the false self, thereby recognizing the true nature of the mind and unlocking the potential for inner awakening.

# III

## PROBLEMS ARISING FROM LOSING THE SELF

What negative consequences might arise in life from not knowing oneself?

### 1. Feeling Insecure

A sense of security is something that modern people are particularly concerned about. For example, the enduring popularity of taking the civil service exams in recent years reflects people's persistent pursuit of job security. Living in this world, we treat our bodies, careers, wealth, and families as the anchors of "self." However, in today's

rapidly changing world, we see more clearly than ever that all these things are constantly in flux, and nothing is truly reliable. Where is the direction of life? What is the meaning of life? If we place our value on external things, we will inevitably feel insecure and rootless.

From another perspective, with the rapid advancement of technology, the tools humans use are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and the weapons more destructive. At the same time, moral qualities have not improved correspondingly; human nature has not become healthier; instead, more problems have emerged. This creates a dual danger for the world. Think of the existing nuclear weapons; think of the conflicts among people; indeed, we can feel that our current situation is precarious. In such a context, the wisdom of Buddha Dharma becomes particularly important. Only by understanding ourselves can we know what provides us with a foundation and a sense of mission in life, and what truly benefits ourselves, others, and the world. Only then do we not fear being swept toward destruction by the torrent of collective karma.

## **2. Misidentification**

Not understanding ourselves means that we will misidentify who we are, which is the root of all afflictions. Clinging to the body as the self, we will fear that we too will disappear as the body deteriorates. Clinging to identity as the self, we will exhaust ourselves in maintaining various identities. Clinging to emotions as the self, we will be swayed by feelings of “I am happy” or “I am unhappy,” leading to deluded thoughts. Whatever we cling to will inevitably control us, turning us into puppets without freedom.

Many things happen in our lives every day, and the impact they have on us depends on our understanding. Starting from self-attachment, every event becomes deeply entangled with us, bringing endless afflictions and harm. Only by observing with wisdom and seeing that everything arises and ceases due to conditions can we accept gains and losses with equanimity.

### 3. Losing Oneself, Chasing Externals

Not knowing ourselves leads to a primal sense of lack in life, driving us to constantly create new desires. These desires push us to chase after external things, and in the process, we develop dependencies. As these dependencies deepen, our desires increase, further strengthening our dependencies. This dependency is not only material but also spiritual. As a result, people today rarely find the capacity to relax and enjoy some quiet time with themselves. Instead, they allow various forms of digital entertainment and social media to occupy every moment outside of their work and life, drawing themselves deeper into the vortex and losing their sense of direction.

Losing oneself and chasing externals is precisely the root of samsara, the cycle of birth and death. Samsara does not necessarily mean the transition from this life to the next; it also represents the repetition of psychological patterns. Some people are trapped in the samsara of power struggles, others in the relentless pursuit of career success,

wealth accumulation, or artistic endeavors. At its core, samsara is an endless cycle of craving and pursuit. If we cannot see ourselves clearly, we will be constantly caught in samsara in various aspects of life, trapped in the mental patterns we create. This cycle then continues from this life into the future. Therefore, understanding ourselves and finding the true foundation of life is the key to transcending samsara.

#### **4. Three Feelings of the Self**

Beyond survival, people generally pursue three feelings: a sense of self-importance, a sense of superiority, and the desire to dominate.

The sense of self-importance, in traditional Chinese culture, is about bringing honor to one's ancestors and becoming a person of high status. Western philosophy emphasizes individual freedom and uniqueness, which is also a pursuit of self-importance. The sense of superiority is primarily achieved through comparison. In the

past, people had a limited range of references, and it was not easy to obtain this feeling. But today, we can see the world's elites and their lifestyles and pleasures through the media at any time. Trying to maintain a sense of importance and superiority in such a reference system is undoubtedly a recipe for self-inflicted misery. As for the desire to dominate, that's even more exhausting. Think about it: we often can't even control ourselves, so how can we control others? How many parent-child and marital relationships have deteriorated because of the desire to dominate? If even the closest relationships are like this, what about others?

So, whose needs are these three feelings ultimately satisfying? What is their value? If examined with wisdom, they cannot withstand analysis. But because we have lost our true selves, we rely on these feelings to maintain a self that is outwardly strong but inwardly weak.

Where does the value of life come from? On the one hand, it comes from enhancing the quality of life. On the other

hand, it comes from benefiting more sentient beings. If we focus solely on pursuing self-importance, superiority, and the desire to dominate, no matter how hard we try, what can we gain? The sense of self-importance adds unnecessary pressure and makes us feel overwhelmed; the sense of superiority leads to comparison and competition, sometimes even vicious competition; and the desire to dominate disrupts the harmony of interpersonal relationships.



# IV

## UNDERSTANDING OF THE SELF IN BUDDHISM

In Buddhism, the “self” is merely a concept designated by a name. So how does Buddha Dharma perceive and describe the self?

### **1. Self-Attachment and No-Self**

Attachment to the self refers to the incorrect belief in an independently existing, unchanging “self” in life. In reality, like all phenomena in the world, life is determined by a myriad of conditions. Without the five aggregates of form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and

consciousness, what is the “self,” and where is it? However, due to ignorance, ordinary beings cling to the physical body—which is merely a temporary combination of the four great elements<sup>1</sup>—and to various mental activities, mistaking both for the “self.” Consequently, this strong attachment creates karma, samsara, and endless suffering.

In Buddhism, another concept associated with the “self” is “no-self.” The notion of no-self can be puzzling, as one might wonder how there can be no “self” when one clearly exists, being able to speak, laugh, and move. However, what Buddha Dharma seeks to negate is not the manifestation of life through dependent origination, but rather the erroneous perception of the self. Only by removing this misunderstanding can we see through the phenomena and discover the true essence of life: the awakened mind.

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1. This refers to the “temporary union of the four elements” in Buddhism. It describes how the physical body is composed of four fundamental elements that come together conditionally and temporarily, without any inherent or permanent existence. These four elements are: Earth, Water, Fire and Wind.

## 2. The False Self of Dependent Origination

Dependent origination means that life phenomena are formed by the combination of multiple conditions, primarily categorized into physical and mental aspects. The physical aspect includes elements like bones, muscles, and organs as discussed in Western medicine, or meridians and acupuncture points as in Traditional Chinese Medicine. The mental aspect pertains to the eight consciousnesses described in the doctrine of Consciousness-Only (*Yogacara*). The first six consciousnesses are eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness, which we can perceive. Additionally, there are subconscious levels that we cannot perceive, namely the seventh consciousness, *Manas*, and the eighth consciousness, *Alaya*, the latter of which stores all experiences accumulated during the continuity of life. All our thoughts, words, and deeds plant “seeds” in the Alaya consciousness, creating potential forces. When conditions ripen, these seeds manifest as actions, which in turn form new

seeds. All these occur in accordance with the law of dependent origination and causality, where such causes lead to such effects. There is no “self” acting as the master.

Some might say: “Since the self is false, why bother with it? Why practice at all?” It is crucial to understand that “false” does not mean non-existent. In reality, when we are hungry, we need to eat, and when we are sick, we feel discomfort. If we fail to properly understand and manage this false self, it can have a tangible impact on our physical and mental well-being, leading to endless suffering in our lives. The Consciousness-Only School speaks of the three natures, with the dependent nature at its core, and considers the understanding of dependent origination as the key threshold in practice. By correctly understanding dependent origination, one can realize emptiness and attain liberation. Misunderstanding dependent origination leads to afflictions and the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, although the “self” is false, it remains an essential tool for cultivating the true nature through the false self.

Everyone wants to become a better version of themselves. But what truly defines a better self? Most people focus solely on external appearances and achievements, while some may seek both inner and outer cultivation, appreciating personal interests and cultural refinement. Yet, these are merely surface-level spiritual activities. On a deeper level, what truly defines us are our mindset and the quality of our being. These two aspects shape who we are: beings trapped in ignorance, afflictions, and delusions, or beings filled with wisdom, compassion, and kindness. Do we cause suffering for ourselves and others, or do we bring joy to ourselves and those around us?

What kind of being we are depends on the components of our false self. If it is composed of negative mental activities, it will continually generate suffering. Take greed, for example: people who are very greedy suffer when they have no money, and even when they have it, they still remain dissatisfied, always wanting more. If greed is not addressed, this kind of suffering is endless. It's like having a virus in the body, constantly causing

problems and leading to illness. That's why understanding and transforming our false self is crucial.

### **3. The Awakened Mind**

Beyond seeing through the false self, what is more important is to understand the awakened mind. But how? Although there are many Dharma methods, they can mainly be categorized into two approaches: gradual cultivation and sudden enlightenment. These approaches are designed according to the different capacities of practitioners. Some are burdened with thick layers of defilements and must “constantly strive to sweep away the dust,” using precepts, concentration, and wisdom to sweep away these defilements, and gradually progress deeper. Others, with sharp faculties, especially during the flourishing of Chan Buddhism, are more likely to break through the duality of subject and object under the guidance of an enlightened master. In special circumstances, they can directly experience their true nature. This directness is possible because the awakened nature is inherently present in all sentient beings, merely

obscured by ignorance. Once it is uncovered, everything is inherently complete and perfect, with nothing lacking and nothing in excess.

Thus, the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* begins by stating, “The self-nature of Bodhi is originally pure and clear. Simply use that mind, and you can attain Buddhahood directly.” This tells us that the awakened mind exists within all beings. This mind neither decreases in the ordinary nor increases in the enlightened; it can generate and encompass all phenomena. It is as vast and infinite as the void, yet possesses the function of clear and discerning awareness. Practice is about realizing this mind, which is no different from the minds of all buddhas. This mind is also referred to in Chan Buddhism as the “original face,” which represents our true self.

It can be seen that Buddha Dharma offers a multi-layered understanding of the self. It not only addresses the phenomenal self but also guides us to realize the awakened nature through practice. This is precisely what sets Buddhism apart from other religions and philosophies.

# V

## THE VALUE OF THE SELF

How can a person realize their self-value in life?

### **1. The Difference in Value Between Freedom and Liberation**

The humanistic movement in the West advocated for the freedom of individuality to spark creativity and realize the value of life. This was a rebellion against the theocratic rule of the Middle Ages, leading to the flourishing of science, art, and philosophy, as well as significant prosperity in material civilization. However, such freedom has also excessively stimulated human desires, resulting in a



range of social and ecological problems.

The core objective of Buddhist practice is liberation, which, like the freedom of individuality, involves breaking free from constraints. The difference lies in that liberation is based on a thorough understanding of the nature of the mind. Although we have Buddha-nature, it remains obscured and unseen due to our current state as ordinary beings. What dominates is often our demonic nature—negative mental states such as greed, aversion, and ignorance. If we pursue freedom blindly and without discernment, it can easily spiral out of control, releasing both wholesome and unwholesome qualities altogether.

Therefore, liberation is directed toward a specific goal. When we talk about liberation, we often see it as crossing from this shore to the other or from this life to another. It may seem like a religious practice that is unrelated to ordinary people. In fact, the focus of liberation is to dispel inner delusion, as well as greed, aversion, and ignorance. From this perspective, everyone needs liberation. When

we counteract a specific affliction, we are liberated from that affliction; when we alleviate a particular suffering, we are liberated from that suffering. Furthermore, we must cultivate positive qualities such as compassion and wisdom. Only in this way can we realize the ultimate value of life.

## **2. The Principles for Realizing the Value of Life**

There are two kinds of values described in Buddhism: mundane and ultimate. To attain either, one must adhere to the following principles.

The first is the principle of cause and effect, meaning that one's values must withstand the scrutiny of causality. Confucianism emphasizes achieving merits and teaching noble ideas, but this is often based on the standards of a particular time and place, without considering the long-term significance of these merits and teachings on humanity. The West advocates for individual freedom, paying little attention to what it ultimately brings to

oneself and society. In contrast, Buddhism believes that self-value must endure the examination of causality. It must be beneficial not only in the present but also in the future, not only for oneself but also for all sentient beings—we should not focus merely on immediate personal gains.

The second is the principle of morality. Many people believe that morality is only a demand from society, not a need of the individual. Therefore, when most people disregard morality, following it oneself seems to put one at a disadvantage. But according to Buddhism, all our words and deeds and even our thoughts are the building materials of life. Just as constructing a building relies on bricks, wood, and cement, the three karmas of our body, speech, and mind are the fundamental components of our character. Positive mental actions create a healthy character, while negative ones result in a flawed character. To realize our self-value, we must adhere to morality. Otherwise, it would be like using inferior materials to construct a dangerous building that is doomed to collapse.

The third is the principle of wisdom. Rationality is a double-edged sword; it can bring development to society and well-being to the people, but it can also cause destruction and suffering. Wisdom, on the other hand, is the understanding of the truth about life and the world. Only with wisdom can we know what is truly beneficial for the development of life and fundamentally transform ourselves. Otherwise, if we cannot even see clearly what the self truly is, how can we realize our self-value? Even if we manage to attain part of it, it will be incomplete and may even bring various side effects.

The fourth is the principle of compassion. Compassion is a crucial component of one's character and the warmth of the world. To elevate ourselves, foster social harmony, and benefit all beings, compassion is indispensable. In my work the *Philanthropic Spirit of Entrepreneurs*, I mentioned that many people equate philanthropy with donating money. In fact, what is more important is that we learn the wisdom culture and cultivate a heart of great compassion and love. By practicing kindness with such a

loving heart, we can not only help others, but also adjust our own mindset, enhance our quality of life, and thereby realize our self-value.

# VI

## CONCLUSION

People all live their lives centered on the self, always considering and being controlled by it. However, the self is often what they understand the least. Due to this lack of understanding, everything they do in service of the self often goes astray. It's like pulling chestnuts out of the fire—intending to gain benefit but ending up suffering hardship and getting hurt. This is the root cause of all problems. Therefore, understanding the self is a significant issue in life.

In the preceding discussion, the self has been explored from five perspectives: that of ordinary people,

psychology, philosophy, other religions, and Buddhism. Through these interpretations, especially Buddhism's analysis of the self, I hope that everyone will realize the importance of understanding the self, thereby embarking on a beautiful life and creating a harmonious and joyful world.

## 国际静心协会、静心学堂简介

国际静心协会（简称 MPI）是 2021 年成立于瑞士苏黎世的非盈利组织，旨在向全球传播佛法智慧和禅意生活。

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