

Bring the Scientists to the Pure Land

帶科學家去極樂世界

A talk given by Bhikshu Jin Gong on

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佛教是真正的科學，而且是真正唯一有用的科學。你或許心裡正思量著：現代科學當然有用，因為它製造了汽車和卡車。然而，這些汽車和卡車果真有益乎？它們能載著我們到淨土嗎？酒後駕車的人經常製造可怕的交通事故；縱使沒有喝酒、頭腦清醒的駕駛者，也會因為突來的車禍事故而身陷苦痛。車子爆胎、公路上的路霸、昂貴的修車費、粗魯的司機、飛天的油價…，我們怎能指望靠這部車到極樂世界呢？

釋迦牟尼佛成道，沒有使用到一部車子、噴射機、電或者電腦。釋迦牟尼佛令許多人成就阿羅漢果，他也沒有使用到一部電視、手機、收音機、Skype、YouTube、電子郵件、網路，甚至也沒有用到麥克風。釋迦牟尼佛早已預見這些東西將為人所知，因為他通曉過去，亦知道未來。

從前有一個人去找釋迦牟尼佛，他問佛陀：「外面那棵樹有多少片葉子？」佛陀立刻就回答出葉子的數目。這個人馬上又想到一個方法來測驗佛陀。他偷偷地從樹上摘下幾片葉子，然後又回去問佛陀相同的問題。他問佛陀：「現在這棵樹上有多少樹葉呢？」釋迦牟尼佛不假思索地給了他一個全新的數字，這個數字比先前回答的少，而且少的數目，正好就是這個人摘下葉子的數量。

沒有任何事物是釋迦牟尼佛不明瞭的。他其實可以跟弟子解釋如何製造到月球去的太空船，但是他看不出登陸月球對他的弟子有什麼好處。他要我們都去極樂世界，所以他教給我們淨土的經典。

我們正處在一個迷惑顛倒的年代。人們仰望著現代科學，並認為那是唯一能解釋因果的東西。他們認為，人只是化學物質的組成，人心及思想不過

Buddhism is true science. It is the only science of what is truly useful. Now perhaps you may think that modern sciences is useful. Modern science can create cars and trucks. But are these cars and trucks truly useful? Can we drive a car to the Pure Land? Drunken drivers cause horrible accidents. Even sober drivers can be in accidents that cause intense suffering. Flat tires, road rage, big repair bills, rude drivers, outrageous gas prices, careless drivers, how can we expect to get to the Pure Land in a car?

Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha without a car or jet plane or electricity or a computer. Shakyamuni Buddha caused many to become Arhats without television, cell phones, radio, Skype, YouTube, pagers, email, internet or even microphones. Shakyamuni Buddha knew that all that could be known. He knew the past and the future.

One time a person went to Shakyamuni Buddha and asked him how many leaves were on a certain tree. The Buddha immediately gave him the number of leaves. Now this person came up with a method to test the Buddha. He secretly removed a few leaves from the tree. And he went back to Shakyamuni Buddha and asked him again, how many leaves were on that tree. The Buddha immediately gave him the new number, smaller than the previous number by the few leaves that were removed.

There was nothing that Shakyamuni Buddha did not understand. He could have explained to his disciples how to make rocket ships that could go to the moon. But he did not see any benefit for his disciples to go to the moon, he wanted everyone to go to the Pure Land, so he gave us the Pure Land sutra.

Now we live in a time when many people are confused. They look to modern science and think that it's the only explanation of cause and effect. They think a person is just a collection of chemicals. They think a person's mind and thoughts are just a result of these chemicals. They think that when the body dies that chemicals

是化學物質間作用的結果。他們認為當人死的時候，這些化學物質分散，人也就不復存在了。現代科學取代了宗教，有信仰的人被看成迷信或是沒有科學知識。

現在我們就來看看一些現代的科學觀念。

一個人的神經系統是藉由兩個系統的平衡來維持：交感神經系統和副交感神經系統。交感神經系統，通常在我們需要做出快速反應的時候，它便會驅動，所以這個系統又稱為「搏鬥」或「逃脫」系統。我們的身體在面對危急狀況時，就會使用這項神經系統，以便做出瞬間有力的回應。

我們體內的一種荷爾蒙「腎上腺素」，就是能讓一個人的力量在極短的時間內，增強到難以思議的程度。以下舉出幾則案例。

2006年，在亞利桑那州一位名叫提姆·博友的男子，看到一部雪佛蘭跑車撞上一個名為凱爾·霍爾特的十八歲男孩。霍爾特被壓在車下動彈不得，但一息尚存。這時博友衝到車禍現場，將整部跑車抬起來，好讓肇事的司機將霍爾特拖出來。

1982年，在喬治亞州的勞倫斯維爾鎮，有一位名叫安琪拉·嘉崴露的女士，她把一部壓在她兒子湯尼身上的雪佛蘭羚羊汽車舉了起來。事發緣由是湯尼在車盤底下工作時，用來架高車子的千金頂突然壞掉，整部1964年出產的汽車便壓在湯尼身上。嘉崴露女士當時不僅抬高車子，還撐得足夠長的時間，好讓她的兩位鄰居換上千斤頂，然後將湯尼救出來。

腎上腺素在當我們碰到威脅的時候，或是很興奮的時候，有很大的噪音、很強的燈光，或者是高溫，不管是室內或室外的高溫，都會讓身體分泌腎上腺素。另外一種荷爾蒙叫做「安多芬」，它是一種內在的嗎啡，在我們交感神經系統亢進的時候也會被分泌。它的作用就像一般的藥用嗎啡、鴉片，或者海洛因一樣，會產生同樣的止痛效果，也會讓人覺得很快樂。

但是和嗎啡、鴉片、海洛因一樣，這個體內嗎啡會讓人上癮。所以當它分泌時，人會發生神經錯亂、焦慮、沮喪，不安、失眠、肌肉痛，以及拉肚子等的現象。

現在來看看另外一個系統——副交感神經系統。副交感神經系統發揮作用，就是人體無需對外界做出即時反應的時候。副交感神經系統與我

disperse, that person no longer exists. Modern science takes the place of religion for them and they look upon religious people as superstitious or unscientific.

Let us look at some of the concepts of this modern science.

The nervous system of a person is balanced between two states - sympathetic or parasympathetic. The sympathetic division typically functions in actions requiring quick responses. It has been called the fight or flight system. Our body uses this system to respond to critical situations that require an immediate, energetic and rapid response.

Adrenaline is shown to increase strength to amazing degrees for short periods of time. Here are some stories of people who went into an extreme sympathetic nervous state.

In 2006 in Tucson, Arizona, Tim Boyle watched as a Chevrolet Camaro hit 18 year old Kyle Holtrust. A car pinned Holtrust, who was still alive underneath. Boyle ran to the scene of the accident and lifted the Camaro off the teenager while the driver pulled Kyle to safety.

In 1982 in Lawrenceville, Georgia, Angela Cavallo lifted a 1964 Chevrolet Impala from her son Tony after it fell off the jacks that had held it up while he worked underneath the car. Mrs. Cavallo lifted the car high and long enough for two neighbors to replace the jacks and pull Tony from beneath the car.

Adrenaline is released by a physical threat, excitement, noise, bright lights or high room temperature or outdoor temperature. Endorphins are also released when the sympathetic system is triggered. These resemble opiates like morphine, opium or heroin because they produce numbness to pain and a feeling of well being.

Like morphine, opium and heroin, it is ease to get addicted to the release of endorphins. Withdrawals from endorphins can cause schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, feeling restless, insomnia, muscle aches and diarrhea



們消化機能有關，它提供細胞養分，排出身體內不需要的化學物質，並修復我們的肌肉及器官。

這兩個神經系統彼此間是互相拮抗。簡化一下這兩個系統的名稱，姑且稱交感神經系統為「應急系統」，副交感神經系統為「更新系統」。一個健康的人，很少使用到應急系統，絕大部分的時間都是在使用更新系統。

什麼事情會刺激一個人去使用應急系統呢？強烈的情緒、電影、憤怒、強音、激動的音樂、壓力、劇烈運動、快速移動的影像（例如開車時或是影片中的）等等。當使用應急系統時，整個人會感覺更有精神和活力，但事實上是在透支身體的能量。

應急系統會讓一個人的身體承受巨大的壓力，同時當我們使用應急系統時，更新系統會關閉起來。這就像讓汽車始終處在加足馬力、全速前進的狀態，而沒有容許車子有足夠的時間進廠維修或是更換機油。身體過度使用應急系統的結果，就是筋疲力竭。

所以身體垮了、壞了，體內毒素累積，人變得疲憊不堪。此時大部分的人會如何回應這些虛弱的現象呢？他們會迫使身體進入應急系統，以取得足夠的精力來度過一天，可是這只會加速身體燈枯油竭而已。他們無法平靜下來讓身體好好地消化食物，供給體內新陳代謝所需的能量。所以身體的排泄系統罷工，體內毒素持續增加。

那麼我們要如何讓身體進入更新系統呢？放下執著，這樣就不會產生強烈的情緒。還有避免看電影，以及聽大聲激動的音樂。什麼樣的活動能夠放慢我們的應急系統，而啟用更新系統呢？那就是繞念坐念，經行和打坐。

如果你知道有人對宗教嗤之以鼻，那你可以跟他們解釋修行能夠使我們更健康，因為它讓我們的身體保持在更新系統或是副交感神經系統的狀態裏，避免長期處在應急或交感神經的系統中。

修行能幫助我們沉靜下來，使身體各項系統修補健全，促進消化功能，排除體內堆積的毒素，因而改善我們的健康。當然，佛法修行的意義遠遠超過保持身體健康這一回事，它同時更提升我們靈性方面的健康。因此讓我們一起到極樂世界的淨土，也順便看能不能帶幾位科學家一起過去！

Now let us look at the other system, the parasympathetic system. The parasympathetic division functions with actions that do not require immediate reaction. It is involved with digestion, providing each of our cells with nutrients, getting rid of unwanted chemicals and repair of our muscles and organs.

Sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions typically function in opposition to each other. Let us simplify these two and call the sympathetic system “the emergency system” and the parasympathetic system “the renewal system.” Now a healthy person uses the emergency system very little. A healthy person uses the renewal system most of the time.

What kind of things stimulates a person to use the emergency system? Strong emotions, movies, anger, loud sound, aggressive music, stress, intense exercise, rapidly moving images, such as from videos or from driving a car. People may feel more alive and energized when they use the emergency system but it is wearing them out.

The emergency system puts a great deal of stress on a person's body. At the same time, using the emergency system shuts down the renewal system. This is like always running a car engine at full speed and not allowing enough time for tune-ups and oil changes. Using the emergency system too much causes burnout.

The body is worn out, unrepaired, toxic and weak. How do people respond to this weakness? They force their bodies into the emergency state to get enough energy to get through the day. This only increases the intensity of the burnout. People cannot calm down enough to properly digest their food. They don't have enough energy to devote to replacing old cells with new cells. Their elimination system breaks down and toxic material builds up.

Now, how do you get your body into the renewal state? Let go of attachments so the strong emotions do not arise. Avoid movies and loud, aggressive music. What kind of activities will allow you to slow down your body's emergency system and use the renewal system? Walking recitation and sitting recitation. Walking meditation and sitting meditation.

If you know someone who scoffs at religious practices, you can explain to them that our practices make us healthier, by keeping us in the renewal or parasympathetic state and keep us from spending too much time in the emergency or sympathetic state.

Our practices help us calm down, keep our bodies in good repair, improve our digestion, eliminate toxins, and improve our health. Of course there is much more to our Buddhist practices than keeping our bodies in good health. We are improving our spiritual health as well. So let us all go to the Pure Land and try to bring some scientists as well.