

Integration of Technology and Life in the Dimension of Being

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Through interweaving and fusion, each civilization is entering into a new stage of evolution. In this rapidly changing age, philosophy should be competent to illuminate the direction and driving principles. Today's world community is searching for the spirit of integration in a new dimension of Being. Between different civilizations, between different religions, between science and religion, between man and nature, between technology and humanity, etc., our age calls for a true philosophy of Being capable of leading them into an essential integration, ceasing the conflict.

To avoid past fallacies of superficial modern reason, committed by the West and later by Asian countries also through imitation, each country should establish the strategy of social development in this dimension. The inertia of modernity is menacing the high-technological society. In the way, we will meet post-modernism first. It is certain that post-modernism approaches this dimension with its merits resting largely in its auto-critique of western civilization. But there is a far distance between auto-critique and synthetic ability of essential integration. We find this ability at the bottom of the Asian culture, in the Awakenings of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Taoism. To harmonize future high-technology society and human values, we need a new philosophical dimension of the Being. Contemporary metaphysics influenced by those Awakenings shows us the opening of this new dimension.

Metaphysical Transformation to Essential Integration

Under the pressure of modernization, traditions had to be broken, shrunk, or fade away. It meant the progress of history that modernity broke

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down the fossilized crust of the traditional feudal societies. But the problem is that, among the traditions expelled by modernity, there were essential elements connecting us to Life and Being. The immature modern reason dichotomized the world affairs too simply and superficially. As it could not read the invisible interconnections, it could not dig deeper the true reality. As a result, it confined us in another artificial dogmatism of dichotomy, let alone attaining the dimension of the Being. In social life, such blindness brought about the *Seinsvergessenheit* and inversion of values.

The Identity Principle and logic of exclusion underlying the western philosophy up to modernity were well criticized by Post-modernism. Its emphasis on the variety, multilateralism, decentralism, protection of minority, and complex structure of dispersion and specialization as the direction of future societies makes possible the coexistence and tolerance between others. But, still there remains far distance from Post-modernism to the essential integration needed for the harmony and mutual encouragement of World Community. The essential integration between different civilizations, between different religions, between science and religion, between man and nature, between technology and humanity can be achieved only in the ultimate dimension where the Being recover its original unity of verity, beauty, and divinity as the universal love itself.

The history of philosophy shows that the evolution of civilizations has attained in this dimension. In this context, the fundamental transformation of Western metaphysics in H. Bergson is very significant. He rightly pointed out the fact that the history of Western philosophy, from its origin, was dominated by the hidden illusions concerning the Being. This fundamental problem has made the history of Western philosophy a series of endless debates and refutations rotating in a confined circle of hidden faults.

This fact has great significance for this paper, because we can see that those metaphysical illusions are underlying the modern confusion between instrumentality and essence which disturbs the desirable relation of technology and human values. Born from this confusion, the paradigms of modern philosophy closed the way to the essence of the Life and Being, driving themselves to self-oblivion and finally to inversion of values. Because, as the instrument, technologies can serve good or for bad, if they

are accompanied by such blind philosophies, the future of the world will be suspicious and dangerous. But, thanks to the transformation of Western metaphysics, we can see what the cause of those illusions and confusions is, to what new dimension our high-technology civilization should change its direction. The Bergsonian genetics of intelligence gives an excellent explanation of the interconnection between these problems. Those illusions and confusions were born when the intelligence molded on the inert matter extended its strong tendency of unlimited reduction to the realm of life. The inhumanity and inversion of values in the high-technological society come from the absurdity of deriving the notion of life from that of death.

The obstinate thick wall of confusions separating the Western philosophy from the true Being broke down by the metaphysics of *durée pure*. H. Bergson indicated that the reality of the Being should be deciphered not in space, but in time.¹ The metaphysical illusions began with the spatialization of time, confusing time with space. We should grasp the reality as the process, mobility itself, and the process is to be perceived in its active interpenetration of the past and the present. This philosophy of Being advances to coincide with the essence of life, and his final message was spiritual *élan d'amour* of open religion. Bergson prescribes to the Western philosophy to return to the origin of misconceptions and faults in the ancient Greek age of 2600 years ago, especially to the school of Elea, and to recommence after correcting them.² In the philosophy of Martin Heidegger deeply influenced by Bergson, the same ideas are expressed in different German vocabularies like *Sein und Zeit*, *Holzwege*, *Seinsvergessenheit*, *Heimatlosigkeit*, *Fundamental Ontologie*, etc.

The fact that we can see the deep influence of Buddhism on this metaphysical transformation of H. Bergson has many important implications for this paper.³ This transformation means the birth of a new civili-

1 Henri Bergson. *Matière et Mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1965), 248. English translation by N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

2 Henry Bergson. *L'évolution Créatrice* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1959), ch. IV.

3 About this important influence of Buddhism on H. Bergson, see my paper "Epistemology for a Harmonized World Order", *Ideals of the Asian Community: Aspirations for a Harmonized World Order* (Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference of the Asian Philosophical Association, Istanbul, 2005), 7-13, available at the website of AsianPA: <http://www.asianpa.net/assets/upload/proceedings/yHTwVAdBVcLteNBb.pdf>.

zation by the fusion of Eastern and Western civilizations. It is possible to save the stray techno-scientific civilization menaced by inhumanity and total collapse. In the globalization age, each civilization will contribute to the humanity with its own merits developed during long history. The Western civilization has brightened the world with science, technology, and democracy, and the great Awakening of the Being which has permeated in Asian cultures from ancient times will open a road to the true World Community. The light emanating from the high dimension of the Being will illuminate our problematic field of knowledge and education. It is in this dimension that the philosophy of the high-technology society should be based, not in the prevalent customary positivism.

We see in history that, even if a new dimension is opened by some pioneers, the inertia of the previous one is so strong that the society still continues to be dominated unconsciously by the old fossilized paradigms or customs for a long time. To overcome this mental limit or obstacle, we should know how it blocks our way to the verity of reality and finally deforms our life. When a state artificially cut from a becoming is fossilized to be an eternal form or principle, its self-oblivion will confine it in a closed circle of literal analysis or simple mechanical efficiency. Positivism is such a case. It drives technological society into a more desolate land.

Inertia of Modern Reason

In the present techno-scientific society, the most widely spread paradigm of conceptions dominating the ordinary way of thinking is to be summed up as positivism. It is natural that the ordinary education is under the influence of this positivism. The crucial problem is that, as the final product of *raison moderne*, positivism inherits its very superficiality and uniformity that are blocking the way to the Being. In this unhappy one-dimensional state of mind, the original unity of verity, beauty, and divinity is broken, and they will be represented in mutual isolation. Just as science and religion confront each other, art and religion have lost their same original ground. In modern times, with the division of art and religion, the essential unity of beauty and divinity has been forgotten, and we worry that, even if art is becoming more and more refined in its techniques, its spiritual

origin is eliminated from us almost completely. We do not know the true messages that art is delivering to us. We have lost sight of the fact that the ultimate meaning of beauty is divinity.

Under the influence of this false philosophy, education is to be misled and reproduce the false relations and false attitudes in life. Forgetting their original interconnections, philosophy, art, and religion are deformed as we see today. In this deformed system of values, what matters is only the maximization of technological efficiency and money. We have seen that, even in the field of philosophy, the Logical Positivism reduced philosophy to a simple analysis of scientific languages, forgetting the fundamental inseparability of synthesis and analysis.

If there are hidden illusions in the basis of the metaphysics of the Being, naturally, through wrong education, they will cause the oblivion of the true reality, or the inversion of value, which will finally deform and oppress life. In the history of the world, we can find many such cases where the hidden unconscious illusions and dogmas have dominated the world in the name of religion or rationality. In effect, a well-organized interest group which could legislate the dogmas has dominated and controlled the society by its uniform principles, sacrificing the majority of the people.

At this point, we cannot help raising questions about the fundamental character of the Western civilization and its historical development. Seen from the aspect of the metaphysics and the ontology, it has repeated the history of illusions, oblivions, and inversions, in spite of the bright success in techno-scientific field. The ironical crisis of today's techno-scientific civilization in which even the survival of mankind is menaced by its own scientific achievements is caused by this dual aspect of the Western civilization. At first sight, this phenomenon may seem self-contradictory. But this self-contradiction is only apparent. We should be able to see how the scientific civilization is estranged from the realization of the true Being through the philosophical misunderstandings derived from those illusions. The rationalism, the intellectualism, and the logos-centrism, misled by those illusions, could not escape from the closed circuit of uniformity and superficiality, incapable of penetrating into the essence of the Being. Those forms of the Philosophy of Identity, captured by its strong tendency of absolute deduction or unlimited reduction, could not accept the heteroge-

neous othernesses of the world. Their metaphysical fault made it impossible for them to enter into the true meaning of life, at the same time closing the way to the community of mankind. In this respect, the western rationalism was transformed surreptitiously into an instrument of exclusion and domination of the otherness. The so called Western modern reason declared itself as the ideal model of the evolution of all civilizations, underestimating other civilizations as the savage, barbarous, or undeveloped. Such an error of extremely linear interpretation of history was a natural result of the superficial *raison moderne*.

The unconscious tendency of the absolute deduction, the monistic reduction, or the uniform totalization makes the Philosophy of Identity fall into the dichotomical way of thinking. The world affairs are divided by two sides, one within the boundary of the definition, and the other outside the boundary of the definition. According to the Identity Principle, the latter should be excluded, expelled, dominated, or annihilated as heretics, or irrationals. The principle or ideology of the Western medieval society is a good example of the mistake of the Philosophy of Identity. Its ideal was to integrate religion, politics, law, economy, arts, culture, and morality into one closed coherent circuit, while excommunicating and extinguishing the others which exist outside that circuit as heretics. The medieval society was a perfect model of a totalitarian society. Such a historical fault did not stop with the end of the medieval age. In modern philosophy, the totalization of knowledge reappeared in the form of Cartesian rationalism, mechanism, dialectical materialism, communism, positivism, etc. And our contemporary techno-scientific society is seriously exposed to the danger of one-dimensional uniformity. Describing history as a battle between totalitarianism and liberal democracy, Karl Popper indicated that identity philosophy encourages a totalitarian mode of thought.⁴ And Jean-François Lyotard called the danger of totalization as “terror against life.”⁵ Fundamentally, it is the false conception of the Being hidden in the root of the Philosophy of Identity that deforms life in the world in various ways.

The history of philosophy shows that the Western traditional rationalism did not recognize the reality of the world. Today, we see that the

⁴ Karl Raimund Popper. *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Hegel and Marx* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 2: 395.

⁵ Jean-François Lyotard. *La condition postmoderne* (Paris: Les Edition de Minuit, 1979), 8.

philosophies which were severely criticized as irrational until the beginning of 20th century give us a deeper understanding of the world. As Bergson rightly indicated, the paradigm of the rationalism, being molded on the inert matter, cannot be the guiding concept in our study of the Being and Life. The sympathy, co-existence, and harmony with the other civilizations and religions, in short, with the otherness, are possible when we open our eyes into the true meaning of the Being and Life. But the traditional Western philosophy, lacking in the vision of the essence and wholeness of the real world, has been confined to the obstinate habit of uniform thinking, which made it closed in the established superficial preconceptions.

Today, positivism, most influential in ordinary life among the various forms of modern philosophies, regards the type of scientific knowledge as the ideal model of knowledge. It is not difficult to see that positivism is the inert prolongation of the modern reason. In his biological epistemology on intelligence, H. Bergson rightly pointed out the fact that the metaphysical illusions on the Being made the confusion between instrumentality and essence in *raison moderne*. Such a uniform thinking, best shown in the Logical Positivism of Vienna Circle, is a case of the happy illusion and self-oblivion, which menace the techno-scientific civilization. The superficiality of positivism makes people blind to the inner reality of the world. It is the vulnerable soil on which the various dangers, psychological, social, or political, can grow.

Generally, deceived by the concept of pure objectivity, the modern reason insisted on the dichotomy of intellect and emotion, objectivity and subjectivity, concept and intuition, giving the full value of reality only to the former and at the same time underestimating and neglecting the latter. Intellect, objectivity, and concept thus defined could not approach the reality of the Being, nor could be conscious of their own origination from the activity of the life. This means that modern reason cannot read at all the processes of experience. The discussion of modern philosophy on experience could not arrive even at the elementary explanation of the representation and perception. The rationalism, empiricism, Kantian constructionism, dialectic, positivism, etc., could not escape from this fault. In these philosophies, the basic concepts like the Being, meaning, experience, knowledge, science, etc., are misunderstood. We cannot help but

being astonished to see that such false conceptions and paradigms have led education and social development planning as the basis of knowledge. It is natural that such conceptions have reproduced false attitudes and deformed relations in social life.

Technology and Religion

Because the dangers menacing the techno-scientific civilization come from the deformed value system like oblivion of the Being or inversion grown from the confusion of instrumentality and essence, the problems cannot be solved solely by the advance of high technologies. That is why the future education should recommence with the new philosophy of the Being. We should completely read again the contents and meaning of experience as the origin of science and religion. On this point, Bergson wrote:

Yet we may admit that mystical experience, left to itself, cannot provide the philosopher with complete certainty. It could be absolutely convincing only if he had come by another way, such as a sensuous experience coupled with rational inference, to the conclusion of the probable existence of a privileged experience through which man could get into touch with a transcendent principle. The occurrence in mystics of just such an experience would then make it possible to add something to the results already established, whilst these established results would reflect back on to the mystical experience something of their own objectivity. Experience is the only source of knowledge.⁶

One of the most important missions of contemporary metaphysics is to decipher the contents and meaning of this privileged experience. Even if it is a very rare special experience, attained through a long and hard spiritual mortification, nobody can deny that it is a given fact. It is the experience of the highest dimension of the Being. The word 宗教 which means religion in Korea, Japan, and China has this implication. Translating the Sanskrit word Siddhanta, 宗 (summit) means the highest dimension

6 Henri Bergson. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. by Audra and Brereton (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), 247-248.

of verity⁷. And 教 means teaching in human language. The etymology of the word 宗教 shows that, in Asian tradition, there is no confrontation between philosophy and religion, no conflict between science and religion. Starting from different places, they advance towards the same summit like in mountain climbing.

Though its essential state is attained only by the religious masters, we cannot say that ordinary man is completely cut off from it. Moved deeply by the works of music, literature, or art delivering the messages of the great souls, anyone can have an experience of meeting an infinite divine world. Is this experience different fundamentally from that of mysticism? Never different, because these experiences are the lights emitted from the same deepest world of our Being, teaching us together by strong emotion about what we are, what the meaning of life is, and what to do. Do these experiences tell us the existence of the transcendental God of Trinity? Or rather do they not tell us that the essence of life we feel in our deepest self is the élan d'amour⁸ itself, and that the profundity of the Being, ordinarily concealed by the manifold thick strata of interests and desires, sends us the flashing light of verity through a crack made for a few seconds by the great spiritual vibration?

The original spirit of open religion is closely related to these experiences. Here, what is the most important is the vivid religious experience and inspiration. The absolute systematization of theology has nothing to do with this original spirit of religion, as it supports the political powers which exclude others for their own interests.

Experience is an indivisible and integrated field of interaction between the subject and the object. In this indivisible whole field, the subject and the object interpenetrate. Preoccupied with the superficial dualism of objectivity and subjectivity, the immature *raison moderne* has led to confrontation and conflict between science and religion. At this level of mind,

7 Interpreting the *saddharma-pundarika-sūtra* (法華經), the Chinese Buddhist monk 天台智者 of the early 7th century used this word 宗教 in his book 法華玄儀. Concluding that the *saddharma-pundarika-sūtra* (法華經) is the ultimate teaching of Buddha, he called it 宗教.

8 Henri Bergson. *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1932), 98. For more detailed discussion, see chap. III, "La religion dynamique".

science is not a true science, religion not a true religion. Here, the old Asian cultural tradition that gives warning to the technique used solely for technique should be reevaluated. In this respect, the Islam tradition in which there is no trouble between science and religion is a good example of the great spirit of integration into the whole.

This spirit of integration coming from the great awakenings of Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam will be the new philosophical basis of the future education. Inheriting this great open mind, the future generations will be able to share together all the merits developed in the different civilizations, encouraging each other. This education will open a road to the true world community. The world will advance toward a new ideal of the unity of philosophy, art, and religion. We call it new only in the sense that we find our original self after a long history of oblivion and wandering.

Awakening of The Being

Jorge Luis Borges, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Ken Wilber, Aldous Huxley, Huston Smith, Thomas Merton etc., affirm that in spite of outer differences of surface religions there is an astonishing sameness in the mystical experiences of in-depth religions. In this ultimate dimension of Being, the verity, beauty, and divinity coincide. The essential integration is attained. The awakening of verity will come with great emotion from the deepest part of our self. This emotion of highest beauty and divinity will reveal us that the essence, meaning, and purpose of life are love.⁹ The true Being underlying all our concepts and values is love itself. Freed from the illusions, confusions, oblivion, and inversions concerning the Being, if high technology civilization is guided by this awakening, we can expect the promised future.

It has been noted by great religious teachers that the experiences and awakenings which have generated the open religions are same. In the state of ecstasy or enstasis,¹⁰ there emerged the following awakenings that

⁹ Bergson wrote: "Une émotion de ce genre ressemble sans doute, quoique de très loin, au sublime amour qui est pour le mystique l'essence même de Dieu", *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, op. cit., 268.

¹⁰ Ecstasy and enstasis are the two different interpretations of the same reality *Samadhi* (三昧).

between the universe and me there is an inseparable connection, that my existence is possible only with the participation of the universe, that all things of the universe interpenetrate each other, that all living beings, in spite of their different forms, have the same value, and finally that the ultimate nature of the Being and Life is charity and love. If it is true that all things arise by universal interaction, the essence of our life is derived from that of the universe, and the religious ecstasy or enstasis will mean the ultimate dimension of the becoming oneness with the universe. The phrases like the union of Heaven, Earth, and Man, union of Atman and Brahman, or the union with God have been used to express this dimension.

We have briefly surveyed the stages in the evolution of civilizations with philosophy. From this fundamental perspective, we could see more clearly the nature and limit of the customary principles guiding social development and education in many Asian countries. The present high-technological phase mixed with tradition and modernity demands to our societies a persuasive ability of new integration. Our work is to overcome the immature level of the modernity, and to open the dimension of the essential integration with the philosophical transformation. Very astonishingly, the essentials necessary for this integration were found in the basis of the old Asian cultures. Until now, we could not see that there are highest spiritual treasures under the thick fossilized crust of tradition. These treasures will emit more bright lights in the high-technological civilization menaced by inversion and inhumanity. Our spiritual heritages will lead us to the Asian Community, and also to the World Community.

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The Role of Faith and Science in the Development of Civilisations

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The philosopher Herbert Spencer argued that science is organised knowledge.¹ Science is a system where beliefs are based on objective methodology and logical reasons designed to analyse the experience of reality. Faith means complete trust or confidence in someone or something based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. Science with faith creates a vision and both these aspects of human thinking and experience can be necessary for human life while neither is adequate on its own. Einstein said that "Religion without science is blind; while science without religion is lame." Here, we are saying that science with faith is a vision. Language incorporates concepts which interpret human experiences; however some languages maps better onto the experience of reality than others. Human observation entails interpretation and a choice of perspective while there can be different perspectives on a single reality. As an example, three famous scientists observed a falling stone in different historical periods: the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that no force was needed for moving a stone as it was moving naturally. Newton saw motion caused by the force of gravity by the earth and Albert Einstein saw a warp in space-time introduced by the presence of a large mass- the earth. The concepts of physics and the word for inertia had not been invented at the time of the Ancient Greek philosopher but appeared in Newton's physics. Although reason makes sense of our experiences and relates them to our world-view, assumptions underlay that world-view and have an influence beyond pure experience and reason, requiring faith to accept something that is not strictly provable. Nevertheless, reason using wrong assumptions will result in wrong answers.

1 UNESCO, 2002, *International Bureau of Education*, 24: 3/4, (1994), 533-54.