

Modern Science and Our View of Moral Values

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Photo date and location unknown

Allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on the very successful Second International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, which has convened eminent scientists of our contemporary age. I am greatly honored to have the opportunity to make some brief remarks at the close of this conference held in the Orient's most modern city, Tokyo, Japan.

First of all, my deepest admiration and gratitude go to the eminent professors of the executive committee who rendered such painstaking efforts to hold this conference and make it a success. Please allow me to express my profound respect and appreciation to this committee, who decided to adopt the subject, "Modern Science and Moral Values," as the theme of the conference, and especially to the professors who in response to the invitation have deeply researched the respective topics that have been brought forth and discussed with enthusiasm.

The common welfare of humanity and the way of science

Once again, I want to extend my deepest congratulations to and appreciation of the participants in this epochal conference. I am going to express my views regarding the theme under the topic, "Modern Science and Our View of Moral Values." I suppose that the conference adopted and dealt with the question of science and moral values because the situation in today's society urgently demands that we address such issues, which, I am sure, have been thoroughly discussed here. I am not alone in the awareness that modern science now shows undesirable side effects, even though, so far, it has contributed tremendously to the welfare of humankind with unceasing and exceptional discoveries and innovations. Men and women of today are losing their subjectivity concerning science and technology. It looks as though the agents of the rapidly accelerating scientific discoveries and its myriad applications are gradually losing the ability to control and guide their scientific work with a universal ethic and pertinent moral values. If this situation persists, it could lead to undesirable and destructive consequences and circumstances in the near future, which will be difficult for us to remedy. I will explain the situation of how our subjectivity has been lost.

Science, it seems, is apt to allow scientists to exclude the questions of ethics and moral values in the process of scientific development. During the history of science, scientific fields have gradually split into sub-disciplines, each becoming more and more specialized. Today, science has become increasingly more analytical and materialistic, utterly ignoring the questions of ethics and moral values. The influence of our existential subjectivity over science seems to have weakened and even evaporated. I am sure that ultimately the most important among the many possible motivations for scientific research is the desire to realize humanity's common welfare, prosperity and peace.

Considering the enormous progress of science and technology, we originally expected and anticipated that

it would facilitate the arrival of the common welfare and happiness of humanity, that it would enhance our subjective position over our natural as well as sociological, economic and political environments. On the contrary, even though scientific achievements so far have focused on improving and developing the environment and on offering new technologies for living, our original desire for science to achieve the welfare, prosperity and peace of humanity is being sidelined and even undermined. Our original desire is for science to achieve the welfare of humanity, which is the subject partner. Although scientific achievements have improved and developed the environment, which is the object partner, science has not taken responsibility for the negative outcomes disturbing the spiritual, mental and physical well-being of individuals, families, societies and nations, and our natural environment. This misalignment and discrepancy between our desire and our scientific and technological achievements finally has caused the weakening and even loss of our subject position concerning the scientific and technological enterprise.

However, it is desirable for science to deal with both the ethical questions arising from our human subjective nature as well as objective problems, such as the improvement of the environment and the development of new technologies for living. I fervently call on all scientists to develop their respective fields on the basis of a solid ethical view of moral values, thus exalting human dignity by adopting a spiritual and unifying methodology as well as a materialistic and analytical one. If we had focused the underpinnings of science on human dignity, the formidable problems of environmental pollution could have been prevented. Here arises the question of human beings' original image, that is, the design of our human nature.

The establishment of a standard of value

My view is that our original design is intended to achieve the harmonious oneness between mind and body. The original human being was supposed to be a being of unity and harmony between his or her spirit and body centered on the purpose of goodness. I view the original purpose of science as embodying the aspirations of both aspects of our existence, spirit and body. This means that such a unified science also incorporates the fields of ethics and moral values.

It may be appropriate to request of science to synthesize rationality and spirituality, to call for a commitment of science to actively pursue the betterment of the world's cultures and peoples. However, in order to integrate ethics and moral values into science, the question of what needs to be the standard of value arises. In general, the standard of value has changed according to historical age and environment. There is a vast difference between the standard of value in ancient times and that of the contemporary age. Also, the standard of value in the Orient differs from that of the Occident. Therefore, to establish a true standard of value for the common benefit and welfare of all humankind, we can only set up as the standard a universal and absolute element that can apply at any time and any place.

The establishment of this absolute standard signifies the establishment of a new view of ethics and moral values. The essence of this absolute standard must be the love that forms the basis of the ethics of the family system. True love in the ethical relationship of the family is an absolute love, agape love, which emits heartwarming joy to all humankind just as the sun emits its light to all creation. This love alone has never changed throughout history, whether in the East or the West. At this point we can think of the one Absolute Being as the one subject of this absolute love. I believe it is most desirable for this Absolute Being to become the ultimate standard of the new view of value.

This Absolute Being is not a conceptual being but is a substantial entity who has revealed Himself throughout human history. We know that in history, many sages and saints, including many religious leaders, have appeared at different times and in different places. Without exception, they appealed to the human conscience and heart, urging the practice of love. When men and women responded and followed their teachings, the peoples and nations enjoyed peace and prosperity; when men and women were obstinate, the nations fell into confusion or decline. Even today the whole of humankind is in confusion and chaos waiting either consciously or unconsciously for the appearance of modern sages and saints to make this love real. Considering all these facts, we can conclude that history has taken a direction of development to realize this love. Therefore, we can only recognize that there has been one central axis functioning in history, consciously and in a certain direction.

I want to identify this substantial being who has played the role of the axis as the Absolute Being. We can see that behind the scenes of human history, this Absolute Being has planned to establish the world of moral values by actualizing love through saints, righteous people and conscientious leaders. Accordingly, my conclusion is that if the whole of humankind will accept this Absolute Being as the axis of human history, the world of moral values will be realized without difficulty.

Finally, I extend to you my heartfelt wishes that the valuable presentations of your research and discussions at this conference will produce epochal results that contribute to the true peace and prosperity of humankind.

Thank you very much.