什么是哲学和什么是佛教哲学

Alex / 2023-09-03 / free_learner@163.com / AlexBrain.cn

本文总结Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction(作者:Mark Siderits)一书中关于哲学和佛教哲学的定义。在下文中,我会阐述该书作者的一些观点,但是也会夹杂自己的一些理解,我并不会特别去区分哪些是作者的观点,哪些是我自己的理解,因为这样很繁琐。不过我会列出相关的原文段落。

什么是哲学?

其他学科通常是以研究对象(研究问题)来进行区分的,比如生物学的研究对象是生命过程,社会学的研究对象是人类社会等等。虽然有些问题是典型的哲学问题,比如"我应该如何生活"或者"我如何认识世界",但这些问题并非哲学专属,比如文学也可以回答"我应该如何生活"的问题,认知科学也可以回答"我如何认识世界"的问题,所以研究对象不能完全用于区分哲学和其他学科。将哲学和其他学科区分开来的更重要的特征是研究方法,哲学更关注的是"如何回答问题"而不是"问题的答案"。学习哲学就是学习如何仔细、批判性地思考问题。

What sets philosophy apart as a discipline is more its concern with how to answer questions than with the answers themselves.

To study philosophy is to learn to think carefully and critically about complex issues.

作为学习者(包括我),通常会想知道过去的哲学研究有没有建立起一些基础知识,就像其他学科一样,有一些公认的"真理"或者"正确答案"。对于这个问题,作者的回答是过去的哲学研究告诉我们"真理是非常复杂的",所有哲学关心的问题都不会有简单的答案。因此,学习哲学的目的之一不在于增加知识(就像其他学科那样),而在于学习论证和分析的技巧。

In all the centuries that philosophy has existed, has it made any progress, come up with any answers?

One response to this question is that indeed philosophy has established something quite significant -- that the truth turns out to be very complicated. None of the simple answers to the questions that philosophy examines is correct.

哲学研究可以分为几个大的领域,一是伦理学(ethics),回答"应该如何生活"的问题;二是形而上学(metaphysics),回答"世界的本质是什么"的问题;三是认识论(epistemology),回答"如何能够认识事物"的问题。针对这些问题,哲学家们发展出了许多不同的理论,但是每个理论都会受到严厉的批评,而哲学研究就是审视这些理论、回答这些批评。

For every theory that has been proposed in metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, there are serious criticisms that have been developed by philosophers. Much of the practice of philosophy involves looking at these objections to a given view and seeing if it's possible to answer them.

综上,哲学在研究内容上是对于伦理学、形而上学和认识论问题的系统研究,在研究方法上以系 统和反思的方式进行分析和论证。

Philosophy, then, is the systematic investigation of questions in ethics, metaphysics and epistemology (as well as several related fields). It involves using analysis and argumentation in systematic and reflective ways.

什么是佛教哲学

如果宗教的定义是关于救赎的理论(soteriology),那么佛教(Buddhism)是宗教。如果宗教的定义是一种信仰而无需运用理智,那么佛教不是宗教。在佛教看来,依靠虔诚的信仰无法获得救赎(salvation),只有通过对于世界本质的理性研究才能获得解脱(liberation)。解脱,用佛教术语叫作涅槃(nirvana),即结束痛苦的状态(no suffering)。佛陀(Buddha)或者乔达摩(Gautama)是佛教创始人,在佛教徒看来,佛陀只是一位老师,他通过自己的才智发现了真理。解脱只有依靠自己来获得,而佛陀或者其他已经解脱的人只能指明方向。这并不是说佛教所有的教义都是受到理性辩护的,而佛教哲学就是佛教教义中可以作为哲学研究的部分。

Buddhism is, then, a religion, if by this we mean that it is a set of teachings that address soteriological concerns. But if we think of religion as a kind of faith, a commitment for which no reasons can be given, then Buddhism would not count.

And salvation is not to be had just by devout belief in the Buddha's teachings. Rather, liberation, or nirvana (to use the Buddhist term), is to be attained through rational investigation of the nature of the world.

Buddhists revere the Buddha as the founder of their tradition. But that attitude is meant to be the same as what is accorded a teacher who has discovered important truths through their own intellectual power.

That [Liberation] is something that one can only attain for oneself; enlightened beings can only help others by giving them pointers along the way.

学习佛教哲学就是学习包含哲学理论和论证的佛教文献。学习的目的不光是了解佛教哲学家给出的结论,更重要的是了解其中的论证过程。通过理性思考,我们可以判断佛教哲学多大程度上反映了真理。

To study Buddhism as philosophy means primarily studying texts. Specifically it means studying those Buddhist texts that present philosophical theories and arguments.

佛教哲学上的发展可以分为三个阶段:早期佛教(Early Buddhism),是佛陀本人及其直接信徒的教义;阿毗达磨(Abhidharma),是对早期佛教教义的系统解读,发展出了严格的形而上学和认识论理论;大乘佛教(Mahayana),是对阿毗达磨的哲学批判,同时发展出了新的形而上学和认识论理论。