

# Ren Xue or Human Life Science?

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Let's talk about the term 'Human Life Science'. Many of you must have felt somewhat uneasy when you first heard this term. The main reason for this problem is the difference between Chinese and Western cultures and languages. The Chinese name of the system we are teaching is 'Ren Xue' (pronounced [ren shueh]). These two words give a precise definition of this system. However, it is very difficult to find an accurate translation for 'Ren Xue' in English. The first word 'Ren' means 'people' or 'humans'. 'Xue' refers to 'xue wen' which can be defined as: 'a body of knowledge or information (and the application of this knowledge or information) developed through serious investigation and exploration of a subject using a systematic approach'. This body of information

or knowledge should have a certain level of depth. For example, scientific research and the results of such research can be seen as 'xue wen'. Arts disciplines with developed bodies of knowledge or systematic theories can be seen as 'xue wen'. So what is our 'xue wen' about? It is about human life. 'Ren Xue' is a perfect Chinese description of our system. We tried to find an English equivalent for 'xue' or 'xue wen'. The closest we came up with was the term 'science'. This choice of word has become a source of problems which really need to be dealt with at this time. Some students and even teachers have real difficulty in accepting this translation. Although a name is only a name, we certainly don't want people to be put off at first sight when the intention is that the system is meant for everyone. Due to the fact that it is hard to find an exact equivalent for it, we have now decided to use the Chinese title 'Ren Xue' as another name for the system. As with Dao, Tai Chi, Yin and Yang, using the original Chinese may be the best approach. Hopefully 'Ren Xue' will become a familiar term to most people in the future. Language is created by hu-

mans. When it is inadequate for accurate communication, we need to create something new. Later on, we may even need to have a Ren Xue dictionary for all the new terms we are using.

Is the name 'Human Life Science' really that inaccurate? Actually, looking at the matter from a fundamental perspective, this name is not only precise and accurate but also future-oriented. Why then do people feel uneasy about it? The problem lies with the pattern which has become established in their reference systems. What is the immediate association when people see or hear the word 'science'? Usually they think of 'modern' science which is based on empiricism. If you think this way, you may have forgotten an extremely important point we covered in an earlier discussion of science. Does modern science represent the ultimate development of science? Far from it. Science is in a continuous process of development and 'modern' science is still at a level on which the paradigm it is based is very narrow and there are serious limitations in terms of the way the laws are discovered. Anyone with a basic level of cultivation of science consciousness has to agree with this. Problems arise when modern science is seen as an absolute paradigm representing absolute truth. Anything that doesn't fit into the paradigm is then seen as unscientific and there-

fore of little value. Take the science of human life as an example. On what is the modern version of the science of human life based? Empiricism. This science of human life has two main focuses. One is the science of the physical body, which is based on physics and chemistry. Subjects such as anatomy, physiology and human biology are examples of that. The other focus of the modern science of human life is on the non-physical, the discovery of the laws of human life in areas such as consciousness, psyche, behaviour and mental health. Science in both the physical and the non-physical domain has developed dramatically and provides valuable knowledge in these areas. However, this scientific paradigm can still only provide an incomplete understanding of human life. Life cannot be seen as a whole because there is no integration of these two areas of study. Sometimes they are even seen as two separate and unrelated aspects of life. So in modern science, the understanding of life is not holistic. Life has to be dissected in a certain way. At the moment, it doesn't look as though modern science is proceeding in the direction of acknowledging the holistic reality of human life. How can we deal with this problem? Let's look at this from a particular perspective here. Beyond the actual practice of science, there is the level of cultivation of science consciousness. This is an important issue to look at, not only for scientists but for all of us. It has been explained in Part 1, Voyage to the Shore. I won't repeat it here. There is also another level, higher again, namely the spirit (or the essence) of science. This refers to the continuous effort to explore the objective laws of objective existences and to use the results in the service of humanity and human society, promoting the advancement of

health and life and the continuous development of human civilization. Looking from the vantage point of the spirit of science, what do you think of the current level of science? You can see how there is a serious problem when things don't

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fit into the framework of modern science; they are condemned as unscientific, as pseudo-science or as false. If the spirit of science is to discover 'truths' for the betterment of humanity, can modern science deliver absolute truth? Of course not. In fact far from it. Why is the aforementioned attitude (that the modern, empirical version of science is the only true science) so common among scientists as well as ordinary people? This results from the absence of basic cultivation of science consciousness. Let's use Qi as an example. True laws or truths should be objective existences. Is Qi an objective existence in the universe? Is the law of Qi a form of objective existence? How about Qi in the human body? Is it an objective existence which is an integral part of human life? We know the answers are positive. However, in

the model of modern science, Qi does not exist because it cannot be proven to exist through the empirical methodology of science i.e. using physical or chemical equipment to make measurements. At most, modern science may recognize certain phenomena or certain effects of Qi but that is not enough to make Qi 'scientific'. Any theories or methods based on Qi must be pseudoscience. Anything that cannot be proven to exist by the techniques of modern science must be non-existent or unreal. Qi, which is so real and so important, is beyond the scope of modern science. Let alone the laws of Qi such as those pertaining to its relationships with the physical body, with consciousness and with the laws of consciousness. It is not likely that we can rely on empirical science to discover these important existences and build a body of true knowledge in these areas. It is therefore similarly unlikely that empirical science will provide fundamental solutions for dealing with human problems in these areas. It is a matter of the direction of modern science rather than time. Time will not change the situation

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much when the direction remains the same. It requires wisdom for a change of direction to occur. Use of special abilities as a tool for the new type of exploration will also be nec-

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essary. After all, isn't it strange to use machines invented by humans who don't have much wisdom to investigate and understand human life and then to assume that the results these machines produce provide true knowledge of human life. I am not saying this approach is totally valueless or meaningless. For example, some machines can be very useful for diagnosis. However this approach can at best provide only partial understanding.

This has also been an issue in China. In China, TCM is an important system for medical care and health maintenance. Nowadays TCM is called TCM science by professionals using it. Scientific models have been introduced and established in the education system and in the practice of TCM. The highest scientific authority in China recognizes TCM as a science. However, this recognition is not well accepted by all in the conventional medicine camp. Some even maintain that TCM does not have a sound foundation. This issue has been a source of controversy for a long time and it will probably be many years before we see the end of it. The theoretical base and the applications of TCM are totally beyond what em-

pirical science can prove. How can it prove the existence of Qi, of meridians, of points, of Yin and Yang? The only conclusion you can expect to be drawn from subjecting TCM to the analysis of modern science is that TCM is unscientific. Is TCM really not scientific? It is actually more scientific than conventional medicine, because it is closer to the truth with its understanding of the law of the holistic reality of life. Diagnostics and treatment methods are based on a comprehensive theoretical base and, more importantly, it is a very effective medical system. In some areas much more effective than conventional medicine.

The reason why I am taking so much time to talk about the meaning of 'science' is that I can see that many of you have been confused by the narrow meaning of 'science'. Some of you think that our naming the system 'Human Life Science' is a misuse of the word 'science' or, even worse, is as described in the Chinese expression 'hanging sheep heads to advertise but selling dog meat in the shop'. We are not using the word 'science' to pretend to be a science as in modern science. We are 'hanging sheep heads and selling the whole sheep'. Looking at Ren Xue from the perspective of the long-term development of human society, it is the true science of human life. Ren Xue is the essence of wisdom deriving from both ancient eastern cultures and modern achievements. It is very old and yet, at the same time, it is the science of the future. Ren Xue is the science which can provide us with the understanding of human life necessary for the moving forward of human society and human civilization. Ren Xue is also the science needed to enable modern science to develop a holistic approach and an integrated understanding of human life. Otherwise, under the par-

adigm of modern science, human life will always be cut into pieces and left in a split state. The pieces can never be put together. Although I knew that the translation 'Human Life Science' was not the best in the current environment, I didn't approve this translation without good reason. It wasn't a decision made lightly. You must now be wondering why, if the translation is correct, we have to change it? Because we want knowledge of the system to reach anyone and everyone. We don't want people to get stuck on the name and not go any further. In the end, what it is called is not that important. It is just a symbol after all. What really matters is actually the content. I am glad that we have taken this opportunity to deepen our understanding of the meaning of science. From here on, the terms 'Ren Xue' and 'Human Life Science' can be used interchangeably or together as in 'Ren Xue - Human Life Science'. Some teachers prefer to use Zhiheng Qigong when they teach their students. That's not a problem because Zhiheng Qigong is an important component of Ren

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Xue. Can you just call it Qigong? Of course you can - for the same reason. The important thing is that, no matter what you call it, you try to use the whole system in the most effective way to benefit yourself and the people you try to help.