

【宏觀視野】

Self and Person in a Non-anthropological View⁺

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Many thanks for inviting me to join this conference. In the last thirty or forty years I have given many lectures in Europe and America, but I have spoken only a few times in Asia, twice in Taipei and once in Macau. This is because I am specialized in European philosophy. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, etc. are quite important fields for me but not in the sense that I am engaged in any philological textual-critique about them. They are important for me only as the ground or the spiritual soil of East Asian thinking. While I am engaged in Western philosophy, my thinking is rooted in the East Asian religious-ethical thought. So, I am very happy to have this opportunity to talk about some of my views on the East Asian thought.

First, I would like to make some remarks on the methodological perspective in which I treat

the conference topic, "self and person." The English word "person" goes back to the Latin word "personare," that is, "sound through (personare)." In ancient Greek theatre, this word referred to the "mask" through which characters that appear on stage speak aloud. In the Christian theology, it was and is used in the sense of the three divine characters: God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit, and these three personages constitute the essence of God. This doctrine of the "trinity" seems more important than the etymology of "mask" because it forms the core not only of Christian theology but also of European philosophy on the whole in the medieval and early modern ages. This etymological and theological background of the word "person" requires some linguistic and methodological reflection when we discuss the concept in East Asian thought.

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When I was invited to this conference, I found the theme of the conference quite exciting. At the same time, I asked myself which East Asian concept would be used for "person." Today this word is translated usually, at least in Japan, as 人格 (jap.: jinkaku; chin.: réngé). But, it is a relatively new word for the translation of "person" that appeared in the modern age and is not found as an established term in the ancient texts of the East Asian thought. Strictly speaking, there is no word in East Asian philosophy or language which corresponds to the European word "person" in the narrow sense. One may say that this is no problem when we start, not from the European, but from the East Asian concepts and take into account English or other European languages. But, if we exclude European languages and discuss the matter only in our own East-Asian languages, we encounter another problem, namely, that the discourse remains a monologue without reference to a global or intercultural discourse. Furthermore, we encounter remarkable differences of the meanings of the same words between Chinese and Japanese language, as shown below.

One keyword of this conference, besides "person," is "self." In Japan, this word is translated as "自己" (jap.: jiko; chin.: zìjǐ). Many expressions are built using this word: "self-introduction" 自己紹介 (jikoshōkai)、"self-intoxication" 自己陶醉 (jikutōsui)、"self-advertisement" 自己宣傳 (jikosenzen)、"self-control" 自己制御 (jikoseigyō)、"self-exhibitionism" 自己顯示 (jikokenji), etc. But, in Taiwanese or Chinese, these expressions are not constructed with "自己" (zìjǐ) but with "自我" (jap.: jiga; chin.: zìwǒ): 自我介紹 (jièshào), 自我陶醉 (zìwǒ táo zuì), 自我宣傳 (zìwǒ xuānchuán), 自我檢查 (zìwǒ jiǎnchá), 自我表現 (zìwǒ biǎoxiàn). On the level of an everyday-communication between Chinese and Japanese

languages, we only need to exchange the two words "自己" (jap.: jiko; chin.: zìjǐ) and "自我" (jap.: jiga; chin.: zìwǒ). But this exchange does not always function. For example, if a Japanese sees the Chinese expression 自我檢查 (zìwǒ jiǎnchá), he or she must consider what it means, and can only assume that it means a kind of psychological analysis of one's own character. More or less the same difference is to be found in the Chinese expression 自我表現 (zìwǒ biǎoxiàn), which means not only one's self-expression but also self-exhibitionism, but a Japanese will understand it in a limited psychological context. When a little child resists his or her parents, or shows expressly his or her own wishes with gestures or words, we say, the child makes his or her 自我表現 (zìwǒ biǎoxiàn), namely the expression of his or her own "ego."

A further difference should be pointed out. In Japanese the word "自己" (jap.: jiko; chin.: zìjǐ) is used as a noun, a substantive, corresponding to the "self" in English. Every Japanese will understand this English word "self" mostly as "自己." But, the contemporary Chinese word "自己" is, so far as I see, is mostly used as an adjective, and not the translation of the self as a noun. (Please correct me if I am wrong.) The organizer of our conference probably had difficulties in giving the title of the conference at the same time in English and Chinese. The English title is "Self and Person," and the Chinese is: "自我"與"個人." As the second word "個人" (gèrén) is always understood in Japan as the "individual," we Japanese must be confused that it should correspond to the word "person." If a Japanese translates this Chinese title into English, the title must be "The 'I' and Individual," and not "Person and Self." The "自我" (zìwǒ) as well as "個人" are, like the word "人格," not to be found in ancient texts, so far as I see, because these are also modern philosophical terms

transferred from Japanese. Originally the Chinese characters were introduced in ancient times from China to Japan, but many modern philosophical terms were introduced from Japan to China, whereby some shifts of meaning have taken place. So, the characters are called in Europe "Sino-Japanese" characters.

For our conference, one more difference should be pointed out: The word "我" (wǒ) means in Japanese "I," but in some contexts also the "ego" in the sense of the egoistic subject. Meanwhile, it seems to me that in the contemporary Chinese language this word is quite neutral or even positive, so that the word "自我" (zìwǒ) is used in principle as a positive expression. The difference between Japanese and Chinese use of this word may have its one of its roots in cultural history. In Buddhism, which has influenced the Japanese culture decisively in its late-ancient and medieval ages, the "我" should be negated. But, in China Buddhism has, after it reached its peak in the Táng and Sòng dynasties, never surpassed Confucianism in its influence, and the latter remained the main stream of the thought in China, so far as I understand. Buddhism declined since the Qīng dynasty. The history of the mutual influences and controversies between Buddhism and Confucianism in China is long and not simple, but one could say that, on the whole, the main stream of thought was formed by Confucianism, in which the "我" was never radically negated, but rather maintained. There will be some experts at our conference who can give exact information about this history. I myself would like to point out only the fact that the terminological difference between Chinese and Japanese language regarding "self" or the "person" is perhaps related to the cultural and spiritual histories of both nations.

This problem of the intra-Asian difference of the meaning of the same words will not appear, so long as the discourse is made among the

compatriots at a conference in Taiwan or Japan or China. It will also be no problem, when English is the only official language. For, in this case, Japanese or Chinese words only need to be understood by way of their English translation, like the conferences in the field of natural sciences. *But in a philosophical conference where just the original meaning or the deep sense of the traditional concepts in East Asian philosophies are to be sought and discussed, and in an open intercultural dialogue with Western philosophy, we should make some methodological reflections and not remain in mere conceptual explanations which alone would not be very fruitful.*

A proposal that I would make is the *hermeneutic-phenomenological* way. We don't know yet how the "self" or the "person" in East-Asian thought can be made understandable in an interculturally open philosophical dialog. We should try to find out their sense by some hermeneutic interpretations of the texts handed down from the ancient times.

Because of the shortness of the time, I limit myself mainly to one representative text, the *Zhuangzi*, more exactly, to one passage from it. Other texts will be quoted only incidentally. The reason why I choose this passage will become clear in the following description. Let me quote this passage:

(1) 莊子與惠子遊於濠梁之上。莊子曰：「儵魚出遊從容是魚樂也。」惠子曰：「子非魚，安知魚之樂。」莊子曰：「子非我，安知我不知魚之樂。」惠子曰：「我非子，固不知子矣。子固非魚也，子之不知魚之樂，全矣。」莊子曰：「請循其本。子曰：『女安知魚樂』云者，既已知吾知之而問我。我知之濠上也。」（《莊子·秋水·17》）

The Taiwanese and Chinese colleagues will understand the text without problem just by reading it. As I cannot read aloud the Chinese text,

I read it now in my translation, exactly speaking, a literal translation I made from a German translation which I will mention later in a certain context:

Zhuangzi and Huizi stood on the bridge that spans Hao. Zhuangzi said: "Look, how the perlit-fish are swimming around swiftly! This is the joy of the fishes." "You are not a fish," said Huizi, "How can you know that the fish are enjoying it?" "You are not me," responded Zhuangzi, "How can you know that I do not know the joy of the fish?" "I am of course not you," said Huizi, "so I do not know you. But I know that you are not a fish. Therefore, you can not know the joy of the fish." Zhuangzi responded: "Please, let us return to the beginning. You asked me: 'How can you know that the fish are enjoying themselves?' In reality, you knew that I know, and asked me still. At any rate, I have known it on the bridge."¹

The conception of the "person" and "self" for Zhuangzi could be found out in detail by some analysis of this passage. Usually, one believes that I am me, and you are you, I am not you, and you

are not me. Zhuangzi says that the fish are enjoying themselves and playing joyfully, but Huizi, who is known as a logician, asks Zhuangzi how he can know the joy of the fish. Between human beings and fish lies a deep gap. The same gap must also exist between Huizi and Zhuangzi. Therefore, Huizi is right in saying that he does not know Zhuangzi, and this means that the latter cannot know the joy of the fish. But Huizi did not notice at this moment that if there was only this gap, without any mutual understanding, then he would not have been able to ask his partner and say to him: I am not you. In reality, he talked to his partner on the bridge. This means also that he understands somehow the other person. Therefore, Zhuangzi could say: "In the end, you know that I know the joy of the fish."

But some further problems remain to be checked. If Zhuangzi on his part asserts directly that he knows the joy of the fish, he remains ignorant of the gap which Huizi has noticed. This gap seems to be deeper between the human beings and the fish because the latter don't speak any language in a usual sense, so that it could be said, Zhuangzi does not fully know the joy of the fish.

There are some Western philosophical or

1 Martin Buber, *Reden und Gleichnisse des Tschuang-Tse* (Leipzig: Verlag, 1921), p. 62: "Tschuang-Tse und Hui-Tse standen (遊) auf der Brücke, die über den Hao (梁) führt. Tschuang-Tse sagte: 'Sieh, wie die Elritzen umherschellen (出遊)! Das ist die Freude (樂) der Fische (魚).' 'Du bist kein Fisch,' sagte Hui-Tse, 'wie kannst du wissen (知), worin die Freude der Fische besteht?' 'Du bist nicht ich,' antwortete Tschunag-Tse, 'wie kannst du wissen (知), dass ich nicht wisse, worin die Freude der Fische besteht?' 'Ich bin nicht du,' bestätigte Hui-Tse, 'und weiß dich nicht. Aber das weiß ich, dass du kein Fisch bist; so kannst du die Fische nicht wissen (不知).' Tschuang-Tse antwortete: 'Kehren wir zu deiner Frage (本) zurück (循). Du fragtest mich: 'Wie kannst du wissen, worin die Freude der Fische besteht?' Im Grunde wußtest du, dass ich weiß, und fragtest doch. Gleichviel. Ich weiß es aus meiner eigenen Freude über dem Wasser (梁上)."

For the sake of the following description another German translation is given: "Tschunag-tse lustwandelte einst mit seinem Freunde Hui-tse auf einer Brücke. Tschuang-tse sprach: 'Wie munter springen und tummeln sich die flinken Fische! Das ist die Freude der Fische.' Hui-tse sprach: 'Du bist kein Fisch, wie kannst du da der Fische Freuden kennen?' Tschuang-tse sprach: 'Du bist nicht ich, wie kannst du wissen, ob ich nicht doch der Fische Freuden kenne?' Hui-tse sprach: 'Ich bin nicht du, und darum kann ich dich allerdings nicht völlig kennen. Aber fest steht, daß du kein Fisch bist, und damit ist vollkommen klar, daß du der Fische Freuden nicht kennen kannst.' Tschunag-tse sprach: 'Bitte, laß uns zum Ausgangspunkt zurückkehren! Du sagtest: 'Wie kannst du denn der Fische Freuden kennen?' Du wußtest dabei schon im voraus, ob ich sie kennen, und fragtest doch. Ich kenne der Fische Freuden aus meiner Freude, ihnen von der Brücke aus zuzusehen!' (Aus: *Tschuang-Tse, Dichtung und Weisheit*, Aus dem chinesischen Urtext übersetzt von Hans O. H. Stange [Insel Verlag, ohne Angabe des Erscheinungsjahrs, 1954].)

For a detailed interpretation of this passage, see the author, "Heidegger, Heidegger und Tschuang-Tse über das 'Spiel'," in: Idem, *Deutsch-Japanische Denkwege*, vorgesehen Dezember 2013.

psychological theories which try to explain this discontinuous continuity not only between different human beings but also between human beings and all objects which they observe. A well-known one is the theory of "empathy (Einfühlung),"² which says that we as human beings project our own feelings onto the objects, so that they say, this flower is elegant and alive, or that earthquake was tremendous. But, regarding this theory of empathy Huizi will say, "Such a feeling is nothing but a projection of one's own subjective feeling, which has nothing to do with the reality of the objects. If you feel that Mr. A is sympathetic, it does not mean that Mr. A is really sympathetic. If you feel that the past typhoon was formidable, the typhoon itself has no feeling." As long as the theory of empathy starts with the "I" as a subject which observes the objects, neither the real "person" of this subject nor the "self" of the objects can be reached. The foreignness or the alienness of the others cannot be overcome using the scheme of subject-object, no matter how self-evident it may look. German philosophy since Kant as well as the phenomenology of the 20th century has always pointed out the limitation and the boundary of this scheme, which is exposed above all in recognizing the otherness of the others. Not only in epistemology but also in contemporary religious thought the problem of the otherness of others is actively discussed.³

Another theory of explaining the possibility of mutual understanding between subjects is the transcendental phenomenology of "intersubjectivity," as was submitted and developed by Husserl. But, the conception of intersubjectivity is limited to the epistemological structure of the consciousness as the cognitive ability of human beings. Husserl has never thought about the intersubjectivity of the fish.

Huizi would say to Husserl: "In your position, you must humanize the fish in order to be able to understand the joy of the fish, but the humanized fish are not following the way of their own self. So you cannot know the joy of the fish themselves."

Husserl would perhaps refute Zhuangzi by saying: "You, the sage saint, you call yourself in your conversation with Huizi with the word "我" (wǒ) three times, and "吾" (wú) one time. Both words mean "I," the first person, the subject. You call your dialogue partner Huizi with "女" or "汝" (rǔ), and he calls himself also with the word "我" (wǒ). Each of you is the talking subject, the "I," and each discusses the fish which are the objects for you. If I cannot know the joy of the fish, as you assert, you also cannot because you have the same problem which you describe to me."

In the face of this argumentation we must return to the text of Zhuangzi who says to Huizi: "請循其本" (Please, let us return to the beginning). The word "本" in this sentence should be understood not only in the temporal sense as the "beginning." It should suggest also the "essential origin." This Chinese character can mean both. The question is, what kind of way of being the "I" "我" (wǒ) or "吾" (wú) is, when Zhuangzi calls himself with these words. What is happening or emerging in the essential origin of the event? Isn't it that Zhuangzi sees the joy of the fish?

Let us look at the situation in which the dialogue between Zhuangzi and Huizi was made. An important word comes twice at the beginning: "遊" (yóu). At first in the first sentence: "莊子與惠子遊於濠梁之上". I read this sentence above in a literal translation of a German translation: "Zhuangzi and Huizi stood on the bridge." The word

2 Theodor Lipps, *Ästhetik. Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst. Erster Teil: Grundlegung der Ästhetik* (Hamburg/Leipzig, Voss, 1903), S. 107ff.; Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1987), [Hua I, §§43-62](#).

3 This is to be seen above all in Judaic religious thought the representative argumentations of which are to be found for example in E. Levinas, *Totalité et Infini* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhof, 1961), see above all pp. 75.

"遊" (yóu) is translated merely with a simple word "stand." Usually, this word is translated with "playing," "gaming," "enjoying," etc., the state of the action without any obligation or necessity, unstressed, and the action itself has its own sort of purposes and rules. It comes for the second time in the next sentence: "莊子曰：「儵魚出遊從容是魚樂也。」" The English translation from the German was: "Look, how the perlitte-fish are swimming around swiftly. This is the joy of the fish." The German word "umherschellen" is artificial. The translator must have considered how to translate better the word "遊" (yóu). But, the word "umherschellen," moving around swiftly, seems to mediate only a spatial and external way of movement, and not the inner joy of playing or gaming.

Once the German philosopher Martin Heidegger has mentioned this passage in a dialogue with a circle of the audience of his lecture. He showed this translation to the circle because he wanted to use this passage in advocating his thought of "being-together" (in German: "Mit-sein").⁴ But, he did not know that in the translation he used the decisively important word "遊" (yóu) remained untranslated.⁵ The translation merely with "stand" is too terse, not only in a linguistic but also in a philosophical sense, because this word means in principle the same way of being that is called "自然" (zìrán) or "道" (dào). These words are, as everyone knows, the key-concepts of Taoism. The word "遊" (yóu) appears often in the text of

Zhuangzi 莊子. It appears of course also in *Dào Dé Jīng* 道德經 of Laozi 老子. Neither with Zhuangzi nor with Laozi is this word used as a special term like "自然" or "道." But in Buddhism it has become a term for a human being which has attained the ultimate awakening as well as for living and moving things like animals, birds, clouds, etc. which express respectively the way of "自然" (zìrán). In Buddhism a bodhisattva is named "遊戲觀音" (yóuyì guānyīn), because this bodhisattva finds himself in a way of "遊" (yóu). In Zen Buddhism, this word means the final and endmost expression of the free being attained by way of the practice. Heidegger tried to explain his idea of "Being-together" with the parable of Zhuangzi and the joy of the fish without knowing that the word "遊" (yóu) was not translated in the text which he made use of. If he had known the deep meaning of the untranslated word "遊" (yóu) he would have not have merely quoted the parable but would have begun to deepen his still subjective conception of the "Being-together."⁶

Let us translate the word "遊" (yóu) tentatively with "gaming" or "playing" which is free from any purpose or the obligation given from outside of it. It has two poles. The first is that this act is done also by small and innocent children with their toys. The another is that it requires the utmost sincerity, techniques, and experiences. Both poles have in common that they are free from all bindings of politics, economy, human relations, etc. Remember the ancient account that

4 According to an account of Petzet, Heidegger talked after his lecture "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit" with a circle of the audience. Someone has asked a question, if a human being can put himself into the position of the others. As a risk emerged that the dialogue would fall into a psychological chitchat, Heidegger picked up the text of Zhuangzi and read the passage of the "joy of the fish" to the circle. See Heinrich Wiegand Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen. Begegnungen mit Martin Heidegger 1929 bis 1976*, (Frankfurt a. M.: Societäts Verlag, 1983), S. 24. According to Otto Pöggeler, Heidegger came back to the text of Zhuangzi in order to explain his standpoint of the "Being-together" ("Mitsein"), to argue against the standpoint of the intersubjectivity of Husserl. See Otto Pöggeler, "Heidegger and Lao-Tse" (jap.), in *Riso*, Nr. 634 (Tokyo, 1987), S. 129.

5 See the note no.1.

6 Otto Pöggeler pointed out also that the parable of Zhuangzi is deeper than the "Mitsein" of Heidegger (See the note No. 3), but he also did not know that the attentively made translation of the word "遊" was left out.

the Greek philosopher Heraclites once passed the time in a temple playing with a child with a dice. A philosopher and a child can join in playing a game. The playing is not only limited to a human act. Also, the movement of the cosmos could be seen as a game-playing, as long as it has no binding purpose and goal, also the same structure can also be regarded as Nihilism, as was thought by Nietzsche. In Europe there are some modern theories of the game-play like Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938) or of Roger Caillois's *Les jeux et les hommes* (1958), which show these two poles. But, they look neither into the dimension of "自然" or "道," as is shown in East Asian thought, nor into the Nihilism radically thought by Nietzsche or Heidegger, or the philosopher of the Kyoto-School Keiji Nishitani.⁷

Let us go back to the question raised before: What state of affairs is emerging regarding the "person" and "self" as Zhuangzi saw the joy of the fish? Both, Zhuangzi and the fish, are from the beginning and in their essential way of being in the state of "遊" (yóu) which is natural and in which everything is, as it happens. It is therefore synonym with "自然" (zìrán), or "道" (dào). In this way of being, the gaming players have no ego-consciousness, they are without the deliberate "I." To say it with a Buddhistic term: They are in the state of "non-ego" (無我 wúwǒ). Already while strolling with Huizi on a bridge over a stream and looking down to the fishes, Zhuangzi was in accord with the fish which were playing and enjoying in the same state of "無我" (wúwǒ) as he himself.

Zhuangzi uses the term "我" (wǒ) or "吾" (wú), the "I." But this "I" has no way of being a

"person" in the sense of divine character or a subject, let us suppose the transcendental subject as in the philosophy of Kant or the phenomenology of Husserl. Zhuangzi will say, this "I" reaches its self only through becoming "I-less;" the "self" of the ego is not again ego-like, but non-ego, so much as the "self" should never be understood as "I."

I will not go further into the Buddhist thought in which this "non-ego" (無我 wúwǒ) is radicalized to the thought of "空" (kōng). Instead, I would like to point out one philosophical consequence of this "無我" (wúwǒ) in the state of "遊" (yóu). What is the state of the mind of this non-ego? In other words, to ask: What is the ultimate state of "知" (zhī) for this I-less "I"? If the self of the ego is not ego, but non-ego, its ultimate mind must be a kind of "不知" (bùzhī). When Zhuangzi says in the text "我知之濠上也" (I know the joy of the fish on the bridge), this knowing does not mean the same as the knowing of an object by a subject. For, the subjectivity of the "I" has already vanished, and the fish are no longer the objects observed by a subject. Usually the "knowing" is related to the object which must be known. But, in the state of "遊" (yóu), in which every participant forgets his ego-consciousness, the knowing has no objects. Imagine that the participants of a game are steadily conscious about the "rules" which they should "keep," and reflect on his own technique. They can never play at their peak performance. They must forget themselves. In this moment, the "knowing" is a kind of "不知" (bùzhī) of not only Zhuangzi but also Laozi and even Confucius, who also mentions this "not-knowing." I cannot indicate these uses in detail

7 Vgl. Keiji Nishitani, *Nihirizumu* 虛無主義, in *Nishitani Keiji chosakushū* [Collected Works of Nishitani Keiji] 西田啟治著作集, Vol. 8 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1986). Nishitani treats the problem of Nihilism for Nietzsche, Heidegger, etc. from the viewpoint of the thought of "sunyata" in Mahayana-Buddhism.

because of the limited time, but I cite one passage here without interpretation. 「昔者莊周夢爲胡蝶，栩栩然胡蝶也。自喻適志與！不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢爲胡蝶與？胡蝶之夢爲周與？周與胡蝶則必有分矣。此之謂物化。」（《莊子·齊物論·14》）
(Once upon a time, Zhuang Zhou dreamed he was a butterfly; flitting and fluttering he darted wherever he wanted; he did not know (不知) he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he awakens. He sees that he is Zhuang Zhou. But, he doesn't know (不知) if he is Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he is Zhuang Zhou. Between Zhuang Zhou and a butterfly there must be some distinction; this is called the Transformation of Things.)⁸

We can get the same result for the understanding of the "person" and "self" for Zhuangzi if we analyze this passage in a hermeneutic way which we tried above to the passage of the "joy of the fish." But, this could be left out. We only need to conclude that in case of the thought of Zhuangzi the understanding of the "person" in its "self" is not anthropological or anthropocentric, and if the English word "person" is to be translated as "我" (wǒ) or "自我" (zìwǒ), its "self" should be understood as the impersonal "無我" (wúwǒ).

The further question will be: How can this "impersonal person" or "I-less I" function as the subject in a social context of ethics. The question concerns a common topic for Daoism and Confucianism as well as Buddhism, also for a dialogue between East Asian and Western European thought. With this remark, I would like to conclude my paper. Thanks for your thoughtful attention.

⁸ Robert E. Allinson, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 81-82.

