

井筒俊彦

言語の根源と哲学の発生

生誕
100年

Izutsu's Understanding of the I-Consciousness in Zen Buddhism: a Metaphysical Critique of Cartesian Cogito

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[井筒俊彦を読む]

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[井筒哲学の可能性]

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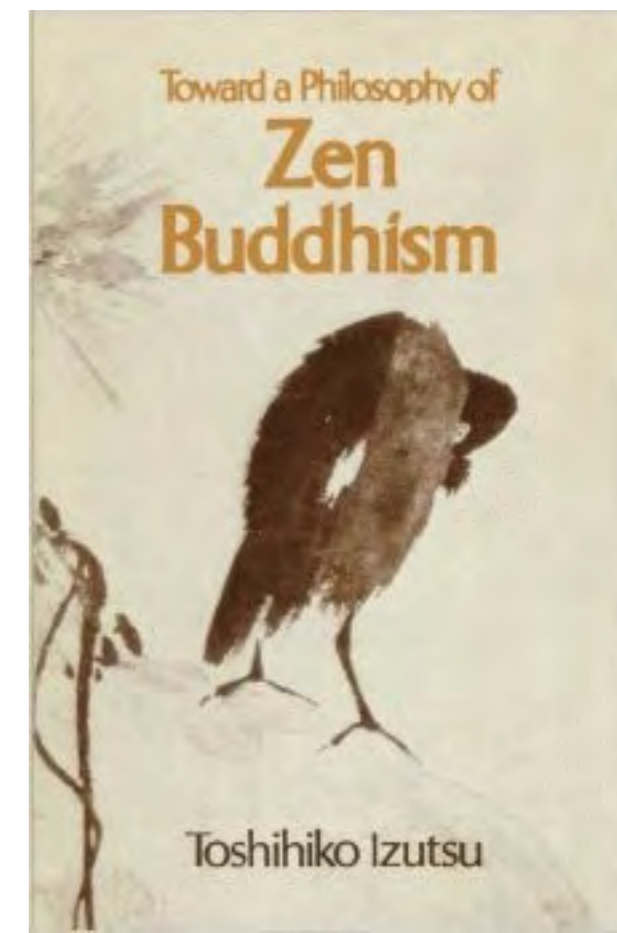


Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-93)

- Kawade Shobo Shinsha (河出書房新社) published in 2014: issue featuring him for the 100th anniversary of his birth
- One of the most brilliant Japanese philosophers in the 20th century, vis-à-vis 'consciousness' (also, Islamic Studies)

Our aim is to examine his 'philosophisation' (metaphysical theorisation) of Zen in his (1977)

Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism,
Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Science.



Zen 'I-consciousness'

- The most fundamental philosophical assertion of **Zen**: at the outset **a functional relationship between the subject and the object**, the knower and the known ... or the ego and the world. (p. 8)
- **The 'no-mind'** (無心 Ch: wu hsin, Ja: mu shin): a psychological state in which the mind finds itself at the highest point of tension ... **Zen** expression goes: the consciousness illumines itself in the full glare of its own light. In this state, the mind knows its object so perfectly that there is **no longer any consciousness left of the object; the mind is not even conscious of its knowing the object** (p. 15)
- **The Oriental 'Nothingness'** (空 Ch: k'ung, Ja: kū, Sk: śūnyatā): not a purely negative ontological state of there being nothing. On the contrary, it is **a plenitude of Being** ... so full that it can manifest itself as anything in the empirical dimension of our experience ... **the true, absolute Ego** as **Zen** Buddhism understands it (p. 82)

Cartesian 'I-consciousness'

Descartes (1984, 85) *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol I & II, trans. & ed. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, Cambridge: CUP

- (Too) Celebrated Proposition: **Cogito ergo sum** (I am thinking, therefore I exist, *Discourse on the Method, & Principles of Philosophy* 1985 p. 127, 195; I am, I exist, *Second Meditation* 1984 p. 17)
- **The Cartesian dualism:** standing on the fundamental dichotomy of **res cogitans** and **res extensa** ... an ontological system based on the dualistic tension between two 'substances' that are irreducible to one another. As a world-view, ... man (i.e. **the ego or an independent personal 'subject'**) is here a detached onlooker confronting **a world of external objects**. (Izutsu 1977 p. 19)
- **The Cartesian cogito (thinking):** from the viewpoint of **Zen**, far from being something that leads us directly to the awareness of the reality of human existence; on the contrary, cogito is considered the very source of all delusions about existence; cogito is a distraction that leads us away from an immediate grasp of reality as it really is (ibid. p. 148)
- **The Cartesian opposition between subject and object:** from the standpoint of **Zen**, something to be demolished before man begins to see the reality of himself and of so-called external objects (ibid. p. 20)

Descartes' 6-day *Meditations*

Meditations on First Philosophy together with *Objections and Replies* (first published 1641)

- **Cartesian methodology:** reconstructed from Amélie Rorty (1986) *The Structure of Descartes' Meditations*, in her ed. *Essays on Descartes' Meditations*, London: Univ of California Press
- **The traditional meditational mode providing an ontological ground:** validates the use of an analytic method in mathematical physics. (p. 8) The Sequence of Descartes' *Meditations* clearly conforms to this traditional structure (i.e. below) (p. 11)
- **The six days of Creation:** Descartes' embarrassing, presumptuous echo, in the six stages of the *Meditations*. **The new creation is the new science of the world** (p. 10)

Stage 1: Catharsis, detachment, or analysis: a movement from sensation to imagination and memory, to science and mathematics, to theology.

Stage 2: Skepsis, despair, or nihilism.

Stage 3: Reflection (peripeteia), a reflection that performs a revolutionary change.

Stage 4: Recognition (anagnorisis) or the reflexive, corrective power of the will; the discovery of the law of noncontradiction as a methodological principle validating reductio arguments.

Stage 5: Ascension from the psychological to the ontological order; proofs for the existence of God.

Stage 6: Reconstruction of the world and the self.

Possibly...Stage 7: Descartes' Sabbath Day after the six-day Creation. Consequently, **the firm existence of this meditator** can differ from Zen practitioner's Enlightenment (Absolute Reality).

Common Features

Between Izutsu's Zen Philosophisation and Descartes' Metaphysics

1. Distinction between the subject and the object, concerning dualism or dichotomy
2. Affinity between both methodologies: After the sceptical doubts, one's own **Enlightenment** / **illumination**
3. Solution to 'I-consciousness' (theorisation from Zen Kōan (公案, Ch: Gong'an) examples and Descartes' argumentation as the meditation)

The **Metaphysico-Epistemological** Transformation of Reality (如來藏 *tathâgata-garbha*: the 'Womb of the Absolute Reality') ('Womb/Matrix of Buddhahood' or 'Buddha-nature')

(Nirvana)

Epistemic Formula

the eternal **Verb SEE** without brackets→ Enlightenment

$S \rightarrow O$

i see **this**

S → =

NO MIND or MINDFULNESS:

the Absolute Reality

1. beyond the dichotomy or dualism between subject and object or mind and body
2. beyond time and space as the Eternal Now and the Ubiquitous Here

reduction

ZEN

The Dynamic Field

in its entirety and wholeness

Ontological Realisation

Subjective sphere

$(S \rightarrow) S$

(I SEE) myself

the empirical ego-consciousness (i)

the Subject I embodies *I (= I SEE THIS)*

Koan Ex1: Pai Chang's Wild Duck
 (all the objects within the subject)

百丈野鴨子 from *Blue Cliff Record* (Ja: *Hekigan Roku*) No. 53

Objective sphere

$O (\leftarrow S)$

(I SEE) this

a concrete actualisation (this)

the Object THIS embodies *(I SEE THIS =) THIS*

Koan Ex2: Chao Chou's Cypress Tree
 (all the subjects within the object)

庭前柏樹子 from *Gateless Gate* (Ja: *Mu Mon Kan*) No. 37

N.B. Zen is not a 'transcendental' philosophy, however Cf. Sato 1968; Izutsu 1977 pp. 20-25, 45-49, 55, 82

Koan Ex1: Pai Chang's Wild Duck (百丈野鴨子)

from the Blue Cliff Record (碧巖錄 Ja: Hekigan Roku) No. 53

Pai Chang was Master Ma Tsu's attendant. Once he was accompanying the Master on the road, they saw a flock of wild ducks flying by. Master Ma Tsu asked, "What is that?"

Chang said, "Wild ducks."

The Master said, "Where have they gone?"

Chang said, "They've flown away."

The Master then grabbed and twisted the nose of Pai Chang.

Chang cried out in pain.

The Master said, "Where have they ever flown away?"

百丈野鴨子

一日，隨侍馬祖路行次，聞野鴨聲，馬祖云「什麼聲？」

師云「野鴨聲」

良久，馬祖云「適來聲向什麼處去？」

師云「飛過去」

馬祖迴頭，將師鼻便搗，師作痛聲

馬祖云「又道飛過去？」

Koan Ex2: Chao Chou (Zhaozhou)'s Cypress Tree (庭前柏樹子)

from the Gateless Gate (無門關 Ja: Mu Mon Kan) No. 37

A monk asked Chao Chou, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma (the First Patriarch)'s coming from the West (from India to China)?" (asking the ultimate purpose of Zen Buddhism in China)

Chou said, "The cypress tree in the courtyard."

庭前柏樹子

趙州、因僧問「如何是祖師西來意？」

州云「庭前柏樹子」

Another ver. 1 Koan Ex2: Chao Chou's Cypress Tree (庭前柏樹子)

from the Record of Chao Chou (趙州錄 Ja: Joshu Roku) Book I

A monk asked Chao Chou, "What is the real self (who practises Zen)?"

Chao Chou said, "Have you yet to see the cypress tree in the courtyard?"

庭前柏樹子

問「如何是祖學人自己？」

師云「還見庭前柏樹子麼？」

Another ver. 2 Koan Ex2: Chao Chou's Cypress Tree (庭前柏樹子)

from the Blue Cliff Record (碧巖錄 Ja: Hekigan Roku) No. 45 Commentary, etc.

One day a monk asked Chao Chou, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West?"

Chao Chou said, "The cypress tree in the courtyard."

The monk said, "Master, don't use objects (outside phenomena that you perceive) to teach people with."

Chao Chou said, "I have never used objects to teach people."

Observe how he can convert the ultimate tenet, which is impossible to convert. Naturally (the tenet) covers the heaven and the earth.

庭前柏樹子

一日僧問趙州「如何是祖師西來意」

州云「庭前柏樹子」

僧云「和尚莫將境示人」

州云「老僧不曾將境示人」

看他恁麼向極則轉不得處轉得。自然蓋天蓋地。

The **Metaphysico-Epistemological** Transformation of Reality (如來藏 *tathâgata-garbha*: the 'Womb of the Absolute Reality') ('Womb/Matrix of Buddhahood' or 'Buddha-nature')

(Nirvana)

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S → =

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the Absolute Reality

1. beyond the dichotomy or dualism between subject and object or mind and body
2. beyond time and space as the Eternal Now and the Ubiquitous Here

reduction

ZEN

The Dynamic Field

in its entirety and wholeness

Subjective sphere

~~**Objective sphere**~~

(S →) S

Ontological Realisation
 on the basis of myself (自内証)

S (← S)

(I SEE) myself

(I SEE) really myself

the empirical ego-consciousness (i)

introspection
 (pratyātma-vedya)

~~a concrete actualisation (this)~~

the **Subject I** embodies I (= I **SEE THIS**)

~~the **Object THIS** embodies (I **SEE THIS** =) THIS~~

Koan Ex1: Pai Chang's Wild Duck
 (all the objects within the subject)

Koan Ex2: Chao Chou's Cypress Tree
 (all the subjects within the object)

百丈野鴨子 from *Blue Cliff Record* (Ja: *Hekigan Roku*) No. 53 庭前柏樹子 from *Gateless Gate* (Ja: *Mu Mon Kan*) No. 37, etc.

Cf. Sato 1968; Izutsu 1977, pp. 20-25, 45-49, 55, 82; Ogawa 2007, 2011

The **Metaphysico-Epistemological** Transformation of Reality (如來藏 *tathâgata-garbha*: the 'Womb of the Absolute Reality') ('Womb/Matrix of Buddhahood' or 'Buddha-nature')

(Nirvana)

Epistemic Formula

the eternal **Verb SEE** without brackets→ Enlightenment

S → O

i see **this**

S → =

NO MIND or MINDFULNESS:

the Absolute Reality

1. beyond the dichotomy or dualism between subject and object or mind and body
2. beyond time and space as the Eternal Now and the Ubiquitous Here
3. **beyond any logical fallacies**

reduction

ZEN

The Dynamic Field

in its entirety and wholeness

A Hidden Principle: (I SEE)
 Zen consciousness constantly functioning through **s** (ego)

Izutsu's formulation

From a sole subjective sphere on the basis of myself
 (introspection; *pratyâtma-vedya*; 自内証)

Solution to a logical fallacy from the transformation of This Reality

Perceiving clear & distinct ideas

Cartesian Circular Reasoning
 (in his *Meditations*)

The existence of a non-deceiving God

The circularity: first pointed out by Arnauld in the *Objections* (1984 CSMII p. 150)

Given a justified way of each methodology:

Zen Koan & Descartes' Meditation

- Zen Koan (Chan Gonggan/Seon Kongan) is akin to a Socratic dialogue: a dialogue between the historical master and disciple is given as a **meditational prop** from the master to the disciple. Self-Realisation/Enlightenment as the 'vicarious experience' (Ruggeri 2006 p. 187)
- Descartes' meditation is a **guided reading**: the author's thoughts are listed in a monologue fashion, but at the same time the reader is guided through different steps of the reasoning (as if the reader were logically meditating with her *cogito*).
- Both methodologies imply a degree of dialectic on the part of the meditator/reader

HOWEVER

- Whilst Koan aims to trigger Enlightenment through a paradoxical intuition and the ultimate elimination of discursive thinking (Izutsu 1977 pp. 151-55), Descartes' meditation aims to build an analytic reasoning / demonstration for the metaphysical conclusions (*Discourse on the Method* Pt. II 1985 pp. 116-22).

They are both meditations, but very different ones!

Where is 'I-consciousness' off to?

T. P. Kasulis (1981) *Zen Action / Zen Person*, Honolulu: Univ of Hawai'i Press

- The Zen Master simply advises us to return: ... we must return to where we *are*. We must regain our grasp of the present moment as it is being experienced. (pp. 56-7) [T]he enlightened person appears “**extraordinarily ordinary**.” (p. 134)
- [T]he state of no-mind is supposed to be **outside the bifurcation into subject and object**. To the Western philosopher who thinks of the subject/object distinction as a priori, the Zen characterization is either suspect or, at best, metaphorical. (p. 57)
- [For] Zen Buddhism ... **reality is what is now happening**—it is **not outside our experience** ... this has the implication that reality is protean, always changing its shape as soon as we come into contact with it and try to pin it down. (p. 61)

Zen 'I-consciousness': towards No Mind apprehending herself in This Reality Now without any bifurcation/duality (Enlightened with the light of introspection)

Cartesian 'I-consciousness': towards the undoubted existence of herself in this reality after the bifurcating proofs (well illuminated with the light of certainty)

Zen Philosophisation Revised

From Izutsu's Interpretation, Compared with Descartes' Metaphysics

1. Reflection on the self: focus on the relationship between subject and object (from the subjective perspective here-and-now but not retrospectively / from the retrospective perspective across time)
2. Foundation of the self (disapproving / approving the existence of the self metaphysically)
3. One's own Enlightenment / illumination out of the success of 1 & 2 above