

Concepts of the Self and the Individual in Japanese and Western Cultures

A Transpersonal Study (III)

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6. The Significance of the Transpersonal Movement in the West

The previous sections focused on cross-cultural differences in the concepts of the self and the individual by using findings from analytical psychology. Specifically, section 4 discussed the process of achieving individuality in the West, using hero myths as an illustration of the path from Wilber's pre-personal to personal level of consciousness. It stressed the separation from maternal unconsciousness (symbolized by the *Great Mother*) as essential to the achievement of individuality in the West. Section 5 attended to the importance of unity with maternal unconsciousness (or the archetypal *Great Mother*) in Japanese culture and how this type of culture considers separation from maternal unconsciousness to be taboo.

In this section, the significance of the transpersonal movement in the West is considered. In addition, a potential shift in cultural consciousness from a masculine focus to a feminine focus is proposed.

Yoshihuku (1987) indicated that transpersonal psychology is interested in connectedness with nature, others, and an identity beyond one's self. The transpersonal movement attempts to satisfy this interest with its aspiration of holism in which one can transcend dualism, or the achievement of individuality. Therefore, I would like to consider that the transpersonal movement can be seen as a means of progressing from the personal to the transpersonal level of consciousness in Wilber's theory.

Perhaps, in Western culture, the paternal principle of division, which has been dominant in this culture with one God as *father* (i. e., with a dualistic notion of boundary), has been excessive. It now needs to be redressed by embracing the maternal principle of unity. Perhaps the rise in popularity of the transpersonal movement confirms just such

a shift. For example, I found in the West, instead of dualistic thinking between the body and the mind, that recently some people have become interested in holistic thinking, including the idea of alternative medicine and Eastern medicine.

The etymology of several key words, *individual* and *heal*, provide some evidence of this shift. The word *individual* originally meant something *indivisible*. As we have seen in the *hero myth*, the paternal principle makes a clear separation between unconsciousness and the conscious ego, i. e., the individual. Individuality is a product of the dividing paternal principle.

However, because of explicit separation from maternal unconsciousness, the connectedness with nature and the wholeness of the mind were lost in this culture with a dualistic boundary. The transpersonal movement in the West is one sign that implies a fundamental shift in cultural consciousness toward retrieving wholeness.

The word *heal* originally meant *to become whole*. Thus, the significance of the transpersonal movement in the West may be the desire of cultural consciousness to heal itself by seeking connectedness and wholeness. Moreover, if the Western ego is symbolized by a masculine figure, a hero, perhaps Western consciousness is now beginning to aspire to a more feminine type of consciousness (i. e., a multiple, holistic, and process-oriented consciousness) as suggested by the rise of the transpersonal movement. At a cultural level, the transpersonal movement might be considered a journey beyond the *hero myth*. In other words, it could be a journey that moves Western cultural consciousness from Wilber's personal level of consciousness to his transpersonal level of consciousness.

The next section focuses on John Lennon's personal mythology. This mythology can be seen as a journey beyond the Western *hero myth*.

7. John Lennon's Journey and the Western Hero Myth

This section presents a short ethnographical study of John Lennon and compares his personal mythology with the Western *hero myth*.

Section 2 pointed out that it is not unusual for a Japanese male to refer to his wife as his mother, whereas it is rare for a man in a contemporary English-speaking country to refer to his wife as his mother. However, there was a well-known British man who referred to his Japanese wife as his mother. That man was John Lennon, and he was a member of the musical group called the Beatles.

To better understand Lennon's journey and his personal mythology, it is important to know his life story. Lennon spent a lonely childhood. His father was a sailor whose whereabouts were unknown long before Lennon was born. After his birth, his mother abandoned him, and he was raised by his aunt. (Fawcette, 1976)

When Lennon was a teenager, he established a relationship with his mother for the first time. Unfortunately, when he was 18 years old, she was killed in a car accident. Sadly, he witnessed her death. He was so traumatized by this that he reported that he was incapable of feeling how much he had suffered and how deeply he had been hurt until he underwent primal therapy later in life. (Fawcette, 1976)

After completing primal therapy, Lennon composed a song titled *Mother* (1970), in which he shouts, "Mother... You had me but I never had you." In this song, he recalls how he suffered from the sudden separation from his mother not once but twice in his life. In reflecting on this song, Lennon thanked primal therapy for allowing him to feel the trauma of the sudden separation from his mother and allowing him to release the pain associated with this trauma. By releasing his pain into this song, he was able to cope with his neurotic symptoms. (Faw-

cette, 1976)

As a member of the Beatles, Lennon was known for his powerful, masculine style of singing, which was said to be the most suitable for Rock'n Roll among the four band members. His musical style changed dramatically after he married Ono. He began to compose songs that were more, touching, and feminine. For example, he composed a small sweet song titled *Julia* (his mother's name) after falling in love with Ono. In this song, he expressed his love for a woman whose name is Julia. In the lyric, he calls Julia an ocean child. He admitted that he had superimposed his inner images of his mother (Julia) and his wife (Yoko Ono) in this song. *Ocean child* literally means *Yoko* in Japanese.

It is notable that Lennon's noticeably changing music style reflected inner changes. Yoshiaki Satoh (1989), a Japanese anthropologist, referred to Lennon's diverse identities and multiple faces as follows:

"I used to be XX, and now I am YY." This type of transformation in one's identity greatly applies to John Lennon. He had such a huge variety of identities and multiple faces. There was John as an aggressive Rock'n Roller, John as an idol in the early days of the Beatles, John in *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, naked John in the *Two Virgins*, bearded John singing *Give Peace a Chance*, John as a fighter for peace in the 1970's, spiritual John singing *Imagine*, and John singing *Stand by Me...* It is miraculous that these multiple faces of John Lennon are not his *personas*. Each face of John represents the transition of *time* and the evolution of his *self*, which stands in remarkable contrast to Mick Jagger and the consistency of his *self* during this same period of time. (1989, p. 188)

Indeed, during his 40 years of life, Lennon had such diverse faces and identities that it is often difficult to determine if they all belong to the same person. Perhaps, as Satoh asserted, all these faces and identi-



Figure 13. John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

ties are not his personas, but rather a representation of the evolution of both his musical style and his inner *self*.

Figure 13, shown above, is a picture of Lennon taken just before his death. It is reported that John was extremely happy when this photo was taken. He said, "This picture symbolizes the relationship between Yoko and me so accurately, because it is the picture of a mother and a fetus.... Yoko as a mother and me as a fetus." (Leibovitz, 1992)

When I saw this picture, I was immensely shocked because this picture seems to symbolize the cyclic notion of time in which the time before one's birth and after one's death are united as one. This is similar to the Buddhist notion of time, *Shi-U*, which is presented in the next

section. What was most shocking to me was the fact that Lennon died and left for life after death shortly after he expressed that he felt like a fetus, a being before birth.

I intuitively felt Lennon's deep maternal aspirations when he stated that he wanted to be a fetus in his relationship with Ono and that he wanted her to be a mother. I wondered if it was a coincidence that Ono was 7 years his elder and that she was from Japan, a culture where males typically have three mothers; (the first mother is a biological, literal mother; the second mother is one's wife; and the third mother is a proprietress of a bar).

Lennon was born in England, where individuality is valued. Thus, he was born into a Western culture with the *hero myth* and linear notions of time and development. However, his journey through life appears to more closely match that of someone from Japan. His path illustrates cyclical notions of time and development, and he appeared to value unity with the maternal instead of individuality.

After the traumatic separation from his mother, Lennon finally found peace in his marriage to Ono, whom he called both his wife and his mother. He also actively fulfilled the role of mother for his son. I was struck by the concept of his life as a journey that allowed him to retrieve his lost connection with the maternal in order to heal himself.

8. Buddhist Theory of the Self

This section examines the relationship between Wilber's life cycle theory and the Buddhist theory of the self. Specifically, this section discusses the similarity between these two theories in terms of the cyclical notion of time.

Wilber (1980) proposed a cyclical model of human life that includes birth, life, death, and reincarnation: He suggested the process be-

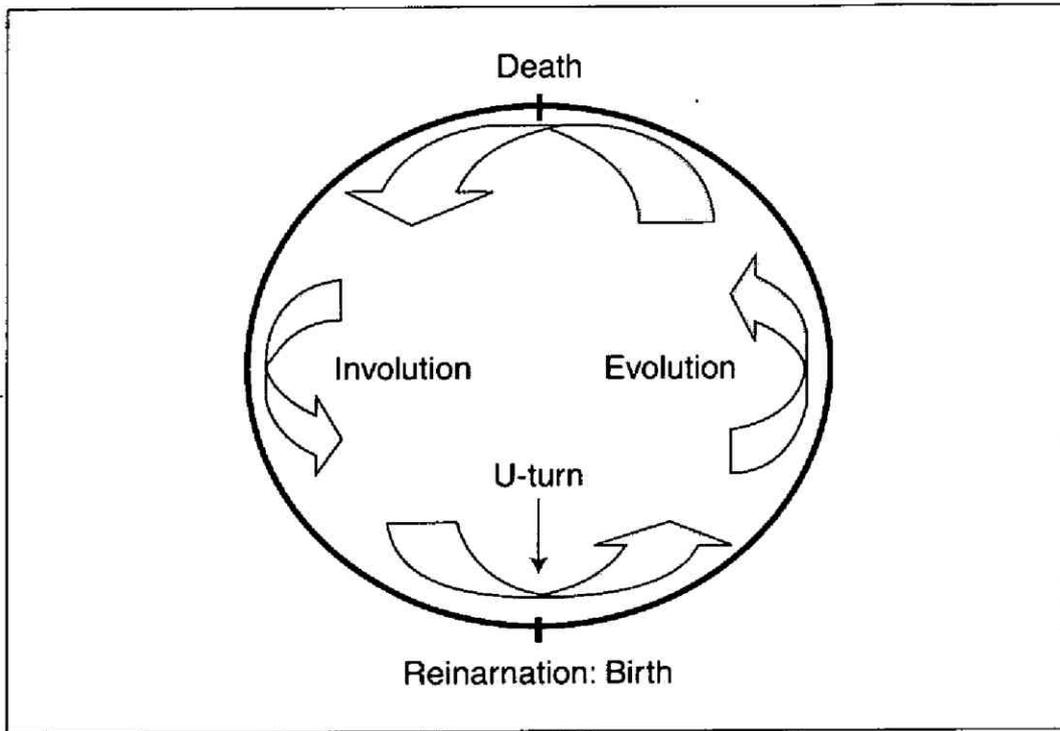


Figure 14. Wilber's life cycle theory.

tween birth and death could be seen as evolution, and that between death and reincarnation as involution.

Specifically, he is interested in the cyclical notion of time in which an individual progresses from birth to a lifetime of personal growth to death to a 49 day period called bardo, and finally to reincarnation. From the perspective shown in figure 14, the personal level of consciousness, or the achievement of individuality, is only a transitional process in one's life.

Nishihira (1997), a Japanese philosopher, pointed out the similarity between Wilber's life cycle theory and the Buddhist theory of the self, *Shi-U-no-Setsu*, which is translated as the theory of the four states of existence (Figure 15).

Nishihira (1997) has been interested in both developmental psychology and the study of metempsychosis (reincarnation), and he has assumed that these two disciplines belong to totally different paradigms that cannot communicate with each other. He stressed that although re-

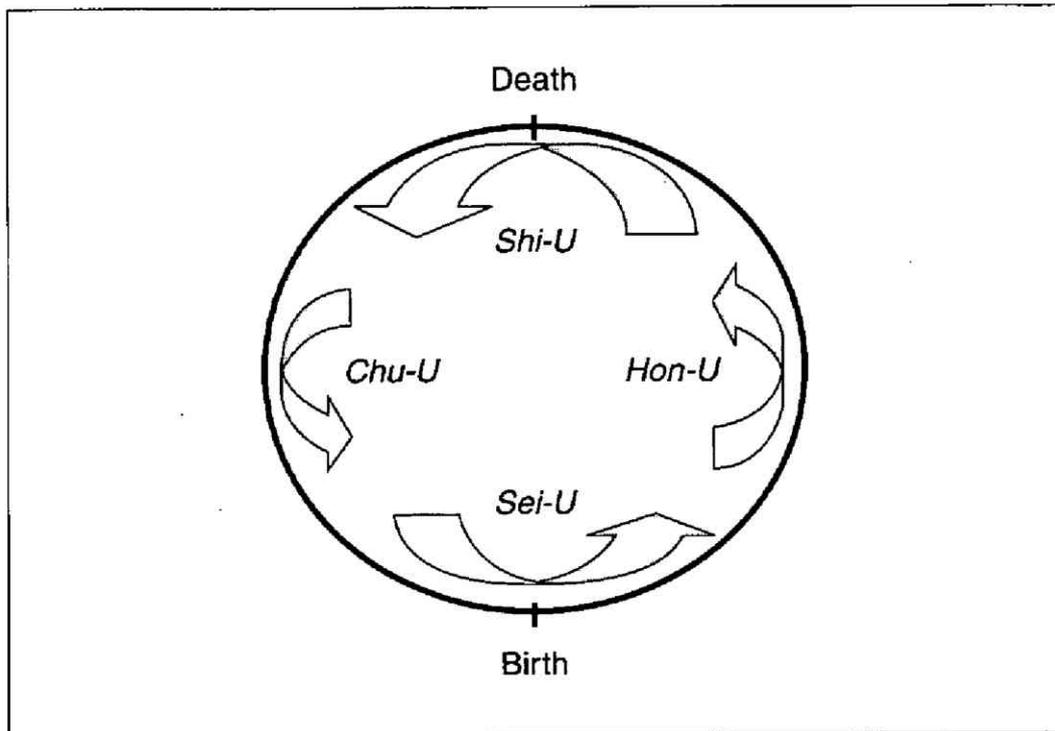


Figure 15. Buddhism's *Shi-U-no-Setsu* (Theory of the four states of existence.)

cent textbooks on developmental psychology occasionally include a final section on death, conventional developmental psychology does not address the concept of development after death. Moreover, many traditional developmental psychologists express little interest in the notion of life after death.

Unlike traditional developmental psychologists, Nishihira (1997) paid particular attention to the Buddhist theory of the self, *Shi-U-no-Setsu*, because he believed it could bridge developmental psychology and the study of metempsychosis. According to him (1997), the *U* in *Shi-U* means existential form or state of being. *Shi* means four. Therefore, *Shi-U* means the four ways of existence in one's life cycle. The four ways of existence (or stages) in one's life cycle are *Shou-U*, *Hon-U*, *Shi-U*, and *Chu-U*.

Shou-U refers to birth, the process by which a fetus emerges from the womb after a certain period of time. Specifically, the fetus is ousted from amniotic fluid into a totally different way of existence. Birth re-

sembles death in that it signifies a radical transition in an individual's way of being.

Hon-U refers to the lifetime between birth and death, including one's infancy, youth, adulthood, and old age. When we mention one's lifetime, it usually means this *Hon-U* (or lifetime) within *Shi-U* (the four ways of existence in one's life cycle).

Shi-U (although the words and pronunciation are the same, this is not the same Chinese character as *Shi-U* meaning four ways of existence) refers to death, or when one's being leaves the physical body and moves toward a different state of existence.

Finally, *Chu-U* is the in-between state of existence after one's death, which is not dependent on the existence of the physical body. Being in *Chu-U*, one waits for the next *Shou-U*, by which one is born again by being made flesh in another body.

Nishihara (1997) regarded *Shi-U-no-Setsu* as a cyclical model of one's life and stressed that attaining individuality, as in Wilber's personal level of consciousness, is only one aspect of the human life cycle. Moreover, he proposed that we refer to Wilber's personal level of consciousness as *identity* and his transpersonal level of consciousness as the state *beyond identity*.

Based on Nishihara's idea, I would like to suggest that the linear concept of time in *hero myths* might apply only to that stage of life that *Shi-U-no-Setsu* refers to as *Hon-U*, or the stage in which one has an identity as an embodied self. Being of *Chu-U* is considered a state of consciousness beyond one's identity.

This section presented the Buddhist concept of consciousness. Specifically, it put forward the Buddhist idea of *Shi-U-no-Setsu* and its four life cycle stages. These four stages are cyclical, with no beginning or end, unlike the Western concept of consciousness, as illustrated in the

hero myth, and its linear theory of identity. The next section introduces a radically different concept of consciousness represented in the Ten Ox-herding Pictures.

9. Cyclical Model of Life and the Ten Ox-Herding Pictures

This section compares the notion of the self in the Ten Ox-herding pictures with that in the Western *hero myth*. Both the *hero myth* and the Ten Ox-herding pictures symbolize the journey in search of one's identity. However, the *hero myth* presents a linear model of the journey, whereas the Ten Ox-herding pictures present a cyclical model.

Before these two models can be compared and contrasted, we must more fully understand the Ten Ox-herding pictures. These pictures use the ox to portray the various stages of development in Zen Buddhism. According to Suzuki (1935), the original author of the Ten Ox-herding pictures was a Zen master of the Sung Dynasty in China known as Kaku-an Shi-en (Kuo-an Shih-yuan), who belonged to the Rinzai school. He was also the author of the poems and introductory words attached to the pictures. However, he was not the first person who attempted to illustrate the stages of Zen development through pictures. Another Zen master, Seikyo, is considered to be the one who first made use of the ox to explain his Zen teachings.

In Japan, Kaku-an's Ten Ox-herding pictures enjoy wide popularity. In fact, at present, all of the Ox-herding books in Japan reproduce his pictures, with the earliest book dating back to the 15th century. In China, a different edition of the Ox-herding pictures, with an unknown author, is popular.

Kaku-an's pictures, shown in this section, were drawn by Shubun, a 15th century Zen priest. The original pictures are preserved at Shokouji

in Kyoto, Japan.

In the Ox-herding pictures, the ox symbolically represents the authentic self that is being sought, and the boy symbolically represents the self who is in search of that identity. Thus, the Ox-herding pictures are said to be a narrative in which one can find one's authentic self.

This section examines the portrait of the self presented in the Ox-herding pictures, with particular reference to Ueda's book titled *The Ten Ox-herding Pictures - Phenomenology of the Self* (1982). Moreover, it explores how the Ox-herding pictures and the *hero myth* reflect Japanese and Western cultures, respectively, from the perspective of transpersonal psychology.

The Ten Ox-herding pictures consist of the following: Searching for the Ox; Seeing the Trace; Seeing the Ox; Catching the Ox; Herding the Ox; Coming Home on the Ox's Back; The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the Boy Alone; The Ox and the Boy Both Gone out of Sight; Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source; and Entering the City with Bliss-Bestowing Hands.

The story begins with the first picture, Searching for the ox, in which a boy notices that he has lost the one thing without which he cannot live. Thus, he begins to search for this most precious thing, but he has no idea what it is.

Figure 16.

Picture 1: Searching for the Ox

Figure 17.

Picture 2: Seeing the Trace

Figure 18.

Picture 3: Seeing the Ox

Figure 19.

Picture 4: Catching the Ox

In the next stage, Seeing the Trace, he finds a clue. He finds evidence of an ox.

In the third stage, Seeing the Ox, he is able to see part of the ox, which is what he is looking for; however, he is still not able to grasp the whole figure.

Finally, in the fourth picture, Catching the Ox, the whole figure of the ox appears. Ueda (1982) explained that the ox leaves a clue for the

boy in the second picture, shows half of itself in the third picture, and attempts to pull the boy in the fourth picture.

Ueda (1982) interpreted this process of catching the ox as the interaction between the self who is in search of one's authentic identity (the boy) and the authentic self who is being sought (the ox). Ueda (1982)

Figure 20.

Picture 5: Herding the Ox

also stated that it is unclear in this fourth picture who is doing the pulling and who is being pulled. Is the authentic self (the ox) pulling the self in search (the boy)? Or is the self in search (the boy) pulling the authentic self (the ox)? What is clear is that there is a strong tension between the self in search (the boy) and the authentic self (the ox), and this tension is symbolized by a tense rope. According to Ueda, the tense rope represents the "integration of the authentic self and the self in search" and "the continual, strict integration of the split between the selves" (1982, p. 40).

In the fifth picture, Herding the Ox, the split between the selves is integrated, and the boy and the ox are depicted in harmony with one another; however, they still walk separately.

Ueda interpreted this fifth picture as follows:

The Ox follows the boy, and they both walk in the same direction..... I should like to point out that the boy sees the ox's face for the first time. This symbolizes the fact that the boy can access the authentic self at this stage. The boy has already experienced the intensity of

the rope between them, that is, the intense split between the selves. Therefore, he will not let go of the rope. However, the rope between the boy and the ox is already loose. Thus, the intense integration of the split between the selves (e. g., the duality of the selves) in the fourth picture is now replaced by the natural oneness in the fifth picture. (1982, p. 42)

The sixth picture depicts the boy on the Ox's back, playing a tune on the flute, as he heads home. In this stage, the self in search (the boy) and the authentic self who is sought (the ox) are united as one, and the split and conflict observed in the previous stages (pictures one through five) has been resolved.

As for this sixth picture, Ueda commented as follows: "The flute is played by the wholeness of the boy and the ox, rather than merely by the boy" (1982, p. 44). This wholeness allows both the boy and the ox to reach the next stage, The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the (Boy) Alone, in which the self is able to return home or to the place where the self can truly be its authentic self.

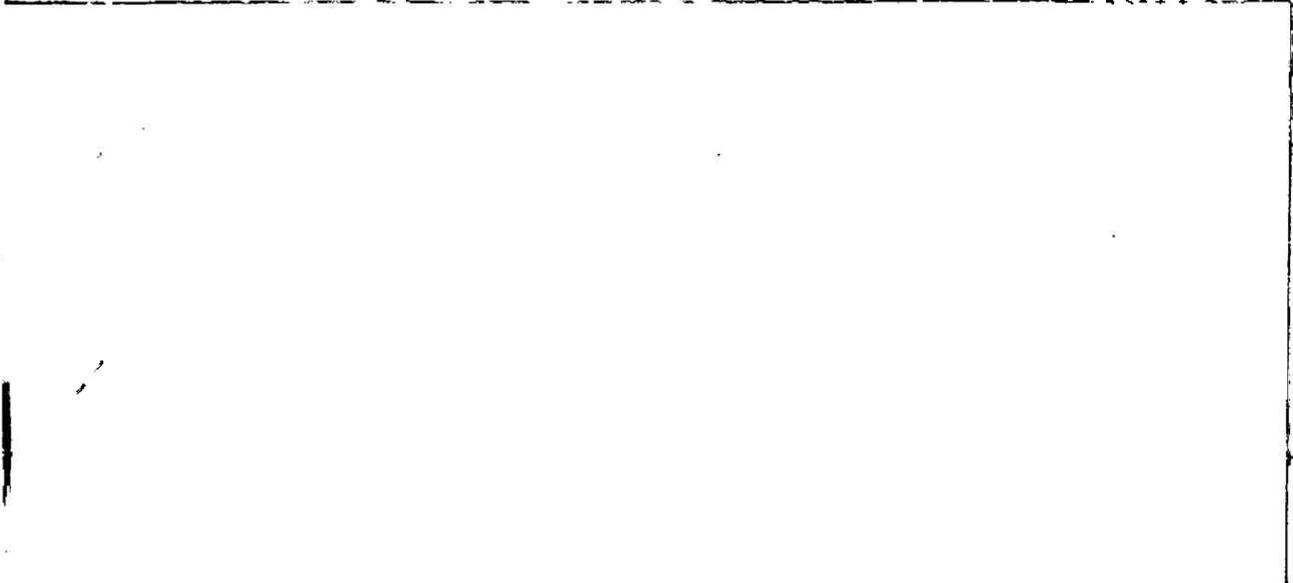


Figure 21.
Picture 6: Coming Home
on the Ox's Back

Figure 22.
Picture 7: The Ox Forgotten,
Leaving the Boy Alone

The seventh picture depicts the figure of the boy, who feels at home. There is no figure of the ox in this picture because the ox has been completely integrated within the boy, and the figure of the boy (the self in search) and the ox (the authentic self) are united as one.

In this way, in the seventh picture, the authenticity of the self is achieved, which corresponds to the goal for the attainment of individuality in the *hero myth*. But the *hero myth* ends when the sense of the self (e. g., individuality) is achieved. The *hero myth* has a linear concept of time and development, and its goal is to achieve individuality. Thus, the *hero myth* stands in remarkable contrast to the ox-herding pictures as illustrated by this seventh picture. The seventh picture does not represent the goal. Instead, true portraits of the self are presented in the eighth, ninth, and tenth pictures.

The eighth, ninth, and tenth pictures are said to represent a set of portraits of the self. The eighth picture, *The Ox and the Boy Both Gone Out of Sight*, depicts a circle of the void, in which there is nothing. This is a circle like the *uroboros*, in which consciousness has regressed back into the stage before the existence of the self. This circle is said to be an absolute void and emptiness. It is a place in which one has to completely let go of the self achieved in the seventh picture. In this stage, the self seems to regress into the primal being--before the first stage of the search--before the first picture, *Searching for the Ox*. Thus, the eighth picture represents the stage before dualism, where any form of duality, including the duality of man (the boy) and nature (the ox), does not exist.

Ueda (1982) considered the stages represented by the first through seventh pictures as one developmental stage leading to self realization. He also thought that the self who finds its original home in the seventh picture must let go of everything it has achieved (represented by pic-

tures one through seven) in order to *progressively regress* to the stage before the first picture, Searching for the Ox. Thus, the eighth picture is indeed an *absolute void*. However, at the same time, Ueda (1982) considered this empty circle of the eighth picture to be a *positive, active void* from which the new beginnings of the ninth and tenth stages can take place.

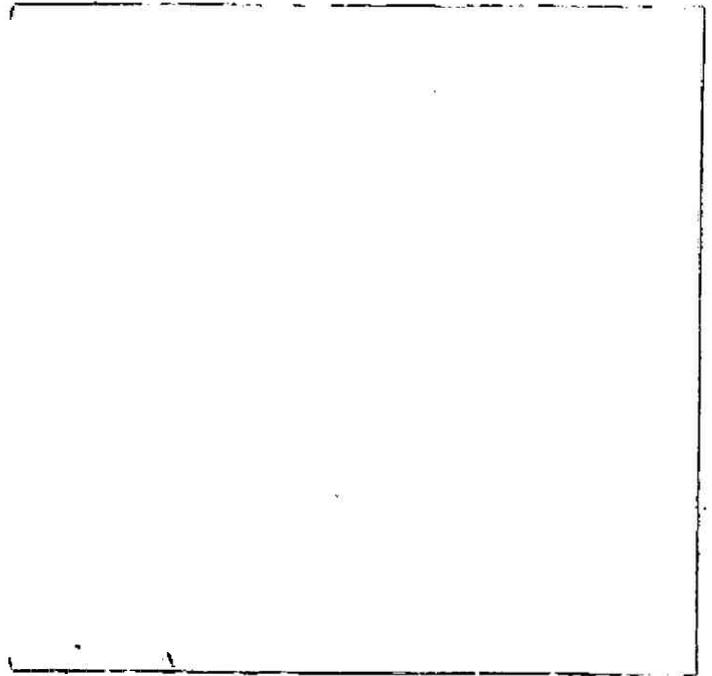
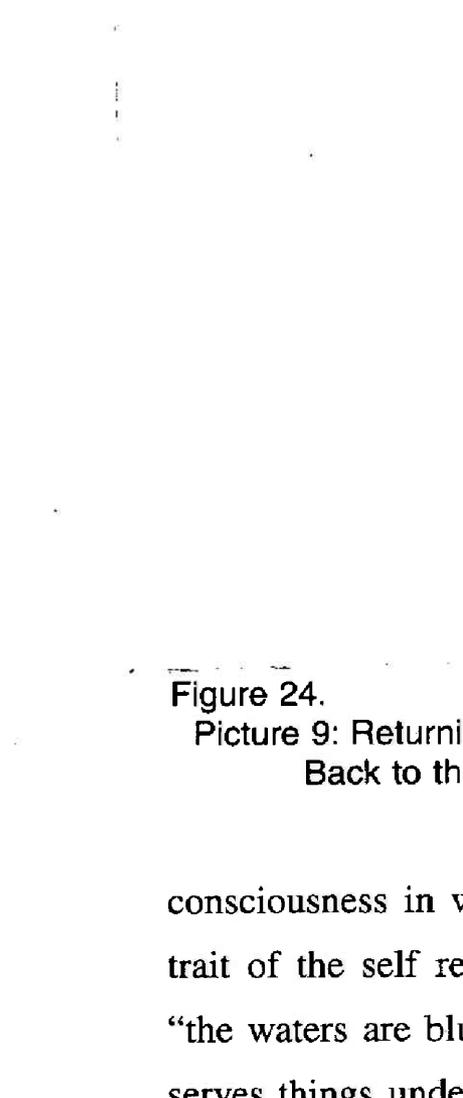


Figure 23.
Picture 8: The Ox and the Boy
Both Gone out of Sight

Indeed, this empty circle of the eighth picture seems to resemble the *uroboros* as a primal stage of consciousness. The Western *hero myth* originates with the *uroboros*, which is the state before dualism (i. e., Wilber's pre-personal level of consciousness). The myth then progresses to include the slaying of the *Great Mother*, the independence of the ego from unconsciousness, and the achievement of individuality (i. e., Wilber's personal level of consciousness).

In the *hero myth*, the process between the pre-personal and personal levels of consciousness is described by the linear notion of time. As a result, the journey from the *uroboros* to the *Great Mother* to the birth of the *hero* is presented in a linear temporal sequence.

Perhaps the critical difference between the Western *hero myth* and the Eastern Ox-herding pictures is that the linear temporal sequence presented in the *hero myth* does not make sense when interpreting the Ox-herding pictures. Reasoning suggests that this is true because the self achieved in the seventh picture progressively regresses into the absolute void in the eighth picture, and the absolute void appears before the first



picture. Thus, the Ox-herding pictures represent the Eastern cyclical notion of time, in which the concepts of *before* and *after* do not make any sense.

In the ninth picture, Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source, only a flowing river and a tree with a blossom by the riverside are depicted.

Figure 24.

Picture 9: Returning to the Origin,
Back to the Source

This represents the stage of

consciousness in which the self has returned to the origin. It is a portrait of the self realized by self-abnegation. The poem attached says: "the waters are blue, the mountains are green; sitting alone, and he observes things undergoing changes" (Suzuki, 1935, p. 133). This portrait of the self is one that is beyond one's identity, united with everything in the world.

The transformation from the eighth picture to the ninth picture is similar to the transformation from the pre-personal *uroboros* to the transpersonal self, beyond the personal level of consciousness. Here we see that the notion of time is not linear, and the process of the achievement of the self is totally different from the process presented in the *hero myth*. In the *hero myth*, the linear notion of development and the achievement of individuality are valued, while in the Ox-herding pictures, the cyclical notion of development, which is similar to the Buddhist theory of *Shi-U*, and self-realization by self-abnegation are valued.

In the final stage of the Ox-herding pictures, Entering the City with Bliss-Bestowing Hands, there is a figure of the boy. He is in a city, and

he is communicating with another person. The theme in this picture is an encounter with others in which the self and others are communicating.

This picture depicts yet another concept of the self; the self that exists between two people who are communicating, rather than inside one person.

In Japanese, a human being is defined as the *person between relationships with others*. This notion of the self stresses that the self cannot exist alone, but it can exist in relationship with others.

As mentioned earlier, these last three pictures (e. g., the eighth, ninth, and tenth pictures) are considered to be one set of self portraits in the Ox-herding pictures. The eighth picture represents the absolute void before duality, before the separation between subject and object. The ninth picture represents self-realization by self-abnegation. The tenth picture represents the relationship between the self and others.

These three states of consciousness are all regarded as portraits of the self in the Ox-herding pictures. Moreover, Ueda (1982) emphasized that the dynamic transformation of the self in the eighth, ninth, and tenth pictures is actually a portrait of the self in Japanese culture. Specifically, the cyclical movement of the dynamic transformation of the self, with the absolute void, self-realization by self-abnegation, and the relationship between the self and others, is the essence of the Japanese concept of the self. In the light of Wilber's life cycle theory, we can observe the transpersonal level of consciousness, consciousness beyond

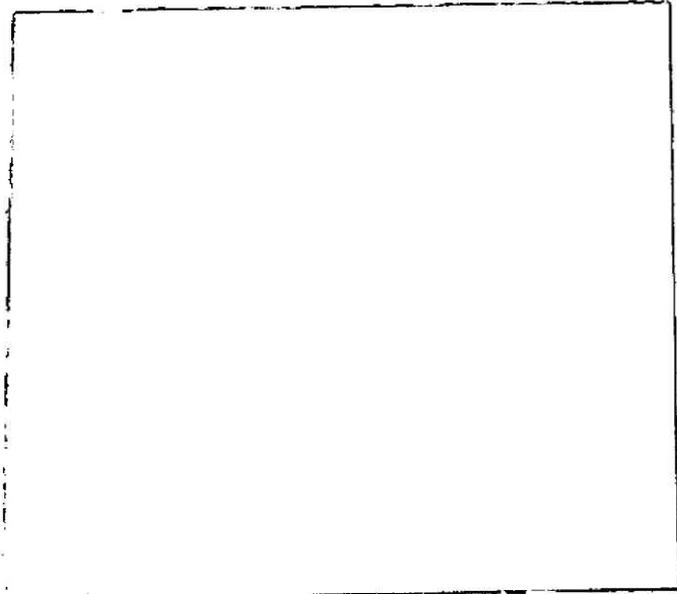


Figure 25.
Picture 10: Entering the City
with Bliss-Bestowing Hands.

individuality or the personal level of consciousness, in the Ten Ox-herding pictures.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to examine the notions of the self and the individual from the perspective of transpersonal psychology. Specifically, it used Wilber's theory on the three levels of consciousness (pre-personal, personal, and transpersonal) as a map to explore cross-cultural concepts of the self.

Various theories of the self, from the West and the East, were introduced and discussed. These theories included (a) Ken Wilber's life cycle theory, (b) Erich Neumann's theory on mythologies, with special reference to the *hero myth* as a linear model of the journey to self identity, (c) cross-cultural differences in the concepts of the self, the individual, and boundaries between Japan and the West, (d) the theory of the self in Buddhism (i. e., the theory of *Shi-U*), and (e) the concept of the self in Zen Buddhism's Ten Ox-herding pictures as a cyclical model of journey to self identity.

This paper attempted to illustrate the cross-cultural differences in the concept of the self by comparing two journeys that portray the self: The Western *hero myth* and Zen Buddhism's Ten Ox-herding pictures. The *hero myth* represents a journey in which the ego attains independence from the unconscious in order to achieve individuality. In this type of journey, there is a goal-oriented, linear notion of time and development. On the other hand, the Ox-herding pictures represent a journey in which the self is returning to the transpersonal self via self-abnegation. In this type of journey, there is a cyclical notion of time and development.

It is interesting to note that transpersonal psychology was born in

the West, where most individuals have already achieved a personal level of consciousness. I consider that the rise of transpersonal psychology in the West might be a sign that some Westerners are feeling the limitations of the achievement of individuality and have begun to seek an alternative. There is a Chinese saying, that "when one thing reaches the extreme, it will give way to another principle. In other words, when Yang reaches its peak, Yang gives way to Yin." This saying originated from the moon's waxing and waning.

Likewise, in the West, the dividing paternal principle might have reached its maximum, and given way to the maternal principle. The transpersonal movement in the West could be a sign of a shift in cultural dynamics from the paternal to the maternal principle.

Conversely, in Japan, many individuals have already achieved a transpersonal level of consciousness. They might be motivated to work on achieving a personal level of consciousness. This movement could be understood as the rise of individuality in contemporary Japanese culture. Perhaps, in Japan, with the maternal principle reaching a maximum, it is giving way to another, the paternal principle.

It is readily apparent that each culture has its own unique definitions of the various modes of consciousness, the self, and the individual. It is also clear that there is an interaction between the personal and transpersonal levels of consciousness occurring in both Japan and the West. I consider this interaction to be a sign that each culture is beginning to move away from its more traditional modes of consciousness in search of newer modes.

In contemporary Japanese culture, the cultural clash between the traditionally Western value of achieving individuality and the traditional Japanese value of conformity has produced intense conflict, as section 2 observed. Such a state of cultural tension might cause a crisis at the

personal level of consciousness; however, at the same time, it might be a chance for Japanese culture to create a new paradigm of consciousness.

The developmental task and challenge for Japanese culture, with its need and desire for international communication, is to become more aware of the present state of cultural consciousness in other cultures and in its own culture as well. Japanese are expected to learn to verbally express their state of consciousness in order to more clearly express themselves to people from different cultures. Indeed, compared with the West, individuals in Japan only recently began to work on achieving individuality (i. e., a personal level of consciousness), and they are not yet accustomed to being an assertive, eloquent encoder of the explicit messages in language. However, Japan has a rich asset in a culture that is rooted in a transpersonal level of consciousness. They have a right to feel proud of this asset, to which the West is only now beginning to attend.

In conclusion, when we consider the different cultural definitions of consciousness, the self, and the individual, we all must become more aware of the need to shift our cultural consciousness. Whether we are from Japan or the West, we need to become more open to exploring how other cultures define and interact with the personal and transpersonal levels of consciousness.

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