

〈「大学院生主体の教育研究国際会議」英語発表論文〉

Comments: How to Read *Beyond the Self*?

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In his *Beyond the Self*, Prof. Standish discusses many topics, as contents shows, such as Language, Meaning, the Self, Autonomy, and Receptivity (or Humility), referring to many philosophers, especially to Heidegger and Wittgenstein. It is clear that the purpose of this book is to go beyond the concept of autonomic self or individual subject separated from the world. Our pretended mastery over the nature and even ourselves must be broken down by the mystery of the Being.

1. How is this book located in the history of education?

First, I want to ask how this book is located in the history of education. I can find only a few references to the location of this book in the past and recent products of the philosophy of education. Of course, the author criticizes the concept of the self in modern education. He also mentions the lack of language of curriculum used at recent schools. But we have so many studies which criticize the modern philosophy of education and its way of thinking. Some of them also try to connect the philosophy of Heidegger or Wittgenstein with the field of education.

For example, O. F. Bollnow, a German philosopher of education, shows us the importance of existential philosophy for education. Referring to Heidegger and other philosophers, he studies on unstable form of education and of human life itself. His books deal with a lot of issues, covering time, space, moods, crisis, and language. Bollnow says that language is not mere instrument for communication, but elemental factor of being-in-the-world. He also insists that suffering is the essential opportunity for human development which makes us aware of the mystery of human being and of the world in which we dwell.

We can find that Bollnow's topics are very similar to those which Prof. Standish treats in his book. Hence, when the author explains the relationship between his own project and Bollnow's philosophy of education, the comparison seems to be helpful for Japanese students to understand his thought, since

Bollnow's thoughts and its relationship with Heidegger is well-known in Japan. And I also want to know the context in which *Beyond the Self* find its own place concerning recent German philosophy of education, especially related with Heidegger and Wittgenstein. (To criticize the concept of the isolated self is one of common issues of Heideggerian.)

2. How is it possible for us to be aware of the Being?

On the basis of Heidegger's ontology, Prof. Standish insists that we should be opened to the Being. Usually, we are stuck on the utilization of things and even of other people, and are not aware of the Being itself. This is the consequence of the idea that we human beings are able to control everything in the world, especially in the virtue of modern technology. Against this tendency, we must receive the Being itself and get the humility, the author says. On this point, we can find the difference between Prof. Standish and Bollnow concerning their interpretations of Heidegger. (Bollnow does not discuss Heidegger's ontology.)

We cannot see clearly, however, what kind of experience the author thinks when he refers to the openness to the Being. (The distinction between the Being, Being, and being is not clear, too.) I wonder what kind of change strikes us when we get aware of the Being itself. With the emphasis by the author on this experience, we can understand it as something special, but we cannot imagine what happens in this kind of experience. Indeed he describes the absorption into the handcraft as an example of an awareness of the Being, but it seems us to be an example of daily commitment of ourselves to the conjunction of the significance of the world. What is the difference between the openness to the Being of the world and commitment to beings in the world? And how is it possible for us to be aware of the Being itself?

Not a few students of education use Heidegger's concepts such as 'Being in the world', 'Being with each other', or 'Openness to the Being'. But most of them do not understand these concepts in ontological way in Heidegger's sense. They regard the Being simply as whole beings or all of beings. Heidegger criticizes this kind of pretended 'ontology' as traditional representivism. Hence, we are prompted to ask what the author thinks with the idea of openness to the Being when he considers an absorption in something (like handcraft, for example) to be the very opportunity of awareness of the Being. And I hope that the answer to this question help us to see how we can be opened to the mystery of the Being itself. (This is the problem of the ontological difference between the Being and beings.)

3. How can we judge the worth of our lives?

Prof. Standish asserts that our lives become better when we get opened to the Being. But he also says that we are confronted with total mystery of the world and of ourselves when we are aware of the Being. I wonder, then, how we can judge the worth of our own lives when we are involved in such an absolute mystery of the world. We can determine the worth of something only in the conjunction of the significance of the world in which everyday we live. Where is the definite measure which enables us to evaluate the possibility of human life opened to the Being? It seems that we should give up talking about goodness or badness when we have enough humility to be opened to the mystery of the world.

Indeed sometimes we had as well drink and dance like Dionysus, but too much drinking is also destructive to our lives. It is true that those mothers who believe that they can complete their duties to care the children may be too haughty, but those who have enough humility and are confronted with infinite duties or responsibility may get embarrassed or lose their mind. If a man is absorbed in handcraft too long everyday, he cannot keep his own life which includes his wife, his son and daughter, and his job. Being opened to the Being, we are confronted with such kinds of danger at the same time. Mystery always scares us out of our lives. Sometimes suffering may tell us about something important, as Prof. Standish says. But we can appreciate neither its risk nor return as long as we are drunk or absorbed in the mystery. Therefore we are able to evaluate the Being only with the scale of our everyday world, but it seems to be nothing less than to try to weigh its shadow projected on the screen of beings. (Simply, we cannot decide whether King Lear is happy or not at the end of the story.)

4. How should we read *Beyond the Self*?

So far I have expressed my questions with 'How', since one of the most important purposes of *Beyond the Self* is to change the way of thinking itself. How-question seems to be central concern of this book. We must note, therefore, that the way in which we ask 'How' has also to be inquired. Prof. Standish presents a distinction between rational-assertive and receptive-responsive way of thinking. The former characterizes modern science, and must be replaced by the latter. He suggests that we must learn to think in the receptive-responsive way. It is true that these two ways of thinking cannot rigidly be defined, but here we may venture to ask how it becomes possible for us to think in the receptive-responsive way.

The problem of the way of thinking is to be related with the reconsideration of the way in which we read this book. How should we read *Beyond the Self*, in rational-assertive way, or in receptive-responsive way? I wonder which kind of readers the author expects. These questions, however, seem to bring us into a serious paradox. If we need to be receptive and responsive to read this book, it seems to be impossible for us to go beyond rational-assertive way of thinking to the receptive-responsive one. Supposed a man had already acquired the receptive-responsive way of thinking, he would not need to learn it afresh. On the other hand, if we can reach the receptive-responsive way of thinking through the rational-assertive one, the acquirement of the former inevitably depends on the latter. But the author does not leave us any description about such a deep relationship between these two ways. Hence, now the way of reading this book appears as one of the most important issues. To ask how we can learn the receptive-responsive way of thinking is just to ask how we should read this book. To ask how to read *Beyond the Self* is, therefore, nothing less than to ask how to read *Beyond the Self*. (And in which way of thinking the author wrote this book is also a key problem.)

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