

## Early Heidegger and Buddhism on Death

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In this paper, I will try to show that Heidegger's understanding of "death" in *Being and Time* is not immune from what I call "Western *ego*." I say "Western" because I believe that the *ego*-structure of Western thought is different from that of Eastern thought that has been influenced by Buddhism. More specifically, in the paper I will argue that the following claim of Heidegger is, from the Buddhist viewpoint, a biased one: "in the ontological analysis of Being-towards-the-end there is no anticipation of our taking any existentiell stand toward death" (*BT* : 292).

Although I said "biased," I have no intention to claim that Heidegger in *Being and Time* is inferior to Buddhism. In order to make a comparison, one would need to acquire a certain standpoint equidistant from both Heidegger and Buddhism, and from there restate each thought in its detail, or at least in its essential parts. A comparative study would be possible only after such preparation. My present investigation is not of that kind. I only intend to show that Heidegger's argument does not have universality. For this purpose, it will be enough to point out that there is at least one counterexample which we can consider as equally universal. More specifically, by pointing out that the Buddhist understanding of death can be a critique of Heidegger's thought, I try to show that the argument in *Being and Time* falls short of Heidegger's claim that his existential Interpretation of death "is also the foundation for any investigation of death which is historiological, ethnological or psychological" (*BT* : 291). So, my basic strategy must be to analyze (1) Heidegger's interpretation of death, (2) the interpretation of death in Buddhism, and (3) to critique Heidegger's interpretation of death from the Buddhist point of view

## 1. Death in *Being and Time*

Since Heidegger's philosophy is quite different from its predecessors and its terms are also unique, it is impossible for us to start right out with his theory of death. As a matter of fact, the entirely correct understanding of *death* in *Being and Time* is only possible when it is situated in the whole argument of the book. However, since my purpose is to contextualize Heidegger's thought on *death* in the light of Buddhism, I will limit my argument relevant to that problem. Hence, I will divide the following investigation into two parts. Namely, I will investigate (1) Heidegger's theory of "understanding, interpretation, and meaning", (2) Heidegger's theory of "death." After those arguments, we should understand correctly what Heidegger means by "understanding the meaning of death."

### 1.1 "understanding the meaning of ..."

#### 1.1.1 Being-in-the-world

Heidegger's ontology is typically new in its point of departure. No philosopher before him has thought that the meaning of being of "this tree" or "this stone" was derivative. When Aristotle says "*to on legetai pollachos*", what he has in mind are entities which we speculate and classify into categories. When Augustine calls God "*summa essentia*", keeping the original meaning of the term *essentia* in mind, he contemplates the supreme entity above sublunary entities. For Aquinas, *ens* is *quod primo intellectu concipitur* (what is captured by the intellect first of all) and *prioprium objectum intellectus* (the proper object of the intellect). But this *intellectus* is apparently a speculative one.

Quite differently, Heidegger's ontology starts with "Dasein's Being-in-the-world." It is not an indifferent, third-person inquiry based on speculative thinking. His starting point is practical activity such as my striking a nail with a hammer. The more I am absorbed in the activity, the purer the activity is and the more primordial Dasein's Being becomes. Just

as Greek *pragma* is taken from *prass(tt)o* from which *praxis* derives, Heidegger thinks that acting precedes “a thing.” In its acting, Dasein is not a separate subject but involved in the environment and, in a sense, unified with the object of activity. When Dasein is striking a nail with a hammer, it is absorbed in the work without thinking that “I” as a separate subject “am striking” “a nail” as a separate object “with a hammer” as a tool. Rather, “my striking a nail with a hammer” is an inseparable element of Dasein.

But even in this case, Dasein has some kind of understanding. It understands how to use a hammer, what it wants to make, why he does such work, etc.. In our everyday life, it is apparently not the case that at first Dasein examines the nature of a nail, a hammer, and lumber, and then makes the judgment that it can make a box, and finally starts working. In reverse, first of all it finds itself already in the mood or the understanding of wanting a box. And then it goes to a workshop which it already knows. If everything is ready, it does not even think explicitly about lumber or tools. It gets down to work immediately.

In this case, Dasein relates to the things which Heidegger calls “ready-to-hand”, and the relation is based on Dasein’s “concern.” The nature of a hammer or a nail does not emerge into consciousness until the work encounters trouble. For example, when the hammer’s head is loose, he begins to think what the hammer should have been (*to ti en einai*), namely, the nature (*natura*) or the essence (*essentia*) of a hammer. In such a case, the relational totality of signifying, i.e., *significance*, steps back, and tools and materials appear as mere objects, or *things*. These are derivative modes of Being, which Heidegger calls “present-at-hand.”

In average, everyday life, Dasein always already has a certain understanding based on which, or, *wherein* Dasein works. In its essential state, Dasein is absorbed in the world. In this sense, Dasein is essentially *in the world*. In other words, Dasein’s Being is analyzed as Being-in-the-world.

### 1.1.2 Being-there

Dasein is essentially in the world. But the meaning of this *Being-in* is entirely different from our ordinary usage such as, “A pen *is in* a box.” The latter is an objective and theoretical statement which emerges from the speculative attitude toward the world, which Heidegger refuses to take in his investigation into the meaning of Being. Rather, Heidegger maintains that the *Being-in* of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world is to be understood as “(T)he entity which is essentially constituted by Being-in-the-world *is* itself in every case its ‘there’” (BT : 171). For example, when I am making a box, Dasein, which in every case I *am*, is in-the-world in the sense that I *am* essentially ‘there’. Heidegger impressively explains this fundamental character of Dasein by the term “clearing” (*Lichtung*). This word originally means a clearing in the woods. Dasein is just like an open space in the forest. There is a plenty of light (*Licht*) there and everything is seen and understood in the light of it. Dasein is not a separate knowing subject but like a field filled with light. *Disclosedness* is another term Heidegger uses to explain this situation. In the dark woods, things are covered with trees and bushes, but when we come to a clearing, such coverings are removed and things are disclosed *there*. Dasein is such *there* where it encounters everything disclosed. “*Dasein is its disclosedness*” (BT : 171).

But where does such light come from? In a clearing, it is from the sun. But in Dasein, which is its disclosedness, the light is also Dasein itself. Therefore, Dasein is at the same time its disclosedness and its disclosure. Heidegger says:

In so far as Dasein *is* its disclosedness essentially, and discloses and uncovers as something disclosed to this extent it is essentially ‘true’. *Dasein is ‘in the truth’* (BT : 263).

Dasein’s Being is essentially Being-in-the-world, Being-there and Being in the truth.

### 1.1.3 understanding, interpretation and meaning

Dasein is not only *thrown* to the *there* factually, but also it *projects* itself in its possibilities. As we have seen in the example of making a box, Dasein has already understood what it can do. But Dasein does not have this understanding as a result of a special investigation into the nature of itself and of things around itself. Rather, Heidegger claims, this kind of understanding always already belongs to Dasein's Being. He writes:

Dasein is such that in every case it has understood (or alternatively, not understood) that it is to be thus or thus. As such understanding it 'knows' *what* it is capable of --- that is, what its potentiality-for-Being is capable of. This 'knowing' does not first arise from an immanent self-perception, but belongs to the Being of the "there", which is essentially understanding (*BT*: 184).

Dasein's Being is essentially potentiality-for-Being, and "understanding" is the name for such Being. This *understanding*, as itself a potentiality-for-Being, has the possibility to develop itself. Heidegger calls this development *interpretation*.

Both *understanding* and *interpretation* are what Heidegger calls *existential*, and essentially belong to Dasein's Being. Thus understood, it is impossible that at first Dasein exists, and then Dasein acquires an understanding or an interpretation from somewhere. Dasein, as a potentiality-for-Being, always *already* understood and interpreted something.

This means that any understanding and any interpretation are circular. Heidegger explains this in terms of the *fore*-structure of understanding and the *as*-structure of interpretation. When we interpret something, we always interpret it *as* something *on the basis of* something. Heidegger says:

In interpreting, we do not, so to speak, throw a ‘signification’ over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it; but when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation (*BT*: 190-1).

Moreover, such *interpretation* is always based on what Heidegger calls “*fore* structure.”

In every case this interpretation is grounded in *something we have in advance* --- in a *fore-having*. ... In every case interpretation is grounded in *something we see in advance* --- in a *fore-sight*. ... In either case, the interpretation has already decided for a definite way of conceiving it, either with finality or with reservations; it is grounded in *something we grasp in advance* --- in a *fore-conception* (*BT*: 191).

When I make a box, I am already familiar with a totality of involvements. (*Involvement* is another special term Heidegger uses to express the Being of ready-to-hand.) I understand what a box is, how it is useful, how to make it etc., also these understandings are made possible on the basis of still larger contexts. We hold them in our fore-having. Besides this, when I make a box, I see a box from a certain point of view. As a matter of fact, I will see a box differently when I want to make it and when I want to destroy it. This difference is based on two different fore-sights. Now, since every interpretation aims at a conceptual knowledge, and since this conceptualization has also been decided beforehand, especially by fore-having and fore-sight, this determination is called fore-conception. Heidegger later calls this fore-structure “hermeneutical Situation” (*BT*: 275). Every interpretation of Dasein is done in this hermeneutical Situation. “An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (*BT*: 192).

“Meaning” is another *existentiale* of Dasein. In its Being-there, Dasein discloses, understands, and interprets entities. Meaning is not what Dasein understands but that by which Dasein understands something. So, Heidegger says, “In so far as understanding and interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the ‘there’, ‘meaning’ must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding” (BT: 193). In this way, “(M)eaning is an *existentiale* of Dasein.” Hence, “(D)asein only ‘has’ meaning” and “*only Dasein can be meaningful or meaningless*” (BT: 193).

So far, we have reflected on Heidegger’s thought in so far as it is relevant to “understanding, interpretation, and meaning.” According to that, “to understand the meaning of something” cannot be something like “to acquire the knowledge of something.” But rather, it must be “to be disclosed to Dasein” or “to be disclosed in the clearing of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world.”

The next step is to investigate what *death* means in *Being and Time* and to unfold the implication of “understanding the meaning of death.”

## 1.2 Dasein’s death

### 1.2.1 Dasein’s Being-a-whole

In *Being and Time*, the problem of death arises in the context of the primordially of the existential analysis of Dasein. Heidegger writes:

If, however, the ontological Interpretation is to be a *primordial* one, this not only demands that in general the hermeneutical Situation shall be one which has been made secure in conformity with the phenomena; it also requires

explicit assurance that the *whole* of the entity which it has taken as its theme has been brought into the fore-having (*BT*: 275).

This means that in order for the ontological interpretation of the meaning of Being to be *primordial*, it requires explicit assurance that the *whole of Dasein* has been brought into the fore-having.

For Heidegger, what makes Dasein a whole is “death” as the end of Dasein.

The ‘end’ of Being-in-the-world is death. This end, which belongs to the potentiality-for-Being --- that is to say, to existence --- limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein (*BT*: 276-7).

In our everyday understanding, life is what happens between birth and death. Life is something which starts with birth and ends with death. So, we may regard the life of a living person as “unfinished” and say, “Her life has been unhappy, but one of these days ....” Whereas the life of a dead person is regarded as “finished” and as something whole. We recall her whole life and say, “Her life, *as a whole*, was unhappy.”

Similarly, Dasein, which is the sample entity that Heidegger chooses in inquiring into the meaning of Being in general, is regarded as something that happens between birth and death. Dasein can say to itself, “I have been happy until now.” But is it possible for Dasein to say, “My life was good. I lived a happy life, *as a whole*”? Not a few people might die leaving these words behind. So, we are inclined to answer to that “Yes.” But Heidegger’s answer is “No.”

As long as Dasein *is* as an entity, it has never reached its ‘wholeness’. But if it gains such ‘wholeness’, this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-world. In such a case, it can never again be experienced *as an entity* (*BT*: 280).



When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its “there.” By its transition to no-longer-Dasein, it gets lifted right out of the possibility of experiencing this transition and of understanding it as something experienced (*BT*: 281).

When Dasein reaches its end, it no longer has the potentiality-for-Being which is *understanding*. In other words, when Dasein dies, there is no *clearing* where things are disclosed with their meaning. For Heidegger, this means that Dasein cannot experience its own death as the end of Dasein. Then, is it impossible to reach the primordial Interpretation of Dasein’s Being?

Although Dasein cannot access its own end, it can experience the death of Others. Since Dasein is in most cases “they” as Being-fallen, there seems to be a possibility to use the death of Others as a substitute of the death of Dasein. But even if it is rather necessary for Dasein, in so far as it is “they”, to be another Dasein within certain limits, it is impossible to experience the death of Others as long as Dasein’s potentiality-for-Being is concerned.

Dying is something that every Dasein itself must take upon itself at the time. By its very essence, death is in every case mine, in so far as it ‘is’ at all (*BT*: 284).

Just as “Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am” (*BT*: 78), death is in every case *mine*.

Furthermore, we cannot consider death as something present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. “Ending”, “stopping”, “finishing”, “fulfilling” all signify a certain mode of death which is interpreted as present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. But “(B)y none of these modes of ending can death be suitably characterized as the ‘end’ of Dasein” (*BT*: 289).

Dasein’s death is not Other’s, nor something present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. Rather, Heidegger claims, Dasein “*is* already its end” insofar as “Dasein *is* already its

‘not-yet’” (BT: 289). In this way, death is recognized as an essential part of the Being of Dasein. Heidegger calls this Being “Being-towards-death” or “Being-towards-the-end.” My death is not something outstanding and something impending someday in the future but it is already a part of my Being. In this sense, I, as far as I exist, *am* dying.

In this interpretation, death is characterized as “a possibility.” So, Being-towards-death is also Being towards a possibility. But this possibility of death is distinctive in that the possibility never turns into actuality but remains the uttermost possibility. When Dasein is *able* to do something, Dasein usually has an inclination to do it. Usually, we do not like to leave possibilities as possibilities. For example, if you have an e-mail system, and it is *possible* to use e-mail, you have an inclination to actualize the possibility, whether or not it is necessary. This Heidegger explains as “there is a tendency to *annihilate the possibility* of the possible by making it available to us” (BT: 305). By using e-mail system, we *annihilate* the possibility which the system had. Of course we do not want to actualize *every* possibility which things around us have. But when we realize something *as* a possibility, the more clearly we understand that as a possibility, the more we are inclined to actualize and *annihilate* the possibility.

But, we cannot annihilate the possibility of death without annihilating Dasein itself. We can weaken such possibility by regarding death as something present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. But as far as death is disclosed in our understanding, we have to understand it as possibility and “*put up with it as a possibility*” (BT: 306).

Heidegger calls such Being-towards-death “anticipation [Vorlaufen].” He distinguishes this from *expecting*, which is a “*waiting for ... actualization*” (BT: 306). In *expecting*, what we expect is an actualization of something. On the other hand, when we anticipate death, in other words, we understandingly run into the Dasein’s ownmost possibility, we do not anticipate the actualization of the possibility; rather, we put up with the

possibility as a possibility. The closer we run into the possibility, the possibility becomes greater. It is “the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence” (BT: 307).

In anticipating, Dasein is gazing at its ownmost, non-relational possibility. Instead of “evading the fact that death is not to be outstripped” (BT: 308), Dasein accepts that fact and “becomes free for one’s own death” (BT: 308). This may be a turning point or a kind of conversion of Dasein. Heidegger impressively describes this:

Anticipation discloses to existence that its uttermost possibility lies in giving itself up, and thus it shatters all one’s tenaciousness to whatever existence one has reached. In anticipation, Dasein guards itself against falling back behind itself, or behind the potentiality-for-Being which it has understood (BT: 308).

Giving itself up, shattering all its tenaciousness, Dasein freely turns back to itself.

Heidegger calls this freedom “**freedom towards death** --- *a freedom which has been released from the Illusions of the ‘they’*” (BT: 311). And quite paradoxically, by giving up every possibility other than death, Dasein acquires the whole possibility in advance, because the measureless possibility of death includes all possibility of Dasein. Hence, Dasein becomes a whole in front of its death.

Since anticipation of the possibility which is not to be outstripped discloses also all the possibilities which lie ahead of that possibility, this anticipation includes the possibility of taking the *whole* of Dasein in advance in an existentiell manner; that is to say, it includes the possibility of existing as a *whole potentiality-for-Being* (BT: 309).

Even though Heidegger uses a positive expression like “freedom” here, this does not mean that the threat of death is weakened by any means. In anticipating, Death is faced with the threat of death and this is held in the mood of *anxiety*. Dasein’s authentic

Being-there is Being-anxious about the potentiality-for-Being. Hence, we could say that anxiety is the essential state-of-mind of Dasein. By anxiety, Dasein confronts its death, individualizes itself, and becomes certain of its totality.

### 1.3 “understanding the meaning of death”

Now, it is time to explicate the implication of Heidegger’s “understanding the meaning of death.” We had reached the point where we interpret “to understand the meaning of death” as “for death to be disclosed to Dasein” or as “for death to be disclosed in the clearing of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world.” Hence, when *death* is interpreted as something present-at-hand, ready-to-hand, or Other’s, such *death* cannot be disclosed in the clearing of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world. On the other hand, when and only when Death is interpreted as Dasein’s ownmost, no-relational possibility of Dasein’s impossibility, death is disclosed in Dasein’s understanding. Dasein, then, puts up with the possibility as possibility in the mood of anxiety. By this anxiety, Dasein becomes an utter individual separated from inauthentic everyday they-self. And by this individualization, Dasein becomes certain of the totality of its potentiality-for-Being (*BT*: 310).

## 2. death in Buddhism

So far, we surveyed the argument of death in *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, death is not only the background against which Dasein is brought out in its totality, but also the source of gravitational power which pulls Dasein back from the “they” to its authenticity. Although the authentic Dasein is free from the illusions of the “they”, it is totally individualized, and anxious about its indefinite death by the very power of death.

In the following, I will reflect on the Buddhist understanding of death. In my impression, Heidegger’s argument in *Being and Time* penetrates so deeply into human nature that it has reached levels which the Western and the Eastern thought have in common. If

this is true, it will be possible to establish a dialogue between them from those levels.

Hence, first I will present one representative theory of death in Buddhism, which is from Japanese Zen Buddhism, and secondly, try to make a critique of each of them.

## 2.1 no-self

Buddhism, like Christianity, has a long and varied history. But the most relevant for our present purpose is the doctrine of “no-self”, since the doctrine of birth-and-death is based on the “no-self.”

Let us begin with Zen-meditation. There are several methods for entering into meditation, one of which is to “see one’s breath.” In this method, you will try to concentrate only on your breathing. You cannot see the air entering through your nostrils into your body and going out from inside of your body. But you can feel the movement of the air. Little by little, you will remove your attention from things around you and direct it exclusively to the movement of the air. If successful, you will forget all the little things in everyday life and feel only the breathing. “Breathe in, breathe out. In, out, in, out, ... .” When you reach a certain stage, suddenly you feel a kind of absurdity and ask, “What is ‘in’ and ‘out’ ? How did I know this was ‘in’ and that was ‘out’? Why isn’t that ‘in’ and this ‘out’?” You will find you have no ground of this in/out distinction. Then, try to think that ‘that’ is ‘in’ and ‘this’ is ‘out.’ If your meditation is deep enough, you will succeed in regarding your ordinarily ‘outside’ as ‘inside’ and ‘inside’ as ‘outside.’ You will clearly feel that you can be your ‘outside.’ After those experiences, with entirely fresh and peaceful feeling, you will calmly affirm that there is no such thing as “self.”

The Buddhist doctrine of “no-self” is sometimes misunderstood as a kind of careless, neglectful attitude toward the life and the world. But it is far from that. Dōgen, who is one of the most important Japanese Zen masters in the 13th century, says:

To learn the Buddha Way is to learn one's own self. To learn one's self is to forget one's self. To forget one's self is to be confirmed by all dharmas. To be confirmed by all dharmas is to effect the casting off of one's own body and mind and bodies and minds of others as well. All traces of enlightenment [then] disappear, and this traceless enlightenment is continued on and on endlessly (Abe: 123).

To be no-self is not only to forget one's self, but also "to be confirmed by all dharmas." By such confirmation, by the "yes" from the true reality, one can cast off one's mind and body and also bodies and minds of others. By this casting off, obstacles are removed and one acquires the source of true endless enlightenment.

We have to be careful not to identify this enlightenment with *mystical vision* which sometimes appears in Christian literature. In Christian literature, the vision usually does not last long and is followed by the subsequent feeling of *falling* or *distance* from a higher stage. Here is a famous example of Augustine's mystical experience with his mother, Monica, at Ostia.

And our conversation had brought us to this point, that any pleasure whatsoever of the bodily senses, in any brightness whatsoever of corporeal light, seemed to us not worthy of comparison with the pleasure of that eternal Light, not worthy even of mention. ... And while we were thus talking of His Wisdom and panting for it, with all the effort of our heart we did for one instant attain to touch it; then sighing, and leaving the first fruits of our spirit bound to it, we returned to the sound of our own tongue, in which a word has both beginning and ending. (*Confessions* IX, x; Augustine: 200)

Dōgen's "enlightenment" is more like Plato's. In *Symposium*, Diotima says:

Whoever has been initiated so far in the mysteries of Love and has viewed all these aspects of the beautiful in due succession, is at last drawing near the final revelation. And now, Socrates, there bursts upon him that wondrous vision which is the very soul of the beauty he has toiled so long for. It is an everlasting loveliness which neither comes nor goes, which neither flowers nor fades, for such beauty is the same on every hand, the same then as now, here as there, this way as that way, the same to every worshiper as it is to every other. ... And if, my dear Socrates, ... man's life is ever worth the living, it is when he has attained this vision of the very soul of beauty. And once you have seen it, you will never be seduced again by the charm of gold, of dress, of comely boys, or lads ripening to manhood; (Plato: 562-3)

## 2.2 no-birth

From the perspective of no-self, the problem of death is a pseudo problem, because there is no such thing as *death*. This does not mean that man is immortal or that a human soul survives its bodily death. In addition, it has nothing to do with the theory of reincarnation which is popular in South and East Asian nations. Whether a soul is reincarnated or not, the very concept of death is false. The same is true even of the Christian world. If in fact this world was created by a creator and will be destroyed one of these days, when every human soul will be judged in front of the creator, from the perspective of no-self, nothing happens. Even a Christian must die. But a Buddhist, even as he or she is not born, need not die. Dōgen says:

Life is the manifestation of the total dynamism [of the universe]; death is the manifestation of the total dynamism [of the universe] (Abe 115).

From the perspective of no-self, no-death is understood as no-birth, or *unborn*. Elsewhere Dōgen expresses this by “cutting off *before* and *after*.” Ordinarily, we understand our life with “before-life” and “after-life.” But from the perspective of no-self, there is no such *before* or *after*. In this sense, Dōgen says, life itself is beyond before and after.

But at the same time, Buddhism always emphasizes that this *via negativa* is not sufficient. After denying all false concepts, most of all the concept of self, one must affirm, say “yes” to, the world as it is from the perspective of Buddha Dharma.

To think that birth-and-death is something to be eliminated is a sin of hating the Buddha Dharma (Abe: 115).

Seen from the perspective of Buddha Dharma, the world itself turns into *nirvāna*. And there, birth and death become authentic birth and death.

This present birth-and-death itself is the life of Buddha. If you attempt to reject it with distaste, you are losing thereby the life of Buddha. If you abide in it, attaching to birth-and-death, you also lose the life of Buddha, and leave yourself with [only] the appearance of Buddha. You only attain the mind of Buddha when there is no hating [of birth-and-death] and no desiring [of nirvāna] (Abe: 116).

This no-denial/no-attachment stance is essential for the non-self perspective. Sometimes Buddhism is misunderstood as an entirely negative attitude toward the human knowledge. But as we have analysed, what Buddhism denies is the theoretical and conceptual attitude toward the world. With no-denial/no-attachment perspective, our understanding of the world is, as it were, reconstructed and reaffirmed.



### 3. Conclusion: Heidegger and Buddhism

#### 3.1 from Buddhism to Heidegger

From the Buddhist point of view, “death” is one of these false concepts which obsesses human beings when they are not in truth. To use Heidegger’s terminology, death and anxiety in the face of it belong to an inauthentic mode of Dasein. Hence, first of all we can ask, “Why must the basic mood of Dasein be anxiety?”

Talking about death, Heidegger says, “(A)nticipation discloses to existence that its uttermost possibility lies in giving itself up, and thus it shatters all one’s tenaciousness to whatever existence one has reached” (BT: 308, emphasis added). Dōgen would say, “when you give yourself up and shatter all your tenaciousness, you will be confirmed by all Buddha Dharma and clearly see that you are not yourself and that you are not born. There will be no anxiety after and in this meditation. Of course it is too rash to identify the situation of Dasein in the face of death and the no-self enlightenment in Zen meditation. Both are different. But I do not think that both are radically different. Because, first, both Heidegger’s investigation and Zen meditation are emancipated from theoretical, scientific understanding of the world (present-at-hand); and second, both concentrate on the problem of individual death; and third, both are free from everyday understanding of birth and death. Therefore, we can ask the question “why anxiety?” even more strongly.

From Buddhist point of view, Heidegger’s *anxiety* is based on Dasein’s *mineness*. In Zen meditation, “Dasein” stops being “I” at a certain point. This is indeed a crucial point and on ceasing to be “I”, the mood of Dasein entirely changes. So, a Buddhist might say that Heidegger is anxious about his death because he does not abandon the false concept of “I.” Heidegger, to be sure, writes that the certainty of “I” is lower than that of *anticipation*. “... the evidential character which belongs to the immediate givenness of Experiences, of the ‘I’, or of consciousness, must necessarily lag behind the certainty which anticipation includes”

(BT: 310). Therefore, we might say that also in *Being and Time*, it is possible to distinguish 'I' from more fundamental Being. But according to the care structure, this anticipation has already been anxiety and death is grasped as threat. Hence, it is still possible to ask, "Why is Dasein's authentic mood anxiety?" and "Why is Dasein in each case mine?"

I think that it is difficult to answer to those critiques from the perspective proposed only in *Being and Time*. For the full explication of those problems, it would be necessary to investigate the Heidegger's thought after *Being and Time*.

### 3.2 from Heidegger to Buddhism

Although the primary intention of this paper is to contextualize the understanding of death in *Being and Time*, the investigation we have pursued reveals that there are several problems also in Buddhist interpretation of death. Namely, from Heidegger's point of view, we could ask Buddhism, "How can you understand the meaning of birth and death after you are no longer yourself?" As we have seen, *understanding* and *meaning* are constitutive parts of Dasein's Being. And Dasein is always mine and limited by its death. If a Buddhist "forgets one's self" completely to the extent that he does not even feel that he is alive, how is he able to possess any understanding? Does he not just forget that he is mortal?

The second question Heidegger would raise is, "Is Zen meditation not a kind of indifferent, third-person contemplation of the world?" If it is so, Zen meditation is one of tendencies which Heidegger attacks, namely, the forgetfulness of Being. As Heidegger claims in *Being and Time*, if the meaning of Being is accessible through Dasein, and if Zen Buddhism throws away the Dasein, in so far as "Dasein is in each case *mine*," Heidegger has good reason to accuse Zen Buddhism of entirely neglecting Being.

I cannot respond to these critiques now. But I am quite sure that Dōgen and other Buddhist philosophers could respond. Anyway, the first critique shows that it is necessary for Buddhism to clarify the structure of understanding and meaning and the second shows that it is necessary to articulate a Buddhist response to Heidegger's claim of *Seinsvergessenheit*.

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