

The Review of Life Studies Vol.6 (December 2015):1-28

Manga and Philosophy

Why Was the Book “Manga Introduction to Philosophy”
Written?

Masahiro Morioka*

The following pages are slightly modified PowerPoint slides presented at the first conference of the European Network of Japanese Philosophy, Barcelona, Spain. (December 4th, 2015).

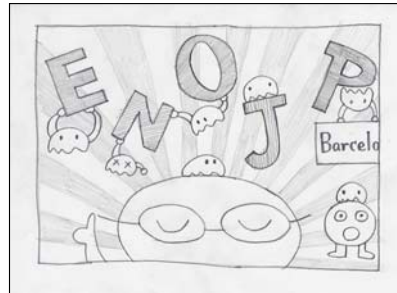
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The First Conference of the European Network of Japanese Philosophy,
Barcelona, Spain. December 4th, 2015.

MANGA AND PHILOSOPHY

WHY WAS THE BOOK "MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY"
WRITTEN? (A SLIGHTLY MODIFIED VERSION)



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PROFILE OF MASASHIRO MORIOKA

- Born in 1958. Graduated from University of Tokyo. Worked for International Research Center for Japanese Studies, and Osaka Prefecture University.
- Currently teach philosophy and ethics at Human Sciences, Waseda University.
- Background:
 - Physics (three years at UT but now I've forgot everything)
 - Wittgenstein (BA, MA)
 - Bioethics (Ph.D.)

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MY BOOKS (IN JAPANESE)

○ Bioethics

- *Brain Dead Person: Human-relationship-oriented Analysis of Brain-death* 1989
- *Reconsidering the View of Life* 1994
- *Life Studies Approaches to Bioethics: A New Perspective on Brain Death, Feminism, and Disability* 2001
- *A Philosophical Inquiry into Personhood, Dignity, and Brain Death* 2015

○ Criticism of contemporary civilization

- *Consciousness Communication* 1993
- *How to Live in a Post-religious Age* 1996
- *Painless Civilization* 2003

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○ Gender and sexuality

- *Confessions of a Frigid Man* 2005, 2013
- *Lessons in Love for Herbivore Men* 2008

○ Philosophical essays

- *An Intellectual Method of Facing Oneself* 1997
- *The 33rd Stone: A Philosophy for a Wounded Age* 2009
- *Connecting the Living and the Deceased* 2012

○ Philosophy

- *Manga Introduction to Philosophy* 2013
- Morioka (ed.) *Reconsidering Meaning in Life* 2015
- *On Life and Dignity* (201? next book)
- *Philosophy of Life* (201? next book)

* Some books have been translated into Korean / Chinese, and are currently being translated into Arabic and Indonesian. Some have been translated into English but are currently unpublished.

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MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

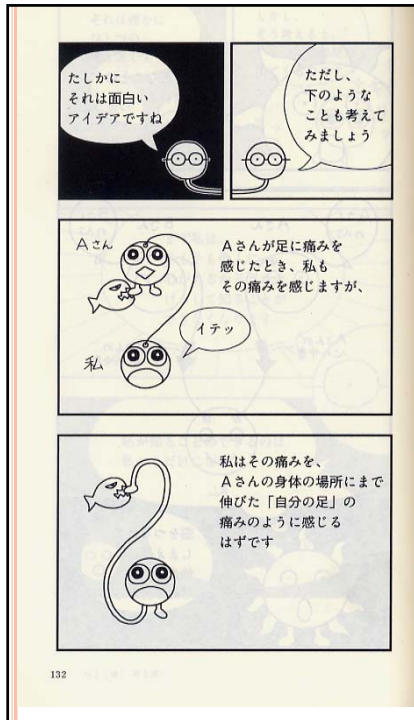
MASAHIRO MORIOKA (TEXT, ORIGINAL DRAWING)

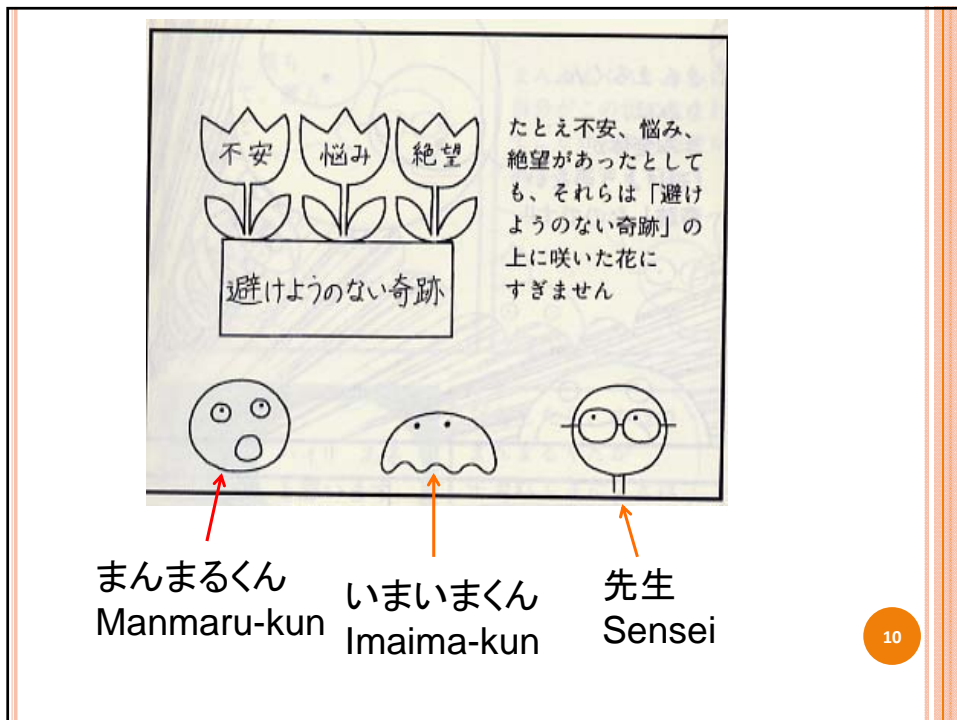
NYANCOF TERADA (DRAWING)

- This is perhaps the world's first book in which a philosopher himself illustrates his own philosophical investigation into hard problems on *time*, *being*, *solipsism*, and *life*, in the form of "Manga."
- This is not a book that illustrates the history of philosophy or great philosophers' ideas. (*Logicomix*)
- Original drawings (230 pages) were prepared by me, and the final drawings were made by the professional cartoonist Nyancof Terada.



- I made original drawings with pencils.
- Mr. Terada made final drawings on his PC.
- It took three years of trials and errors to finish the book.
- The following slides show my original drawings (right) and Terada's final cartoons (left)



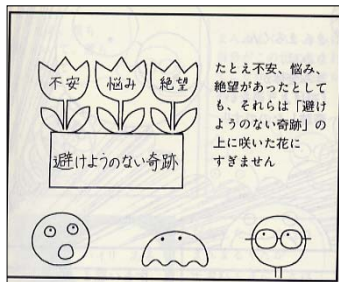


WHAT I THOUGHT AFTER PUBLICATION

- 1) There are philosophical thinking and ideas that can be best described in the form of Manga.
 - We can draw “the flow of thinking and/or images” directly in Manga
 - For me, in many cases, a philosophical thinking first emerges as a picture. It makes sense to draw that picture before it takes the form of language.



- 2) Manga has strong power to attract people’s attention.
 - I don’t know why but even a child can read Manga two or three hours continuously, without rest.
 - A combination of the right brain and the left brain?
 - We’ve found that simply drawn Manga pictures suit well with philosophical contents.



YES

NO

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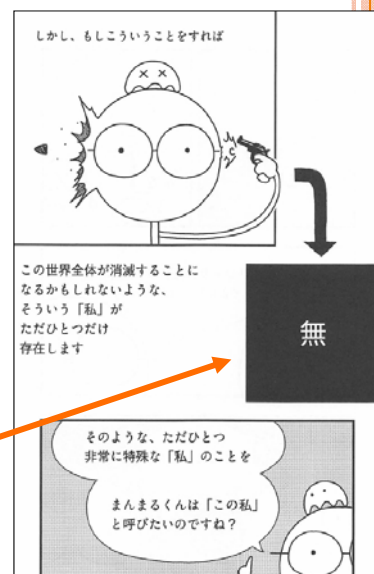
○ 3) There are philosophical thinking and ideas that cannot be well described in the form of Manga.

- It is impossible to draw a Manga picture which describes complicated logical sentences such as: “Because X and Y has such and such relationships, if X includes A, B, and C, then it naturally follows that Y ………”
- Sometimes, a whole page is filled with words.



- It is impossible to draw such abstract concepts as “Nothing(ness)” and “the death of myself”. (This was a very interesting discovery for me.)

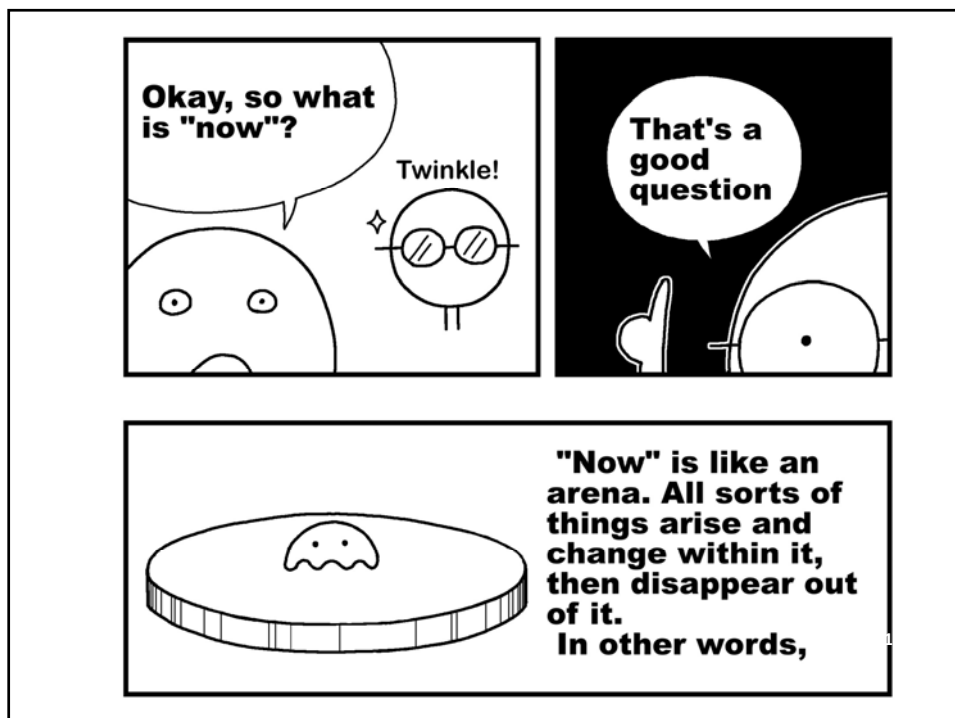
I used the word “Nothing 無” to describe the concept of Nothing(ness) after the death of mine.

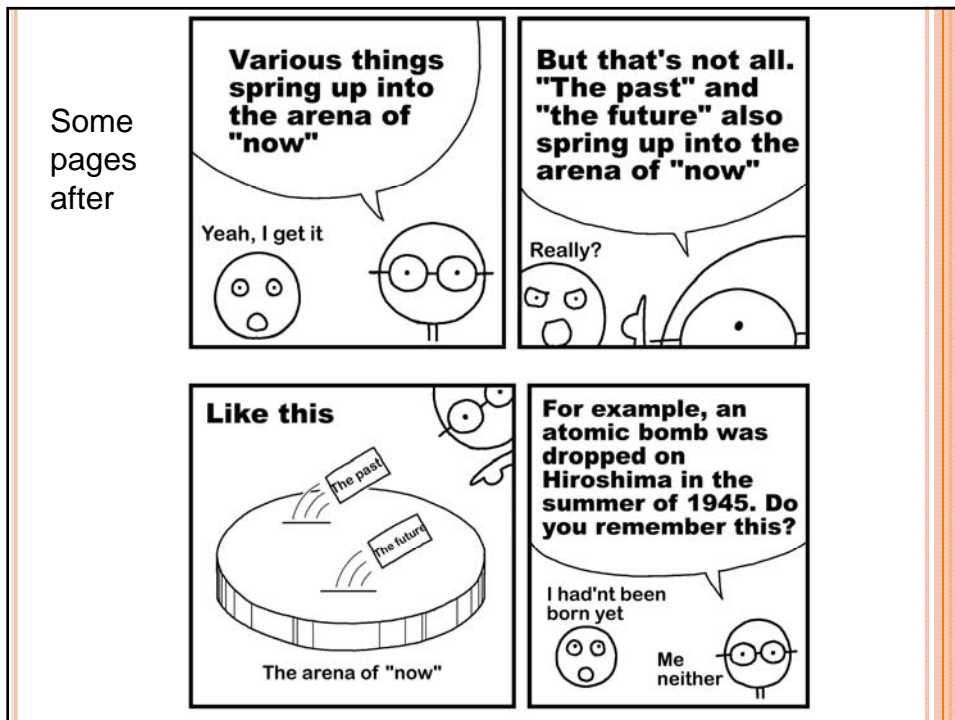
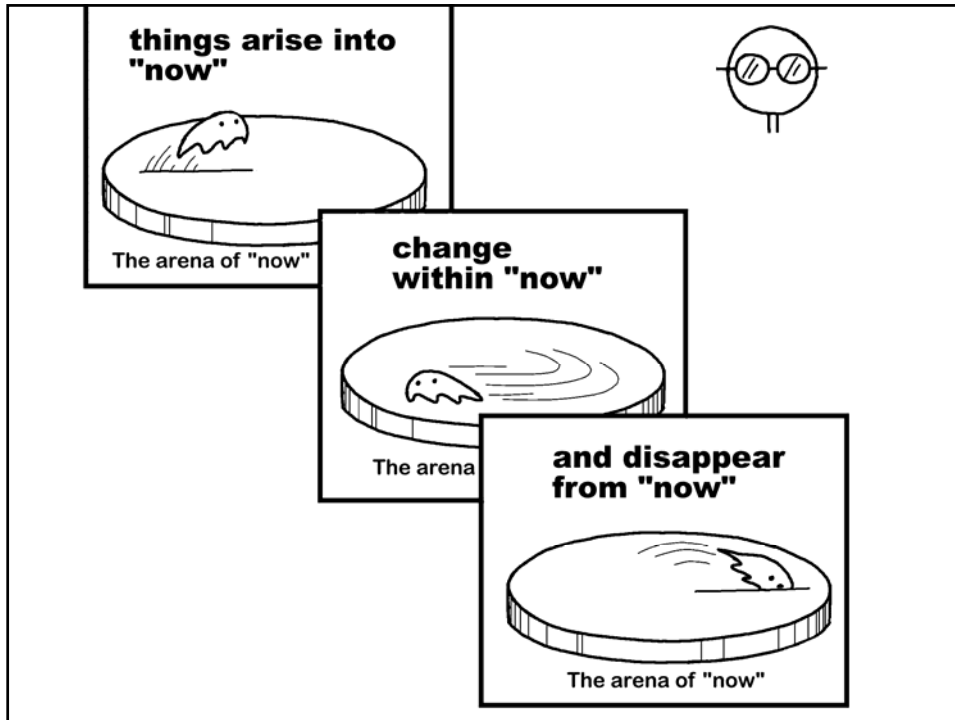


AN EXAMPLE OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSIONS IN "MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY"

- In Chapter One "Time", which deals with the philosophy of time, I discuss the following:
 - "The past itself" and "the past that springs up now" is different
 - "The future itself" and "the future that springs up now" is different
 - "The present this instant" and "now" is different
 - "Now" is "the arena of "now""
 - "The present this instant" does not exist inside "the arena of "now""

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Some pages after

Let's try thinking about it from a different angle

Normally, we think about the flow of time like this

Right

Time that has already passed

The moment between the past and the future

Time that will occur in the future

Present

Past Future

The flow of time

passed

future

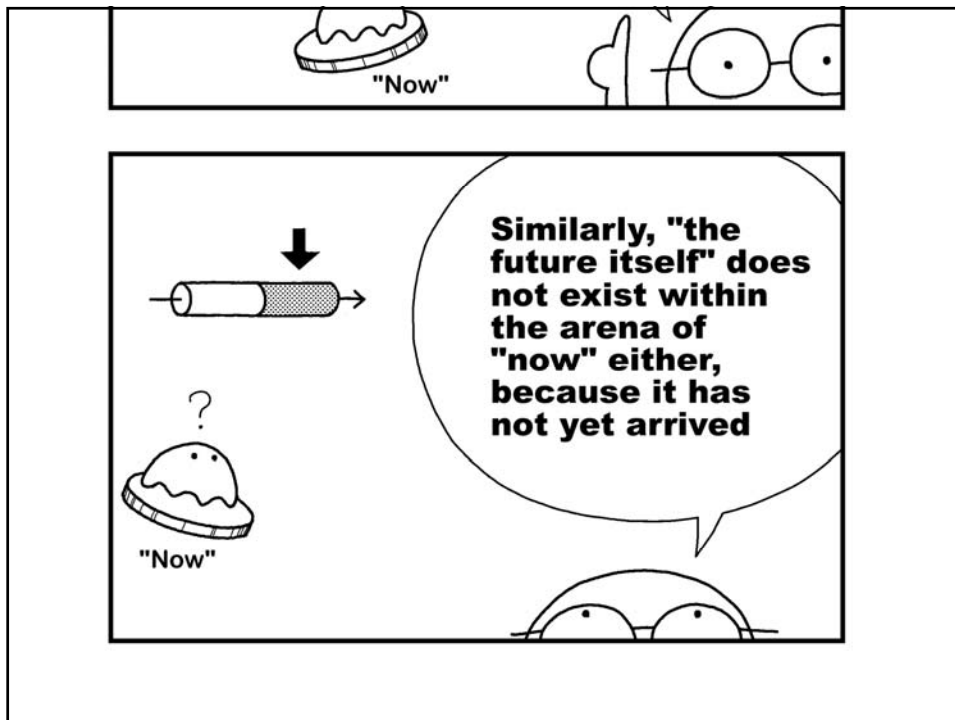
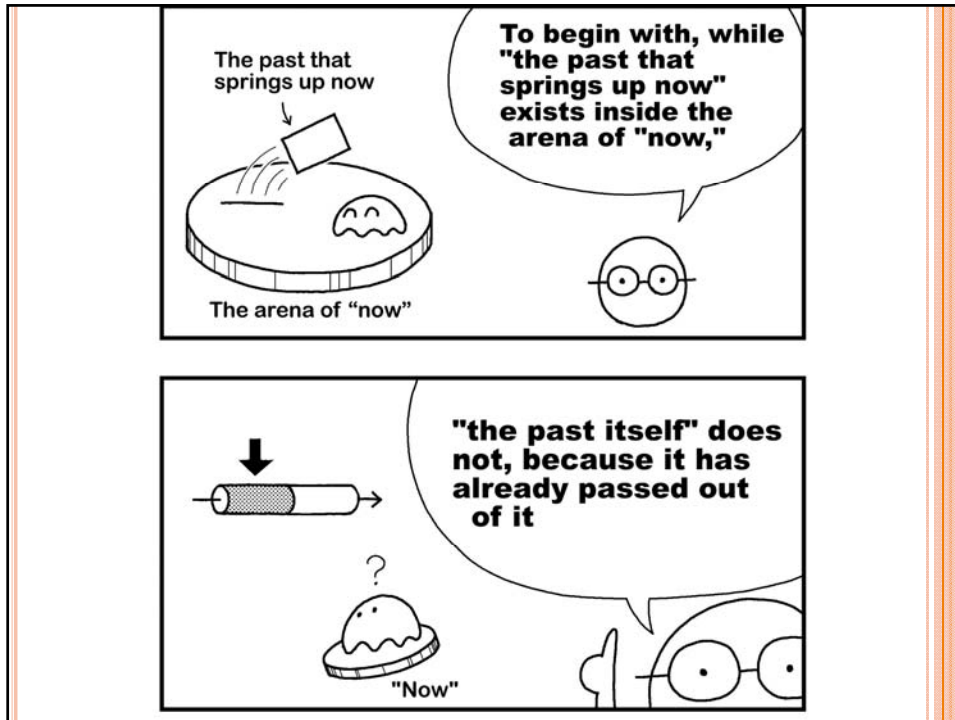
Present

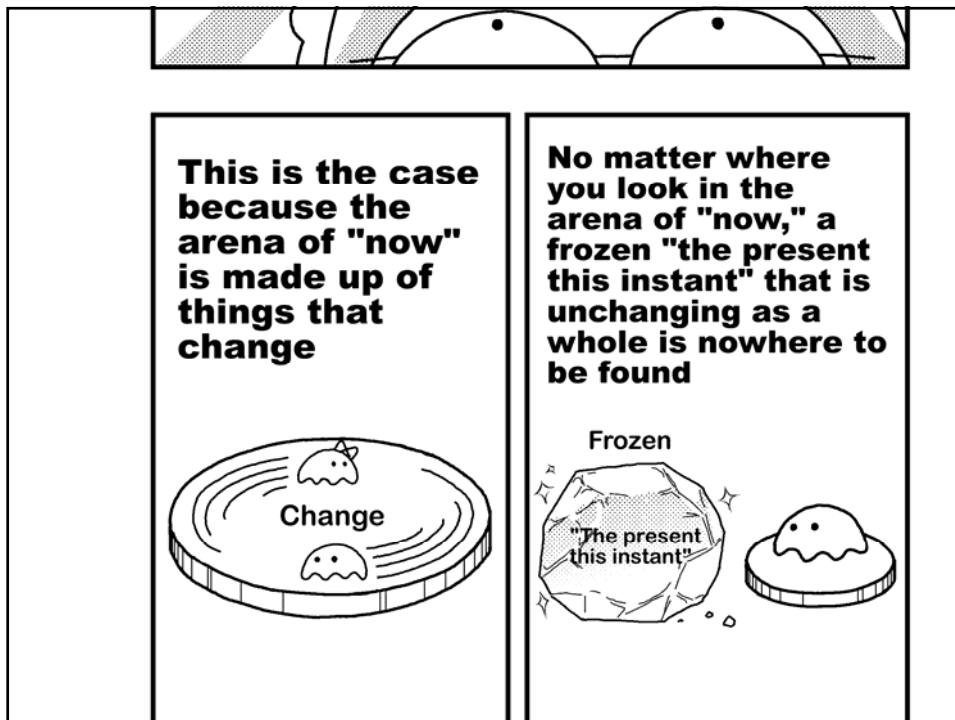
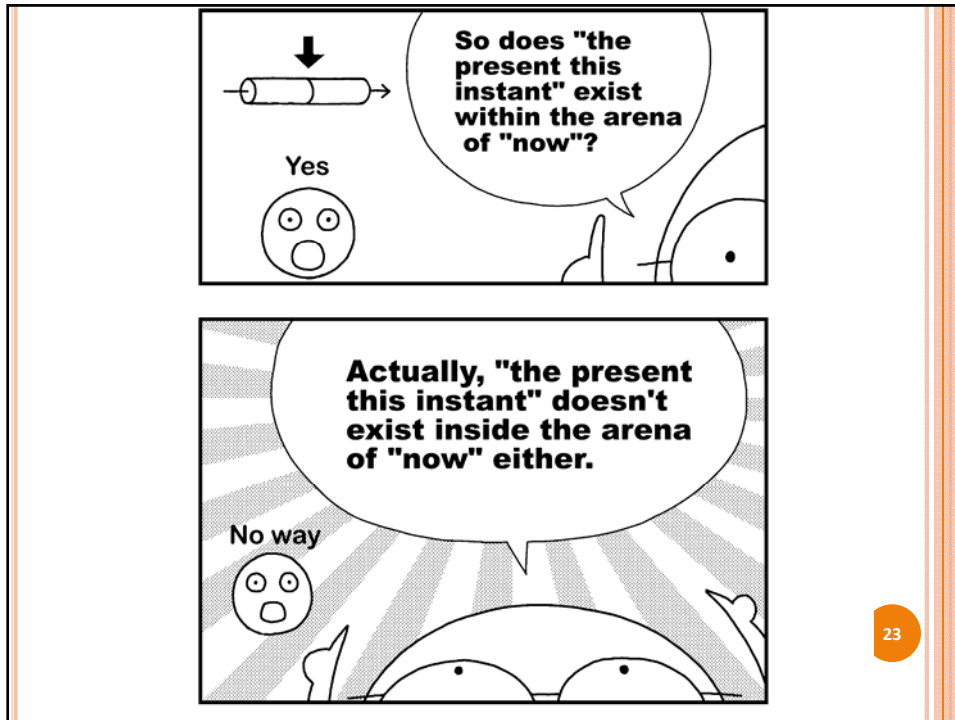
Past Future

The flow of time

Let's see what happens when we compare the common-sense view of time described above

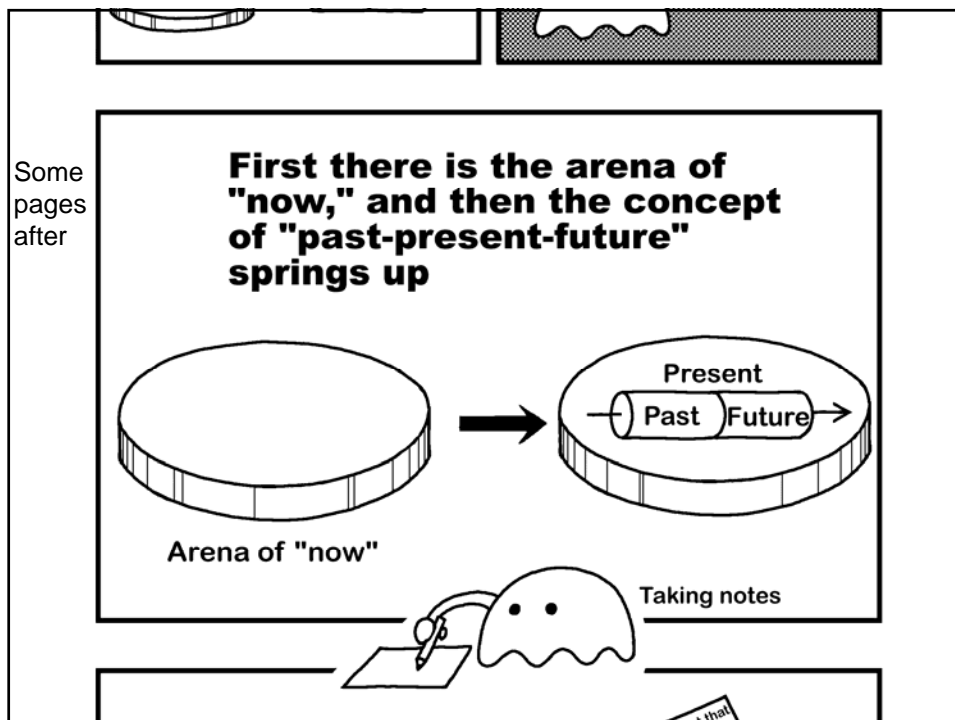
and the arena of "now"

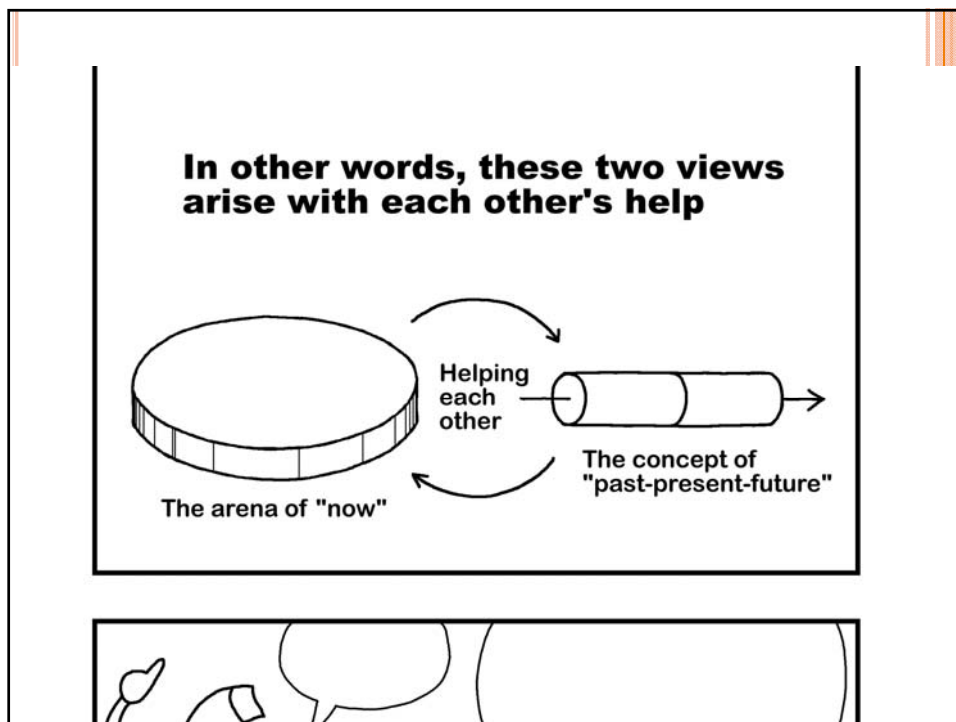
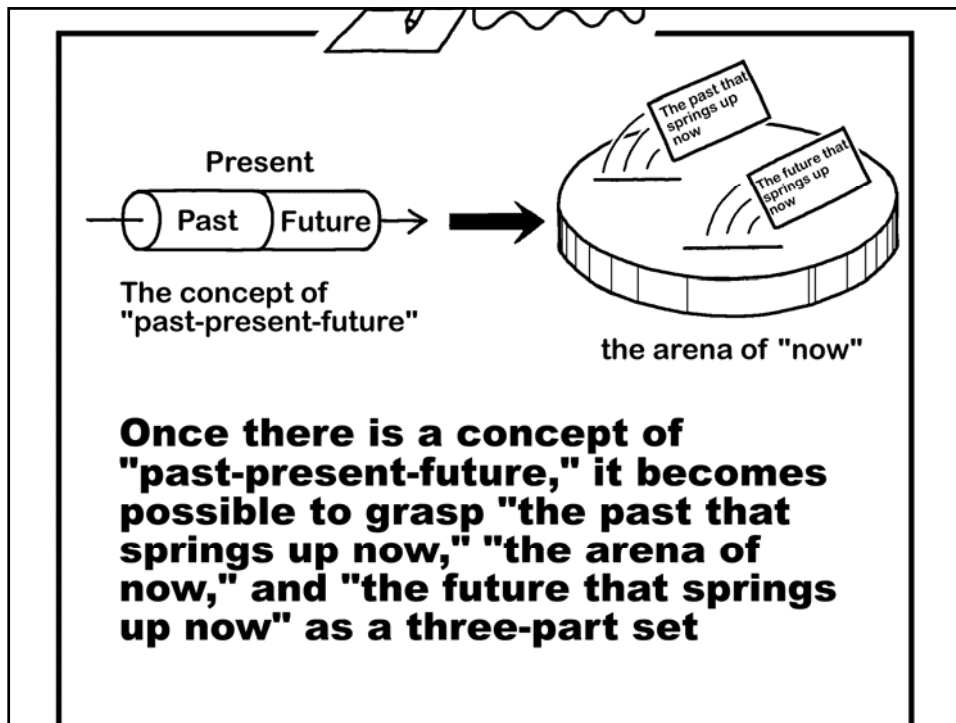




- The discussion in the above slides borrows a lot from great philosophers in the past.
 - For example, imagine Edmund Husserl's "Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time" and Aristotle's discussion of "time."
- But the way of visualizing it may be original and interesting.
- The discussion in the following slides depicts my own philosophical thoughts on "time".

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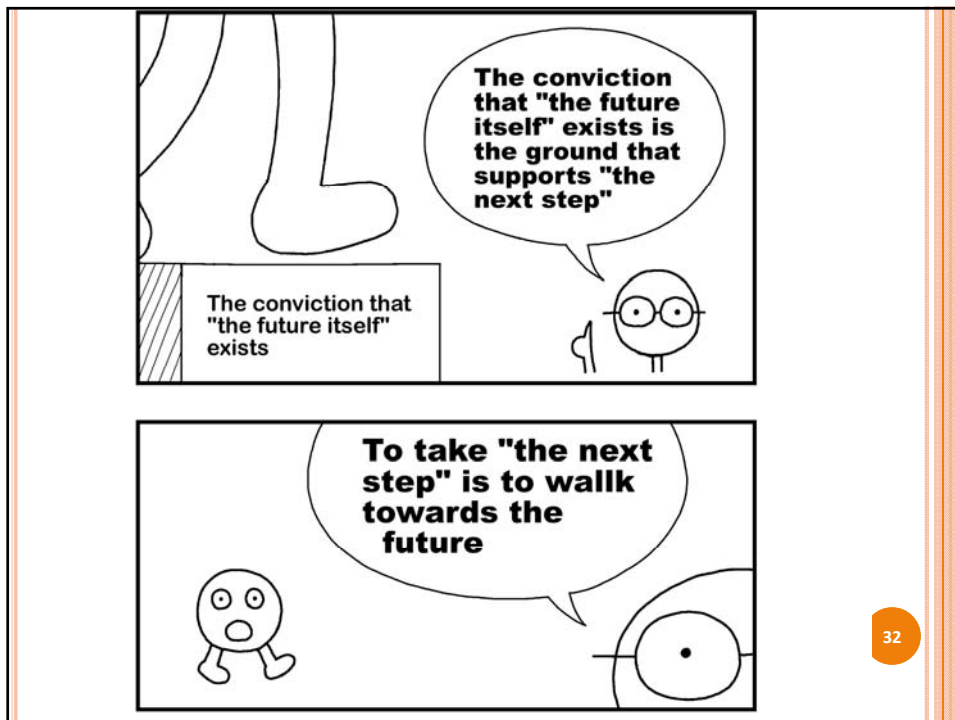
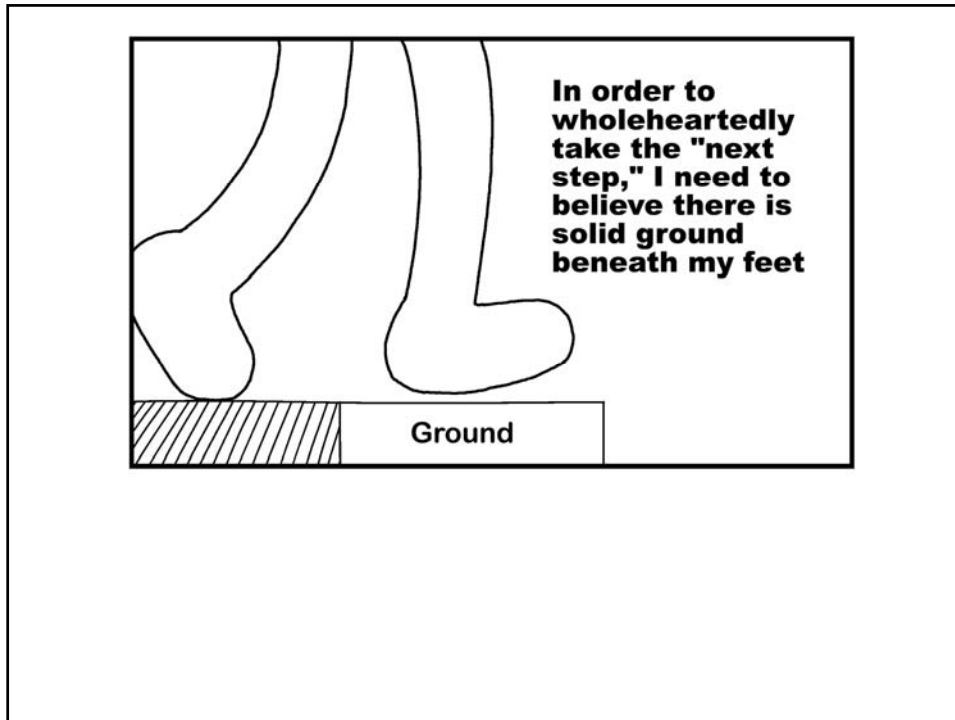


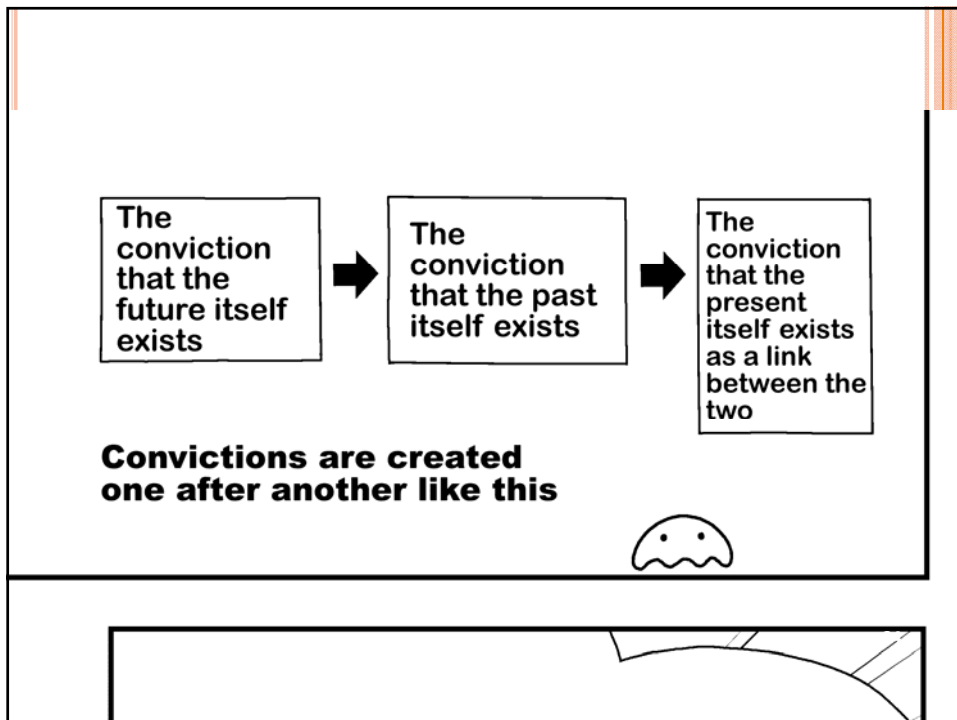
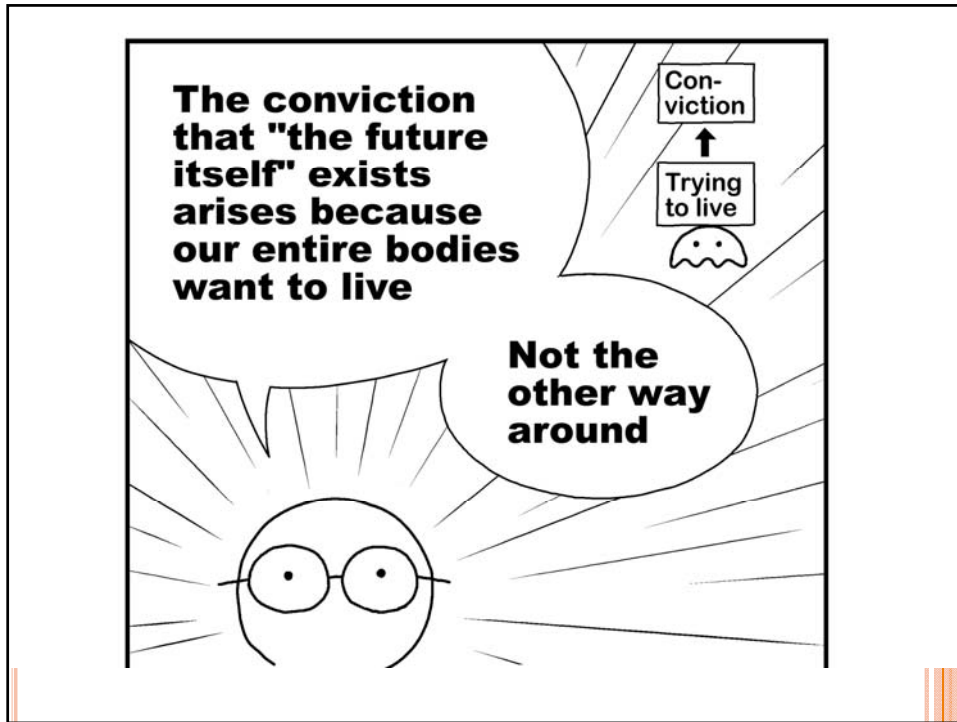
- “Past-present-future” is not just a concept. It is a strong conviction held by us who are living our every day life.
- Then, how does this strong conviction arise in us?

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Some pages after







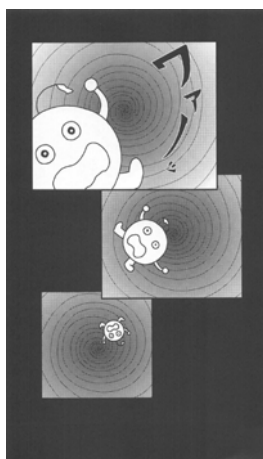
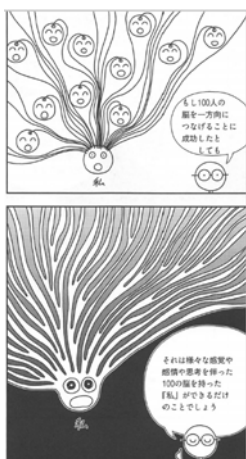
CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

Chapter 1 Discussion on “What is Time?”

Chapter 2 Discussion on “What is Being?”

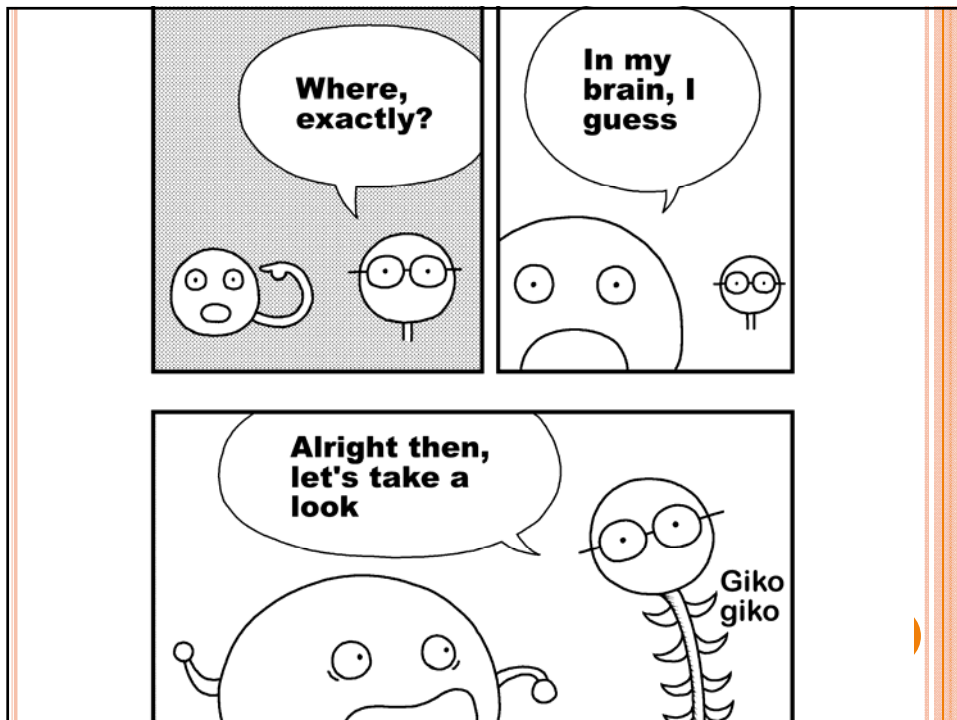
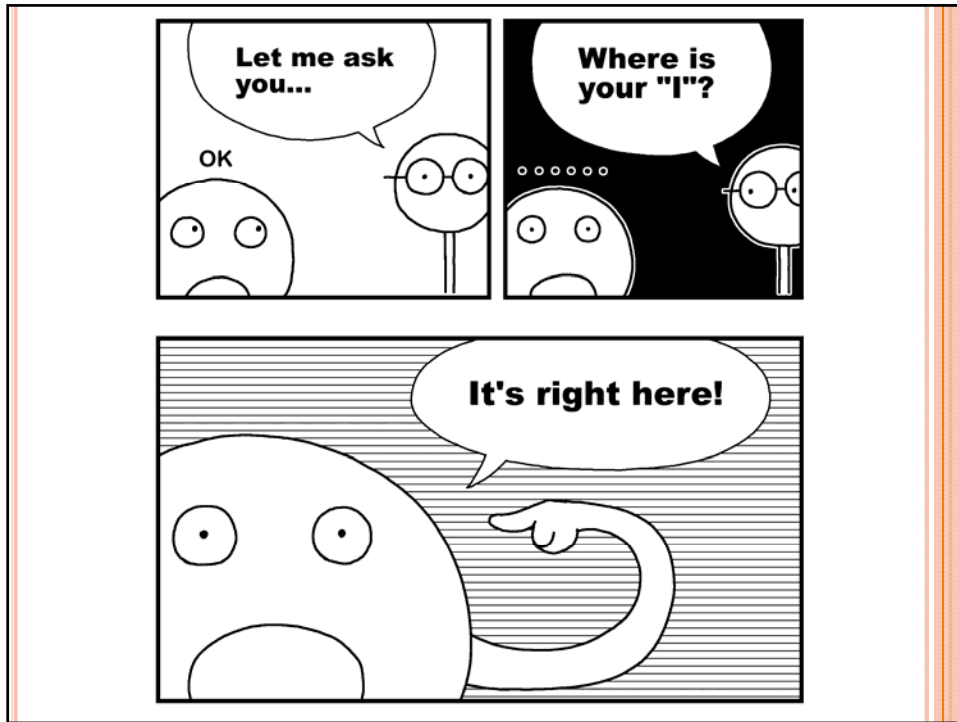
Chapter 3 Discussion on “What is I?”

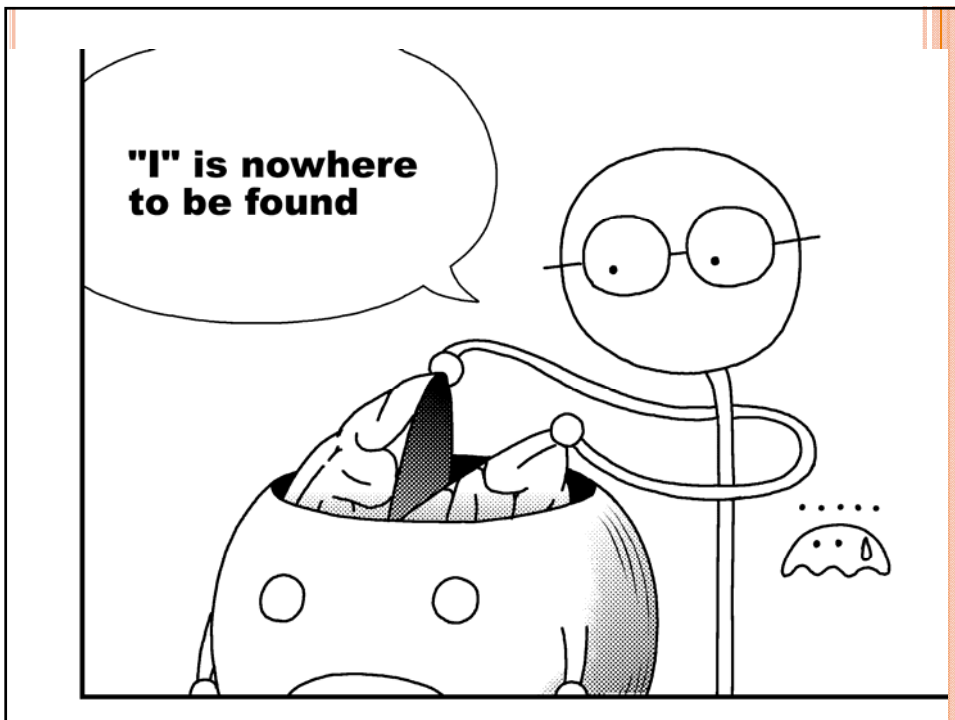
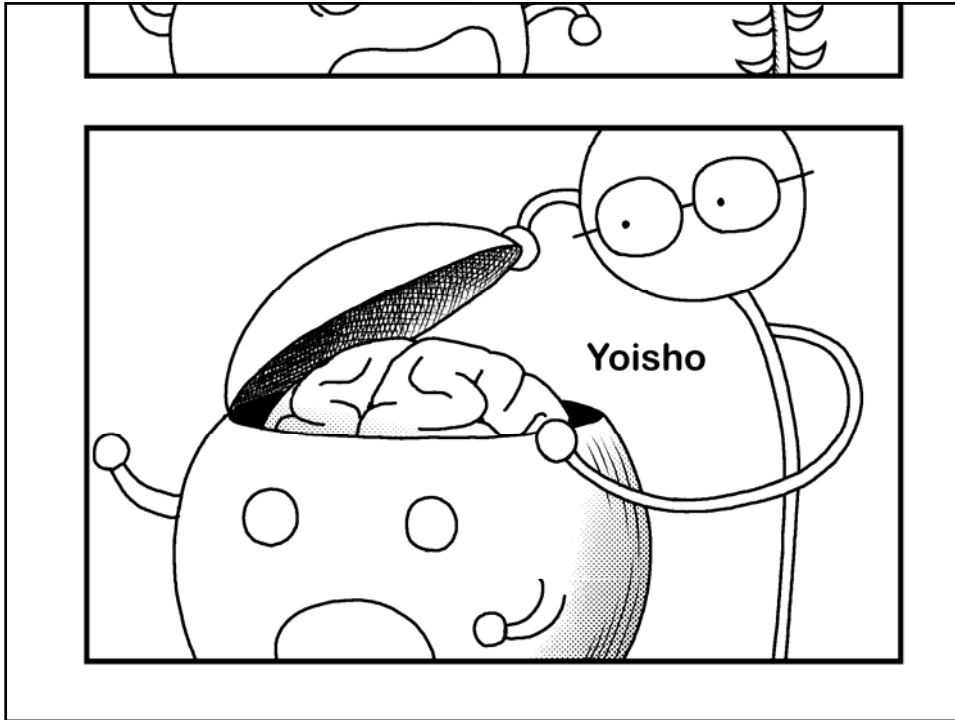
Chapter 4 Discussion on “Meaning of life”

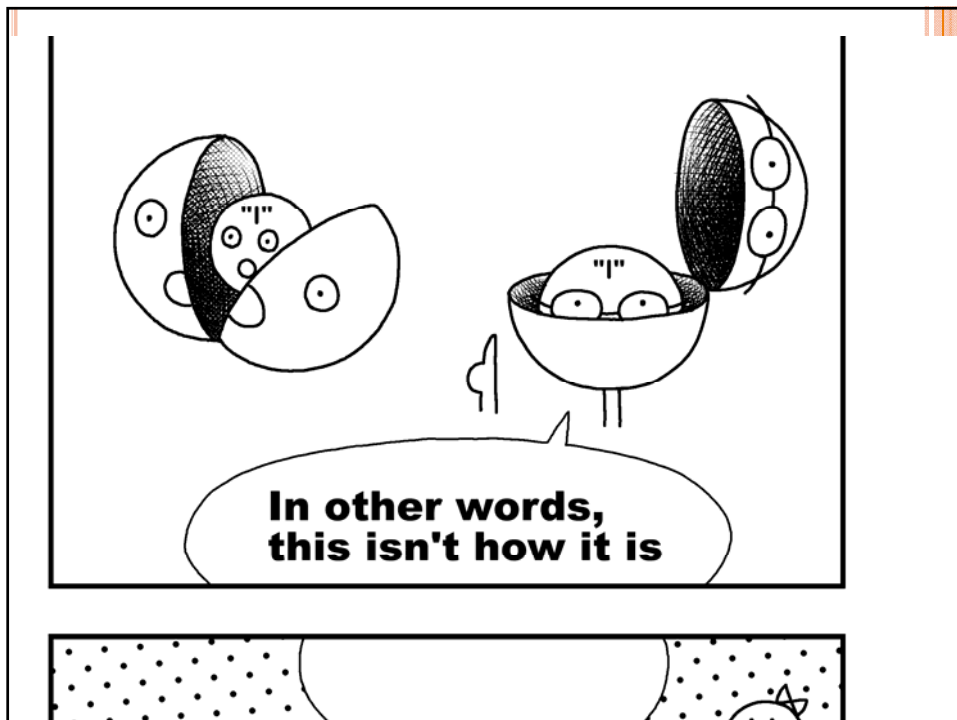


ANOTHER EXAMPLE FROM CHAPTER 3

- The following is a sequence in which Sensei introduces the mystery of the concept of “I”.

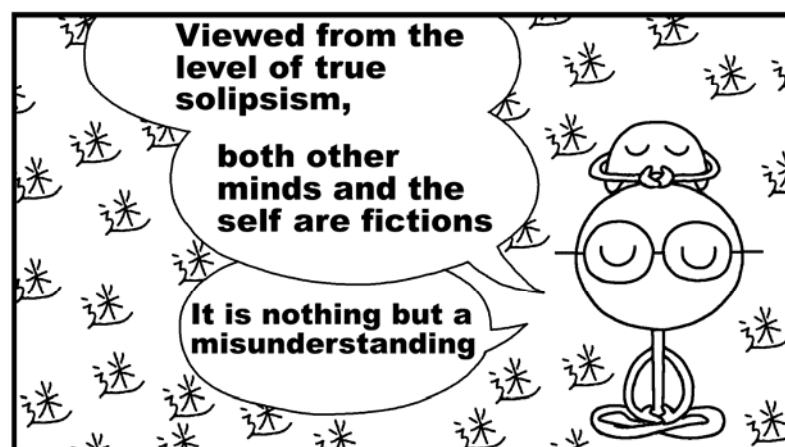


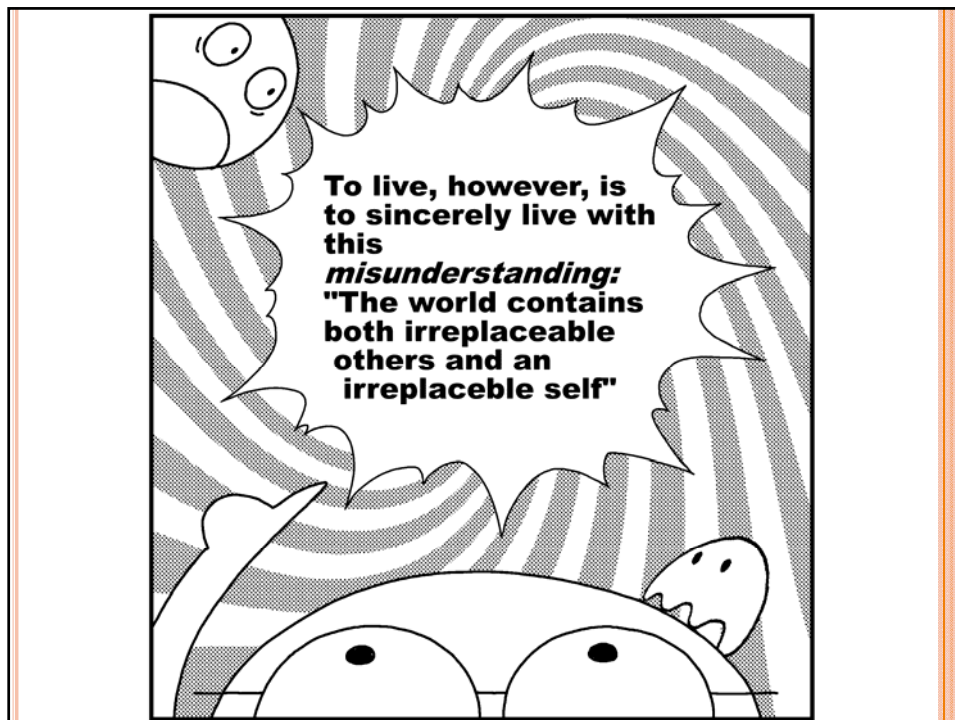




- In this introductory part, a philosophical issue concerning the existence of “I” is depicted directly and intuitively in the form of Manga.
- And the next slides show the conclusion of this chapter.

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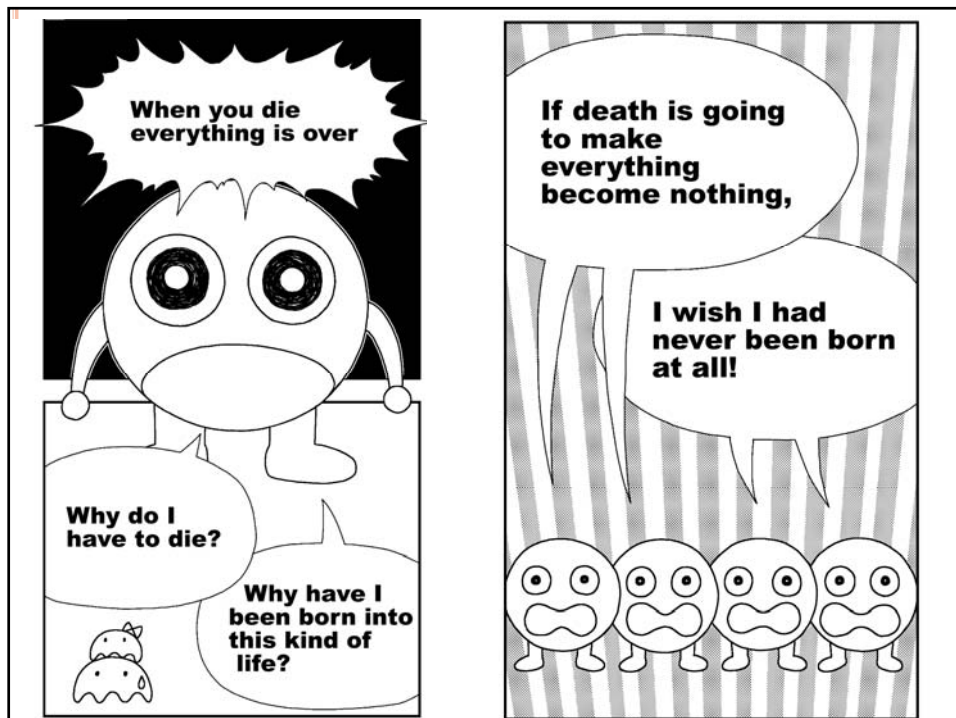


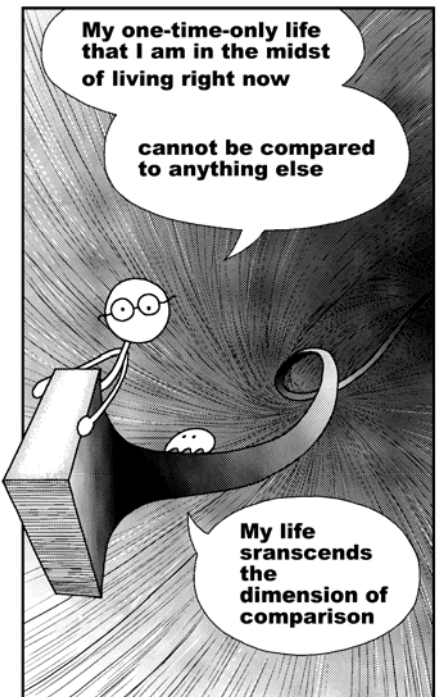
- It is difficult to translate Japanese 迷い into English/French etc.
- Sensei distinguishes “true solipsism”, which claims that both other minds and the self are fictions, from “(common) solipsism”, which claims that only “this I” exists.
- And Sensei stresses that from the perspective of “true solipsism” the existence of other minds and the self should be considered 迷い (misunderstanding).
- However, Sensei concludes that to live is to sincerely live with this 迷い (misunderstanding). In this sense, Sensei seems to affirm (say yes to) 迷い.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE FROM CHAPTER 4

- The following is an introductory part of Chapter 4 “Meaning of Life”.
- Here Manmaru-kun cries out for the question of meaning of life.

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My one-time-only life that I am in the midst of living right now cannot be compared to anything else

My life sranscends the dimension of comparison

My life sranscends the dimension of comparison

- Sensei tries to persuade Manmarukun to believe that one's life cannot be compared with anything else, hence, his actual life cannot be compared with his counterfactual non-life.

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WHY I WROTE "MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY"

- I have had an interest in the visualization of philosophical ideas/images, and I wanted to try to visualize them myself.
 - I wanted to write an introduction to philosophy that can be easily read by teenagers.
 - Japan is a nation of Manga and Anime. There are many Mangas that deal with the history of philosophy or past famous philosophers. However, there is no Manga book that is drawn by a philosopher him/herself from his/her own philosophical perspective.
 - After publication, I came to the conclusion that philosophy and Manga have good chemistry.
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- In Japan, not only children and young people, but adults read Manga. Even if professors read Manga in their offices or libraries, no one criticizes them. This is a good environment for professors/philosophers to write Manga books. (What about your countries?)
- Now I think I will try to write an “academic” paper in the form of Manga someday.
- What differences are there between Manga, Comic, Cartoon, and B.D.?
 - Manga Introduction to Philosophy
 - Comic Introduction to Philosophy
 - Cartoon Introduction to Philosophy
 - Bande Dessinée Introduction to Philosophy

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WHAT ABOUT “MANGA INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS”?

- My intuition: “Manga Introduction to **Ethics**” will be easier to make than “Manga Introduction to Philosophy”.
- But “**Ethics**” will not become an adventurous Manga book because,
 - 1) it is very difficult to visualize such abstract concepts as “good”, “evil”, “love”, “happiness”, “justice” in the form of Manga, so we are forced to draw “good guys”, “happy people” etc. instead,
 - 2) there have been already many excellent story-based Mangas that deal with “friendship”, “love”, and “justice”.
- “Manga Introduction to **Logic**” may be interesting and adventurous.

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- When I was writing this book, I never imagined that academic researchers outside Japan would have interest in this book (because this was a Manga), so I was surprised when Pierre asked me a permission to translate into French.
- Pierre and I are now looking for publishers who might be interested in French edition (or other language editions). If you have any suggestions please let us know.
- Original Japanese edition at Amazon.co.jp (Kindle):
<http://www.amazon.co.jp/dp/B00G1ZUOEK/>
Amazon.uk: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/4062882167/>

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- Author's website: <http://www.lifestudies.org/>

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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