



## Head or Heart?

A symposium at Eko-Haus, the Center of Japanese Culture in Düsseldorf/Germany, conducted under the topic "self and selflessness" gave me the opportunity to take a look into Platon's cavern.

Sure all of you know a "genuine artist" and his typical, very individual attitude which normal people sometimes do not understand.

Well, I am an artist myself. I am fully aware of it and often wonder what I am doing there. I am orientated a little towards Natural Science, because originally I studied Electrical Engineering. Therefore, I am looking for the internal switch in order to illuminate myself, so to speak, from the outside – this is meant ironically.

I often wonder whether the scientific "headman" and the artistic "heartman" do not basically pursue similar kinds of questions, everyone in his own specific manner. This strongly came to my mind during a symposium at Eko-Haus, the Center of Japanese Culture in Düsseldorf, conducted under the topic "self and selflessness". Even though I could not cope with all scientific knowledge of people in attendance, because I did not study Theology, Philosophy, or Buddhism, however the questions looked very familiar to me. As an artist I am again and again confronted with the question of what is my personality, my real self. However, I have a different approach. The scientist approaches the question from the outside, but I as an artist approach it from the very inside. I think none of the two ways is more simple than the other one.

But something else struck my mind:  
Firstly – the extremely high level of discussions and the very accurate work attitude which I also know from my darkroom activities.  
Secondly – that from a certain point on there remains only guesswork. Also the scientist sooner or later ends up at limits. Presumably, he will sometime overcome them, but sometime there is a stop, and he possibly moves too far away from the original question.  
Thirdly – from this limit on, to a large extent, the individualities of the scientist as well of the artist keep shining through. An individual standpoint, a personal meaning or passion become visible.

However, this will happen on abstract level! Frequently, this cannot be put in words or only with much difficulty – here comes the chance for the artist. He presents the abstract, only sensible matter **in pictures**.



Looking out of Platon's cavern our inner fire throws our shadow on the reality in front of us.



I personally see here again the parallel to ZEN. This is **about making things visible which are rationally not-comprehensible.**

Very likely, in a deeper sense, all art has to do with ZEN. It deals with the dissonance mentioned above between self and selflessness. If the valuing self steps back giving room to the locationless and timeless moment, then the genuine glance on the reality of things becomes possible, free of any categorizing. And this, in my view, is similar to the rational look of the scientist.

Translated by Jürgen G. Schmitz