

Self Accompanied by One's Own Name -- Exploring the Self-Concept of Buddhism

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Naming (i.e., people giving objects arbitrary labels) is important for communication and representation. Without it, however, we can still perceive and identify an object. "Self" seems specific and so does a person's own name. We examine the question that when the referring object is self, is it necessary to attach one's own name? In Buddhism, the self-concept for ordinary people is nothing but a convenient label, so the answer is yes. We used the modified Stroop paradigm to examine this. Participants were restricted to those whose family names are "黃", meaning "yellow" in English. In Experiment 1, the Chinese character "我", meaning "I" and referring to self, was displayed in yellow or blue, and used to elicit self. Participants were asked to respond to the ink color. If self-name is concomitant with self, a Stroop effect on the colored word "I" (shorter reaction times to yellow "I" than blue "I") would be found. Results showed that was the case. In Experiment 2, the participants' own faces were used to elicit self, either consciously or unconsciously. Results showed that self was accompanied by self-name only when elicited consciously. These results are consistent with the self-concept of Buddhism: activation of "self" is accompanied by one's own name.

Keywords: *conventional truth (samvrti), objective me, selflessness (anatman), subjective I, ultimate truth (paramartha)*