In your case, where is “I”?  
“I” is here.

However  
In my case, “I” is here.

There are two “I”s, aren’t there?  
Yes, I guess there are.
So if there are 100 people, there are 100 “I”s?

Somehow that doesn’t seem right.

For me, there is only one “I.”
How can I say that there is only one “I”?

I guess I could say there is a “this I” here that is different from any other “I.”
That may indeed be true.

But this phrase doesn’t just apply to you – it applies to me as well!

It’s also possible to say there is another “this I” here.

And this applies to other people as well.
It turns out that there is an enormous number of “this I”s.

That can’t be right!

Ok then, what about this “this I”?!?
You still have the same problem.

Let’s start again from the beginning.

What did you want to say with the phrase “this I”?

Um,

I guess I wanted to say that my “this I” is a very special “I” that is different from everyone else’s “I.”
How can I put it? The deepest, most thoroughgoing “I,”

an “I” that is not comparable to other “I”s at all.

It feels like there is only one “I” like this in the entire universe.
I see.

Let me try explaining it in my own words.

People call themselves “I.”

Even when such people die, the world continues to exist.
But if I did something like this,

the entire world might disappear,

and there is only one “I” that could cause such a result.

And you’d like to call this one of a kind,

extraordinarily special “I,” “this I”? 
Yes, that’s right.

Alright then, let’s call what “this I” refers to the “solipsistic being.”

Where is this “solipsistic being”?

It’s right here.

*Hitoshi Nagai calls this “<I>,” and Masahiro Morioka calls it the “solipsistic being.”

162
Who is the “solipsistic being”?

I am.

Wrong!
The “solipsistic being” is not you

and it isn’t right there.

The “solipsistic being”...
…is you!!

Sensei, can you really point outside the book like that?

I just did.
I think something was conveyed to you just now.

Because who and what the “solipsistic being” is can only be directly, effectively conveyed with this kind of approach using pictures.

It is very difficult to get the meaning of “solipsistic being” across directly using words.
In fact, even the...it’s you!!

from a few pages ago isn’t so good, because it gets dragged into the meaning of the word “you.”

To really state it correctly, I should say something like this.

* "Pugyaa!!" is Japanese Internet slang for a finger pointing at the reader.
The “solipsistic being” that I’ve just pointed my finger at is a unique being that exists in a special form – it is the only one of its kind in the entire universe.

There is only one being that exists in this way, but we cannot talk about who it is directly using words.

We can’t talk about it because...
if we talk about it using a proper name, other people will object, and if we use “this” we fall into an infinite regress.

The “solipsistic being” is Manmaru-kun.

No, the “solipsistic being” is me!

This this this “this I”!!

Whenever we try to talk about it using only words, the “solipsistic being” slips away like sand through our fingers.
We can also say that the solipsistic being is what we glimpse here briefly in the form of something that "slips away and cannot be expressed using only words."

We have now reached the limits of language,

and have one foot in the realm of poetic expression.

It’s just like when we talked about “existence.”
There is only one “solipsistic being” in the entire universe.

Let us call this the “solipsistic level.”

When I am actually living my life, however, I am not living at the “solipsistic level.”

I live my life thinking the “solipsistic being” is myself, and at the same time that every other person is another “solipsistic being.”

I believe that both myself and other people are equally “solipsistic.”
In other words, the meaning of “solipsistic being” changes drastically when I move from the “solipsistic level” to the “level at which I live.”

It changes because the solipsistic nature of the “solipsistic being” is destroyed,

and the “solipsistic being” is transformed from a “true solipsistic being” into a “pseudo solipsistic being.”
The concept of “my mind” then emerges through the application of “pseudo solipsistic being” to myself, and the concept of “other minds” emerges through its application to other people.

“Another mind” corresponds to “another person’s experience ②” discussed earlier.

Solipsistic being

Solipsistic level — “true solipsistic being”

Level at which I live — “pseudo solipsistic being”

The mysterious being that is another person’s mind also becomes a pseudo solipsistic being.
Why is solipsisticness destroyed at the “level at which I live”?  

“To live” is to live together in relationships.

In order to live together, we must discard the genuine solipsistic nature possessed only by the “true solipsistic being” and descend to the dimension of “you and I are both solipsistic beings.”

In the process of doing this, the genuine solipsistic nature possessed by the “true solipsistic being” is broken down and destroyed.
Is a “pseudo solipsistic being” a being without value?

Not at all!

On the contrary, for someone trying to live together in relationships with others, it is “pseudo solipsistic beings” that are truly important!!

This is the case because to live together in relationships with others is to live with the conviction even if it may be a false conviction that both I and other people are irreplaceable “solipsistic beings.”
Viewed from the solipsistic level, both other minds and my mind are fictions. They are nothing but illusions.

*迷 means “illusion.”

To live, however, is to live with this illusion: “Both my irreplaceable mind and other irreplaceable minds exist in the world.”

Note: Buddhist philosophy also maintains that we are living in a “world of illusions,” but Morioka is not a Buddhist philosopher.
And since in practice I live in a world of “I and other people’s minds are equally real,”

and live my life with the conviction that “you and I are both irreplaceable solipsistic beings,”

the questions “What is ‘I’?” and “What are other people’s minds?”

_can never be answered on the level at which I live!!_
Manga Introduction to Philosophy
An Exploration of Time, Existence, the Self, and the Meaning of Life

Masahiro Morioka

Chapter 1 What Is Time?
  Part 1
  Part 2

Chapter 2 What Is Existence?
  Part 1
  Part 2

Chapter 3 What Is “I”? (You are here)
  Part 1
  Part 2

Chapter 4 What Is Life?
  Part 1
  Part 2

The entire book PDF (76MB)

The author’s website:
http://www.lifestudies.org/