This book is about Asian culture and psychotherapy. It looks at Asian culture as it relates to traditional Eastern approaches to healing, on the one hand, and to modern psychotherapy, which is largely of Western origin, on the other. One of the essential functions of a culture is to provide ways to relieve the suffering of its people. Since the forms of suffering are inevitably related to cultural patterns, the methods of healing also follow the culture’s characteristic values and beliefs. The main focus of this book, therefore, is Asian culture and its relation to, and influence on, psychotherapy. It examines the similarities and differences between the diverse cultures of the East and the West and their implications for the application of psychotherapy. The book is based on the fundamental assumption that, beyond universally observed factors, culture is a significant variable and has a direct impact on the theory and practice of psychotherapy—the healing of the mind.

Scholars of behavioral science have defined culture in various ways. After analyzing hundreds of definitions of and statements about culture, American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) suggested the following formulation: “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.”
Asian Culture and Psychotherapy

Based on these concepts, this book will examine Asian culture and how its ideas, beliefs, and values, as reflected in common sayings, legends, myths, dramas, philosophical thoughts, religions, and so on, directly or indirectly influence the psychotherapy performed in Asia. It will not merely seek to identify the unique issues relating to the theory and practice of psychotherapy in Asia but also examine how cultures pattern their common, basic, biological, and psychological matrixes into two contrasting types that we call "East" and "West."

Asian Culture

In order to discuss Asian culture, it is necessary to first clarify what we mean by Asia. For the sake of convenience, we use the term “Asia” broadly to refer to the regions around the Asian continent. Customarily, this is regarded as the “East” by Westerners, in contrast to the “West,” which, from an Asian perspective, largely includes Western Europe and North America. These conventional definitions are used here to stress the differences that may exist in the world, not only geographically, but also socially and culturally.

From a geographic perspective, this book will concentrate more on East Asia, which includes China, Japan, and Korea. The societies of Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, Indonesia, and India, are included only occasionally. This is simply because, although Southeast Asia and East Asia share common basic values, the authors of this book are more familiar with, and have greater access to, East Asian traditions.

We are aware that within any society there are usually heterogeneous subcultures associated with differences related to socioeconomic, geographic, religious, or minority ethnic factors. Society is subject to cultural changes over time, as well, particularly when it is exposed to other cultures. Therefore, overgeneralization about any cultural group needs to be carefully avoided. However, for the sake of comparison, we will simply address the culture of any society as if it is a homogeneous one, and refer to Asia, or the East and the West, at a gross conceptual level.

The Study of Asian Culture and Mental Health

Although it is a difficult task, it is necessary to identify the overall “Asian culture” to be elaborated in this book. A review of literature reveals numerous publications that focus on the cultural systems of different societies,
such as Chinese culture, Japanese culture, Korean culture, and so on, but few that deal comprehensively, in an integrative manner, with Asian culture as a whole.

Numerous publications regarding the psychology and mental health of Asian people have appeared in the past several decades. For example, there was a series of books that addressed culture and mental health in Asia and the Pacific (Lebra 1972, 1974, 1976; Caudill and Lin 1969). Some works are specifically concerned with the Japanese (Doi 1973, 2001; Lebra and Lebra 1974) or the Chinese (Bond 1986, 1991; F. L. K. Hsu 1953; Lin, Tseng, and Yeh 1995; Tseng and Wu 1985). Several publications focus on Asian-Americans (E. Lee 1997; Lee and Zane 1998; Sue and Morishima 1982), while others focus more specifically, from a cultural perspective, on psychotherapy for Asians (Cheng, Cheung, and Chen 1993; Cheng, Baxter, and Cheung 1995; Korean Academy of Psychotherapists 1995; Nishizono and Yamamoto 1988; Tseng 1997). These publications have provided useful knowledge regarding the culture, psychology, mental health, and healing of the minds of Asian people.

Common Threads Found in Asian Cultures

A few issues must first be clarified. Culture, like all other phenomena, can be better understood in relation to and comparison with what is already familiar to the observer, provided that he or she takes a comparative perspective. In doing this, some people dwell on the popular, folk level, others on the philosophical, intellectual level, and still others on the deviant, fringe level (Tseng 1997, 5–6). With this in mind, several themes have been commonly recognized as characteristic of Asian culture, and are summarized as follows.

*Harmony with Nature*

Scholars (Kluckhohn 1951) have pointed out that, for the sake of comparison, there are several frameworks that can be used to analyze the value systems of people in a certain cultural group. These include their orientations toward time, activity, the nature of human beings, the relationship between humans and nature, and interpersonal relations. With regard to the relationship between humans and nature, including such concepts as conquering, obedience, and harmony, it can be said that harmony with nature is strongly emphasized in Asian culture. This attitude toward nature, it has been speculated, is related to the traditional means of livelihood
Asian Culture and Psychotherapy

in Asia, namely, agriculture (Wright 1953). Chinese Daoist philosophy reflects this view.

Tradition and Continuity
Another dimension that can be utilized for comparison is orientation toward time, namely, past, present, and future. Spiegel (1988) has pointed out that, in contrast to the American emphasis on the future and the present, with less concern for the past, the Asian orientation toward time is generally in the order of past, present, and future. This view needs some clarification and adjustment. For instance, even though Asian people have a high regard for tradition and the past, as illustrated in the customs of ancestor worship and citing traditional thought, they are also very concerned with the future, emphasizing, for example, lasting marriages and the care and education of their offspring. Thus, the Asian orientation toward time is varied, depending on the issues addressed, and should not simply be generalized as primarily toward the past.

Synthetic Integration of Differences
From cognitive as well as attitudinal points of view, people in Asia tend to have a relatively high tolerance for variety, and easily accept differences in a synthetic manner, without a sense of conflict. For instance, Westerners may be amazed to learn that, in Asian societies, people allow the coexistence of different religions within a family, such as a father who is agnostic, a mother who is Buddhist, and children who are Christian or something else. Even one person may observe more than one religion for various occasions, as in Japan, where he or she may have a traditional Shinto wedding and a Buddhist funeral. This is in contrast to the Western, monotheistic tradition. It is not a problem for Asians to respect things that are old and traditional and, at the same time, value things that are new and modern.

Importance of Family
Valuing the family is another common thread observed among most Asian people. Close ties among family members are always emphasized, and the importance of filial piety is stressed. Close mother-child relationships are accepted and practiced, and become the basis for dependent-indulging love (amae, in Japanese) in adult social relationships (Doi 1973). This idealization of harmony, togetherness, and family also produces characteristically complex conflicts (J. Hsu 1995). Nevertheless, the family is regarded as the primary source of support and the basic unit of society. This concept
is illustrated by the existence of a law in some Asian societies that requires children to care for their elderly parents or face legal punishment. Also, the most serious thing that can happen in a person’s life is to be disowned by his or her parents, thus losing his or her family ties.

**Vertical Relations**

In interpersonal relations, vertical relations override horizontal relations. This emphasis has various ramifications, including a greater respect for authority and a moral sense of responsibility toward elders, parents, and higher officials. Again, many fail in the discharge of their culturally endowed obligations, and their failure breeds unwarranted fear, timidity, and distrust.

As a result of this emphasis on a hierarchical social system, people tend to respect the parental figures within a family and the authority figures within institutions and society in general. Obedience is stressed in parent-child relations and, by extension, in authority-subordinate relations. With the movement toward democracy, the emphasis on vertical relations is gradually fading; instead, horizontal relations, such as those between husband and wife and among colleagues, are receiving greater emphasis.

**Interpersonal Relationships**

Although interpersonal relationships are important aspects in all our lives, they are of relatively more concern for Asian people. It has been pointed out that, in contrast to individually oriented Westerners, Easterners are more situation oriented (F. L. K. Hsu 1953). This means that, instead of taking the perspective of the “self” and asserting one’s rights, benefits, and boundaries, Asians are enculturated since childhood to be concerned with others’ opinions and how they will be regarded and received by others. From this concern there developed a culture concerned with “face,” which is more or less shame oriented, rather than guilt oriented. The basic, underlying assumption is that a person cannot survive without others and cannot exist outside the group.

**Harmonious Resolution**

An extension of the concern for others in interpersonal relationships is the emphasis on the harmonious resolution of problems. People are encouraged to bend, to endure, to tolerate, to comply, and not to stand out, rather than to fight, to challenge, or to defy. It is important for clinicians to know in therapy with their clients that seeking harmonious solutions
is more valued than confrontation. It should be explained that this does not result in a fatalistic or passive end. A person has the basic right to defend himself or herself and even challenge an authority figure if he or she is seriously harmed by others or mistreated by an authority. What is important is determining in what situations harmonious solutions are aimed for, before reaching a point of no return. Thus, many variations exist for the same individual, within the same society, and among different societies in Asia. Therefore, careful judgment and application are necessary, beyond the general patterns that have been described.

Needless to say, all cultures are different from each other, as are all individuals. Therefore, each culture must be seen in its own light, in its difference and uniqueness from others. At the same time, however, we need to recognize what is common behind and beneath unceasing social changes and inexhaustible surface variations among cultures. What we want to know is what makes the societies of Southeast Asia, and those of Northeast Asia, “Asian” (or “Eastern”). What, if any, is the central, organizing principle, the logic of the societies, that makes them “Asian”? In answering these questions, our implicit control and reference point is the “Euro-American” (or “Western”) model. Our fundamental assumption is that all cultures that are durable and widespread must meet the needs and aspirations of human beings. How do Asian traditions meet them, for better or for worse? How do they relate to the experiences, perspectives, and logic of the West? Finally, how can the wisdom of cultures accumulated separately for thousands of years, having now met, be integrated?

**Culture and Psychotherapy**

The importance of the influence of cultural factors on the practice of psychotherapy began to attract the attention and concern of scholars and clinicians in the early 1960s. This was reflected by the study of indigenous healing practices, with comparisons to contemporary, formal psychotherapy (Frank 1961; Kakar 1982; Torrey 1986; Tseng and McDermott 1975); the investigation of culturally specific psychotherapies (Jilek 1982; Lebra 1976); the examination of intercultural psychotherapy (Hsu and Tseng 1972; Tseng and Hsu 1979); and transcultural psychotherapy, or counseling across cultures (Marsella and Pederson 1981; Pedersen, Lonner, and Dragun 1976). Topics relating to “culture and psychotherapy” have been dealt with in countless publications (Abel and Metraux 1974; Tseng and Streltzer 2001). The term “transcultural” psychotherapy, or “cross-
cultural” psychotherapy, stresses the importance of crossing the cultural barrier that exists between the therapist and the patient. “Intercultural” psychotherapy indicates that the cultural backgrounds of both the patient and the therapist are going to interact through the process of therapy, and, therefore, the “intercultural,” “interactional” process is emphasized. Even though these terms have slightly different connotations and implications, they all highlight the significant impact of cultural processes on the practice of psychological therapy.

Along with the human rights movement and the concern for ethnic minorities, as well as increased cultural contact through migration, foreign travel, and the expansion of information networks, a greater awareness of the cultural differences among people of diverse backgrounds has developed. From a clinical perspective, it has become almost a matter of common sense to most clinicians that psychotherapy needs to be culturally sensitive, relevant, oriented, and responsive. Recently, the term “cultural competence” has become popular, and cultural competence is required in clinical work in addition to basic clinical competence.

Even though it is necessary to approach the effect of culture on psychotherapy from multiple perspectives, namely, technical, theoretical, and philosophical dimensions (Tseng 1995), when approaches to “culture and psychotherapy” are reviewed, it is found that most concentrate on the technical adjustments needed for culturally suitable psychotherapy. These include raising cultural sensitivity, overcoming language barriers, adjusting therapist-patient relations, promoting cultural understanding, increasing cultural empathy, and so on.

However, few scholars or clinicians have examined culture and psychotherapy from theoretical or philosophical levels. It is a salient fact that the contemporary, formal mode of psychotherapy has been derived mainly from the West. The theories for understanding human nature that comprise the foundation of the clinical practice of therapy, such as those of human behavior, personality, psychological development, defense mechanisms or coping patterns, psychopathology, and the optimal resolution of problems, are based primarily on the clinical experiences and research of Western scholars and clinicians with Western European and Northern American patients. To what extent these Western-derived theories are universal and can be applied to people of other cultures, particularly in the East, is a challenging issue awaiting vigorous exploration.

Although the practice of psychoanalysis no longer prevails in contemporary Western societies, some psychoanalytic theories are still considered
Asian Culture and Psychotherapy

useful for understanding the nature of human psychology. In contrast to other schools of psychotherapy, such as cognitive or behavior therapy, psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapy focuses on the dynamic nature of human nature and is more useful for examining the cultural aspects of depth psychology. However, the psychoanalytic theory concerning human psychology is a product of the West. Determining the extent to which it can be applied to people in the East, and in what ways it needs modification, revision, or expansion, are challenges waiting for us.

Actually, some scholars and clinicians have started to tackle these issues from theoretical perspectives (Tseng 2001, 779–794). For example, F. L. K. Hsu (1973) has challenged the concept of the self and personality as defined by Western scholars. He has pointed out, for instance, that the boundaries of the ego are basically different between the people of the East and the West. Ego boundaries are much more prominent and clear for people in a culture that emphasizes the importance of the “individual.” Ego boundaries are relatively blurred and fused with other people (particularly immediate, close family members) in a culture that is situation oriented. S. C. Chang (1988) holds a similar view.

Among theories of personal development, it has been pointed out that, although Eric Erikson’s (1950) concept of psychosocial development is useful, there is a need for cultural modification regarding the themes or tasks that are identified and stressed in each developmental stage. Also, the pace of development between different stages may be different from culture to culture, being faster in certain stages, more delayed in others (Tseng 2001, 788–790). Obviously, the theory requires cultural adjustments.

It has been thought that the psychosexual development theory proposed by Sigmund Freud, which is concerned with the development of basic biological drives and instincts, is universally applicable. However, some scholars and clinicians have indicated the need for cultural modification and expansion of the theory (Chang 1998). This is particularly true with respect to the Oedipus complex observed in the phallic stage of development. For instance, how a paternal figure is involved in a parent-child triangular conflict may change in different family systems (Malinowski 1927), and the intensity of and culturally sanctioned solutions for the complex will vary (Tseng and Hsu 1972). Even entirely different emotional complexes, such as the Ajase (Okonogi 1978) and the Ganesha (Kakar and Ross 1987), are recognized in certain cultural backgrounds, in addition to the Oedipus complex. These issues are dealt with in detail in chapter 4, by Okonogi, and chapter 5, by Kakar. It seems that, with regard to the
basic universal of child-parent relations, the child-father relationship develops as the primary framework in certain cultures, the child-mother relationship in others. If this is the case, the causes, implications, and consequences (including psychotherapeutic approaches) of such divergent and contrasting developments require a great deal more study.

It needs to be pointed out that these theories have been developed primarily to help clinicians understand and interpret their patients’ behavior. Very few scholars have attempted to deal directly with the cultural perspectives of the therapy itself. This is a challenging subject for future exploration.

The philosophical dimensions of the effect of culture on psychotherapy have been revealed by a few scholars and clinicians, emphasizing the importance of the philosophical views that influence the process, direction, and results of psychotherapy. For instance, Varma (1982) has reported that the practice of psychotherapy is extremely difficult in India, primarily because of the fundamental philosophical views and attitudes of the people. According to Varma, they have a fatalistic view of life, believing that their present suffering is the result of sins committed in earlier incarnations. It is difficult for psychotherapy, which aims at the resolution of problems in life, to flourish in such a belief system. Thus, it is clear that basic philosophical concepts and attitudes have a direct, significant impact on psychotherapy. This subject has rarely been elaborated by scholars in the past, and awaits further exploration.

Scope and Goal of This Book

From the discussions above, it is clear that there is a great need to examine culture and psychotherapy at the theoretical and philosophical levels, beyond their technical or practical dimensions. The goal of this book is to conduct such a theoretical exploration, at least from the Asian perspective, with the hope that it will open the door to more culturally relevant and competent psychotherapy.

Examining Personality and Psychopathology and Their Relationship to Therapy

Psychotherapy seeks to understand and, thereby, help to resolve, a patient’s predicaments and sufferings. In doing so, it is necessary to study not only the patient’s symptoms and psychopathology, but, even more basi-
Asian Culture and Psychotherapy

cally in the Asian context, the personality and its disorders. This is because, from a traditional Asian perspective (especially Confucian), symptoms are signs, the tip of the iceberg, or an epiphenomenon of the underlying, or overarching, personality. To achieve the book’s goal, section 1 addresses personality and psychopathology, on which the psychotherapist should focus before undertaking psychotherapy for a patient from any culture.

In chapter 2, Cheung and colleagues focus on the issue of personality in China. After a long-term evaluation of the Chinese personality, they developed an indigenous personality instrument for the Chinese. They first reviewed the obstacles to measuring the Chinese with a Western-derived instrument, and ascertained the need to design an instrument designed especially for the Chinese, by focusing on the culturally unique dimensions of Chinese behavior patterns and personality formation. After a massive survey and measurement of personalities in the normal Chinese population, they pointed out that there is a different personality profile for Chinese and American people (Cheung et al. 1996). Somatization has been identified as an important aspect of Chinese psychopathology. Interpersonal relatedness is an important personality dimension in the interdependent Chinese culture. Further, a unique coping mechanism, “passive-rationalization” (called the “Ah-Q” spirit, the mentality of dealing with problems in the manner of a dramatic figure, Ah-Q, in a novel written by well-known writer Lu Xun), is commonly recognized and needs to be measured as a unique Chinese personality trait. These results point to the existence of culturally characteristic personality traits, which need to be considered from a mental-health perspective to determine what constitutes a normal, healthy personality in the East and how to provide psychotherapy for people with that profile. The lessons learned from the development of a personality inventory that includes cultural considerations have set the tone for the following chapters in this book.

In chapter 3, Nishizono, based on his experiences as a psychotherapist, reviews the cultural changes that have occurred in Japan from traditional times through the Meiji era, before and after World War II, and the present. Through insightful observation, he describes the vicissitudes of psychopathology that have occurred in association with three stages of cultural change in Japan. He points out that the practice of psychotherapy is not static, but dynamic, responding to changes in lifestyle, psychopathology, and the social need for the latter.

In particular, he explains that, although people continue to stress the importance of traditional values to maintain harmony with others and
Tseng, Chang, and Nishizono

with nature, they are also being asked to follow a trend toward modernization and establish their individualized selves. Consequently, in recent years, dynamic psychotherapy, which focuses on the care of the individual at the intrapsychic level, has been gathering more interest among young psychiatrists and clinical psychologists. This phenomenon corresponds to the increased concern with the individual in psychotherapy, in accordance with the cultural changes occurring in contemporary Japanese society. It is found that dynamic psychotherapy is useful for certain psychopathologies that are becoming more prevalent in contemporary Japanese life, such as borderline personality disorder and eating disorders, problems that had limited treatment results from the descriptive-oriented psychiatric care that existed in the past.

Theoretical Exploration Centering on Parent-Child Relations

Immediately after the elaboration of personality and psychopathology, section 2 explores the theoretical exploration of Asian psychology, with particular focus on parent-child relations. Psychotherapy, especially psychoanalytically oriented therapy, emphasizes the importance of early-childhood experience. The parent-child relationship in early life not only molds personality formation, but shapes inherent psychological problems in adulthood. This is the core and source of emotional complexes. Therefore, it is important and relevant to examine parent-child emotional relationships and complexes from a cross-cultural perspective. This examination is attempted through an analysis of Asian mythology, folklore, and other cultural products, such as children’s stories and plays, to which people refer in daily life. It is believed that such cultural products can reveal the basic psychology of a culture at a deep emotional level, through more primary processes and less inhibited expressions.

In Western psychoanalysis, the Oedipus complex, or the parent-child triangular conflict and resolution, is considered a basic developmental stage through which each child must go. Scholars in the past considered the complex universal. However, this section illustrates that the classic Oedipus complex derived from Greek mythology is only one type of parent-child complex that occurs and needs to be resolved. There are other interpersonal emotional complexes rooted in parent-child issues, as illustrated by the Ajase complex, which involves the mother and son, rather than the father and son (chapter 4); the parent-child conflicts described in the Ganesha complex, in which the son is defeated by the father, rather
than conquering him (chapter 5); and the prohibition against a man looking at a woman, which derives from the mother-child relationship (chapter 6). Parent-child complexes with different forms and solutions are compared cross-culturally through cultural products, such as fairy tales and plays, in Asian and Southeast Asian societies and the West (chapter 7). They illustrate how different people, based on their cultures, experience and deal with basic parent-child relations in various, diverse ways, rather than in the one, classic way described in Greek mythology.

More specifically, in chapter 4, Okonogi describes the Ajase complex, the unique emotional complex between mother and son found in Japan, which is not well known to Western scholars. The complex borrows from a legendary Indian story about Prince Ajatasatru, who had murderous desires toward his own mother for what she had done to him. Okonogi pointed out that this mother-son complex is pre-Oedipal and does not involve the father figure or sexual matters. It is entirely different from the Western Oedipus complex, which involves a triangular relational complex among the parents and the child in the phallic stage (Okonogi 1978, 1979).

In chapter 5, based on psychoanalytical experiences and insights from India, Kakar indicates that certain forms of the maternal-feminine may be more central in Indian myths and psyche than in their Western counterparts. In the story of Devi, the omnipotence and sexual energy of the goddess, expressed in the imagery of her dancing and riding naked, exhausting even the most powerful male to abject submission and ultimately death, leaves the image of the goddess as man-woman. Further, Kakar elaborates on the importance of the mother-son relationship with the story of Ganesha—the most popular and adored Hindu god, a son of the powerful goddess Devi. The story reflects a Hindu mother’s expectation that her son will arrange his life around her and see her as the center of the universe, an expectation that Kakar (1978) refers to as the Ganesha complex.

Following this, in chapter 6, Kitayama elaborates on mother-child relations through an analysis of Japanese mythology and folktales centering on the taboo against a man’s looking at a woman. He indicates that, because of the close emotional relationship between mother and son, the man (as a son) has difficulty viewing the “ugly” side of women (his spouse—often resulting from exogamy with a nonhuman female) beyond the idealized mother-figure. He points out that the prohibition against looking is a taboo set up for man against woman, due to the early (oral) stage of fixation with and idealization of the mother (Kitayama 1985).

Finally, in chapter 7, Tseng and his colleagues examine the Oedipus
complex as it is revealed in Asian cultural products. They disclose that the nature and intensity of the Oedipus complex in Asian societies is carefully and subtly described, rather than presented explicitly. In addition, the way in which the parent-child conflict is resolved is often different in the East. The child is always defeated by parental authority, an appropriate solution for intergenerational conflict in Eastern societies, which emphasize parental authority figures. These findings point out that the nature and pattern of personal development is greatly subject to the cultural environment in which an individual grows up (K. I. Kim 1978; Tseng and Hsu 1972).

Based on this theoretical exploration of parent-child relations, the therapist is encouraged to understand the human emotions and complexes relating to early childhood experiences in a broad sense, with consideration of cultural perspectives. Based on this kind of cross-cultural comprehension and insight, more proper assessment, understanding, and care of patients can be delivered in clinical service, particularly centering on the issues of parent-child relationships. This is true for all culturally diverse patients, whether Eastern or Western.

Reviewing Traditional Thought and Philosophy as the Backbone of Therapy

In section 3, traditional thoughts and philosophies of Asian origin are examined, that is, the systems of thought and philosophical ideas and attitudes that have long been held by Asian people and have formed the core of guidance in their thinking, behavior, and reactions to life. In order to carry out culturally oriented psychotherapy, a therapist cannot ignore the importance of these traditional thoughts and philosophies, which directly or indirectly influence the patient’s mind, emotions, and behavior.

The thoughts and behavior of Asian people have been heavily influenced by three traditions—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—in a compound and complementary way. These philosophies are elaborated in chapters 8, 9, and 10 of this section. Clearly, they are not in themselves psychotherapies, intending to heal a person’s troubled mind. However, they do contribute to understanding human nature, guiding people in their thinking and behavior, suggesting ways to face and deal with psychological problems and seek good mental health.

In chapter 8, Yan examines the essence of Confucian thought. He points out that Confucianism emphasizes the fundamental benevolence, rather than evil, of human nature and teaches that the goal of life is to culti-
vate this nature and develop one’s potential, rather than to conquer the external world, and to maintain proper human relations in society. From mental health and psychotherapeutic perspectives, he indicates that Confucian thought advocates benevolent empathy toward others (including patients), seeking harmony as the principle of interpersonal relations and following the golden mean in dealing with problems. Basically, the Confucian school believed that every person had the potential to achieve maturity and that self-cultivation was the means to achieve it.

Young and colleagues, in chapter 9, describe the basic views of Lao-zi, the originator of the Daoist school of thought in ancient China, which, in subtle, unofficial ways, influenced the philosophical attitudes of people through many centuries, influencing Chinese Buddhism, traditional medicine, and so on. They indicate that Daoism views the person as a tiny part of nature and that a person’s goal is to follow the way of life that exists in the universe. Lao-zi’s view of the world is characterized by the Concept of Opposites, with the existence of two poles in every matter; the way to deal with life is, paradoxically, to follow the virtue of not-contending, or doing nothing. Lao-zi helped us see the nature of our lives from an entirely different perspective and offered a paradoxical way of coping with problems. Young and colleagues also report their clinical experiences conducting a Chinese style of cognitive therapy by utilizing Daoism’s philosophical views.

Buddhism, as analyzed in chapter 10 by Chang and Rhee, originated in a small kingdom in the foothills of the Himalayas in present-day Nepal and spread over East and South Asia. Contemplating the pain and suffering in life inevitably attendant to growth, aging, sickness, separation, and death, Buddhism finds the causes for human miseries in humanity’s selfishness and consequent attachment to and craving for what is illusory and transient over what is real and durable. To be released from the chains that bind one to the ephemeral is to rediscover the real self that is buried beneath the layers of the false self. Are not reality and the true self, Chang and Rhee ask, what philosophers and psychologists in both the East and the West have searched for since ancient times, as we do today, perhaps even more so?

These three chapters illustrate that, on different levels and using different approaches, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism offer different solutions for human life problems. Examining these traditional thoughts and philosophies, valued by Asian people in both the past and the present, and comparing them with the emphases of Western ethos will help us understand the different approaches advocated in the East and West and, from there, how to move into actual therapeutic work.
If we define psychological therapy very broadly, all the therapy observed around the world, in the past and the present, can be conceptually categorized into culture-embedded, indigenous healing practices; culture-influenced, unique psychotherapies; and culture-related, common psychotherapies (Tseng 2001, 515–561). Using this concept, the contributors to section 4, describe and discuss several therapeutic modes or approaches, closely related to culture-influenced, unique psychotherapies, that originated in Asia. “Culture-influenced, unique psychotherapies” refers to certain therapeutic practices or approaches developed in certain cultures that are heavily influenced by cultural factors. It is important to examine in what ways cultural factors are utilized, applied, and reflected in these unique approaches.

In chapter 11, Kitanishi, a prominent teacher and practitioner of Morita therapy, presents his view of the philosophical background of the therapy, an approach pioneered in the early 1920s in Japan (about the same time that Sigmund Freud started psychoanalysis in Europe). In contrast to the traditional understanding of Morita therapy, Kitanishi offers the updated view that, at its core, neo-Morita therapy is a therapeutic method that resolves egocentric love and suffering caused by unwarranted attachment and craving. He elaborates that, in the original concept of Buddhism, suffering is understood as “not being able to control things according to our will” or “things that do not go according to our wish.” We suffer because we think that our bodies and minds and all other phenomena belong to us, and we try to control them according to our wills. He explains that Morita therapy emphasizes discovering a new self and moving forward with life, rather than searching for the reasons for suffering, anxieties, or fears. The Eastern views of nature and egolessness, or the attitude of accepting things as they are (arugamama), are used to correct pathological narcissism. In therapy, the focus is on the development of a self that incorporates nature (Kitanishi 1999).

In chapter 12, Kawahara, one of the key practitioners of Japanese Naikan therapy, elaborates on how Buddhist religious beliefs form the basis of this unique, introspective method of psychotherapy. Naikan therapy methodologically follows Zen Buddhist practices, requesting that clients go through a “retreat” and examine their minds and lives. In principle, this self-inspection is intended to raise a sense of appreciation and support from others, through the recollection of the experiences of love that
one has received from others (particularly immediate family members) and the recollection of one’s self-centered attitudes (Kawahara 1999). This practice is considered to facilitate guilt-consciousness, by reinforcing the sense of on (obligation), particularly the on (grateful obligation) regarding one’s mother. Thus, Naikan therapy very effectively uses such basic characteristics of the Japanese personality as strong potential guilt feelings, on-consciousness, the predominant significance of the mother, and specific moral values in the context of highly particularistic interpersonal relationships.

In chapter 13, Tseng and colleagues address an entirely different issue, namely, how to apply proverbs in the practice of psychotherapy, another unique feature of Asian psychotherapy. The proverbs used in daily life in a society often reflect the cultural views, values, and beliefs of the people in that society and are therefore useful instruments for providing suggestions and guidance in psychotherapy. They provide a highly culture-based and -colored therapeutic approach. The authors examine proverbs commonly used in the East and West, discussing the ways in which different values are stressed in coping with situations or problems, and the common issues between them. The usefulness of applying proverbs in psychotherapeutic communication is explained.

Following this, in chapter 14, Chang, based on his own personal experiences with meditation and a description of the process of Zen meditation, elaborates on the basic differences between the methodological features of psychoanalysis and Zen meditation. In psychoanalysis, the goal is enriching ego content and strengthening ego function by way of the intellect in order to replace and illuminate the darkness and chaos of the unconscious. In Zen, the ego is the obstacle to the workings of the innately healing matrix of the human psyche. Therefore, the ego must be resolved and removed. Chang explains that in Zen, as one’s attention is withdrawn from the outside and directed internally, the mental stream—the flow of feelings and thinking, intertwined and conflicting—proceeds centripetally (Chang 1974) by internal and experiential logic rather than by a priori or external means. The process is inevitable under the circumstances and given the belief in the self-healing nature of the human psyche.

Reviewing Psychotherapy Experienced in Asia

Finally, section 5 of the book examines the clinical experiences of psychotherapy in Asian cultures. It focuses on the basic, traditional thoughts that guide people’s ways of thinking and behavior, the potential problems
or conflicts arising from such thoughts, and the therapies—based on the theoretical background of these philosophical thoughts—that are used.

In chapter 15, Kim, a leading cultural psychiatrist in Korea, describes psychiatric service and the practice of psychotherapy in Korea, elaborating on several culturally relevant therapeutic modes applied there, including indigenous, shamanistic practices, Daoist psychotherapy, and folk-related therapeutic activities. All of these therapeutic activities are based, in general, on an intuitive approach that focuses on emotional aspects. Emphasis is placed on seeing the self as a part of the group and on harmony with others and nature. Kim explains that this is different from contemporary Western psychotherapy, which is intellectual and logical, and for which a cause-and-effect relationship and logical inference are required (K. I. Kim 1999).

Echoing this, in chapter 16, Chang, using a different approach, examines the issue of culture and psychotherapy in Korea. After providing a historical and cultural background of Korea, Chang elaborates on the psychology of the Korean people within a cultural context. Specifically, he focuses on the “self” as seen in the East and West. Chang places Korean psychology and psychotherapy in a larger cultural and historical context, suggesting that the Korean situation is symbolic of the problems and potentials of the meeting of the two traditions, East and West, as well as the two realities and the two selves that have preoccupied philosophers and psychologists.

In chapter 17, Tseng, Lee, and Lü review the trend of psychotherapy in China from social and cultural perspectives. Various kinds of psychological treatments that are practiced in China, including folk healing practices, unique therapies, and contemporary psychotherapy, are traced historically. This panoramic review indicates that, in the society as a whole, multiple healing systems, whether folk or modern, exist and are utilized. Each different healing practice performs certain functions and provides certain services for the society as a whole. It is also pointed out that geographical or subcultural differences have caused many variations among Chinese living in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas. Finally, the historical situation in China illustrates clearly that the vicissitudes of psychotherapy are subject to social and cultural factors, including political ideology, social situations, war, and cultural change. Providing mental health care to meet the psychological needs of the Chinese, who are currently facing rapid, dramatic sociocultural change, is a particular challenge for clinicians.

Chapter 18 concludes by summarizing the major differences between East and West regarding views of human nature, self, personal develop-
ment, the nature of suffering, and appropriate styles of resolving problems. Based on these variations in Eastern and Western thoughts, recommendations for performing culturally competent psychotherapy are made from three dimensions, namely, technical adjustments, theoretical modifications, and philosophical reorientation. The chapter aims to integrate the essential issues raised in this book and suggests practical applications for both the East and the West.

Final Comments

As far as is comprehensively possible and in various ways, the contributors to this book examine the themes and values of various Asian societies and their attendant approaches to healing. These approaches are based on the following premises: If “Asian culture” is a coherent whole, it should be possible to identify its central organizing principle, whose diverse manifestations can be seen in its various aspects, components, layers, and structures, and all the manifestations can be related to a central principle. Thus, the cultural principle and its myriad and changing expressions are like a mathematical axiom and its corollaries. We have been too preoccupied with Eastern and Western corollaries, rather than axioms. This book intends to draw attention to those neglected areas. It does not dwell on the cultural and psychological features that distinguish one Asian society from another, but on the basic principle that lies beneath the sometimes seemingly inchoate surface of society and psychology.

Throughout the book, attempts are made to integrate the aspects of psychological therapy observed in the East and the ways in which they differ from those in the West. Suggestions are made on how integration may be carried out between the two traditions, to provide a more holistic view of psychotherapy and more effective and flexible practices for people of diverse cultures in the contemporary world. After all, the East and the West are metaphors for the two divided selves that are a common predicament for modern man. They suggest that both the Eastern and Western perspectives have been one-sided. The West, in its valorization of the ego, has neglected its matrix, and the East, in its preoccupation with the matrix, has inhibited the ego. There is room for both to learn and endeavor together, to integrate views and practices, and thereby develop a more comprehensive, expanded, and balanced way of healing the mind.