

In summary, this book provides a useful basic introduction to genome sequencing, although in the context of a fairly stereotyped reading of the history of the subject. The book includes an index, but mainly proper names: when trying to find a reference to the chimpanzee genome that I wanted to reread, the closest I could come was "Churchill, Winston." Another major shortcoming, perhaps in keeping with the journalistic treatment of the subject, is that the book contains no references whatsoever to published books or journal articles.

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The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy by Yasuo Yuasa (translated by Shigenori Nagatomo & Monte S. Hull). Albany (NY): SUNY Press, 1993. 224 pp. \$44.50 (c), \$14.95 (p).

The twentieth century is approaching its end. As we leave it behind, carrying with us remnants of ancient practices and aspirations of advanced techniques, this question arises: will we broaden our outlook to include new sciences, or will we cling to safeguards of the recent past? Yasuo deals with this question and others by comparing the beliefs of the Eastern world (Buddhism, Daoism, ki-energy, self-cultivation) with those of the Western world (philosophy, medical science, psychology, parapsychology). Yasuo brings to light uncommon facts concerning Eastern culture that slant him towards preferring that civilization and its methods. His purpose is not one of conversion, however, but to find a "happy medium" between the contrasting cultures for the benefit of life in general.

It may be beneficial for the reader to have some knowledge of Eastern religions and practices, but such knowledge is not crucial to understanding and enjoying this book. Yasuo's style glides easily and coherently from one thought to the next, taking careful precaution to inform the reader of the detailed content. This work can be an inspiration owing as much to Yasuo's writing technique as to his subject matter.

As noted, Yasuo's bias clearly lies with Eastern culture. Within that, the mind-body relationship involves ki-energy, a type of power or energy relating the physical body to the unconscious; and self-cultivation, a form of training for the body and the mind in order to ameliorate one's personality. This view underlies the use of meditation methods for medicinal purposes. Yasuo shares the Eastern belief that the mind and the body must be viewed as a whole in

modern medicine and other sciences in order to further our knowledge and care of the entire population.

In contrast stands the Western culture with its idea of dualism, treating the body and the mind as two completely separate entities. Our view of the mind-body relationship serves as the main barrier to accepting Eastern ways as scientific.

Yasuo explains the body, its parts, and its functions in meticulous detail. He uses this knowledge of contemporary anatomy to suggest proof for such seemingly unscientific methods as ki-energy and self-cultivation. With Yasuo's study of meditation and its implications, one cannot help but wonder: if the body can be trained to control its emotions, to slow its heart rate, and to create an hallucinogenic state, can we not use the body as a vehicle to reach the unconscious?

From the beginning, the unconscious has been an uncomfortable dilemma. Talk of neuroses and dark sides lying in the realms of our minds has, for the most part, been a sticky subject. Something supposedly so powerful yet so intangible leaves people with feelings of uncertainty and fear. Even as we dream, the unconscious reminds us that it will not and cannot be ignored. Pioneers in this, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, both did extensive research on the unconscious especially through dream analysis, assigning various symbols and drawing different conclusions.

Yasuo makes a valiant effort to further thought about the unconscious. The main problem with Western studies is that the analysis is based on dreams already dreamt. Nothing in the unconscious can be changed through this method at the point of analysis; however noble and novel the technique, it is still an after-the-fact method. Perhaps Eastern culture can provide a way to take active, conscious part in our unconscious. In Eastern society, people do this through meditation which gives them control over their dream content. Might it be possible to conjure up dreams in a semi-hypnotic state, thereby giving access into the unconscious while semi-awake? If we could harness such meditational power, perhaps we could become active participants in our unconscious instead of passive bystanders.

As well as creating questions involving the contrasts, Yasuo also recognizes similarities between the two cultures. Take meditation as a form of psychotherapy, for instance. Meditation involves taking an "ordinary" person and lifting him to a higher state where a better personality may be obtained. Psychotherapy takes an "abnormal" person and tries to lift him to a saner, more peaceful state. Although the definitions differ, the purpose is equivalent.

Yasuo touches on contemporary themes that concern both the East and the West. Citing a report from a Zen monk, Yasuo confronts one of the main neuroses of our time, anxiety. After repeated meditation, this monk felt acute de-personalization, intense anxiety, and agoraphobia. These symptoms seem synonymous with the West's terminology behind anxiety and, more specifically, panic disorder. This newly diagnosed disorder has quickly spanned America.

The one slight problem with panic attacks is that no one can seem to pinpoint their exact cause. Doctors conceptualize that the attacks have something to do with a chemical reaction in the brain, yet at this point no evidence is substantial. If you were in the East and developed symptoms of high anxiety and severe depersonalization, an experienced meditator, a guru, would be summoned. In the Western hemisphere, however, a psychiatrist or psychologist would be notified and medications and therapy would be prescribed. The question remains, however, which form of therapy would be better for the patient.

This question brings up a dominant theme of this book. Which types of culture and techniques are healthier for the human race? First the definitions of health in each culture must be defined. In Western civilization, sports and training are used as methods to enhance one's physical skills; in other words, the mind consciously trains the body to enhance bodily functions. The mind delivers messages to the body to move, and this is the mind's sole purpose in this equation. When the body appears healthy, it is defined as being healthy. The East, however, defines health through its idea of the body-mind relationship. The mind and body train together so that both improve and, consequently, the personality is taken to a higher state. These extremely different definitions form another problem for us all. If we cannot universally define what it means to be healthy, how can we treat those who become ill?

Another problem in choosing between the two cultures lies in how they determine the effectiveness of their techniques. Since ancient times Eastern medicine has regarded the mind and the body as a single whole and treated them accordingly. Acupuncture, for example, works by affecting the mind's sensors through the touch of a needle to one's flesh. The proof of the technique is justified by the patient's recovery. Yet all patients are not treated with the same technique. They are viewed as individuals and are treated as such.

Western civilization uses the scientific method to conclude which techniques are most advantageous. Populations are studied, theories are drawn, and hypotheses are tested. Analyzing the numbers produces the best guess for a cure in Western culture. Because the West views mind and body separately, Eastern methods are neither applicable nor scientific. Recently, however, debate has arisen concerning aspects of a human being which our analysis of the brain cannot explain. Memory, for example, cannot be designated to any specific realm of the brain, although it undoubtedly exists. Emotions also lie in a realm beyond our microscopes. In these cases, an analysis of the East's knowledge on these matters would seem appropriate, although most Western practitioners fail to recognize their beliefs and their implications.

Western scientists have stated, "It is not the role or responsibility of science to question the purpose, meaning, or value of life (p.176)." Perhaps it should be. Perhaps we need to question the values of our own lives before we hastily shun foreign techniques that could save our lives. Most mainstream scientists view parapsychology as completely unscientific; yet is it not evidence of the "paranormal," that the unconscious has an impact on us physically? Perhaps

we need to redefine what is scientific, and therefore acceptable. We have survived on this planet because we continued to evolve. In order to keep surviving we must keep evolving, which includes studying different cultures and different techniques in order to improve the quality of life as we know it.

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