Ma (間)—etymologically speaking in terms of the pictorial sign, 間, ma is the entrance space supported by two gateposts (and the door) into which moonlight or sunlight streams (Nitschke, 1988). Hermeneutically speaking, ma signifies zone of, and opportunity for, transformation where change possibilities can be discovered, perceived, and seized upon, and action can take place that brings about desired changes. Ma is not simply an open expanse that holds infinite possibilities: a metaphysically plausible and intriguing notion, but what’s signified would be too nebulous and amorphous to draw us into specific action. A gate is erected to mark the space around it, making it special, and imposes a structure that both invites in and keeps out certain kinds of beings, goods, situations, and actions. Ma is the space that is created when the gate opens and invites in possibilities. When the gate is closed, there is no ma—hence no change, no transformation. This notion of ma as a gate provides some horizons beyond everyday consciousness. More on this notion of “beyond everyday consciousness” later.

Again, hermeneutically speaking, ma represents the middle ground between two ends of a continuum: on the one hand, a state of closedness, therefore, rigidity, and no possibility of working toward change and transformation; on the other hand, a state of amorphous openness that also is not conducive to meaningful and functional changes. It is illuminating to note
that the contemporary neuroscience would corroborate this way of interpreting ma with how our nervous system works and supports consciousness (Siegel, 2010). Rigidity and closedness are characteristics of “frozen” state of consciousness not open to learning and changes. Psychologically speaking, we would describe a person who is in this state of consciousness as “closed-minded,” “rigid,” “dogmatic,” “fundamentalist,” or “shut-down.” If such a person is capable of action, his or her action would tend toward obedience to rules, rigid conformism, and reactivity built into corresponding behavioral patterns.

Complete openness—the other end of the continuum—on the other hand, does not fare any better in terms of change action potential. A person who is in this state of consciousness, possibly under the influence of intoxicants and substances, is not capable of seeing select, perspicacious possibilities of action. The person’s consciousness might be too dispersed and unattuned to see anything specific, or he might see either all too many possibilities and get overwhelmed by them, or perhaps his seeing is all too nebulous and can’t see anything concrete and perspicacious to try to act on. Ma resides in the middle ground where a person sees perspicacious possibilities for change action. Moreover, ma represents dynamic change moment. A person entering the ma “space” is in attunement with dynamically changing transformative possibilities moment-by-moment and can work with unfolding possibilities. Perspicuous action follows perspicuous perception.

Inasmuch as ma is typically understood as a certain kind of “space,” or “space–time,” we thus externalize it and endow it with objective reality, ma vitally depends on human perception, hence consciousness. No perception, no ma. Again, going back to the etymology (the Chinese character for ma, 間) between the gateposts is an illuminating celestial body: the sun or the moon. In many world wisdom traditions, consciousness (or mind or mind-heart) is understood as itself having the property of illumination: it sheds light on things, pierces through darkness, can amplify energies, animate, and so on. For example, in Buddhist literature, human consciousness in essence is often referred to as luminous or radiant mind (Das, 1997) endowed with warmth of the heart. In fact, in many Asian traditions, mind is never separate from heart.² The intellectual or cognitive and the affective or feeling dimensions are not viewed at all as separate, but rather, as a whole. The main point here is that the reality of ma already assumes the contribution of consciousness. Human mind-heart cocreates ma by seeing it. Thus the objective and the subjective, the external and the internal, come together in ma. This process
of integration and coemergence is what renders ma an educative process in the most serious and aspiring sense. Learning to see ma is at the heart of education. This is an important point for us to keep in mind as we explore the connection and application of ma to education.

Learning in Ma

Learning requires change. There is no learning without change: for, learning always implies that the learner is seeing, feeling, thinking, and doing something new and anew, fresh and different from before. Otherwise, there is no learning: only conditioned seeing and behavior. Hence, learning and ma are intimately connected: to learn, one needs to enter ma. The more deeply one can enter ma, the more transformative will be one’s learning.

Yet, entering ma is not easy. In fact, it can be very challenging. Analogically speaking, as we approach the gate, we may find the gate locked and closed. Or the gate seems to have disappeared, and there is only a high wall with no opening: impenetrable. Or the gate seems ajar but it’s so dark inside that we do not see our way in. In attempting to enter ma, finding ma to enter becomes the essential first task. How do we find ma?

Key to finding ma is the understanding that ma is dynamically relational. Recall that ma is the in-between space (and timing that’s represented by the light shining in) that is created by the two gateposts standing. It is, first of all, the relationship between the two gateposts that creates the ma space or zone. But we can extend this relationality further and further to include everything surrounding the gates: gateposts are themselves in relationship with the ground (otherwise, they won’t be standing upright) as well as the space that surrounds the posts. They are also in relationship with the door that is attached to the post and opens and closes. Moreover, the gate is in relationship with the forests that provided the lumber to fashion the gateposts. And forests are in relationship with the soil that nurture and support them, and so on and so forth. Thus the chain of interconnectivity and interpenetration extends to the whole universe.

In this exercise of tracking the ma-relationality, we can also start with the person who is seeking ma. Simply put, seeking and seeing the gate are essential to there being a ma zone, since ma is not a pregiven objective reality “out there,” independently of the seeker-perceiver. Ma comes into existence the moment it’s perceived. Hence ma is perceiver-dependent. But then perception is not independent of that which is perceived, either. Perception is truly a
coemergent phenomenon: the perceiver and the perceived come together for there to be perception. This is one way to explain or illustrate the philosophical notion of nonduality or nondual consciousness in Buddhism.

We can also speak of ma-relationality in terms of moment-by-moment unfolding process that the perceiver is involved in relating to ma. Every step the perceiver takes toward the gate puts her in evolving relationship with everything that touches and surrounds the gate. Moment by moment, she is negotiating, consciously and unconsciously, with thousands of relational dynamics. Thus, ma is not a static given to the seeker-perceiver. Ma appears and disappears, comes close and moves far away, shifts and turns, speeds up, slows down, expands and contracts, and jumps and slides. This is particularly the case when there are multiple seekers-perceivers engaged in the same ma zone. A person who doesn’t know how to be in attunement with ma dynamics will literally and metaphorically run into the wall, have the door shut in the face, stumble and fall down, stub her toes, get her arm caught in the door, and so on: no attunement and flow. Thus, learning to see and enter ma is all about the work of attunement and flow.

However, inasmuch as attunement is native to humans, and exists as a capacity and potential, it is not something that just leaps into action and happens automatically. Misattunement happens all the time. Hence, in learning ma, we would need to learn the art of attunement. Attunement is an achievement. Attunement arises from an ongoing and dedicated process of self-cultivation (Bai, Cohen, & Park, 2016; Davey, 2007), which becomes the essential and the most substantial preparatory learning for working with ma.

**Prerequisite to Learning Attunement**

In the way of learning attunement, no amount of abstract information and theoretical knowledge is of any consequence. For, attunement is living, breathing, embodied experience that requires the perceiver’s presence, participation, and being-with-ness, moment-by-moment. We may summarize the advice for attunement as follows: “Show up, be there fully, and immerse yourself in the emergent flow.” Put it this way, it sounds simple and natural. But it is not. It is, for various reasons, one of the hardest things for us to learn. For, it may require surrendering the ego (whether rigid or shaky) and trusting the emergence, which in turn requires letting go of one’s deeply rooted fear, insecurity, inadequacy, diffidence, doubt, shame, and so on. Essentially, all this comes down to the self not trusting the self and the world. And this mistrust
would typically show up in the moment of encountering ma: for, when confronted with a closed or closing door, and other challenges, one reacts out of fear, anger, shame, worry, and so on and shows resistance, hesitancy, defense, and even offence. Reactivity generally takes the form of flight, fight, or freeze. The moment one finds oneself moving into one of these patterns, one is getting out of the ma zone. One could use this as a signal to work on oneself, not succumbing to the impulse to kick the door and swear.

There are two ways to account for the phenomenology of fear, anger, doubt, and so on that is not conducive to our embracing ma: (1) the world can't be trusted, is a frightening and unreliable place, and can reduce us to inadequacy, doubt, and shame; or (2) there has been a process, in the way humans have been raised and educated, that instills in us fear, shame, doubt, insecurity, helplessness, anger, and the like. These two accounts are interdependent: they mutually reinforce each other and fulfill each other in creating the subjective reality of the person and the objective reality of the world. Since our interest in ma is as educators, what we wish to do at this point in this chapter is to examine the way we educate and school ourselves, and to identify factors and elements that may contribute to our becoming fearful, mistrustful, insecure, inadequate, and lacking confidence. Going from there, the last part of our chapter will consider ways to reschool ourselves—learners and teachers together—to be, as it were, ma-friendly and ma-fluent. We will consider how we may recover our full capacity in the service of knowing the reality of the moment and to simultaneously become existentially secure, confident, trusting, and alive.

Miseducation

As we mentioned earlier, how the world is and how we are are cocreative and mutually reinforcing. Given this, introducing change can happen at either end: the world or the self. As educators, starting with the self is more germane to our viewpoint and approach. This approach, however, does not negate changing the world: for, in this mode, world change is mirrored by self-change. We change who we are, which changes how we act in the world; then, this will change how the world comes into shape and form (Bai et al., 2014).

Initially an infant is helpless, even though powerful in its potential for becoming. He has spent nine months in mother's womb, totally dependent upon the mother for all its vital sustenance. Emerging from the womb, and cut off from the umbilicus, he is still almost totally dependent, except it now
breathes on its own without the umbilicus and has a few developing vital skills: turning toward the breast that touches its cheek, the sucking reflex, and orienting herself toward the mother’s voice, smell, and gaze. He is ready to engage her and receive care and nurture that he vitally needs to survive and flourish. This process of engagement requires the mother’s attunement to her baby. Her comforting and smoothing sound in response to her baby’s crying, her touch and warm smiles, her smell, her breast milk … all offered in attuned timing, rhythm, and flow not only satisfy the baby’s biological needs but also meets his existential and psychological needs to be loved, safe, secure, and to belong and matter. Mother’s and Father’s attunement to their baby is not just something nice and wonderful: it is absolutely essential for the baby’s survival and flourishing.

By the same token, misattunement threatens the baby’s sense of survival and flourishing: indeed, it can be deadly. The baby cries when hungry, uncomfortable, and frightened, and if the caregiver does not respond or responds haphazardly, the seeds of insecurity are sown. Suppose this happens not just once or a few times but repeatedly. What would be the message that the baby gets, implicitly and explicitly? That his existence does not matter all that much? Its needs are not serious and worth attending to? That he is not wanted and loved? As well, since the baby has repeatedly failed to bring the caregiver to his side and to engage the caregiver, self-confidence is lowered: an increasingly embedded and unconscious sense of powerlessness to affect and influence those who matter to him and his survival. The unconscious message it ends up internalizing is: “your existence does not matter. You are not wanted. We don’t care about you.” The foundational existential sense of self-agency is compromised. The individual grows up feeling powerless and helpless, which can push him/her toward anger (fight) or depression and avoidance (flight and freeze).

We provide the above account in sketch to illustrate how a person—in our case, a student—would come to have a compromised ability to perceive and find ma, confidently move in, immerse, and flow with ma, thereby engaging herself in learning and transforming. For this student, struggling experience of frustration, impatience, anger, helplessness, hopelessness, dejection, and giving-up may fill her day: a sense of failure may follow her like her own shadow. She may seek out ways to bolster her lack and sense of failure with compensatory gratifications in all manners (typically with forms of addiction), ego-boosting identity formations, extended dependencies, and activities that distract her from her pain of existential lack. As we look into our selves and
look around our selves, we may find everywhere, in varying degrees, the manifestations of this existential lack we described here. All this is pandemic in our current civilization.

**Reeducation in the Space of Ma**

The experience of ma requires a great sense of and ability for attunement by the educator. Consequently fine-grained attunement to the ma of the classroom is not separate from the overall development of the educator as a whole, awakened, and awakening human being. Attention to ma and its effects is an alive process that is unfolding endlessly each moment, ever changing, ever affecting classroom members, and ever being affected by those in the classroom. The inner and relational development of the educator as an ongoing and committed process is essential to the cultivation of the ma-infused classroom (Cohen, Bai, & Fiorini, 2014; Cohen, Bai, & Green, 2008).

What we are interested in exploring in this chapter is reschooling our selves—as teachers and students—through working with the phenomenology of ma and cultivating the attuned relational humanity that is our birthright. Call this “attuned relational humanity” the “original nature” of each person and of the collective, as it’s alluded to in Zen discourse. This original nature signifies the state of humanity prior to the mind-body-heart separation and privileging of intellect (mind) over body and, to a large extent, affectivity, which has become the hallmark of Western civilization, albeit globalized in recent centuries through colonialism. Working with ma compels us to reintegrate the separated parts in embodied ways: this is not an exercise in intellect and cognitive undertaking, such as critical thinking and problem-solving that has become the foundation and mainstay of contemporary schooling. The ma work, as we would like to call it, requires complete integration and alignment of mind-body-heart-spirit (or however we may name these parts); for, without such integration-alignment, we can’t have the degree of attuned and sensitive embodied awareness required for the work in the space of ma.

**Martial Arts Example**

A perspicacious example of ma work is martial arts learning. To give a small taste of this learning, we quote Kenji Tokitsu (2012), writing from his background not only as a sociologist and a scholar in Japanese Language and
Civilization, but also as a martial arts master. He explains ma within the context of Japanese martial arts that works with the derivative concept, maai:

[ma is] ... not only “distance” or “interval (between objects) in space,” but also “an interval in time”—the moment in music where the rhythm changes, and so on; and of the ai, which means “a meeting of two or several persons or objects.” Thus the word maai, in addition to the abstract idea of distance or interval expresses a movement of getting closer or moving farther apart in relation to persons or objects. (p. 60)

As earlier, ma work is best facilitated through interactional dynamics involving multiple participants. In other words, it is not an individualistic work, as much of contemporary schooling is, and indeed as much training in mindfulness meditation is. Nor is it mostly a cognitive endeavor as, again, much of modern schooling is. Ma work calls for the whole person that is being trained in greater and greater embodied awareness and learning to be in deeper and deeper attunement with every being and everything around her.

We quote Tokitsu (2012) again, this time, to introduce an associated companion concept to ma, hyoshi (meaning, cadence) that shows how ma works in a complex and dynamic learning environment like school:

Hyoshi is an integrated set of cadences that brings together as rhythmic elements several human subjects and their surroundings within the framework of an arranged cultural activity. This integration of cadences results in a balance or an overall harmony. (p. 75)

Hyoshi is what a classroom that is sensitive to ma will manifest. Facilitating this environment by the educator is a fine art that requires attunement arising from a deep and abiding sensitivity that is responsive, relational, and arising from an awakened consciousness (Cohen, 2015). For this reason, as indicated earlier, ma learning at school is best undertaken as a group process: an ongoing community-culture process of learning through participation and simultaneous observation of this process. The experience of ma requires a great ability for attunement, and educators can bring in the practice of fine-grained attunement to their classroom environment, thereby helping and supporting students and teachers alike to become whole and awakening human beings.

Tokitsu (2012) introduces another companion concept to ma: yomi. Yomi has been called “the art of intuitively sensing and foreseeing (the moves) of the adversary” (p. 19). The word “adversary” is easily replaced in the above quotation by the words “classroom citizens”—students and teacher. Consequently the “knowing” that comes from the combination of maai and yomi is
in the service of sensing the overall ebb and flow of each individual and the classroom community as a whole, and in the overall service of the emergence of an atmosphere that invites the most optimal and natural possibilities.

What is said of martial arts training earlier applies to all arts training, whether it is the traditional tea ceremony, calligraphy, dance, and movements. A contemporary martial arts teacher and scholar of Japanese culture, H. E. Davey (2007, p. 35), explains that “the term [dojo] has meditative connotations and describes the training hall used in some Japanese cultural arts.” Bai et al. (2016) also give the following explication:

In classical Japanese arts of all kinds (as with classical Chinese, and Korean arts), the purpose of artistic practice is two-fold: (1) to use the practice to facilitate learning how to be in the do (道, pronounced as dao in Chinese, and meaning, path or way), that is, to be in attunement to the creative, life-giving energies of cosmos; and (2) to be in the process of perfecting one’s self in order to be increasingly in the flow of the universal energy in all of life’s activities. (p. 6)

Whether one is using primarily one’s body or brush and ink or tea pot with water, or flowers and rocks and sand, the outwardly forms, though tremendously varied, all follow the same principle of attuning to the do (道) and becoming creative and effective. However, in order to attune and become creative, one needs to engage in self-cultivation seriously; for, one’s self is the instrument of attunement. As Carter (2008) states:

[O]ne learns the rules early on but, as one matures as a person it is not the rules that keep one on an ethical path, it is the transformation that has taken place in your personality that now spontaneously responds to situations with a benevolent heart, a sense of identification with the joys and sorrows of others, a strong desire to help, and a clear vision of what those people could become. Ethics is a self-manifestation of who a person is and the more developed levels, there is no need for rules and regulations; one is spontaneously benevolent and other directed simply because that is now who one is. One has become no-minded, no longer filled with ego and self-importance. (p. 37)

By now it is surely evident that the sensing of ma is inseparable from the being of the self who is sensing, and who is simultaneously observer, participant, and facilitator of ma. Thus, as Carter elaborates earlier, the sensing of ma is an ethical act.

Self-cultivation takes dedicated inner work, and the latter “refers to reflective practices conducted under the gaze of consciousness” (Cohen, 2015, p. 29). Inner work depends on a developed capacity to self-observe, to witness
experience. This type of awareness is not something teacher education currently addresses, nor is it a part of the culture that most of us inhabit. It is our contention that cultivating the above-mentioned awareness is the crucial and central key to inner work that will facilitate narrowing the previously mentioned gap between outer presentation of self and inner experience. In order to attune to complex and dynamic reality before one, one needs to bring one’s whole being that has been superbly developed and refined to reflect complex dynamic reality. Every faculty, from the intellectual to the somatic, from the sensuous to the intuitive, all needs to be refined and tuned, expanded and complexified. It is a life-long project.

Liberation of Self as True Education

What complicates the earlier project of refining attunement through self-cultivation, however, is the fact that most of us have become, in varying degrees, blunted and weighed down by anxiety, greed, shame, guilt, anger, blame, and so on. We need to be liberated from these existential burdens and afflictions: how else can we dance within ma, which requires lightness of being and nimbleness of spirit? But these are more than burdens that we carry externally, and that we can just drop. They are ingrained part of the egoic personality structure we ended up creating from within in response to the kinds of survival threats we experienced or continue to experience in our personal/familial and cultural history. Hence, for optimal ma work, most often we will need to actively disrupt the cemented personality structure. This, too, is a challenging work. Once built, one’s personality structure is resistant to change. “This is who I am!” declares the self.

Disruptions that we are proposing involve discovering and identifying the egoic structure that gets in the way of ma work. For example, suppose one is practicing a certain brush stroke in calligraphy, and it’s not going well. One quickly boils up with frustration, which soon turns into a rage. The brush now looks to this calligraphy student like an instrument of torture designed especially to test and taunt her. She feels an impulse to smash down the brush on the floor. Her calligraphy teacher who is a Zen master, seeing her frustrated with flushed face and quivering lips from rage, calmly and kindly asks her, “How did you learn frustration? Who taught you that?” Suddenly, memories from distant past flood in: her young self, struggling to lace her first pair of sneakers, couldn’t do it, and her mother yelling at her, hurrying her. Her
brother standing nearby, laughing and taunting her: "What's the matter with your fingers? Are they buttered?" Neither of them coming to help and support her struggle. She starts to cry, and gets mad. She picks up her shoes and flings across the floor, just as she saw her father do such things. Smack! She gets a slap from her mom. Painful memories: frustration, despair, humiliation, helplessness, and anger all surface.

Her calligraphy teacher is not like her mother, brother, or father. She is a Zen teacher. She is calm and kind, empathic and understanding. She motions her to hold the brush in a certain way, puts her own hand over the student's, and together, they yield the brush, again and again, until the student begins to have a “right” feel of the brush in her own hand. She looks at the strokes on the paper, and she smiles in joy. Her teacher smiles, too. They have good feelings. The brush no longer looks menacing. It's now looks intriguing and inviting. The student now tries the strokes on her own, and they look pretty good. The teacher encouragingly points out what she could do to improve the wavy lines: "Breathe evenly, and synchronize your breathing with your hand motion." They now practice breathing together. The student notices how she’s been holding breath, making her breathing erratic, and how tense her fingers and wrist were in holding the brush, how rigid her right arm and shoulder were from trying to maintain an unnaturally high, raised position, and so on. With relaxed rhythmic breathing, all these parts begin to relax: they are now much more freely moving, soft and yielding. Now her brush seems to follow her rather than resisting her, as before.

Liberation of the self can come, little by little (or, in rare instances, in one fell swoop) in all these small moments of struggling and suffering self in the encounter zone of ma. Faced with ma, the self finds all the places that it has been unconsciously, therefore reactively, constructed and became frozen, tense, stiff, or going the opposite direction, in reaction to the latter, ready to explode and discharge the tension, resulting in self- or other destructive actions. To liberate itself, it now needs to bring mindful awareness to all these moments of ma encounter, learning to breathe interrupted life energies back into the self, unfreezing, untensing, relaxing, flowing, or, again in the opposite zone, learning to contain the explosive energy about to havoc destruction, redirecting it to the source (of life energy), and then reengaging it in ways of creativity and helpfulness. What we are really describing here is the way of contemplative practice that is psychologically informed. We add this piece about the psychologically informed to contemplative practice because, all too often, the latter is undertaken to merely or mostly to soothe and calm down
the arousal, which, however beneficial in the moment, is not enough to actually bring about desired changes to the egoic personality structures that have been blocking the person's mental-emotional-spiritual growth. The usefulness of ma encounter is that the challenges one experiences in this encounter show up in all the places where one needs to do the work and the kind of work that needs to be undertaken in the concrete specifics of the learning challenges one faces. Recall the calligraphy learning scene earlier. In other words, manifest discomfort and suffering are clues to what happened and didn’t happen in the way of a person’s development, and using these clues as cues, one can begin to recraft the self. We again wish to reiterate that this kind of learning is at the core of education. Learning for information accumulation and knowledge acquisition, in and of itself, does not constitute as the aims of education. This does not mean that education excludes information and knowledge acquisition: it necessarily includes, but we must not focus on the acquisition as if that's the primary goal of education.

Ma as Relationship Work for Educators

By now it should be abundantly clear from our writing in this chapter that we see ma as relationship work. What are the implications in the way we conduct schooling? How should teachers teach and students learn? Simple and obvious answer is, through relationship. Our reader may rightly say, "Who doesn’t know that these days?" True! The more serious response is indeed specifying the kinds of relationship—between teacher and student, among teaching faculty, among students, between school and community, and moreover, between learner and subject matter—that we need to create in order to do the ma work in all aspects and domains of learning. Commenting on all this extensively is completely out of the scope of this chapter. Instead, below, we will share key insights that underlie our proposed ma work for educators.

Being an Educator Who Is Attuned to Ma

1. It is the educator's privilege and mandate to accompany the student. How the accompaniment is done greatly influences the outcome of the student learning.
2. Essential to the art of accompaniment is attunement. Failing to attune to students may result in ma not happening to the student. Accompanying
the student within the ma classroom experience is a core activity of the educator.

3. Attunement requires presence. The teacher’s ability to be present, fully, in each moment is *sine qua non* of the educator’s art.

4. Becoming increasingly capable of full presence is synonymous with attunement. Without being present there is no attunement.

5. The quality of an educator’s presence can be expressed as the ability to engage and “hold” students while being fully engaged with students moment-to-moment. Such experience will be compromised by a teacher’s rigid and/or flaccid personality structures. Such all-too-common manifestations of educator’s compromised ways of being has many mis-educative consequences, including oppressing and crushing students, and losing their attention, interest, and engagement, trust, and respect.

6. Educators, too, can, and really must, undertake their own ma-sensitivity training within their teaching activities. They can take the difficulties and challenges they have with their students as opportunities for working on themselves—on their presencing-compromised personality/identity structures. If they do this, they will grow as human beings while simultaneously modeling a process of development that is central to nurturing a liberated consciousness in students. Basically, then, both teacher and student together can do the work of self-cultivation in their mutual encounter zone of ma.

In closing, we share an inspiring verse about the “Gateless Gate” by a Chinese Chan (Zen in Japanese) master, Wumen Huikai (in Japanese, Mumon Ekai, b. 1183, d. 1260), which is part of a collection of Kong-An (in Japanese, Koans)8 that he collected and commented on (1988):

*The Great Way has no gate,*
*A thousand roads enter it.*
*When one passes through the gateless gate,*
*He freely walks between heaven and earth.*

**Notes**

1. The Chinese character, 門, means “door” or “gate.” The Chinese character, 関, is read as “ma” in Japanese has an additional part to 門, and that is 日, meaning the sun, a source of light, and this part is placed, as we can see, right between the two posts of the gate/door.
2. For example, the Chinese character, 心, which is used both in Japanese and Korean, doesn’t just mean “mind” as the function of intellectual cognition, as in English. Rather, 心 is both cognitive and affective: mind-heart or heart-mind.

3. The integration of the subjective and the objective in human consciousness is none other than enlightenment or awakening in the Eastern traditions (e.g., Buddhism and Daoism).

4. This is not to say that conditioned behavior or action is unimportant or not desirable in humans. Without a vast repertoire of already learned, hence conditioned, behavioral patterns, we can’t carry on with our daily life with minimum energy expenditure and maximum ease and efficiency. Whatever is learned well goes into the domain of the unconscious (Ginot, 2015), and we are saved from having to learn everything again, anew.

5. Central to the Buddhist cosmology/ontology is the understanding of interconnectivity (everything is connected to everything else) and interpenetration: nothing is discrete but is interfused, and the dynamic mixing and fusing continues unceasingly.

6. This notion of coemergence of the perceiver and the perceived has been explored in cognitive science as well as in contemplative sciences (e.g., Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991).

7. To note, nondual consciousness is that of enlightenment or awakening in Eastern traditions. In contrast, ordinary consciousness is ego consciousness that separates the self from the nonself; hence, dualistic consciousness.

8. A koan (公案) is “a story, dialogue, question, or statement, which is used in Zen practice to provoke the ‘great doubt’ and test a student’s progress in Zen practice” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%85%8D%E6%8C%87).

References


