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The Science of the Mind

Series Ed.: T. Matsuzawa

This series aims to promote the advanced studies of “kokoro”: the human mind and related mental functions. The Japanese word “kokoro” incorporates various English concepts such as mind, emotion, intelligence, heart, psychology, will, intention, consciousness, and compassion. The Japanese kanji character meaning “human” is derived from the shape of two persons leaning toward each other, thus lending one another support. This suggests that the essence of human nature exists not in the individual but in the mutual support between individuals. Thus, Japanese words, written characters, and ways of thinking may be particularly suitable for presenting complex ideas, perceiving things as a whole, and distilling the essence of concepts in a simple manner. We all know that the human mind resides in the brain – an organ made up of neural cells connected by synapses, activated or suppressed by neural transmitters. However, the deduction method popular in Western science needs a complementary approach. A more holistic view can sow the seeds for establishing new disciplines in the science of the mind. This series highlights such new approaches, exploring the nature of the human mind with reference to broader contexts such as society, culture, ecology, and evolution.

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