The cultural upper class of Chinese civilization had been adhered to a medicine that owed its plausibility to the structures of the ancient unification of kingdoms for two millennia, from the first century bc to the nineteenth century. It equally owed its plausibility to the sociopolitical ideals of the Confucian and legalistic social philosophers. The ancient doctrines of social theory had become rigid over the centuries. The structures of the ancient empire were now dated. The empire faltered in the nineteenth and fell at the beginning of the twentieth century. Totally new ways of organizing social life were first promoted as ideals and later formed into reality. Customary medical thinking did not have a chance, even for short-term survival. A few insistent authors' verbose, anachronistic attempt to halt the threatening decline but in vain.

The Arabs became admirers of an ancient heritage whose people were trying to leave it behind. The moment the Chinese opened their doors, seeking a serious change in direction toward the future, droves of men and women flocked to China from the future-oriented civilization of the West with the wish to learn the classics of antiquity. The cultures have met at a crossroads. On the one side were those who had decided, after slowly walking forward with their heads turned backward for two
millennia, to turn their heads around and look forward. They were met by those who were educated to look forward but were in fact walking backward. Now, for part of the Western population, the light comes from the past and suggests turning around and continuing to march while facing backward, and to always keep the light in view.

The Fragile Japanese Family: Narratives about Individualism and the Postmodern State
Charles Leslie and Allan Young

in Paths to Asian Medical Knowledge

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Although Japan has a long history and civilization of its own, it bears a particular blight that is associated with postwar civilization: the Westernized, high-tech culture, prosperity and material comfort, and urban nuclear family life and a loss of traditional values. This chapter discusses the remaking of a cultural identity in postwar Japan. The emphasis is on the concept of nuclear family, and most especially the pivotal figure in the family, the mother. A postulated relationship between the behavior of family members and their individual physical health is couched in explicitly moralistic terms and forms one part of the cultural debate about identity. It includes a stereotype in which women are said to be vulnerable to experiencing one of several syndromes and neuroses especially associated with their gender. This chapter also discusses the attempt to medicalize menopause and its lack of success to date.