

THE INNER SELF IN THREE COUNTRIES

ROMIN W. TAFARODI
CHRISTOPHER LO
University of Toronto

SUSUMU YAMAGUCHI
University of Tokyo

WINCY W.-S. LEE
Chinese University of Hong Kong

HARUKO KATSURA
Hokkai-Gakuen University

Personal identity involves continuity of the inner or private self—the intimately familiar *me*—across time and place. Is this continuity experienced to a similar extent across cultures? East Asian cultures place greater moral emphasis than do Western cultures on the contextual adjustment of personal behavior. This adjustive focus translates into greater variation in the outwardly presented self across contexts, raising the question of whether the inner self is also experienced as less continuous or unchanging by East Asians. To examine this issue and its implications, we asked Canadian, Chinese, and Japanese students to answer a set of questions about the inner self and its behavioral expression. Their responses confirmed a weaker sense of continuity among the Chinese and Japanese but also revealed that socially appropriate expression of the inner self is valued and sought in all three countries. In addition, East Asians claimed to experience self-expression in fewer activity domains than did Canadians.

Keywords: personal identity; self-continuity; Canada; Hong Kong; Japan

In this article, we examine how personal identity—the continuity of the inner or private self—is experienced in North American and East Asian cultures. We begin by outlining the dominant Western view of the inner self. Next, we describe challenges to the universality of this view, which, taken together, suggest that East Asian personal identity may be characterized by a looser phenomenal continuity than is experienced in the West. We then test this and related predictions by comparing the responses of European Canadian, Hong Kong Chinese, and Japanese students to questions addressing their experience of the inner self.

Belief in the singularity and unity of personal identity is a long-standing tenet in Western philosophical and psychological thought. The leading figures of the Enlightenment, including John Locke, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant, accepted the reality of the undivided self as self-evident. Even those who rejected this claim, such as David Hume (1739-1740/1985), acknowledged the subjective “composition” of a continuous, unified self. Locke (1693/1995) attributed personal identity, the sameness of individual persons across time and place, to the continuity of self-consciousness reflected in episodic memory. For Descartes

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(1641/1998), the reflexive awareness of his own isolated consciousness, thinking through time, was the only knowledge of which he was absolutely and independently certain. This original “clear and distinct idea,” according to Descartes, was capable of upholding all other well-reasoned beliefs. Kant (1781/1990), for his part, focused on the self as the subject rather than object of awareness. He saw this subjectivity, or “transcendental ego,” as an a priori condition of experience, a “sensuous intuition” and “logical function” of consciousness with a fundamental unity and constancy that lay beyond doubt or analysis.

The Freudian revolution of the late-19th and early-20th centuries fissioned the mind into conscious and unconscious regions but did little to challenge the established Western belief in the singularity and integrity of the total self. Conceived as a layered, multifarious, and dynamic functional system, the Freudian subject was still essentially a single psyche. However submerged and complex its operations, it remained aware of its own continuity and individuality. Even William James (1890/1950), who argued for a plurality of selves loosely considered as all things that are perceived as intimately “mine,” recognized the enduring presence of a “self of all other selves”: “Each of us, when he awakens says, Here’s the same old self again, just as he says, Here’s the same old bed, the same old room, the same old world” (p. 334).

The “same old self,” of course, consists of much more than the familiarity of some formless, elusive *I*, although it is that as well. The sameness that we experience rests as much on the perceived continuity of the traits, intentions, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and other attributes—the *me*—that we use to define ourselves as distinct minds in society. Thus, my chronic tendency to fantasize about crème brûlée and distrust auto mechanics does as much as any intuited Kantian ego to remind me of my singularity and persistence as a person. Moreover, these familiar attributes need not be expressed in behavior to be privately acknowledged. When at a funeral, for example, good sense dictates that I refrain altogether from repeating the racy jokes that proved so popular at a cocktail party the week before. This restraint or suppression, however, does not prevent me from continuing to view myself, while at the funeral, as a *characteristically* funny person. If asked, I would say that I am a funny person although I am not being funny at this time. So, although our overt behavior may vary considerably in accordance with the shifting demands of social life, we do not necessarily lose sight of our inner, ever-familiar selves. We are not independently constituted within each situation we enter, but rather, bring with us rich private identities that we express, mask, inhibit, amplify, coordinate, and develop with others within role constraints and normative action frames.

According to the dominant Western view, however, the identity of self-consciousness across time is not strict or absolute. It is, as James put it, “only a loosely construed thing.” People do change over time, so much so that one might fail to perceive any sameness at all in the image of a former self, say a photograph of oneself as a very young child. The disjunction in such a case is due to not only a complete lack of memory for “what it was like to be” the distant self (Nagel, 1979), but also dissimilarity in physical appearance, which makes it difficult to discern any commonalities in personality and disposition. Of course, change in physical appearance is neither sufficient nor necessary for change in personal identity. People change in many other ways and often revise aspects of their inner selves, or specific beliefs about who and what they are, accordingly (Bem, 1972; Turner, 1978).

We can say, then, that the diachronic self, in its substantive form as an intentional object, has been conceived in the Western intellectual tradition as a private mental *me* that is continuous across contexts, even when not expressed in some contexts. However, it does change over time and in response to interpretations of one’s own behavior, suggesting only a loose form of continuity. It is also generally accepted that the individual is aware of different sets of

attributes at different times, different parts of the “same old self,” suggesting that the composition of the momentary *me* is in constant flux, much like a searchlight illuminates now this and now that swath of a broad field, unable to reveal it all at once (Markus & Nurius, 1987; Showers, 2000). The movement of self-consciousness, however, does not under normal conditions undermine the perceived unity of the field, as each swath brought into view feels as familiar or “seen before” as the one that preceded it and therefore part of a single abstracted identity, the same enduring being.

Such a conception of the inner self as a singular, phenomenally enduring entity with a distinct identity is broadly consistent with the post-Enlightenment emphasis on individualism, self-determination, and egalitarianism within the liberal democratic polity (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996; de Tocqueville, 2000; Taylor, 1989). It is presupposed in the Western ideal of the unique, assertive, and self-directed individual who nonetheless remains empathetically attuned and connected to others (Riesman, Glazer, & Denney, 1961).

Is the inner self seen in essentially the same way in non-Western societies? Some have argued that it is not. Perhaps the strongest objection to singularity, integrity, distinctiveness, and transcendent continuity as universal features of personal identity was offered by Geertz (1984). According to him,

The Western conception of the self as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background, is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures. (p. 126)

As an illustration, Geertz described the Javanese “inside” (*batin*) self as referring not to

a separate seat of encapsulated spirituality detached or detachable from the body, or indeed to a bounded unit at all, but to the emotional life of human beings taken generally. It consists of the fuzzy, shifting flow of subjective feeling perceived directly in all its phenomenological immediacy but considered to be, at its roots at least, identical across all individuals, whose individuality it thus effaces. (p. 127)

Such a view stands in stark contrast to the West's “self-contained individualism” (Sampson, 1989). Shweder and Bourne's (1984) contrast between the “sociocentric organic” view of the person, as held by Oriya-speaking Hindus in India, and the “egocentric contractual” view dominant in the West, is consistent with Geertz's position. Sociocentrism, they claim, is marked by a “tendency not to separate out, or distinguish, the individual from the social context” (p. 167). Markus and Kitayama (1991) contrast the “interdependent” Japanese self against the “independent” American self in similar terms.

The heightened concern of East Asians with social harmony has been used to explain their greater tendency to rely on personal adjustment and accommodation rather than direct influence over the environment in meeting the challenges of everyday life (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984). This flexibility suggests that the East Asian experience of self is highly variable across social contexts, leading some researchers to infer that they are therefore lower in self-concept clarity than Westerners (Campbell et al., 1996). Consistent with this claim, the Western emphasis on the unity, integrity, and internal consistency of the self is not as evident in Japan. Rather, the Japanese appear to be more concerned with the management of a multiplex, dialectical self that consists of

inevitable oppositions, divisions, and complementarities. The complexity of this self must be understood and coordinated to produce socially appropriate sentiment and behavior (Rosenberger, 1989). This requires an intensive focus on what Lebra (1992) termed the “interactional self,” the features of which change across social situations in accordance with relative positioning. Such a focus, however, poses a profound challenge for the continuity of the inner self, the importance of which is not discounted by the Japanese. According to Lebra (1992),

A more stable self . . . more immune from social relativity, is sought inwardly. . . . The socially, outwardly oriented interactional self is thus compensated for by the inner self. Japanese do divide self into the outer part and inner part. . . . It is the inner self that provides a fixed core for self-identity and subjectivity, and forms a potential basis for autonomy from the ever-insatiable demands from the social world. . . . At the center of the inner self is the *kokoro* which stands for heart, sentiment, spirit, will, or mind. (p. 112)

Parallel to Lebra’s highlighting of *kokoro*, Doi (1986) identifies *honne* (true motives and sentiments) as the “expression of self-consciousness” underlying the *tatemae* (proper and conventional display) of social conduct. He argues that it is as threatening to the Japanese to lose sight of *honne* as have it overrun the boundaries of *tatemae*. Like Lebra, he argues that the Japanese emphasis on context-sensitivity and shifting self-presentation is taxing and can obscure *honne*: “A Japanese can move adroitly from one standpoint to the other, so adroitly in fact that we are not sure which is *omote* [front] and which is *ura* [back]. The distinction, however, never disappears” (p. 152). Although *honne* has a wide meaning and refers to more than one’s private beliefs about oneself, Doi’s analysis suggests that the Japanese inner self is often subordinated to the demands of modulated public display. Over time, this might be expected to lead to less phenomenal coherence and constancy of private self-beliefs. Of specific interest here is the possibility that James’s “loosely construed” continuity of the private *me* across changing contexts and varying behaviors is felt more weakly by Japanese and other East Asian groups. The results of two recent studies are especially relevant in this regard.

Kanagawa, Cross, and Markus (2001) asked Japanese and American women to give 20 responses to the question, “Who are you?” in one of four different social contexts (alone, in the presence of an authority figure, in a large noninteractive group, interacting with a peer). The responses were then coded into distinct reference categories, and the proportion falling into each category was calculated. The Japanese showed statistically significant variation across conditions for 4 of the 13 analyzed categories, whereas this was true for only 2 of the categories for the Americans. This difference indicates somewhat greater contextual sensitivity in Japanese self-description. Even so, it does not provide direct evidence of a less continuous Japanese inner self. The self-descriptions are social communications about oneself to a real, implied, or imagined audience. As such, they are as likely to reflect beliefs about which descriptive features are relevant and appropriate to share with that audience as to expose which aspects of the familiar *me* are in mental focus. Private thoughts and public statements need not be consistent and often are not. A second limitation is that particular kinds of self-descriptions may not reveal anything at all about the inner self. References to short-term activities and states or the immediate situation are especially problematic in this regard. For example, the following three responses by the same participant would be entirely consistent: I am a cheerful person; I felt sad yesterday; I am feeling sad. The latter two statements tell us little about the respondent’s inner self. The first statement, in contrast, describes a familiar, intransient *me*, a mind that is known to itself through personal identity. Returning

to Kanagawa et al.'s findings, if we disregard the two categories in their scheme that refer to the transient past or present moment, the number of statistically significant cross-context differences in self-description is reduced from four to three for the Japanese, now only one more than for the Americans. This cultural difference, although perhaps suggestive, does not provide compelling evidence that the Japanese inner self is less continuous than its American counterpart.

Suh (2002, Study 2) asked Koreans and Americans to rate themselves on 20 personality traits in five different social contexts (friends, parents, professor/teaching assistant, someone younger, and a stranger; e.g., "When I interact with my parents, I am dominant."). He then conducted a principal components analysis of each participant's 20 (traits) \times 5 (contexts) ratings matrix, using the proportion of total variance accounted for by the first extracted component as an index of cross-context "identity consistency." The first component accounted for significantly less variance on average for Koreans than Americans, suggesting less consistent self-ratings. Several other indices of identity consistency revealed parallel differences. Suh interpreted these results as reflecting the "malleable nature of the East Asian identity" and "a self that is inherently . . . multiple and changing" (p. 1,389). Considered more strictly, however, these findings reveal only greater variability in normative *behavior* across more or less formal social contexts in Korea than in the United States. Nearly all the traits used in the study were clearly associated with interpersonal expression (e.g., honest, talkative, cold, kind). That Koreans see themselves as behaving inconsistently across contexts may simply reflect a cultural emphasis on properly adjusting one's public behavior and does not necessarily indicate that their inner selves are less continuous. After all, fulfilling social expectations of how one should act in a given situation does not require believing that one is the action. For example, a young man who sees himself as characteristically aggressive does not somehow relinquish that self-view when custom and upbringing constrain him to be deferent and timid in the presence of his parents. The universal divide that separates private from public, sentiment from expression, belief from action, and performer from performance makes it difficult to know what the greater contextual modulation of behavior reported by Suh's Korean participants means for the continuity of their inner selves.

In the study that follows, we sought to overcome the above interpretive difficulty by providing respondents in one Western and two East Asian countries with a clear conceptual frame for reflecting on the familiar *me*. The critical distinctions were made explicit. Specifically, we asked students in Canada, Hong Kong, and Japan to answer a set of questions addressing the inner or private self, defined as conceptually separate from one's overt behavior and the beliefs of others. In this way, we were able to more directly compare across countries the experience of the inner self as distinct from behavior, with special attention to issues of continuity and expression. We tested the prediction, derived from relativist accounts of East-West differences in personhood, that the Chinese and Japanese would be less likely than Canadians to view the inner self as unchanging across contexts. We also tested a number of corollaries to this prediction. We inferred that the two East Asian groups, insofar as they experience a more changing inner self, should be less likely than Canadians to (a) believe in the privileged status of self-knowledge, (b) view an unchanging inner self as desirable, (c) strive for constant expression of the inner self, (d) feel frustrated when unable to express the inner self, and (e) find it natural to comment on the inner self as an object of introspective analysis. Given the greater emphasis on restraint, decorum, complaisance, and sensitivity to the formality-informality axis in East Asian societies, we also expected that the Chinese and Japanese would report expression of the inner self in fewer activity domains than would Canadians. The inclusion of two very different East Asian groups allowed us to examine the

possibility of their parallel divergence from the Western experience of continuity and expression. Such a pattern would implicate the broad moral emphasis on contextual adjustment of personal behavior that is common to the Chinese and Japanese rather than the distinctive features of either culture.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 100 (50 women and 50 men) undergraduate students at each of three universities: University of Toronto, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and University of Tokyo.

All Canadian participants were of European ethnicity, all Japanese participants were of Japanese ethnicity, and all Hong Kong participants were of Chinese ethnicity. The exclusive sampling of European Canadians was intended to reduce within-group heterogeneity and sharpen contrast with the two other cultural samples. The age range was from 17 to 23 ($M = 19.47$, $SD = 1.00$), with no significant gender or cultural-group differences (all $ps > .13$).

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

Participants completed a self-instructional questionnaire designed to assess aspects of self-identity relevant to the hypotheses. The questionnaire was administered in the primary language of each group. Chinese- and Japanese-language versions had been created from the English original through back-translation to maximize equivalence in meaning. The questions pertained to the nature and expression of the inner or private self—defined as the understanding of one's own familiar characteristics and qualities, irrespective of whether this understanding is corroborated by others or even outwardly expressed at all. Participants were asked whether they know themselves better than anyone else knows them (and if not, who knows them best), whether they know the reasons for their actions better than anyone else, whether their inner self is usually expressed through their actions within each of several activity domains (and the time spent in each domain), whether their inner self remains the same across activity domains, whether such continuity is desirable, whether constant expression of the inner self in behavior is desirable, whether they strive for as much expression as possible, whether they feel frustrated when unable to express the inner self adequately, and whether they find it awkward to reflect on and answer questions about the inner self and its expression. Consistent with the claim that a weaker sense of self-continuity exists in East Asian societies than in the West, we predicted that Chinese and Japanese participants would be less likely than Canadians to report that they know themselves and the reasons for their actions best, possess an inner self that remains the same across activity domains, see such continuity as desirable, strive to express the inner self as much as possible, see constant expression as desirable, and feel frustrated when unable to achieve expression. Furthermore, we predicted that the Chinese and Japanese participants would be more likely than Canadians to report that they find it awkward to answer questions about the inner self. Finally, we expected Canadians to report experiencing expression of the inner self in more activity domains than do Chinese and Japanese. Participants were also asked to report how much time they spent in each domain. This was intended to help clarify any cultural differences found in expression of the inner self within that domain. We had no fixed expectations for

how the Chinese and Japanese would diverge in their responses to any of the questions, despite the considerable cultural differences that separate these two groups (Dien, 1999). Just how these cultural differences might translate into distinct experiences of continuity and self-expression was not clear to us.

The categorical response options for all questions but one were *no*, *yes*, and *undecided*. The exception was time spent in various activity domains, where *none*, *very little*, *some*, and *a lot* were used as response options. We chose categorical over scalar format to reduce the likelihood of confusing group differences in interval-scale use (response style) with substantive difference in belief. Such confounding poses a serious challenge for cross-cultural comparisons (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995; Clarke, 2000; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997). Although categorical formats are not immune to response style distortion, the three-category scheme used here offers a major advantage over scalar measurement. The advantage rests on separate testing of the relative likelihood of responding *no* versus *yes* and *undecided* versus *yes*. If, for a particular question, the first comparison reveals significant differences across groups whereas the second does not, then the differences cannot be attributed to the confounding tendency of some groups to be uncertain, noncommittal, or reluctant to self-disclose in response to the question. In contrast, if there are significant differences on the *undecided* versus *yes* but not the *no* versus *yes* comparison, then these differences do not provide good evidence for divergence in beliefs. Interpretation of symmetric differences on both comparisons is less clear-cut, given that the *undecided* response can indicate many things ranging from true moderacy in belief to confusion about the wording of the question. Simple scalar comparison, or testing of means, does not allow for such considerations.

In addition, participants were asked to offer two open-ended descriptions of recent experiences, one where their behavior was consistent with the inner self and one where it was not. They were also asked whether they felt good and bad, respectively, about themselves as a result of these experiences. The questionnaire required approximately 30 minutes to complete. Afterward, participants were debriefed on the nature and purpose of the study.

RESULTS

The response frequencies appear in Table 1. For all questions with a *no/undecided/yes* response format, multinomial logistic regression was used to examine response likelihood as a function of gender and culture. Regression parameters of the generalized logit model were computed using maximum likelihood estimation. For the time questions, which had a *none/very little/some/a lot* response format, we opted instead for the cumulative logit model. This model treats the response options as ordered categories. A total of 42 logistic regressions were conducted. A Bonferroni-corrected significance level of .0012 was adopted to constrain overall probability of Type I error to 5%. Probability values higher than this correspond to parameter estimates that do not differ from zero reliably enough to warrant attention in the context of so many parallel tests.

Prediction of a nominal three-category variable required two separate response functions. The regressions were defined so that the first function predicted the natural log of the odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* and the second function of responding *undecided* rather than *yes*. The remaining odds (*no* vs. *undecided*) are completely redundant with the first two and therefore were not modeled. For each regression, only gender and cultural group were included as predictors. In each case, the sufficiency of this main-effects model was tested using the deviance statistic (Allison, 1999). As used here, this fit statistic compares the main-

TABLE 1
Relative Response Frequencies (Percentages)

	Canadian		Chinese		Japanese	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>Do you believe that you know yourself more accurately than any other living person in your life knows you?</i>						
No	8	6	22	24	32	14
Undecided	6	4	26	16	28	22
Yes	86	90	52	60	40	64
<i>Do you believe that you understand the reasons for your actions better than any other living person in your life understands the reasons for your actions?</i>						
No	8	8	12	8	28	18
Undecided	6	6	16	14	8	18
Yes	86	86	72	78	64	64
<i>Despite variability in your actions and the views that others have of you, do you think that the beliefs that you hold about who you are (your inner self) remain the same across [different] activity domains?</i>						
No	14	24	74	44	48	50
Undecided	8	10	10	16	18	12
Yes	78	66	16	40	34	38
<i>Do you think it would be a good thing if a person's inner self remained the same across [different] activity domains?</i>						
No	22	22	68	28	12	26
Undecided	14	12	14	32	40	30
Yes	64	66	18	40	48	44
<i>Do you think it generally would be a good thing if a person's inner self were always expressed in his or her actions?</i>						
No	44	38	26	24	44	62
Undecided	22	18	36	26	40	20
Yes	34	44	38	50	16	18
<i>Did you feel good about yourself during the [consistent] event or experience?</i>						
No	8	4	10	8	14	22
Undecided	10	6	12	30	20	22
Yes	82	90	78	62	66	56
<i>Did you feel bad about yourself during the [inconsistent] event or experience?</i>						
No	32	36	28	28	18	22
Undecided	16	16	18	26	20	24
Yes	52	48	54	46	62	54
<i>In general, do you consciously attempt to express your inner self in your actions as much as possible?</i>						
No	24	26	20	28	32	38
Undecided	20	20	8	26	30	18
Yes	56	54	72	46	38	44

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

	Canadian		Chinese		Japanese	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>In general, do you tend to feel frustrated, uncomfortable, dissatisfied, or otherwise unhappy when you are not able to adequately express your inner self in your actions?</i>						
No	6	10	14	38	10	26
Undecided	8	8	10	16	16	10
Yes	86	82	76	46	74	64
<i>All the above questions referred to your inner self and its expression in your behavior. Did you find it awkward, strange, or unnatural to think about this topic?</i>						
No	72	76	76	74	56	32
Undecided	10	12	10	8	14	14
Yes	18	12	14	18	30	54

effects model against a saturated model that includes the Gender \times Culture interaction. A nonsignificant value indicates that the interaction is not needed in the model. The deviance was nonsignificant for all regressions reported. Tests of parameter estimates for each model are detailed in Table 2. All statistically significant coefficients are discussed below for each question in turn. The questions are ordered as they appeared in the questionnaire.

1. *Do you believe that you know yourself more accurately than any other living person in your life knows you?* The Chinese and Japanese differed significantly from the Canadians on both the *no/yes* and *undecided/yes* coefficients ($ps < .0004$). Specifically, the predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* to this question were $e^B = e^{1.67} = 5.31$ times greater for Chinese than for Canadians, adjusting for gender.¹ Also, the predicted odds of responding *undecided* rather than *yes* were 6.80 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians. The pattern was similar for Japanese. Their predicted odds were 5.74 times greater than that of Canadians for *no* versus *yes* and 8.75 times greater than that of Canadians for *undecided* versus *yes*. Differences aside, the dominant response was *yes* for all groups (88% of Canadians, 56% of Chinese, and 52% of Japanese).

The minority who answered *no* to this question were then asked to indicate the living person who knew them best. The options were mother, father, sibling, other relative, spouse or romantic partner, friend, teacher, mental health professional, and other. Three of these options, other relative, teacher, and mental health professional, were dropped from the analysis because they were never selected. The reduced Gender \times Culture \times Person-Category cross-classification table revealed a good number of zero cell frequencies. These threatened to lead to problems of quasi-complete separation in the estimation of logistic regression parameters (Allison, 1999). As such, we applied the Mantel-Haenszel procedure (see Stokes, Davis, & Koch, 1995) for stratified analysis of the Culture \times Person-Category distribution, including gender as the stratifying variable. This procedure is based on few assumptions, and the sample size requirements refer to total frequencies rather than individual cell sizes. Testing was conducted using the Mantel-Haenszel statistic of general association. This

TABLE 2
Logistic Regression Coefficients

<i>Predictor</i>	B	SE B	Wald $\chi^2(1)$	p
<i>Do you believe that you know yourself more accurately than any other living person in your life knows you?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	-.59	.33	3.33	.07
Gender (undecided/yes)	-.62	.33	3.42	.06
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.67	.47	12.80	.0003*
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.92	.53	13.15	.0003*
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.75	.47	13.92	.0002*
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	2.17	.52	17.20	< .0001*
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	-.08	.35	.05	.83
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	-.25	.36	.50	.48
<i>Do you believe that you understand the reasons for your actions better than any other living person in your life understands the reasons for your actions?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	-.38	.35	1.20	.27
Gender (undecided/yes)	.21	.37	.31	.58
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	.36	.50	.51	.47
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.05	.51	4.29	.04
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.36	.44	9.35	.002
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.07	.52	4.20	.04
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	-1.00	.42	5.73	.02
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	-.01	.42	.00	.98
<i>Despite variability in your actions and the views that others have of you, do you think that the beliefs that you hold about who you are (your inner self) remain the same across [different] activity domains?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	-.30	.27	1.28	.26
Gender (undecided/yes)	-.10	.38	.06	.80
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	2.09	.35	36.32	< .0001*
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.32	.49	7.27	.007
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.65	.34	23.54	< .0001*
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.21	.47	6.63	.01
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	.44	.32	1.90	.17
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	.11	.46	.06	.81
<i>Do you think it would be a good thing if a person's inner self remained the same across [different] activity domains?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	-.48	.29	2.81	.09
Gender (undecided/yes)	-.07	.30	.06	.80
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.60	.34	21.83	< .0001*
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.38	.41	11.18	.0008*
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	.20	.37	.29	.59
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.34	.38	12.52	.0004*
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	1.40	.36	15.02	.0001*
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	.04	.36	.02	.90

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

Predictor	B	SE B	Wald $\chi^2(1)$	p
<i>Do you think it generally would be a good thing if a person's inner self were always expressed in his or her actions?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	-.17	.28	.36	.55
Gender (undecided/yes)	-.68	.31	4.90	.03
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	-.61	.34	3.33	.07
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	.33	.36	.80	.37
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.09	.36	9.30	.002
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.25	.41	9.18	.002
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	-1.70	.38	20.65	< .0001*
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	-.93	.39	5.72	.02
<i>Did you feel good about yourself during the [consistent] event or experience?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	.16	.38	.18	.67
Gender (undecided/yes)	.42	.32	1.71	.19
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	.61	.55	1.24	.27
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.18	.45	6.95	.008
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.45	.50	8.34	.004
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	1.32	.45	8.59	.003
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	-.83	.44	3.50	.06
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	-.14	.36	.15	.70
<i>Did you feel bad about yourself during the [inconsistent] event or experience?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	.23	.27	.68	.41
Gender (undecided/yes)	.33	.30	1.16	.28
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	-.19	.32	.36	.55
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	.32	.39	.69	.41
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	-.68	.34	3.95	.05
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	.17	.38	.20	.66
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	.49	.35	1.91	.17
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	.15	.36	.17	.68
<i>In general, do you consciously attempt to express your inner self in your actions as much as possible?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	.34	.27	1.54	.21
Gender (undecided/yes)	.25	.30	.66	.42
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	-.11	.34	.11	.74
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	-.23	.38	.38	.54
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	.63	.33	3.60	.06
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	.48	.37	1.70	.19
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	-.75	.34	4.96	.03
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	-.71	.38	3.57	.06

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

Predictor	B	SE B	Wald $\chi^2(1)$	p
<i>In general, do you tend to feel frustrated, uncomfortable, dissatisfied, or otherwise unhappy when you are not able to adequately express your inner self in your actions?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	1.16	.34	11.42	.0007*
Gender (undecided/yes)	.24	.37	.40	.53
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.56	.45	12.19	.0005*
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	.82	.48	2.90	.09
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	1.04	.46	5.08	.02
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	.69	.48	2.08	.15
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	.52	.36	2.03	.15
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	.13	.43	.09	.76
<i>All the above questions referred to your inner self and its expression in your behavior. Did you find it awkward, strange, or unnatural to think about this topic?</i>				
Gender (no/yes)	-.46	.29	2.51	.11
Gender (undecided/yes)	-.33	.42	.60	.44
Chinese/Canadian (no/yes)	-.05	.40	.02	.90
Chinese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	-.27	.58	.21	.65
Japanese/Canadian (no/yes)	-1.56	.36	19.10	< .0001*
Japanese/Canadian (undecided/yes)	-.80	.50	2.52	.11
Chinese/Japanese (no/yes)	1.51	.35	18.50	< .0001*
Chinese/Japanese (undecided/yes)	.53	.52	1.06	.30

NOTE: Testing of redundant parameters representing Chinese/Japanese comparisons was conducted by redefining the reference group within the original model. Coefficients labeled with an asterisk are significant against the Bonferroni-corrected criterion of .0012.

revealed no significant differences in response pattern across cultural groups, controlling for gender, $\chi^2(10) = 9.70, p = .47$. The overall pattern was 26% mother, 6% father, 9% sibling, 13% spouse or romantic partner, 38% friend, and 8% other.

2. *Do you believe that you understand the reasons for your actions better than any other living person understands the reasons for your actions?* None of the coefficients were significant, indicating no cultural or gender differences. Seventy-five percent of participants answered yes.

3. *Despite variability in your actions and the views that others have of you, do you think that the beliefs that you hold about who you are (your inner self) remain the same across different activity domains?* Chinese and Japanese differed significantly from Canadians on the no/yes comparison ($ps < .0001$). The predicted odds of responding no rather than yes to this question were 8.06 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians and 5.20 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians, controlling for gender. Fifty-nine percent of Chinese and 49% of Japanese, but only 19% of Canadians, responded no.

4. *Do you think it would be a good thing if a person's inner self remained the same across different activity domains?* Chinese and Canadians differed significantly on both the no/yes and undecided/yes comparisons, Japanese and Canadians differed significantly on the undecided/yes comparison, and Chinese and Japanese differed significantly on the no/yes com-

parison ($ps < .0008$). Controlling for gender, the predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 4.97 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians and 4.07 times greater for Chinese than for Japanese. Furthermore, the predicted odds of responding *undecided* rather than *yes* were 3.98 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians and 3.80 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians. Notably, 65% of Canadians and 46% of Japanese, but only 29% of Chinese, answered *yes*.

5. *Do you think it generally would be a good thing if a person's inner self were always expressed in his or her actions?* The only significant predictor was the Chinese versus Japanese comparison on *no/yes* ($p < .0001$). The predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 5.49 times greater for Japanese than for Chinese, controlling for gender. Forty-one percent of Canadians and 53% of Japanese, but only 25% of Chinese, answered *no*.

6. *Self-behavior consistency.* Participants were asked to recall two occasions during the past year, one where their inner selves were clearly and fully expressed in their actions and one where their inner selves were clearly inconsistent with their actions. The following two questions refer to the affective nature of these instances.

Did you feel good about yourself during the consistent event or experience? None of the coefficients were significant, indicating no cultural or gender differences. Seventy-two percent of participants answered *yes*.

Did you feel bad about yourself during the [inconsistent] event or experience? Again, none of the coefficients were significant, indicating no cultural or gender differences. Fifty-three percent of participants answered *yes*.

7. *In general, do you consciously attempt to express your inner self in your actions as much as possible?* None of the coefficients were significant, indicating no cultural or gender differences. Fifty-two percent of participants answered *yes*.

8. *In general, do you tend to feel frustrated, uncomfortable, dissatisfied, or otherwise unhappy when you are not able to adequately express your inner self in your actions?* The only significant predictors were the gender and Chinese versus Canadian comparisons on *no/yes* ($ps < .0008$). The predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 3.19 times greater for men than women. Independent of this, the predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 4.75 times greater for Chinese than Canadians. Twenty-five percent of men, but only 10% of women, and 8% of Canadians, 26% of Chinese, and 18% of Japanese answered *no*.

9. *All the above questions referred to your inner self and its expression in your behavior. Did you find it awkward, strange, or unnatural to think about this topic?* The only significant predictors were the Japanese versus Canadian and Japanese versus Chinese comparisons on *no/yes* ($ps < .0001$). The predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 4.76 times greater for Canadians than Japanese and 4.54 times greater for Chinese than Japanese. Seventy-four percent of Canadians and 75% of Chinese, but only 44% of Japanese, answered *no*.

10. *Domain-specific expression.* Participants were asked to think over the past year and decide, for each of 16 activity domains, whether their inner selves were generally expressed in their actions within the domain. The domains were time with close friends, time with acquaintances, coursework and attending classes, time with parents, time with siblings, time

with extended family, participating in sports and other physical activities, hobbies (solitary), hobbies (social), time with romantic partners, paid employment, volunteer work or community service, religious or spiritual activities, one-on-one interaction with teachers/instructors, visits to medical doctors or mental health professionals, and free time spent alone. The list was designed to be as inclusive as possible of what students do with their time. Participants were instructed to skip over any domain in which they had not spent any time at all. To save considerable space, the results are summarized here rather than detailed in Tables 1 and 2. Nowhere did gender emerge as a significant predictor. In contrast, significant response differences as a function of cultural group were evident for 5 of 16 domains as follows. For time with acquaintances, the predicted odds of responding *undecided* rather than *yes* were 4.33 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.47, \chi^2[1] = 15.49, p < .0001$), controlling for gender. For time with parents, the predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 4.93 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians ($B = 1.59, \chi^2[1] = 16.57, p < .0001$) and 3.42 times greater for Chinese than for Japanese ($B = 1.23, \chi^2[1] = 11.14, p = .0008$), controlling for gender. For time with siblings, the predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 6.22 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians ($B = 1.83, \chi^2[1] = 13.55, p = .0002$), and the predicted odds of responding *undecided* rather than *yes* were 5.12 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.63, \chi^2[1] = 11.04, p = .0009$), controlling for gender. For time with extended family, the predicted odds of responding *no* rather than *yes* were 6.40 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians ($B = 1.86, \chi^2[1] = 24.34, p < .0001$) and 3.86 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.35, \chi^2[1] = 12.07, p = .0005$), controlling for gender. In addition, the predicted odds of responding *undecided* rather than *yes* were 5.38 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.68, \chi^2[1] = 16.33, p < .0001$), controlling for gender. For volunteer work or community service, the predicted odds of responding *undecided* rather than *yes* were 6.77 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.91, \chi^2[1] = 14.94, p = .0001$), controlling for gender. Finally, for those who had spent any time in each domain, the overall percentages responding *yes* were as follows: time with close friends = 93%; time with acquaintances = 37%; coursework and attending classes = 44%; time with parents = 63%; time with siblings = 70%; time with extended family = 25%; participating in sports and other physical activities = 64%; hobbies (solitary) = 90%; hobbies (social) = 61%; time with romantic partners = 65%; paid employment = 40%; volunteer work or community service = 51%; religious or spiritual activities = 38%; one-on-one interaction with teachers/instructors = 32%; visits to medical doctors or mental health professionals = 30%; and free time spent alone = 87%.

11. *Time spent in activity domains.* Participants were also asked how much time they had spent over the past year in each of the activity domains. As mentioned above, the *none/very little/some/a lot* response format permitted use of the cumulative rather than generalized logit model. The *none* response was sparsely represented across domains and was therefore combined with *very little* to enhance the reliability of the analyses. The key assumption of the cumulative model is that of equal nonintercept coefficients for all binary logit models that can be created from the ordered categories. In simple terms, this assumption holds that the associations of the explanatory variables with the probability of being in a lower versus higher category is the same regardless of how the original ordered categories are dichotomized, or collapsed into two. This assumption was supported for all 16 domains using the score test of proportional odds (see Allison, 1999). In applying the cumulative model, only one parameter is estimated for gender and for each orthogonal cultural comparison. To save considerable space, the results are summarized here rather than detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

Nowhere did significant gender differences emerge. In contrast, significant response differences as a function of cultural group were evident for 7 of 16 domains, as follows. For time with acquaintances, the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 3.35 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians ($B = 1.21$, $\chi^2[1] = 18.82$, $p < .0001$), controlling for gender. For hobbies (solitary), the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 2.92 times greater for Chinese than for Canadians ($B = 1.07$, $\chi^2[1] = 15.34$, $p < .0001$) and 2.80 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.03$, $\chi^2[1] = 14.19$, $p = .0002$), controlling for gender. For time with romantic partners, the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 3.80 times greater for Canadians than for Chinese ($B = 1.34$, $\chi^2[1] = 23.02$, $p < .0001$) and 2.98 times greater for Canadians than for Japanese ($B = 1.09$, $\chi^2[1] = 15.89$, $p < .0001$), controlling for gender. For paid employment, the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 3.82 times greater for Canadians than for Japanese ($B = 1.34$, $\chi^2[1] = 23.69$, $p < .0001$) and 2.93 times greater for Chinese than for Japanese ($B = 1.07$, $\chi^2[1] = 15.57$, $p < .0001$), controlling for gender. For volunteer work or community service, the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 10.64 times greater for Canadians than for Japanese ($B = 2.36$, $\chi^2[1] = 14.12$, $p = .0002$) and 8.14 times greater for Chinese than for Japanese ($B = 2.10$, $\chi^2[1] = 10.87$, $p = .001$), controlling for gender. For religious or spiritual activities, the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 4.83 times greater for Chinese than for Japanese ($B = 1.57$, $\chi^2[1] = 13.53$, $p = .0002$). Finally, for free time spent alone, the predicted odds of reporting more rather than less time spent in the domain were 4.46 times greater for Japanese than for Canadians ($B = 1.50$, $\chi^2[1] = 27.32$, $p < .0001$).

12. *Nature of consistent and inconsistent events.* As described above, no group differences were found in relation to participants' reports of whether behavior consistent or inconsistent with the inner self felt good or bad. This invariance, however, in no way discounts the possibility of group differences in the *types* of consistent and inconsistent events reported by participants. To address this issue, two judges independently analyzed the events for recurring elements using the NUD*IST (N5) program and developed categorical schemes to represent the dominant themes. The judges came up with converging schemes, which were then integrated through discussion. In the case of consistent events, the result was seven event categories: disclosure or lack of inhibition (sharing one's innermost thoughts and feelings with another; acting or speaking freely), altruism (helping or providing for others); self-assertion (taking a stand vis-à-vis others), hobbies and creative activities (pastimes, art, music, writing), self-discovery (becoming aware of what one believes, feels, or is), belonging (communication with others), and achievement (success at realizing one's goals or ambitions). In the case of inconsistent events, the result was six categories: social constraint (feeling obliged to hide or misrepresent one's thoughts or sentiments), doing harm (hurting, offending, betraying, or upsetting others), lack of interest (engaging in a boring activity), indecision (uncertainty about choice or direction), failure (falling short of one's goals or ambitions), and uncharacteristic behavior (acting atypically because of mood or situation). Events that could not be classified as the result of ambiguity, insufficient information, or irregularity were put in the *other* category. The two judges independently classified each event according to the final schemes. Chance-corrected agreement was adequate: $\kappa = .78$ and $.81$ for consistent and inconsistent events, respectively. Disagreements were resolved through discussion.

The overall breakdown for consistent events was as follows: disclosure or lack of inhibition = 49%; altruism = 8%; self-assertion = 8%; hobbies and creative activities = 6%; self-

discovery = 3%; belonging = 1%; achievement = 5%; and other = 21%. The cell frequencies of the Gender \times Culture \times Event-Type cross-classification table recommended Mantel-Haenszel testing of the association of culture and event type, stratifying on gender. The result was significant, $\chi^2(14) = 89.61, p < .0001$, controlling for gender. Additional analyses revealed that the association was the result of significant group differences on the altruism, $\chi^2(2) = 34.81, p < .0001$; and other, $\chi^2(2) = 30.14, p < .0001$, categories, controlling for gender. Specifically, 21% of Canadians but only 1% of Chinese and 2% of Japanese reported an altruistic act as an example of self-behavior consistency; and only 3% of Canadians but 26% of Chinese and 33% of Japanese reported events that fell in the *other* category.²

The overall breakdown for inconsistent events was as follows: social constraint = 50%; doing harm = 12%; lack of interest = 3%; indecision = 1%; failure = 8%; uncharacteristic behavior = 6%; and other = 19%. Again, Mantel-Haenszel testing revealed a significant association between event type and cultural group, $\chi^2(12) = 63.54, p < .0001$, controlling for gender. The association was the result of significant group differences on the social constraint, $\chi^2(2) = 13.67, p = .001$; doing harm, $\chi^2(2) = 17.55, p = .0002$; and other, $\chi^2(2) = 18.26, p < .0001$, categories, controlling for gender. Specifically, 65% of Chinese but only 42% of Canadians and 43% of Japanese reported an experience of social constraint as exemplifying self-behavior inconsistency; 23% of Canadians but only 4% of Chinese and 10% of Japanese reported an instance of doing harm to others; and only 6% of Canadians but 29% of Chinese and 23% of Japanese reported events that fell in the *other* category. There were no significant gender differences, controlling for cultural group.

DISCUSSION

We conducted this study to test the claim, derived from relativist accounts of personhood across cultures, that the inner self—that familiar set of qualities that constitute who we are to ourselves—is experienced as less continuous across contexts by East Asians than by Westerners. We also tested a number of corollary suppositions that addressed the likely consequences of a weaker sense of sameness. The findings are reviewed and discussed below.

The critical difference in perceived continuity was confirmed. Both Chinese and Japanese participants were less likely than Canadians to agree that their inner selves remain the same across activity domains, irrespective of variability in their actions and the beliefs of others. Specifically, more than half the Chinese and Japanese (54%) but a clear minority (19%) of the Canadians rejected the notion of an inner self that persists unchanged across contexts. The two East Asian groups did not differ between themselves in this regard, and their greater tendency to reject the statement was not matched with a greater tendency to remain undecided about it. This latter equivalence across all groups is important as it discounts the possibility that the cultural difference in agreement was the result of greater confusion about the statement on the part of the Chinese and Japanese. Rather, the difference appears to reveal dissimilar convictions about personal identity, convictions that we assume are informed by the phenomenal qualities of self-consciousness over time. We suggest, then, that the greater plasticity of the East Asian presented or enacted self across contexts (Cousins, 1989; Suh, 2002) is accompanied by greater change in the private or inner self as well. The repertory performer does not remain unchanged through so many different performances.

The Chinese and Japanese were matched in their greater tendency than Canadians to reject the claim that they know themselves best (23% vs. 7% rejecting). However, because the East Asians also showed a greater tendency to be undecided about this statement, it may

be that the differences here reflect greater reluctance to take a clear position on the statement because of modesty concerns or confusion about its precise meaning. Nearly two thirds (64%) of participants who rejected the statement attributed superior knowledge to their mothers or friends, with no cultural difference in this pattern. The groups also did not differ in regard to the claim that they knew the reasons for their actions best, with a clear majority (75%) indicating agreement. That East Asians were as willing as Canadians to accept this statement despite being less willing than Canadians to accept the former, closely related statement, is somewhat perplexing. This logical inconsistency lends some credence to the possibility that the cultural difference on the former was the result of reluctance or confusion primarily and not substantive beliefs about the self. Similar concerns arise for cultural differences in the desirability of an inner self that remains the same across contexts. Here, the Chinese were less willing than Canadians and Japanese to view such continuity as good (29% vs. 56% agreeing) but were also more likely (along with the Japanese) than Canadians to remain undecided about the question (29% vs. 13%). Given that the Japanese differed from the Canadians only in the tendency to remain undecided, it may be that the statement itself was problematic for the East Asian groups.

The groups did not differ in the tendency to recall behavior consistent with the inner self as feeling good (72% agreeing) and behavior inconsistent with the inner self as feeling bad (53% agreeing). Closer examination of the events revealed that Canadians were more likely than both East Asian groups to recall an instance of altruistic behavior as an example of consistency. Also, the Chinese were more likely than Canadians and Japanese to recall an instance of social constraint as an example of inconsistency, and Canadians were more likely than both East Asian groups to recall an instance of causing harm to others as an example of inconsistency. Given the differences in the types of events reported, too much should not be made of the cultural invariance in the overall feeling of self-behavior consistency and inconsistency. Nonetheless, that the invariance held despite qualitative differences in the events reported permits the tentative conclusion that cultural difference in the continuity of the inner self is compatible with the universality of feeling good when expressing the inner self but bad when acting against it.

The Japanese were more likely than the Chinese to reject the idea that constant expression of the inner self across contexts, interpretable as transparency or authenticity, is desirable (53% vs. 25% rejecting). Canadians fell midway between these two groups, significantly different from neither. One speculative interpretation of this pattern is that the Japanese have greater concern about the social harm or discord that might result if suppressed aspects of the inner self are given expression. "Authenticity," as Lionel Trilling (1971) famously observed, "is a word of ominous import," because it contains within it dark, primitive, and unsocialized aspects of thought, feeling, and desire. The disequilibrating potential of the spontaneous, fully exposed self may be a threat that is felt especially keenly by many Japanese. For them, one who expresses only *honne* with disregard for *tatemae* is doomed to social failure (Doi, 1986). This is not to say that the Japanese have less appreciation for the value of honest self-expression. To the contrary, they were as likely as Canadians and Chinese to claim that they try to express their inner selves in their actions as much as possible (52% overall agreeing), where "as much as possible" might be understood as "where at all appropriate." Furthermore, the Japanese were as likely as Canadians and Chinese to agree that they feel frustrated when unable to express the inner self adequately. The Chinese, however, were more likely than Canadians to reject this statement (26% vs. 8%), suggesting that, of the three groups, the Chinese are the least bothered by self-disidentified conventional behavior (see Bond & Hwang, 1986). It was here, also, that the only gender difference of the study was found, with

men more likely than women to reject the statement. Whether this reflects a masculine reluctance to admit psychological distress or a feminine investment in the realization of authentic social identity is unknown.

The Japanese were more likely than Canadians and Chinese to agree that thinking and answering questions about the inner self and its expression feels odd (42% vs. 16% agreeing). The meaning of this difference is unclear. The weaker continuity of the Japanese inner self does not provide an adequate explanation as the Chinese were no different in that regard. A better interpretation is that the Japanese experience greater reluctance and discomfort in “publicizing” introspection of the private self, perhaps because of doubts about its social relevance or concerns about exposure (Okabe, 1983). It is unlikely that the Japanese hold fewer convictions about personal identity than the others, for, as noted by Hsu (1971) and Lebra (1992), Japanese interest in the private psyche is even stronger than that of the Chinese.

Where do students in the three countries achieve expression of their inner selves? Time spent with close friends, solitary hobbies, and free time spent alone were most frequently judged as allowing for expression (equally for the three groups). The invariance is noteworthy, suggesting that the universal constraints, obligations, and affordances of student life may be as important as sociocultural distinctiveness for determining which contexts best accommodate self-expression. These contexts also appear to be the most informal, a feature that is hardly surprising. Furthermore, the East Asians groups reported spending more free time by themselves and engaged in solitary hobbies than did Canadians, suggesting that the former enjoy more opportunity for self-expression in these specific contexts. The differences for the remaining contexts were consistent with our expectation that East Asians express their inner selves in fewer activity domains than do Westerners. The relevant evidence here is greater likelihood of rejecting rather than accepting the claim that the inner self is generally expressed in the domain, not just greater likelihood to remain undecided about the question. By this criterion, the Chinese were less likely than Canadians to find self-expression in the company of parents, siblings, and extended family. For the Japanese, this difference held only for extended family and volunteer work, the latter of which they reported devoting less time to than did the other groups. There were no group differences in the amount of time students spent in the three family domains. The overall pattern of differences suggests that the Chinese are least likely to experience self-expression in the context of family interaction. This is perhaps because of the tightly prescribed framework of obligations, duties, and responsibilities—the “authoritarian moralism”—that characterizes the Chinese family (Dien, 1999; Ho, 1997). In the Japanese *ie* (household), on the other hand, there is considerable indulgence of spontaneity, frankness, and informality among members of the immediate family that does not commonly extend to more distant kin (Bachnik, 1992a, 1992b; Doi, 1981). The greater tendency of the Chinese to cite experiences of social constraint as examples of self-behavior inconsistency supports this interpretation; a fair number of the events reported by the Chinese involved family matters.

Before summing up, two limitations of the study deserve mention. First, our reliance of self-reports leaves open the possibility that the findings reflect divergent cultural beliefs about the inner self rather than differences in how personal identity is actually experienced over time by individuals living in these cultures (Spiro, 1993, 1996). Admittedly, this possibility cannot be discounted without convergent findings that rely on projective or implicit methods for assessing the subjective qualities of the inner self, a clear priority for future research. We suggest, however, that the related phenomena of how the self is *understood* and communicated as an objectified abstraction and how it is spontaneously *experienced* within consciousness are so intertwined throughout the cultural development of the individual that

some degree of parallelism is virtually guaranteed. As such, we are confident that what our participants are telling us about their inner selves reflects more than culturally normative stories that fall outside of private experience. The second limitation of the study is the exclusive reliance on university students. Clearly, students around the world are more alike than nonstudents owing to their common socioeconomic position, shared popular culture, and the institutional regimentation of their lives within the university. Their high similarity inevitably blunts cultural comparisons. At the same time, however, student samples are effectively equated on many descriptive features that might otherwise confound the interpretation of behavioral differences. The reliance on students for cross-cultural comparison, then, is best seen as a double-edged sword rather than a clear shortcoming.

What triptych portrait, then, emerges from this comparative analysis? What can be concluded about the continuity of the inner self and its implications for thought and action in the three countries examined? Focusing on only those findings that lend themselves to clear interpretation, we offer this integrative summary. Consistent with theoretical frameworks that emphasize the highly relational and contextualized aspects of East Asian personhood (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998), the Chinese and Japanese appear to experience a less continuous inner self than do Canadians. The difference, however, is not as stark as suggested by vividly contrastive accounts of the self across cultures (e.g., Geertz, 1984), for nearly a third of Chinese and Japanese students apparently *do* believe in the sameness of the inner self across contexts. Furthermore, individuals in the three countries are as likely to feel good when behaving in a manner that reflects the inner self, feel bad when acting in a manner that contrasts with it, and strive to express the inner self wherever possible. When such efforts are blocked, Chinese are less likely to feel frustrated, suggesting a greater tolerance for social constraint. The Japanese are most skeptical of the value of sustained, uniform expression of the inner self across contexts, presumably out of fear that situationally inappropriate thoughts and feelings will disrupt social harmony. The Japanese were also least comfortable with exteriorizing their thoughts and feelings about the inner self on a questionnaire, in accord with their moral emphasis on the private-public (inside-outside) duality as an organizing principle for social life (Lebra, 1992). Contexts that permit the most informality are most supportive of the inner self in all three countries, although the Chinese and Japanese enjoy self-expression in fewer contexts overall than do Canadians. Most notably, Chinese students are least likely to find self-expression within the traditional strictures of the family. The overall picture, then, is of a common core consciousness of the *me* that is experienced as more or less continuous across cultures, depending on the extent to which contextually sensitive restraint and suppression is morally emphasized. Socially appropriate expression of the inner self appears to be similarly valued and sought, with individuals in all three cultures feeling that their actions are most reflective of their private selves when freed of the formal constraints of public life.

We end by noting that our investigation focused on aspects of experience—continuity and expression of the inner self—that have received great emphasis in the Western intellectual tradition. The questions we asked our participants reflected these concerns at the exclusion of others that may be as or more central to Chinese and Japanese conceptions of selfhood. Future studies would do well to consider whether alternative conceptual frameworks—especially those not bound by the constraints of a single, integrated, and private self-identity—might be of equal or greater heuristic value for illuminating the self as experienced in East Asian cultures.

NOTES

1. The adjusted and unadjusted odds are, in fact, equivalent when the gender ratio is exactly the same across cultural groups, as is the case here. This equivalence holds for all the regressions reported. Nonetheless, for purposes of statistical-procedural clarity, we will refer throughout to test results that control for gender.
2. The higher percentage of *other* events, both consistent and inconsistent, reported by the Chinese and Japanese was the result of insufficient detail in the descriptions provided, not inadequacy of the categorical scheme used. The relatively meager information offered by the Chinese and Japanese for these events prevented them from being categorized with any degree of confidence.

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Romin W. Tafarodi, Ph.D., is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Toronto.

Chris Lo, M.A., is a graduate student of psychology at the University of Toronto.

Susumu Yamaguchi, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology at the University of Tokyo.

Wincy W.-S. Lee, M.Phil., is an assistant lecturer of psychology at Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Haruko Katsura, M.A., is a professor of education at Hokkai-Gakuen University in Sapporo, Japan.