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Elliot Cohen, *The Psychologisation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions: Colonisation, Translation, and Commodification*. London: Routledge, 2022, 158 pp. ISBN: 978-03-67375362, \$37.99 (pbk)

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Though where and when it began remains unclear, it catches our attention that, in the past few decades, psychotherapy has been increasingly influenced by the meditative practices of Eastern religious traditions or the former has been considering the latter as one experimental alternative. Elliot Cohen questions what caused such a change in the relationship between Western-originated psychotherapy and Eastern-rooted religious practice. There is no doubt that both have one thing in common; how to take good care of the human psyche. Yet, one question remains unanswered: How have they been intermixed with each other?

In his book *The Psychologisation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions: Colonisation, Translation, and Commodification* (2022), Cohen attempts to make a cultural analysis of how Western psychology has adopted Eastern religious traditions for the sake of its own practice. To do so, Cohen first investigates the history of Western psychology's encounters with Eastern traditional religions, particularly Buddhism and Daoism. These encounters were initially influenced by Western colonialism, which perceived Western and Eastern cultures in a dualistic manner. Western culture was considered superior, materialistic, extroverted, analytic, and objective, while Eastern culture was viewed as inferior, spiritual, introverted, synthetic, and subjective. However, the collective traumas brought about by the two World Wars led Westerners to reevaluate their beliefs in their reason-armed and development-led civilization. This shift paved the way for a counterculture movement in the post-war generation, where Westerners sought after Eastern traditional religions and their lifestyles, considering them in a more positive and idealistic light. The East and its religions became a special place where Westerners could find spiritual fulfillment that they could not attain through their traditional religion and society.

Secondly, Cohen explores how Eastern religions, primarily Buddhism and Daoism, have become an alternative to the West's psychotherapy. He refers to this process as 'the psychologization of Eastern spiritual traditions,' which means that Westerners somewhat hastily utilized the 'psychological' aspects of these religions for their own purposes, without fully understanding their unique historical contexts and the

different ways they were practiced for thousands of years.

Thirdly, Cohen argues that, due to the psychologization and commercialization of Eastern spiritual traditions, Eastern spirituality in the West, exemplified by Buddhism and Daoism, has been reduced to mere products that are bought and sold in the mindfulness market. To make matters worse, sexuality and attractiveness are attached to them to make them more desirable.

Lastly, Cohen presents a tentative solution to the current problems caused by the psychologization and commercialization of Eastern spiritual traditions. Pointing out that Eastern spiritual traditions and Western psychology can help each other, he emphasizes the importance of transpersonal psychology, which embraces the numinous and transcendent realms of human experience, as a new intersectional space where the two different psychological and spiritual traditions can harmoniously coexist.

This book is recommended to anyone who wants to understand how Western psychology has integrated Eastern spiritual traditions and the implications of this process, including the challenges of commercialization and potential paths for harmonious coexistence between the two traditions.