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Beyond The Tiger Mom: East-West Parenting For The Global Age

"*Beyond the Tiger Mom* is a brilliant book — hard-hitting and brutally honest but also balanced, insightful, and funny."

— Amy Chua, author of *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*

BEYOND THE TIGER MOM

East-West Parenting for the Global Age



Maya Thiagarajan

TUTTLE



Synopsis

Dispel the hype and myths about Asian parenting and uncover the practical with this effective parenting guide. How do Asian parents prime their children for success from a young? Why do Asian kids do so well in math and science? What is the difference between an Asian upbringing and a Western one? Why do some Asian mothers see themselves as "tiger moms" while others shun the label? How do Asian parents deal with their children's failures? Is it sometimes good for children to fail? These are just a few of the compelling questions posed and answered in this fascinating new parenting book by educator Maya Thiagarajan as she examines the stereotypes and goes beneath the surface to explore what really happens in Asian households. How do Asian parents think about childhood, family and education—and what can Western parents learn from them? Through interviews with hundreds of Asian parents and kids, Thiagarajan offers a detailed look at their values, hopes, fears and parenting styles. Woven into this narrative are her own reflections on teaching and parenting in Asia and the West. Thiagarajan synthesizes an extensive body of research to provide accessible and practical guidelines for parents. Each chapter ends with a "How To" section of specific tips for Asian and Western parents to aid their child's educational development both inside and outside the classroom.

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Customer Reviews

Maya Thiagarajan is uniquely qualified to write this book. She grew up in India with Indian and American parents. She completed her education in the US at Middlebury College and Harvard University after which she taught in schools that served impoverished and elite American students. As a parent, she moved to Singapore and taught there as well. She shares her insight on eastern and western approaches to education. The first two chapters dealing with reading and math show how both the Asian parents and schools favor math. Parents say the high paying jobs are in "STEM" and note that in math, where answers are clear, kids (and adults) can be evaluated without favoritism. In the US, reading is valued and this is seen in the variety of books for kids, celebrity read alouds, DEAR (drop everything and read) programs, school libraries and the ever-popular bedtime story. Kids are asked at an early age, which books they like. Asian students are rarely asked their opinion. The later chapters deal with memorization, play, and the messages embedded in culture and family life. Each chapter is followed by helpful suggestions for raising and educating kids. Throughout the book, the rigor of the Asian testing system and the openness of the western system are contrasted. While stressful for students and their parents, Asians feel the test system gives their children a chance; otherwise, university seats would go to those with connections. These tests dominate childhood and teen years with parents spending small fortunes on tutors and reducing play time to minutes a day. In the west, universities look at a host of experiences and qualities which de-emphasizes any one test.

Maya Thiagarajan's book *Beyond the Tiger Mom: East-West Parenting for the Global Age* should not just be read by parents but by anyone interested in education, especially in improving it, both here in the US and in Asia. Ms. Thiagarajan, who taught in both public and independent schools in the US and presently teaches at an international school in Singapore, is well versed both practically and theoretically in educational theory from around the world. She looks at the positives and negatives of the Western educational system (positives: emphasis on creativity and individuality; weaknesses: insufficiently demanding, too much stroking of a child's self-esteem without its being warranted, too little focus on building fundamental skills) and the Eastern system (positives: fundamentals, especially in math, are fully developed, memorization, practice drills, and a

strong work ethic leads to academic success; weaknesses: too much pressure on students to achieve to the highest standards can demoralize those who are less capable” that is, hard work alone cannot always lead to success and leads to students’ shunning risks, too much rote learning diminishes creativity). What one is left with is that there are strengths that exist in both systems and a blend of these is ideal. What makes this book so special are her suggestions, based on research, of how to help one’s child both inside and outside the classroom to be a balanced learner who loves reading, math, language and ideas as well as a balanced individual. She includes brief anecdotes from her own experiences raising her children and being a child in India herself as well as brief comments from parents she has met and interviewed from around the world. These comments and anecdotes reinforce her message.

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