

# Common Morality, Human Rights, and Multiculturalism in Japanese and American Bioethics

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## **Abstract**

To elucidate some issues in global biomedical ethics, I consider three problems about alleged moral differences between Eastern and Western cultures. The first is whether Eastern and Western moral traditions are fundamentally different. Concentrating on Japan and the United States, I argue that theses of profound and fundamental East-West differences are implausible since there are many forms of shared morality. The second is whether human rights theory is a Western invention with no firm roots in Eastern moral traditions. I argue that this thesis is unsupported both historically and in contemporary bioethics. The third problem is whether multiculturalists' theory casts doubt on claims of universal principles and rights. I argue that the reverse is true: multiculturalism is a universalistic theory. The argument throughout supports common morality theory.