

ВОСПРИЯТИЕ И МЫШЛЕНИЕ ЛЮДЕЙ С ЗАПАДА И ВОСТОКА

Poliviana A. S.

Perception and thinking of the people from the West and the East

People from the West and the East typically see the world differently from each other. It might be very important in scientific research, because if we have people, that are able to look at the same problem from the different sides, that might be a sign, that the results are going to be reliable.

Westerners generally see space as something that is mostly empty. They think that invisible space is a thing in which everything floats. The objects and the empty spaces exist independently of their surroundings. Easterners have been believing since ancient times that the space is filled with the energy called "qi". All objects are made of and closely related with surrounding "qi". In the West objects are existing in an empty space while in the East objects are made of "qi". This small difference in perspective is a source of the difference between East and West.

In Western thought if two objects exist, they don't really affect each other, because the space between them is empty. But in Eastern thought two separated objects affect each other anyway: all things are made of "qi" and they are related through it. We can clearly see this relations in the Karesansui gardens.

While the Westerners think that the object's properties control it's behavior, Easterners see the reason of it's behavior as a result of the influence of it's surroundings on this object. When Westerners see that the person is kind, the cause of it will be person's kindness. But for Easterners the person's behavior is decided and interpreted by the behavior of the others.

Also the interaction between yin and yang is a representative principle of the Eastern thought, they mean sunshine and shade. And according to this principle nothing can exist by itself like there's no shade without sunshine and no sunshine

without shade. So Easterners see the world full of connections, but the Westerners would more likely divide everything into categories.

Another difference in the perception and thinking of Easterners and Westerners lie in understanding of the difference between the object and the substance. As professor of Cognitive Science of Keio University Mutsumi Imai noticed, there are two ways we can look at this problem:

1) The object or form way:

if you break the object, the piece of this object is not the object itself (if you break a cup, the piece of it is not a cup)

2) The substance way:

Whole and a part of it are the same (if you have a wood, a piece of it will be the same as the whole wood)

It happened so that people from the West have the object in the center of their focus and we can see it in their languages: there's a clear difference between singular and plural nouns, but there's no such clear difference in the Eastern languages.

Westerners tend to distinguish the individuality out of collection of the objects. And the wholeness of collection would mean the multitude of individual objects. But for the Easterners wholeness wouldn't be anyhow connected to individual objects, but it would lie in oneness.

Professor of Psychology of University of Illinois Denise Park mentions, that when the Asian brain sees a picture it looks at the picture as the whole thing and the part of the brain that pays attention to the individual objects, interprets all the shapes and forms doesn't activate so much. But when American look at the same picture, their brain concentrates more on individual objects and that part of the brain that is to understand what the object is activating more. So while the Easterners see the picture as a whole, Westerners see the separated objects of this picture.

After the research we found out that Ukrainians have got "mixed" perception and thinking. Their worldview is a combination of Western and Eastern ways. But it's interesting to notice, that around 70% of Ukrainians, that took part in our research, percept and think more like the Easterners, and many of them had a problem about

answering the questions, because they could look at the problem from the two sides, but Asians and Americans didn't even think about these different options.

We propose a new classification of the thinking and perception, based on our research:

- western type (Western and Southern Europe, countries of Southern, Central and Northern America)
- eastern type (Eastern and Southeastern Asia)
- mixed type (Africa, Eastern Europe, Western, Central and Southern Asia)