

The world as a mirror

In a faraway land, there lived a wise old man. He came everyday and sat on a stone-bench on the outset of the town. He loved watching people go by : merchants that left for faraway lands, peasants that came to sell their products in the Market place; travelers that came from a long way.

He also was looking after his grandchildren who were playing at the feet of the walls.

On that particular day, he saw a traveler approaching with a balluchon and accosted him, had a chat with him for a while and ended up asking him :

-Tell me, old man, you who have lived all your life in this town, what are the people here like ?

- Where are you from ? asked the elderly man.

- From the town over there, behind the mountains.

- And what were the people like over there ?

- They were not very interesting. I found them cold, mean and also withdrawn, said our old man.

And the traveler, continuing his journey, disappeared in the alley-ways of the town.

A little later, another traveler started the same conversation with the same ole man and ended up asking him the same question :

-Tell me what are the people living here like ?

- Where are you from ? asked the old man.

- I am from the town, over there, behind the mountains.

- And what were the people like over there ?

- They were fantastic, retorted the traveler whilst his face lit up. They were generous, friendly and warm.

- Here, said the old man, you will also find the people generous, friendly and warm.

And the traveler disappeared in the streets of the City.

At this moment, one of the the kid who was playing nearby came up to his grand-father, pulling his sleeve towards him and said :

- You are telling lies grand-pa. That's not nice. You taught me not to lie and you are telling the opposite to this traveler to what you are saying to the other one.

- Think about it, said the grand-father. I, during those exchanges, did not say anything. They themselves said how things were happening. All I did was mirroring and reflecting their own ways of living and looking at things.

If you want, we can go and look for them and ask their first impressions about the people of this town. However, it is not necessary, because I already know what each one of them is going to say. And you can also guess that.

Oriental story