

## The world as a mirror

In a faraway land lived a wise old man. Everyday, he sat on a stone-bench on the outset of the town. He loved watching merchants leaving for faraway lands, peasants coming to sell their products in the market place; travelers arriving from a long way.

He also was looking after his grandchildren who were playing around.

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 have lived all your life here, what are the people here like ?*

*- Where are you arriving from ?* asked the elderly man.

*- From the town over there, behind the mountains.*

*- And what were the people like over there ?*

*- I found them cold, mean and also withdrawn,* said the traveler.

*- Here,* said the old man, *you will also find the people cold, mean and withdrawn.*

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 old man and ended up asking him the same question :

*-Tell me what are the people living here like ?*

*- Where are you arriving from ?* asked the old man.

*- From the town, over there, behind the mountains.*

*- And what were the people like over there ?*

The traveler's face lit u : *- They were warm, generous and friendly.*

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

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 were saying to the other one.*

*- Think about it,* said the grand-father. *I did not say anything. They themselves said how things were happening. All I did was mirroring their own way of 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

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