

CHAPTER 5

THE SELF IN WESTERN AND ORIENTAL/ESTERN THOUGHT

There is a clash of civilization that is plaguing the country right now and though this is not officially and consciously acknowledged, this war for dominance is victimizing all Filipinos in one form or another. There is really no middle ground, and it is either one is rooting for the other side or opposing all contentions and wisdom from another side. This is the battle for the dominance, and prisoners are not taken and captured. This is literally, the war between the eastern self versus the western self. Western culture basically is about the focus on oneself and personal needs; Eastern culture is about focus on others and the feeling of others.

Western culture is predicated on putting egoism first while Eastern culture is about collectivism. Conceptually, there is a vast of difference between egoism and collectivism. While egoism is focused on oneself, collectivism is all about focus on others. While the Western culture is inclined in more acquisition of material things, the Eastern culture is tilted towards less assets (thus the mantra less is more). Western culture is obsessed with being successful, the eastern culture is more inclined towards long life; for the Eastern culture, long life is equated with wealth.

In the Eastern culture, wealth and poverty is the result of fortune and luck, for the Western culture, wealth and poverty is the result of enterprise and hard work. The Eastern culture values the wisdom of years and seniority, while the Western culture celebrates the youth and being young. Philosophically, the Eastern culture subscribe to concept of reincarnation while Western culture subscribe to the idea of evolution. Taken as a whole, these basic and subtle differences between the Eastern culture and the Western culture are taking its toll on Filipinos on which culture to adopt. The dilemma is whether to follow and subscribe to the Western influences or subscribe to Eastern ideas.

Concept of Self Western and Eastern Thought

WESTERN	EASTERN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self is a social construction which is symbolically and signally created between and among social beings • Phenomenological object which can be productively studied through as series of evanescent actions, self is multidimensional entity • Self is an interpersonal unit • Self takes form in communication • Self is intimately connected to bodily experience both ontogenetically and here and now awareness • Self is both phenomenal and nonphenomenal • Self acquires substance according to semantic, syntactic and pragmatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gentleman by following the moral way consisting of the virtues of love, righteousness, wisdom, propriety and loyalty in order to promote harmony in society (Confucianism) • (Theravada) detachment and desirelessness to reach nirvana; reciprocal relationship; (Mahayana) compassion to other humans for belief that we are part of the same ever-changing universe (Buddhism) • Attainment of liberation in the identification of Atman (the spiritual essence of all individual human beings) and Brahman (the spiritual essence of the universe) through the Four Yogas (Hinduism) • Concept of Kapwa, recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others; Two levels or modes of social interaction – ibang-tao or “outsider” and hindi ibang-tao or “one-of-us” (Filipino Psychology)

Individualism versus Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● People are autonomous and independent from their in-groups● Give priority to their personal goals of their in-groups● Behave on their basis of attitudes rather than norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Interdependent within their in-groups● Give priority to the goals of their in-groups● In-groups primarily shape their behavior● Behave in a communal way● Concerned in maintaining relationship with others