



# **Intercultural Communication and Korean Language**

# Contents

1. The whole context and specific objects
2. Group culture and individual culture

# LET'S THINK!

Because the living environment of the East and the West was different, the way of looking at the world developed differently.

ex) universe

- West: The space of the universe is viewed as empty, objects are not related to their surroundings, and objects that are separated do not affect each other.

-East: The cosmic space is filled with 气(qi, energy, 氣).

It is thought that objects exist in a state of being related to each other, and that they also affect distant objects.

Due to the movement of the moon, ebb and flow phenomena occur on Earth.

아리스토텔레스(Aristotle,  
BC 384~)

He didn't think it's because of gravity that rocks fall to the ground.

He thought that rocks fall to the ground due to the property of falling on rocks.

The thoughts of the greatest Western intellectual at the time who never thought about the connection between the entity and the other entities around it.

## 1) **Experimental Study 1:**

A psychological study on the characteristics of Asians who view a specific object in the context of the whole and the characteristics of Westerners who focus on only a specific object

- **Experimental Study 1: Reading the Emotions of Specific Characters in People Around them (Masuda, Ellsworth, 2008)**



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What is the feeling  
of the person in the  
middle?

Is he happy?  
sad?  
Or angry?



- **Americans - judged to be happy**
- **Japanese - judged not to be happy**
  
- **Asians look at the central character + the surrounding people and judge that the middle person is not happy because the people around him are not happy. Eye movements look at the central person for about 1 second and then look at the people around him.**
- **Westerners do not pay attention to the facial expressions of those around them, but only look at the facial expressions of the man in the middle and judge him to be happy. 95% - interest in the central character, 5% - interest in the surrounding people**



- **Commentary:**

- **In general, Asians view a specific entity in the context of the whole, whereas Westerners view a specific entity in isolation from the context.**



- Placing the Face in Context: cultural Differences in the Perception of Facial Emotion
- [2장 참고논문 Masuda Ellsworth placingthefaceinthecontext.pdf](#)

## 2) Experimental Study 2: Taking a Portrait Photo

- If I asked you to take a portrait photo, what would it be?

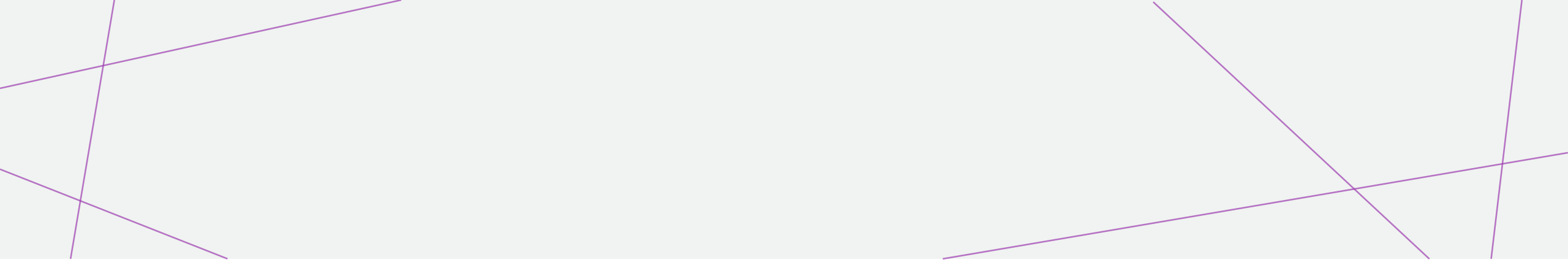




**Figure 2** Examples of photographs taken by American and East Asian participants in Study 2.

NOTE: The left picture was taken by an American participant. The right picture was taken by an East Asian participant.

- Masuda, Ganzalez(2008) 외 실험
- 2장 참고 논문 culture and aesthetic preference, Masuda Gozalez 2008.pdf

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- **Asian (Japanese)** - taking pictures with a wide composition including the background - Put people in context
  - **Westerner (American)** – taking the photo with focus on the model's face - Tendency to take pictures with the model in the center without without context.

\*\*\* See photos of your travels.\*\*\*



# Comparison of Korean traditional portraits – Western portraits

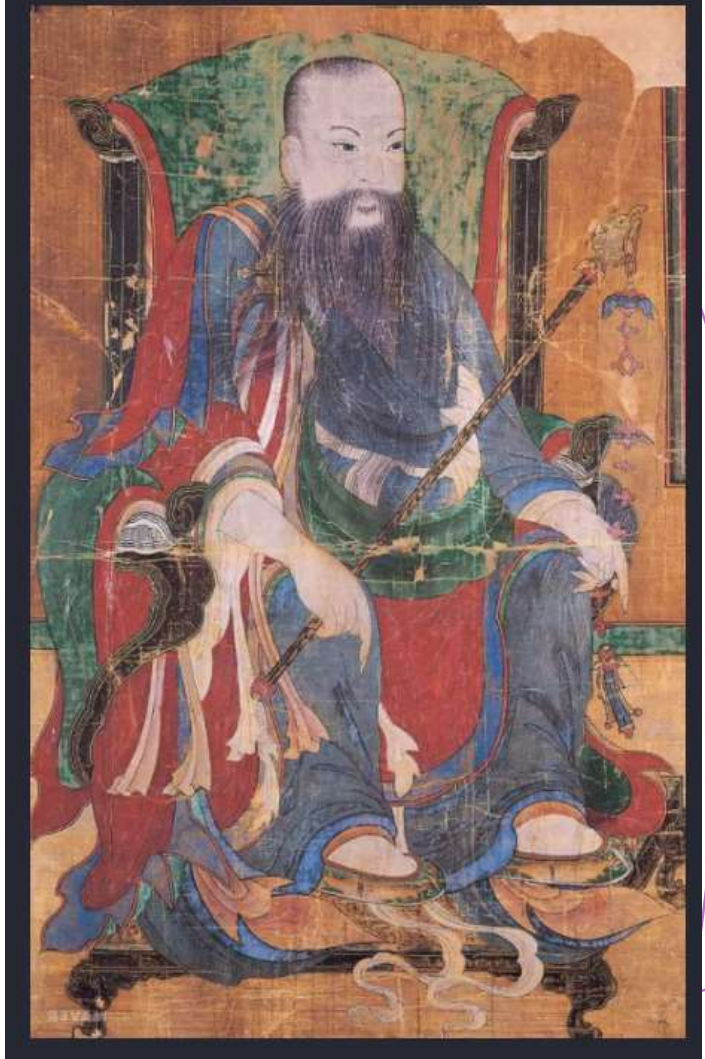
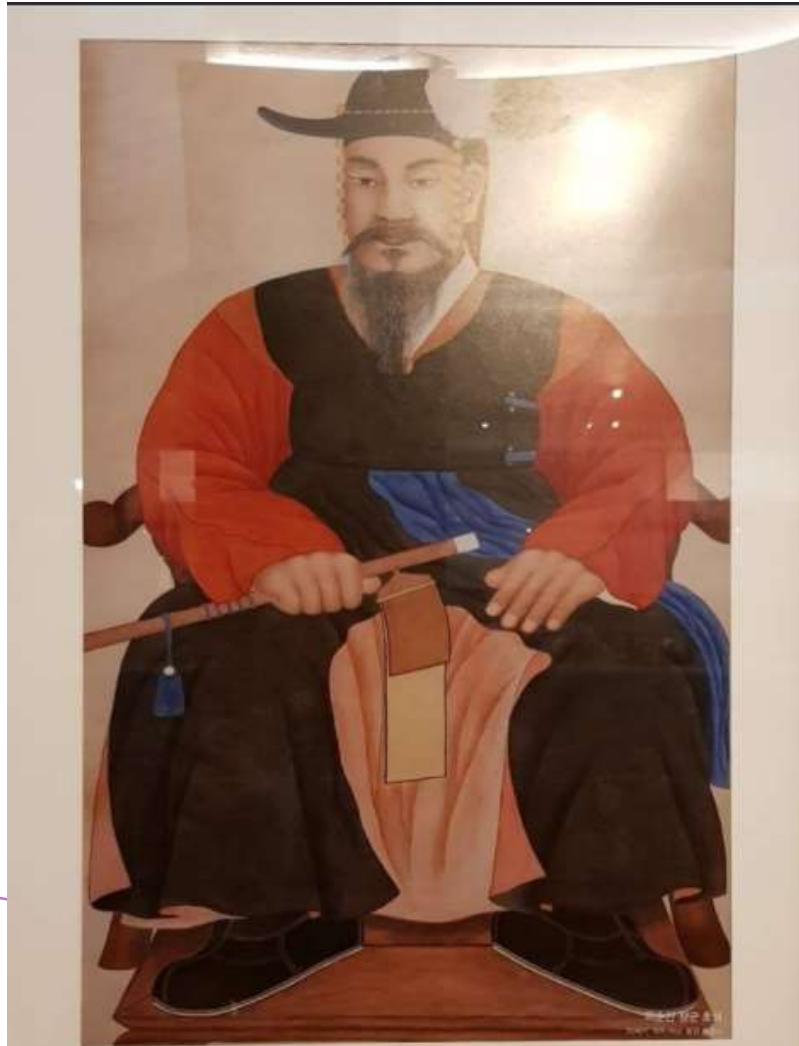
[국립중앙박물관 주최 인문학콘서트: 동양 초상화.. : 네이버블로그 \(naver.com\)](#)

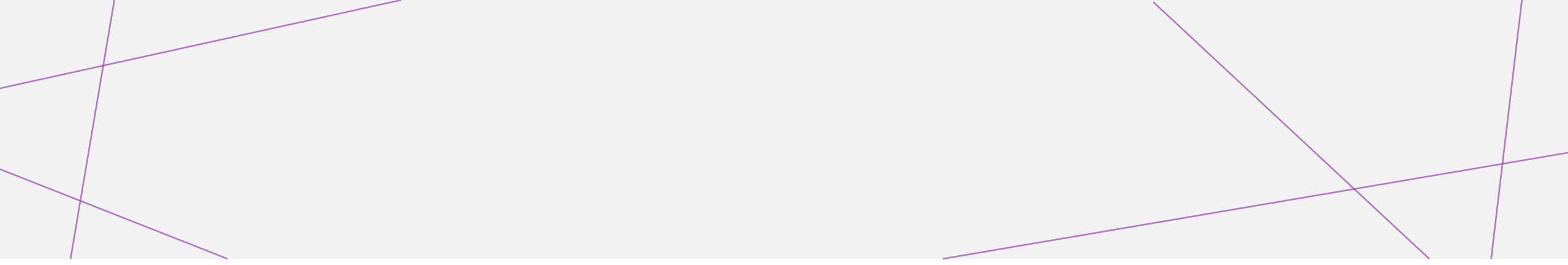




# Comparison of Korean traditional portraits – Korean portraits

국립중앙박물관 주최 인문학콘서트: 동양 초상화.. : 네이버 블로그

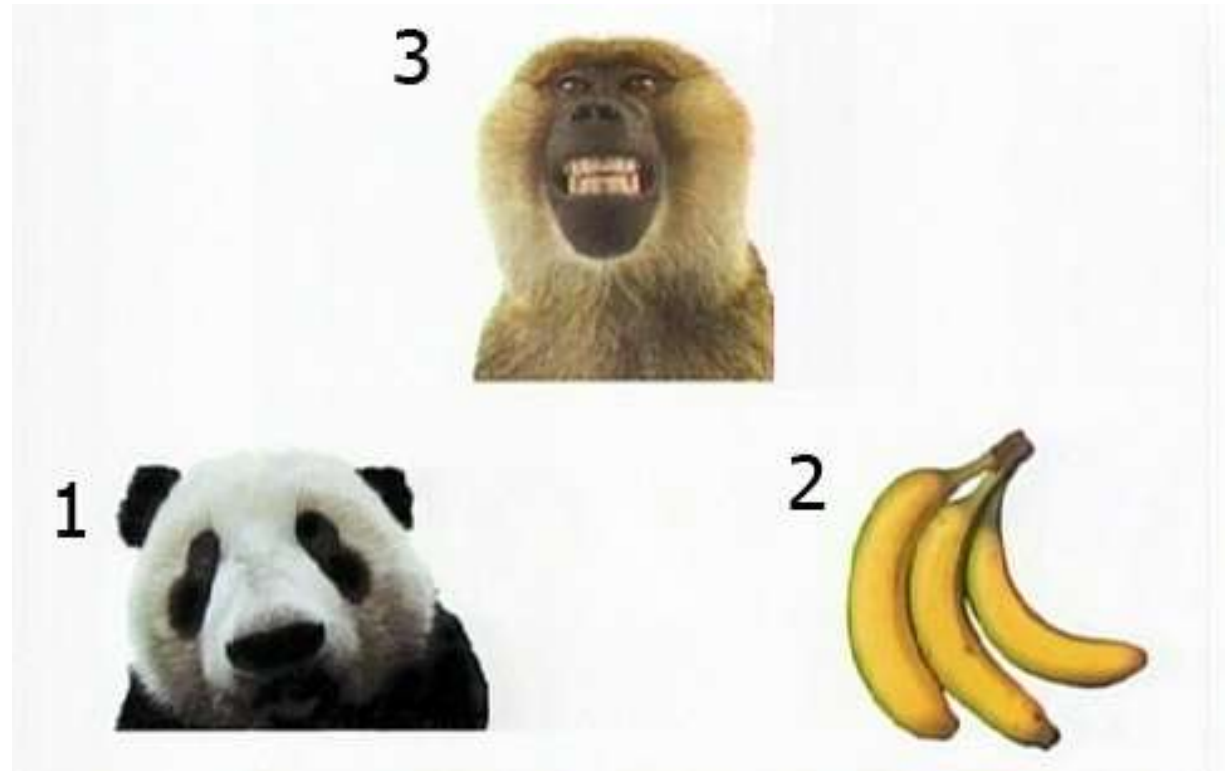


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- In Western portraits, the composition is narrowly framed and is drawn, centered on a half-figure or a person.
  - Asian portraits draw a full body with a wide composition



# 3) Experimental Study 3: Classifying Objects

- Choose the two most related from the picture below.



- Westerners (Americans) - pandas, monkeys
  - same category as animals
  
- Asian (Chinese) – monkey and banana
  - based on their relationship to each other, such as monkeys like bananas

- **Westerners: Classification considering the characteristics of things**
- **Asians: Classification of objects and their relevance**  
(The result of reflecting the oriental habit of thinking not only of ourselves but also of their neighbors)

Choose two of the following that are close to each other.

(cow, chicken, grass)



COW



GRASS



CHICKEN

# Comment:

- East - Thinking that objects interact with each other in a huge field connected as one
- West - individuals thought to be independent of each other

# Comment:



- Asians - Classify objects according to their associations
- Westerners - Analyze the characteristics of individuals and classify them by types with the same characteristics
  - ⇒ Western analytic thinking has been of great help to the accumulation of knowledge and the development of science.

## 4) Observational Study 1: Conversation between mother and infant

- Observation of mothers playing toys with infants (6–19 months) (Fernald, Morikawa, 1993)
- Explain this toy to your toddler.



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- Western mothers
    - “That’s a car, See the car? You like it? It’s got nice wheels.”
    - Focusing on things
    - In other words, it pays attention to the object itself.
- 



- Asian mothers
  - "Come on, Vroom Vroom. Here you are. Give me this, please. Yes. thanks."
  - Omit the name of the object
  - Focus on giving and receiving things with courtesy rather than the things themselves
  - In other words, they pay attention to the relationship between people by using the object.

# Comment:

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- Due to cultural differences, Eastern and Western mothers are interested in different aspects, and Eastern and Western children have a habit of being interested in other aspects through their mothers.

# Summary - West

- Westerners view things as independent of context and pay attention to the properties of things themselves.
- They categorize things based on their properties, and try to explain the movement of things with the rules by making rules using those categories.
- Westerners have a linear mindset that does not accept change, and have a dichotomous mindset of either-or.
- Westerners' analytical thinking has helped a lot in advancing science.
- Disadvantages: There is something wrong with oversimplifying the world or trying to explain all the behavior of a thing in terms of its abstract properties.



# Summary - East

- Asians pay more attention to the relationship with the object rather than the object itself.
  - They pay attention to the principle, harmony, and part of yin-yang (陰陽, yin, dark, passive vs. yang, light, active) , and to the interrelationship of the whole and things rather than the part.
  - Because the world changes, they think it is impossible to accurately categorize and understand it.
  - Because they emphasize the whole context, they have the advantage of being able to understand variable situations well.
  - Disadvantages: They ignore the rules that exist in categories or do not effectively explain the behavior of things.
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# Home assignment:

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The stark difference in thinking between Westerners and Asians – [YouTube](#)  
[ep 05 서양인과 동인인의 극명한 사고관 차이](#)  
[EBS 5.mp4](#)

**Explain the difference between East and West views of the world.**

## 2. Group culture vs. Individual culture

## 2. Group culture vs. Individual culture

In agricultural culture, the members have no choice but to live with each other, helping each other rather than living as independent individuals.

In such a society, members want to live in a strong sense of solidarity with the society to which they belong and with other members.

The East has the characteristics of a community with a strong character of this group culture (Gemeinschaft) .

# Group culture vs. Individual culture

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In a culture centered on livestock and trade, members are less likely to live with neighbors and help each other.

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In such a society, they want to keep a certain distance between themselves and their neighbors, and they want to live independently and freely.

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Western society has the character of an interest society (Gesellschaft) that prioritizes individuals over relationships with neighbors.



# Individualistic society

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Focus on personal happiness, success, and emotions.

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They value and teach their children to live independently, not dependent on their parents or others.

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Each individual is taught to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.

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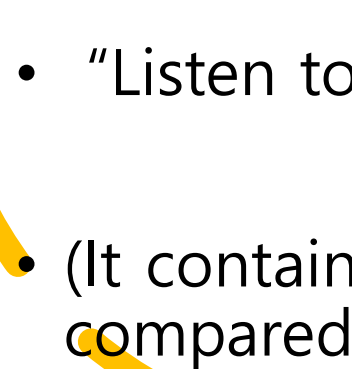
They believe that each individual should be respected as someone special.

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If you work on a given task using your individuality, you will get different and special results in your own way.

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In the West, it is very important to preserve each individual's individuality. (If everyone works in the same way, they will be compared to others and naturally create a hierarchy) 서양에서는 각자의


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- In Korean culture, getting along well with neighbors is a more valuable value than individuality.
    - Prefers so-called conventional thoughts and behaviors that think and act similarly to others.
  - Mom's advice to students going to school:
    - "Listen to your teacher."
    - (It contains the meaning of obeying the teacher so as not to stand out compared to others in group life rather than individuality.)
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# Group culture

- Strong attachment to the society to which the individual belongs.
- In particular, the fondness for 'hometown' is special.
- On Lunar New Year or Mid-Autumn Festival (Chuseok), almost everyone visits their hometown, which they consider to be their roots, and shares food and affection with neighbors.
- Considering 'hometown seniors, hometown seniors, hometown friends, hometown juniors', and confirming solidarity through various gatherings such as hometown associations.

(We share many memories and friendships that we shared, while growing up and born in the same village.)

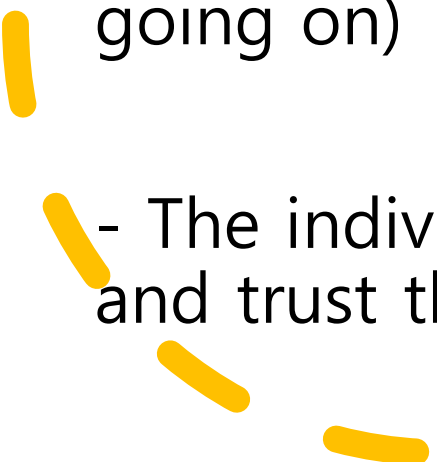
- Even when eating food, the characteristics of group culture appear.
  - Except for rice and soup, the rest of the side dishes are shared by everyone at the table.



# high-context culture vs. low-context culture, Hall(1989)

- High-context culture:
  - A culture of shared knowledge among members

Example) A country village where you live together for a long time (they know each other well, and they know who's house and what's going on)

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- The individual feels very similar to other members of the ingroup and trust them significantly more than members of the outgroup.



- **Low-context culture:**

- A culture where there is not much knowledge shared among members due to frequent movement

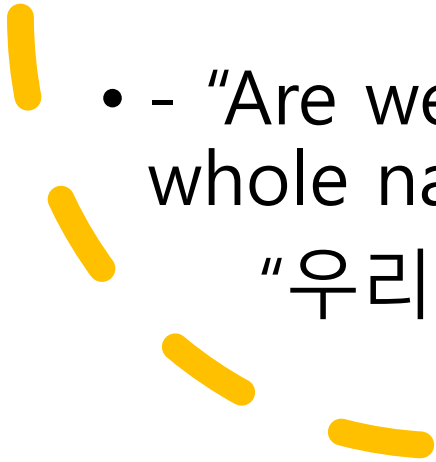
- The individual wants to keep a certain distance from the members of the ingroup, and follows a universal principle of behavior without distinguishing between the ingroup and the outgroup.





- linguistic phenomena in collective culture;

- - Our country, our school,... my wife, my husband  
우리나라, 우리 학교,... 우리 마누라, 우리 남편



- - "Are we strangers, aren't we?" (We = our group, not the whole nation)

"우리가 남이가?"

# privacy

- In group culture, it is often not respected or ignored.
- Being asked like "Are you married?" and "How old are you?" by someone, you meet for the first time.
- There are cases in which alcohol is unreasonably recommended, ignoring an individual's health condition or taste.
- Individual's will being ignored, you are invited to convert to another religion.
- You are forced to support a particular candidate or party in an election

# harmony

- In high-context culture or group culture, 'harmony' is a very important virtue.
- Reconciliation with neighbors should be prioritized within the in-group, even if an individual suffers losses or sacrifices.

⇔ It is a behavior that is different from those of low-context or individual culture that follow a universal principle of behavior without distinction between in-group and out-group.



# “Good is good.” 좋은 게 좋은 거지

- What is good for you is good for me, and what is good for me is good for you.
- Words that emphasize reconciliation from the point of view of group culture.
- If there is a reconciliation of “between each other” that takes place only within an in-group, this may be far from universal justice and lead to corruption.

# Positive aspect of group culture

- If the whole group has a unified mind of 'Let's try it!', we can overcome any difficulties.
- Example) When faced with the economic crisis in 1997, Koreans overcame it with the power of a unified collective culture.

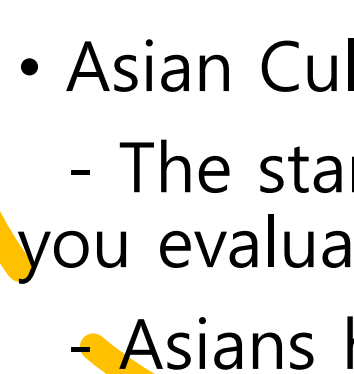
[금모으기 운동 한국의 애국심 IMF를 기억하다.mp4](#)

# When are you happy?

- Collective Culture:
  - As a member of a group, I feel happy to be recognized and harmonized with other members.
  - You need 'humility' and 'concession' in order to be accepted by others.
- Individual culture:
  - Find happiness in the full use of one's own qualities.



# Standard of happiness

- Western Culture:
    - You have your own standard of happiness.
    - When it comes to happiness, westerners have internal standards.
  - Asian Culture:
    - The standard of happiness depends on how the people around you evaluate you.
    - Asians have external standards.
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# Generalized other, Mead(1934)

- 'My image that others see'
- The way other people see me is very important in Asian society.
- ex)
  - If there are clothes or hairstyles that I like, but my friends say they don't suit me, I avoid them.
  - When the seasons change, we don't choose clothes according to the temperature (because we need to be conscious of others), we turn our attention to what kind of clothes other people are wearing.
  - When choosing a job, choose a job that your parents or friends like rather than a job you like.
  - When choosing a spouse, choose someone that your parents or people around you will like rather than the one you like.

⇒ From a Western perspective where people are educated to judge for themselves in order to display their talents???

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# 눈치 nunchi, reading face and mind

- In a culture where harmony among members is the most important virtue, it is important to avoid conflict with others.
- In order to avoid conflict with other people, it is natural to pay attention to the psychological state of others and the circumstances in which they are placed.
- Observing the 'reading face and mind' of others can help you avoid conflict.
- In oriental culture, people who are quick to 'nunchi' are recognized as competent people and are often successful in social life.

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# Collective culture vs. Individual culture/ Korean - English

- High Context Culture:
    - Because there is a lot of information shared between the speaker and the listener, it is possible to understand the other person's words in context without having to accurately convey information or intentions in language.
    - If communication is interrupted during the conversation, it is recognized as the listener's fault.
- (Nisbett 2003)

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# Collective culture vs. Individual culture/ Korean - English

- Low-context culture:
  - Due to the lack of shared information, it is difficult to understand what the other person is saying, if the information is not accurately communicated in language.
  - If communication is interrupted in the course of a conversation, it is recognized as the speaker's fault. (Nisbett 2003)



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# CONCLUDING THE LECTURE

Let's summarize what we learned today.

