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LIFESTYLE

# Blast from the past

*Mental time travel a unique human capacity: Study*

**H**UMANS APPEAR TO be the only species who are able to remember events that they had experienced and mentally time travel not only into the past but also the future, suggests new research. The researchers found no definitive evidence for foresightful behaviour in animals.

In order to answer the question if animals are capable of mental time travel, the researchers relied on published experimental studies and matched the results with their own model. "Some animals indeed appear to possess episodic memory. There is, however, no evidence that they are able to construct, reflect and compare different future scenarios like humans are. We, therefore, do not believe that animals are capable of mental time travel," said one of the researchers Sen Cheng, professor at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany.

For example, the ability of squirrels to cache food in autumn for the winter can be interpreted not as an anticipatory activity, but rather as innate behaviour, the researchers said. "The squirrel would hoard food even if it had been fed in the winter all its life," Cheng noted.

The new model that the researcher developed sug-



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gests a new relationship between mental time travel and episodic memory - the memory of autobiographical events that can be explicitly stated. The research team assumed that mental time travel is composed of different components.

"Component one are memory traces from episodic

memory. That means: fairly accurate representations of personally experienced episodes, where each trace represents a particular experience," Cheng explained. Component two is the ability to construct mental scenarios. By this, the researchers mean dynamic representations of past or expected situations that are

not isolated but rather can be embedded into larger contexts and be reflected.

If, for example, someone misplaces their key, they mentally travel back to places and situations where they still had the key. The study was published in the journal *Neuroscience and Behavioral Reviews*. IANS

## ALIGN YOUR LIFE

### *The Story Of Pakua*

**W**hen I first moved to Hong Kong, a small mirror placed above my neighbour's door intrigued me. Upon close inspection I discovered that almost all apartments and shops in Hong Kong had this mirror. It was framed in shape of an octagon and the mirror was placed in the middle. All around the mirror there were some symbols and it looked very different from anything I had ever seen. Upon enquiring I was told it was Bagua or Pakua mirror used for protection. Years later when I was studying Feng Shui I tumbled upon Pakua once again. But this time round I was able to go into deeper in regards to its design and how it can be used.

A Pakua mirror is considered a powerful cure against negative energy and helps protects the residents of the property. This mirror can also be used to deflect poison arrows and unwanted energy. Each octagonal section has a trigram representing elements of nature. Three types of mirrors can be used in Pakua: normal flat, convex and concave mirror. Each of these mirrors have their own function and can be used for different purposes.

Pakua with normal flat mirror is used for general protection and can be placed above the door with trigram Chien, the one with the three solid lines, at the top. This helps in balancing the energies within a home. Concave mirror tends to curve inwards and therefore absorbs the energy within the home. This mirror is only used when you have good energy in front of your home and you want to attract it within your home. Convex mirror on the other hand has an outward curve that reflects the energy away from home. This mirror is used when there is a graveyard, hospital or garbage dump opposite a home to deflect the bad energy.

Other than the mirror and the trigrams the Pakua also consists of Loushu diagram, and the five Feng shui elements. Only when all the elements work together and the right mirror is used then the effect of Pakua is felt the most!

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# Strengthen your heart

*Seven activities to reduce heart failure risk*

**SEVEN MEASURES THAT** people can use to rate their heart health and take steps to improve it are managing blood pressure, controlling cholesterol, reducing blood sugar, getting physically active, eating better, losing weight and stopping smoking suggests new research.

"Even though there is awareness about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, many people do not act on those messages," said study senior author Vanessa Xanthakis

from Boston University in the US.

The researchers followed 3,201 participants for up to 12.3 years. The average age of the participants was 59 years. During that time, 188 participants suffered heart failure. They found that for each one-point higher cardiovascular health score on the American Heart Association's Life's Simple seven checklist for a healthy heart, there was a 23 percent lower risk of developing heart failure.

Those scoring in the middle third cut their risk of heart failure nearly in half compared to those in the bottom third. Those in the top third reduced their risk even further. "This study points to the importance of knowing your numbers and speaking to your doctor about improving your score on each health metric and trying to get as close to ideal status as possible," Xanthakis explained.

The study was published in the journal *Circulation: Heart Failure*. IANS