

Benevolence (ren, 仁)

- Also translated “goodness”
- Interconnected people
- Altruistic concern for one another and the tender aspects of human feelings
- Relationships define a person’s humanity
- Compare to the western concept of “loving one another.”



48

Ritual propriety (li, 礼)

- Following the norms of polite conduct (originally ancient rituals, etiquette.)
- Express moral commitment as a human being
- To maintain an order in society
- All of life is sacred, and should be treated with honor
- Western Thought: “A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help.” (Albert Schweitzer)



50

Trustworthiness(xin, 信)

- Loyalty to moral principles
- Loyalty to social rules & propriety
- Standing by one’s word
- Being a dependable support for others
- Western Thought: “We must trust to nothing but facts: These are presented to us by Nature, and cannot deceive. We ought, in every instance, to submit our reasoning to the test of experiment, and never to search for truth but by the natural road of experiment and observation.” (Antoine Lavoisier)



52

Righteousness (yi, 义)

- Uprightness
- Relates to living and behaving according to moral principles
- Focus more on what is the correct decision rather than focusing on material gain.
- Western thought: Integrity. “The time is always right to do the right thing” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)



49

Wisdom (zhi, 智)

- Importance of learning
- Perceive situations correctly and make good judgments
- Decision making with a recognition of the correct goal
- Western Thought: “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.” Albert Einstein)



51

Filial piety (xiao, 孝)

- Serve and obey parents and respect ancestors
- Moral character is related to how a person treats his/her parents
- Thus, you are (morally) known by how well you treat others
- Western concept: Honor your father and mother and treat others like you want to be treated.



53