

“Ren (仁)” : ethical integrity

Ren (仁) and li (禮)

- If you do not have the ethical integrity, what will become of li? If you do not have the ethical integrity, what will become of music?
禮樂廢則上下亂 (論語, 3.3)
- Yan Yuan asked about ren (仁). The Master said, “To overcome oneself and bring oneself to the path of Li (禮), that is ren (仁).” 顏淵曰：克己復禮為仁 (12.1)
- Zhong Gong asked about ethical integrity (仁). The Master said, “When you are outside, behave courteously as if you are having an audience with a great guest (國君). When you employ people, treat them with respect as if you are conducting a solemn ceremony (宗廟). What you yourself do not want, do not do it to others. Make sure that there is no grievance in the country and in your household.” Zhong Gong said, “Although I am not smart, I shall mark these words.” (12.2)
- Zi Xia asked, “‘Enchanting smile, revealing the dimples; Beautiful eyes, with a dark iris; Plain white, making patterns colourful.’ What does that mean?’ The Master said, ‘Painting is to be done on white.’ Zi Xia said, ‘Li comes afterwards, you mean?’ The Master said, ‘You move me, Shang! Now we can talk poetry together.’ 子夏曰：‘巧笑倩兮，美目盼兮。’子曰：‘繪事後素。’曰：‘禮後乎？’子曰：‘起予！爾來，可與言詩。’ (論語, 3.8)
- Does ‘ceremonial’ Li (禮) have much to do with Ren (仁)?
 - Guan Zhong (管仲)’s case

1. Ren (仁) and beauty (美)

There is no one whose ren (仁) is as beautiful as him (管仲),

There is no one whose drinking manners are as beautiful as him (□□□),

There is no one whose horse riding stance is as beautiful as him (□□□)

– (□□, □□, □□□)

His ren (□) is beautiful (□□□),

His neat hair is beautiful (□□□),

His firm posture is beautiful (□□□).

– (□□, □□, □□)

□□, □□ Duke of Zhou's prayer for his brother's recovery from illness

Please take Dan's (=Duke of Zhou's) body instead of his body (□□□□□□). My ren (□) resembles our deceased father (□□□□). I have many talents and I have many skills. I can serve ghosts and spirits. My elder brother does not have as many talents or skills as myself. He cannot serve ghosts and spirits. Moreover, he has the task of making your descendents prosper in this land.

□□□, “□□ □□□ □□□ □□”, □□□□ □20□(2003)

2. What is truly beautiful?

- The Master said, “To live with □ (ethical integrity; inner beauty) is truly beautiful. If you choose not to live with integrity, can you claim to have wisdom?” □□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□(4.1)
- The Master said, “Soothing words and pleasant face; there can hardly be ethical integrity.” □□□□□□□□□□□□□□(1.3) (17.17)
- The Master said, ‘Soothing words, pleasant face and lots

of politeness. Zuo Qiu Ming regarded them as shameful. I (Qiu) also regard them as shameful. To hide grievance and pretend to be friend with the person. Zuo Qiu Ming regarded it as shameful. I also regard it as shameful.’
 人而不仁，疾之已甚，無也。 (5.25)

3. Firm, decisive, courageous – backed up with fury

- Firm, enraged, undecorated and terse. These are closer to ethical integrity. 剛 (gāng, 13.27) 剛 yi → 剛毅 剛毅 剛毅 剛毅
- The Master said, ‘Only a man of ethical integrity can love a person or hate a person.’ 剛，則愛 則恨 (剛, 4.3)
- The Master said, “A person with ethical integrity is bound to have courage. A courageous person does not necessarily have ethical integrity. 剛而不仁 (剛, 14.4)
- Fury (怒 nu)
 - Duke Ai (哀) asked, “Among your students, who is fond of learning?” Confucius replied, “A man called Yan Hui was fond of learning. He was unwavering in his wrath. He did not repeat the same mistake twice (不犯). 6.3
 - “Without a heart seething with rage, you won’t understand. Without gnashing your teeth, you won’t develop yourself further. When I raise one corner and if you don’t respond by raising the remaining three corners, I won’t repeat again.” 一隅之反，則三隅之反 (7.8)
 - Confucius described himself as a person “who would forget about eating when he is outraged (忘食)” (7.19)
- Courage (勇 yong)
 - The Master said, ‘If you indeed have ethical

integrity, you would not give in to an army of 2500 soldiers.’ 子罕見之 (15.36)

- 子 means “if you have 子”
- 子 was used in this manner in 子, 子 (15.36, 15.36)
- 子 means 2500 soldiers. 子罕見之. 子罕見之Zhu Xi (11.26 子罕見之) 子罕見之
- Existing translations, however:
 - “When it comes to being Good, defer to no one, not even your teacher.” (Edward Slingerland, Analects of Confucius, 2003)
 - “When encountering matters that involve the question of humaneness, do not yield even to your teacher.” (Annping Chin, The Analects, 2014)
 - “Le bien doit avoir le pas même sur le maître.” (Jean Lévi, Confucius, Entretiens, 2019)
 - One may not yield the performance of virtue even to his teacher. (James Legge)
 - What do they mean by “being Good”?

- The Master said, “A determined officer who has 子 will not seek to live if it undermines 子. He will sacrifice his life to fulfil 子.” 子罕見之 (15.9)
- a perfect man? “If you think about what is right when faced with a benefit, if you sacrifice your life when faced with a critical situation, and if you do not forget old promises, you can be called a perfect man.” 子罕見之 (14.12, also see 19.1 子罕見之)
- Abide by the good Way even at the cost of your own life. (15.9) (8.13)

4. The Master rarely spoke of ethical integrity...

- The Master rarely spoke of benefit, destiny or ethical integrity. 寥寥寥寥 (9.1)
- 仁 appears 109 times in Lunyu. 智 appears 219 times. 勇 (9.1, 20; 勇, 1; 勇, 1)
- Meng Wu Bo asked whether Zi Lu (子路) was a man of ethical integrity. The Master said, 'I don't know.' He asked again. The Master said, 'You (子路) could control the army in a country of thousand chariots. But I don't know about his ethical integrity.' 'What about Qiu (丘)?' The Master said, 'Qiu could serve as an administrator in a town of thousand houses or in a household of hundred chariots. But I don't know about his ethical integrity.' 'What about Chi (公西赤)?' The Master said, 'Chi could, donning himself with a robe, be in attendance in court and entertain guests. But I don't know about his ethical integrity.'

[illegible]

- Zi Zhang asked, 'Governor Zi Wen had the governor's post three times. But he did not appear to be pleased. He lost the post three time. But he did not appear to be displeased. He informed the details of his administration to his successors. How's that?' The Master said, 'He is loyal.' 'Was he a man of ethical integrity?' asked Zi Zhang. The Master said, 'I don't know. Was he?' 'Lord Zui assassinated the prince of Qi. Chen Wen had enough horses to equip ten chariots. He abandoned them and left. He arrived in another country. But he said, "You guys are all like Lord Zui of my country." And he left. He went to another country. But he again said, "You guys are all like Lord Zui of my country." And he left. How's that?' asked Zi Zhang. The Master said, 'He is clean.' 'Was he a man of ethical

integrity?’ asked Zi Zhang. The Master said, ‘I don’t know. Was he?’ 子張曰：「何如？」子曰：「吾不知也。夫以是取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。」 (論語, 5.19)

- Someone said, ‘Yong is a man of ethical integrity; he does not have a silky tongue.’ The Master said, ‘What is the point of having a silky tongue? If you manipulate people with smooth talk, you will end up being hated. I do not know about Yong’s ethical integrity, but what is the point of having a silky tongue?’ 子貢曰：「有美言，而後可以加人，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。」 (論語, 5.5)
- Xian asked ‘If one refrains from love of superiority, boasting, having resentments or covetousness, can we call it integrity? The Master said, ‘That would be achieving something which is difficult to achieve. But I do not know whether that is ethical integrity.’ 子貢曰：「有美言，而後可以加人，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。」 (論語, 14.1)

5. Easy explanation

- Fan Chi asked ... about ethical integrity. The Master said, ‘A man of ethical integrity would tackle the difficult things first and leave the spoils to be considered afterwards. You can call it ethical integrity.’ 子貢曰：「有美言，而後可以加人，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。」 (論語, 6.22)
- Fan Chi asked about ethical integrity. The Master said, ‘Be polite at home. Be respectful when you do things. Be loyal in your dealings with others. Even if you find yourself among barbarians, you should not forget about these.’ 子貢曰：「有美言，而後可以加人，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。」 (論語, 13.19)
- Fan Chi asked about ethical integrity. The Master said, ‘It means to love people’. He asked about knowledge. The Master said, ‘It means to know people’. Fan Chi didn’t get it. 子貢曰：「有美言，而後可以加人，吾知其未可也。且以其自取信於人，而後求其信，吾知其未可也。」 (論語, 12.22)

- Zi Gong said, ‘How about broadly looking after people and bringing all living beings to their fulfilment? Can it be called ethical integrity?’ The Master said, ‘How can it merely be ethical integrity? It must be Sainthood! Even Yao and Shun fell short of this. Ethical integrity means no more than this: As I want to stand so I help others to stand too; as I want to succeed so I help others to succeed too. Being able to derive lessons from what is near and to apply them to more remote situations; this can be called the method of practising ethical integrity.’ 吾欲立而人欲與我立，吾欲富而人欲與我富，是故君子居則見而小人欲與我居，小人欲與我富，小人欲與我富，小人欲與我富，小人欲與我富 (論語, 6.30)
- Zi Gong was in the habit of comparing people. The Master said, “Ci must be winning, eh? I have no time for this.” 齊人將平，公問其故，公曰：「吾欲平之，而齊人將平之。」 (論語, 14.29)
- Zi Zhang asked Confucius about ethical integrity. Confucius said, “If you can actually do five things wherever you go in the whole world, that can be ethical integrity.” Zi Zhang inquired further. The Master said, “Politeness, forbearance, trustworthiness, diligence and liberality. If you are polite you won’t be treated with disrespect. If you are tolerant, you will win many people’s heart. If you are trustworthy, people will entrust you with a task. If you are diligent, you will achieve a lot. If you are generous, people will work for you.” 子張問：「何如斯可以顯達？」子曰：「居處恭，執事敬，與人忠。雖之夷狄不可棄也。」 (論語, 17.6)
- Chai (Zi Gao) is stupid. Shen (Zeng Zi) is dull and pompous. Shi (Zi Zhang) is specious. You (Zi Lu) is rough and tough. 柴也愚，申也詘，公冶也幹，公西赤也佞，公冶也幹，公西赤也佞，公冶也幹，公西赤也佞 (論語 11.18)

6. Don’t flee!

- The Master said, ‘Wealth and high position are what people desire. But if you did not get them through the proper Way, do not dwell there. Poverty and low position

are what people loathe. But if become poor and and be removed from your position not through the proper Way, do not flee. If a noble man abandons ethical integrity, loathsome indeed is his reputation as a noble man! A noble man does not go against ethical integrity even while eating. Even in extreme haste, even in extreme peril, he will always abide by ethical integrity.’ 子貢曰：「子之所謂『道』，其所以貴乎？曰：『然。』子貢曰：『若夫遇急，遇急，則無所不為。』子曰：『然。』」 (LZ, 4.5)

7. Don't seek reward!

- Zi Gong said, 'Bo Yi and Shu Qi, what kind of men were they?' The Master said, 'They were superior men of the olden days.' 'Did they not have grievances?' said Zi Gong. The Master said, 'They sought after ethical integrity and they got it. What grievance, then?' 子貢曰：「子之所謂『道』，其所以貴乎？曰：『然。』子貢曰：『若夫遇急，遇急，則無所不為。』子曰：『然。』」 (LZ, 7.15)
- The Master said, 'Is ethical integrity far from you? If you want it, you will have it.' 子曰：「有是，則有是。有是，則有是。」 (LZ, 7.30)

8. Don't be a prick!

- The Master said, 'If you cherish courage and hate poverty, you become disruptive. If you hate very much a person lacking in ethical integrity, you become disruptive.' 子曰：「有是，則有是。有是，則有是。」 (LZ, 8.10)
- I have not seen a man who cherishes ethical integrity and yet loathes a person lacking in ethical integrity. A man who cherishes ethical integrity does not make a fuss about it. He who loathes a person lacking in ethical integrity is making a virtue of his own loathing. Do not use a person lacking in ethical integrity to aggrandize

yourself. 言者寡而聽者衆，言者寡而聽者衆，言者寡而聽者衆(論語，4.6)

- Si Ma Niu asked about ethical integrity. The Master said, 'The man of ethical integrity does not say much.' Si Ma Niu said, 'Does not say much! Is this ethical integrity?' The Master said, 'To practice what you say is difficult enough. Should you not be cautious in what you say?' 言者寡而聽者衆(論語)言者寡而聽者衆，言者寡而聽者衆(論語，12.3)

9. The joy of living with ethical integrity

The Master said, "The joy of a wise person is like water. The joy of a person who has ethical integrity is like a mountain. A wise person is dynamic. A person of integrity is serene. A wise person will have a delightful life. A person of integrity will live long."

言者寡而聽者衆，言者寡而聽者衆，言者寡而聽者衆(論語，6.23)

論語 33, 言者寡而聽者衆