

Consider the Confucian Background of the Japanese Value System Transmitted in Language

- **Rectitude** (義 *gi*) This is the same character as the Chinese character *yi*, meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘moral appropriateness/uprightness, being beyond reproach.’
- **Humaneness** (仁 *jin*) This is the Chinese character *ren* meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘humaneness’
- **Respect** (礼 *rei*) This is the Chinese character *li* meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘acting according to propriety in relationships’
- **Honesty** (信 *shin*) This is the Chinese character *xin* meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘truthfulness’
- **Loyalty** (忠 *chuu*) This is the Chinese character *zhong*, meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘loyal, dependable, one that can be counted on’
- **Filial piety** (孝 *ko*) This is the Chinese character *xiao*, meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘to be filial, obedient, respectful’
- **Wisdom** (智 *chi*) This is the Chinese character *zhi*, meaning in the Confucian value system, ‘to be learned, self-cultivated, knowledgeable, wise’

Central Interpersonal Values in Confucian-Influenced Japan

wa- harmony, peace. lit. "circles". Don't stand out, don't create disharmony.

amae (ah-may)- A value necessary for any Japanese to feel comfortable in any relationship. It is the trust that another person will go to pains to take care of one's needs and see that they are met. The more one is able to be dependent on another, the greater the intimacy.

enryo (in-ree-oh)- Keeping one's distance, holding back a little. Permission for a greater closeness is expressed in "Go enryo naku" ("please don't be shy"). Enryo alone may suggest to non-Japanese aloofness or isolation.

giseisha (ghee-say-e-sha)-Injury or feeling victimized or wronged. Japanese have an unusual susceptibility to felt moral injury. They may feel injured anytime some thing or person interferes with their aims or efforts; or even if their position of dependence has not been relieved.

koto to shidai ni wa -circumstantial truth. Telling the truth is not an abstract duty in Japanese moral culture. Generally speaking, truth telling in the abstract is less important than what furthers harmony of relationships.

tatemae/honne (tah-tay-my/ hone-nay) - Tatemae is the concept of face. It refers to the outer appearance of inner feelings, thoughts, desires--the public presentation. Honne is one's honest voice, one's real thinking, intention, or desire.

giri (ghee-ree)- the sense of duty or requirement to fulfill one's obligations. Obligations take precedence over feelings (ninjo), so one does what is expected whether one "wants to" or not.

sumimasen (sue-me-mah-sin)- "I'm sorry" in the sense of regret for being an inconvenience. Used for small transgressions.

Moshiwake arimasen (moe-she-wah-kay ah-ree-mah-sin) - "I have no excuse and submit to your mercy." Used for more serious wrongs.