

Glossary - Cultural Background

Creating a harmonically environment, loyalty and ritual distance

The concept of social harmony dates back to ancient China, to the time of Confucius. As a result, the philosophy has also been characterized as a form of New Confucianism. The aim is always to try to create a positive and harmonically environment. With smiling Chinese people want to show goodwill or hide insecurity.

Confucianism is an ethical and philosophical system, also described as a religion developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BC). It became the official state ideology of the Han. Nonetheless, from the Han period onwards, most Chinese emperors have used a mix of Legalism and Confucianism as their ruling doctrine.

A person should reach to moral and ethical perfection and therefore geared oneself to the Five Constants which are humanness, justice, ritual distance, wisdom and integrity.

This leads to three virtues: loyalty, filial piety, continence, righteousness.

Guan Xi - 关系

Guan Xi describes the basic dynamic in personalized networks of influence, and is a central idea in Chinese society. It provides the requirements for a good and trustful relationship. Guan Xi has a major influence on the management of businesses based in China.

Strong hierarchical order and respect for elder

In China it is common and deeply based in the Chinese behavior and culture to accept and to integrate yourself in hierarchies. You have to show respect for people who are at a higher hierarchical position and especially for elder people. This behavior has influence both on business and on the daily life.

Ren Qing - 人情

The closest translation of "Ren Qing" in English is human sentiment or favor. It includes the moral obligation to maintain a relationship. So if one received a favor from someone, it is expected to return the favor to the other person.

Mian Zi - 面子

Like Guan Xi, Mian Zi or face keeping is an important feature of Chinese etiquette. It is so important that it can sometime sweep business or relationship aside. Mian Zi, or face, in this context refers to more than physical face. It is more about the dignity of the person, and to Chinese this is more important than physical appearance. Especially in business situations you should always avoid face losing by blaming someone in front of others.

Taoism

Taoism is a philosophical, ethical or religious tradition of Chinese origin that emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao. The term Tao means "way", "path" or "principle".