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Disciplinary Brief

GENUINE LOVE: CONFUCIAN REN MEETS PAULINE AGAPE

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The Fall of Love: Fragmented Thinking and Polarizing Violence

Love is beleaguered in a world filled with polarization and violence. Jealousy, bigotry, hubris, and resentful revenge are traits Paul described in 1 Corinthians 13:4–5 as signs of a troubled Roman society, and they are appearing again in today's headlines. Siloed and binary thinking divides people into "us" versus "them." This mindset leads to partisan hostility, racial divides, and echo chambers, all stifling the animating spirit of love and fueling antagonism and hatred.

This paper addresses the fragmentation of Christian faith and academic scholarship within secular research universities, with a particular focus on bridging the divide between the divinity school and the Chinese department. While each field sharpens its core competencies to thrive amid academia's competitive pressures, such specialization often fosters intellectual isolation. The paper advocates for more interdisciplinary initiatives and promotes a substantive dialogue between Confucian *ren* and Pauline *agapē*, [1] with a twofold thesis:

(1) Although expressed in different languages and scriptures, both Confucian and Pauline traditions share the conviction that love is the supreme law or highest principle of life;

2) Developing a cross-cultural understanding of love can help bridge the apparent divide between Paul's and Confucius's views, revealing deeper connections across diverse cultural contexts. This approach highlights the profound interplay between culture and theology.

Cross-cultural Interpretation of Love: *Ren* and *Agapē*

I appreciate the refreshing and succinct insights of Prof. O'Donovan's Theology Brief "The Sovereignty of

Love" (hereafter OTB, cited as O'Donovan 2025). His profound writing has immense implications for Christian scholars, fostering a shared understanding across disciplines.

Cross-Cultural Contexts and Linguistic Nuances of Love

We cannot assume that all disciplines attach the same meanings to the English word "love" or to various biblical concepts of love. This is especially evident when examining love outside the Christian traditions-for example, the Confucian *ren* in the Analects [2] or the Platonic *erōs* in the Symposium (O'Donovan 2025, 6; Benardetge 2001).

Meaning is best understood within its context. Even the same Greek word *agapē* can vary widely depending on the literary context. For instance, in 2 Samuel 13:1, 4 of the Greek Old Testament, *agapē* (translating the Hebrew word *ahav*) describes Ammon's love for his half-sister Tamar, whom he raped. In John 3:19 of the Greek New Testament, *agapē* refers to people who "love darkness rather than light." [3] In contrast, in John 3:35 *agapē* describes "the Father [who] loved the Son." Linguistic, historical, and cultural *contexts* reveal diverse meanings-complexity that multiplies when Christian Chinese scholars navigate several languages and textual traditions.

Misreadings often arise when terms are understood in isolation from their contexts-such as the common Christian claim that *erōs* is inherently negative and inferior to *agapē*. If that is the case, how then has Platonic *erōs* been reappropriated in Christian theology by Augustine (Solovyon 2016)? [4] A cross-cultural reading of Plato within a Christian framework suggests that Platonic *erōs*-as a desire or ascent to wisdom-could be appropriated as Christian love (*agapē*), namely the desiring of or ascending to God himself, for "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16) and "wisdom" (Proverbs 8). The Bible explicitly identifies God with the noun "love," implying that love is fundamental to God's *very nature* as a substantive reality.

Similarly, the common sharp distinctions drawn among four kinds of love in C. S. Lewis' *The Four Loves* remains problematic today (Lewis 1960). [5] In *Exegetical Fallacies,* D. A. Carson critiques Lewis's categorization of love as a "semantic fallacy," arguing that theological interpretation must give priority to how words actually function in their historical-linguistic settings (Carson 1984, 26, also Louw 1999).

Therefore, discussing love responsibly requires a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approach, as evidenced in biblical texts, Patristic hermeneutics, and non-biblical commentaries on Chinese classics such as the Analects-a collection of Confucian teachings engaging with earlier traditions and ancient Chinese texts (Källström 2023). The Old Testament (OT) understanding of love is itself *cross-cultural,* shaped by its multilayered ancient Near-Eastern contexts. The New Testament (NT) understanding of love is also inherently cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary, situated at the intersection of Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds and interacting with the OT in diverse ways. Attending to context and culture across these texts is crucial for a responsible conversation on love.

Love in the Analects and Pauline Epistles

O'Donovan's reminder that "a life joined up by law required a joined-up law; God has one will, and demands one obedience" (O'Donovan 2025, 1) is persuasive. This emphasis on the unity of the law through love does not negate the reality that God works through complex history, myriad cultures, and the "whole" (*universitas*) of disciplines. As O'Donovan notes, "neighborly love is not uniform" (O'Donovan 2025, 2), a point especially evident in the works of Chinese Christian scholars whose theological and cultural identities integrate Confucian ethics and a Pauline theology of love.

In the relatively brief book of the Analects, the word *ren* (仁) appears over eighty times. Analects 12:22 equates *ren* with "humanness" or "to will what is good" for others. Confucian ethics regards *ren* as the way (*dao*) to become truly human through relationships. [6] Unlike Paul, Confucius does not articulate a doctrine of God's personhood; for him, the goal is union with Heaven and the realization of full humanity-fulfilling Heaven's mandate (*tian-ming*) by becoming a person of *ren*. This entails, as life's fundamental principle, the task of becoming a benevolent or humane person (*ren*) by adhering to ceremonial rites (*li*) in political and social contexts, aligning with the cosmic order (*dao*), and loving (*ai*) others [7] (Analects 4:1, 12:1, 17:2).

Paul's anthropology, by contrast, is Christological (cf. Galatians 3:28; 5:13)-framing "cruciform love" (*agapē,* or cross-shaped love: self-sacrificial and unconditional, mirroring Christ's death on the cross) as the unmerited grace of God that constitutes the family of God. Addressing the specific contextual issue of Jewish-gentile relations within God's plan of salvation in first-century Roman society, Paul in Galatians (5:14) and Romans (13:8–10) interprets the cruciform love of God as calling the church to cross the external, literal observance of the Jewish laws as an ethnic boundary marker toward the very essence or spirit of the law-namely, love. This spirit of the law is embodied in Jesus' life who, though accused of breaking the law (e.g., as a Sabbath violator), does not abolish it but fulfills it by *being a loving person*, as exemplified in his healing of the sick on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1–6). [8]

While Confucian *ren* and Pauline *agapē* both center on love, their historical contexts differ: *ren* primarily governs love extended from the family outward into a structured society through socially reciprocal bonds, [9] whereas *agapē* is the self-sacrificing love of God-received and imitated by God's followers-that expands God's family beyond social boundaries. Juxtaposed, they offer complementary visions: *ren* grounded in relational order, *agapē* in radical grace.

The Mutual Enrichment of Confucian Heaven and Pauline Spirit

The differences between a Confucian ethics of *ren* and a Pauline theology of *agapē* need not be framed as oppositions. Both biblical theology and Chinese scholarly tradition prize dialogue as a way to deepen and refine the life of love. This dialogue becomes especially urgent when love is twisted, becoming untruthful and deceptive, in contradiction of Paul's exhortation to "let love be genuine" (Romans 12:9). For example, Constantinian or Crusader theologies have at times invoked the Pauline Christology of "King of kings" to

justify conquest, while Confucian ethics have been co-opted to legitimize rulers' domination rather than their service. In moments when political leaders wield "love" as a mask for control, *ren's* emphasis on virtuous, service-oriented leadership amid the dynamics of asymmetrical power can expose such abuse. Love affirms that good governance flows from the personal virtue of rulers rather than from harsh punishments (Analects 12:19: "[the] virtue of a leader is like the wind [that] bends the grass"). Conversely, Pauline self-emptying *agapē* (Philippians 2:2–11) can correct the manipulation of *ren* into hierarchical subservience by grounding leadership in sacrificial service, acting "in love as bondservants" (Galatians 5:13). A significant point in this cross-cultural conversation is that contexts are fluid, and theological analysis requires more than a surface or literal reading. For example, the dynamics of domination often linked to hierarchical or highly structured societies can also appear within ostensibly "egalitarian" democracies. This is evident in the United States, where the Christian aspirations of its founding coexist with persistent caste-like systems throughout its history (Wilkerson 2020).

A second example of the conversation needed for both traditions arises as they confront the disjunction between text and practice. This phenomenon is evident not only in Confucian history, where *ren* ethics have been politically co-opted, but also in Judeo-Christian contexts marked by legalism or performance-based love (cf. Luke 11:37–54; Galatians 3:1–14), as well as in the gentile world's misguided rituals and fetishes surrounding love (e.g., love potions and magical spells). In this regard, the Christian tradition offers a sharper critique than Confucian ethics, since the Confucian cyclical worldview understands negativity as an imbalance of forces and regards evil primarily as a social ill, whereas Pauline theology recognizes the enslaving power of sin (Romans 5–6) and calls believers to "abhor what is evil" (Romans 12:9).

Regarding legalism and love, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) and Paul's spiritual interpretation of the Torah provide a valuable corrective to religious, political, and ethical interpretations that breed exploitation. Jesus' command to love is meant to grant life and freedom, not to impose an absolute imperative of submission. Likewise, Paul's emphasis on the Spirit in a deeper understanding of the law, as expressed in 2 Corinthians 3:6, presents a transformative framework—"God has made us competent as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." While the Analects emphasize deliberate moral cultivation through virtues, early Confucian thought did embrace a Daoist-inflected ethics of "effortlessness" (*wu-wei*) (Slingerland 2003; Eno 2015). Later Confucian thinkers like Mencius (c. 372–289 bce) also alluded to a "natural" (*zi-ran*) way (*dao*) of being and living, one that involves surrendering personal control and ego-driven striving to align with the *dao*—the ineffable cosmic way or order. The Chinese semantic field here invokes not "spirit" but *qi* (vital energy or breath), inviting a life of *wu-wei*-self-release and cosmic attunement-led by the universe's spontaneous currents rather than human will, emphasizing letting go rather than intervention and non-action over force. Unfortunately, these themes-harmony with nature and spontaneous moral action-which once formed the core of early Confucian ethics have been largely diminished through later institutionalization and the rigid formalization of its practices.

God's Spirit and Human Agency in Justice and Love

Both *ren* and *agapē* raise questions about love, agency, and justice-in other words, about the resonant idea of "effortless action" (*wu-wei*) of love in relation to love empowered by God's Spirit. For Confucius, human agency involves constant self-cultivation, within a complex web of relationships, toward harmony with Heaven. For Paul, it involves Spirit-enabled obedience to God's will, bearing the fruit of love beyond human striving alone. Viewed together-in a Christian-Chinese ethics of love-Confucius and Paul offer a vision that resists legalism and fosters authentic relational love.

True love cannot be forced: it flows naturally from the Spirit, arising from sincerity rather than performance or acting (the NT meaning of "hypocrite" refers to an "actor" in ancient Greek drama-one who performs behind a mask). But non-coercion is not passivity especially in face of injustice. In fact, indifference is the opposite of love: Revelation 3:15–16 condemns lukewarm faith as spiritual apathy. Likewise, Malachi warns the people that their indifference to sincere devotion is robbing God of love and honor (Malachi 1). Jesus' teaching to "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39) rejects both violent retaliation and passive submission, and instead advocates a wise and courageous love that seeks to break cycles of violence while holding aggressors accountable. "Turn the other cheek" exemplifies courageous love, which may appear to invite a more degrading insult to the person struck. However, in ancient Jewish culture (Mishnah, *Bava Kamma*), a backhanded slap carried a much harsher penalty for the assailant, thereby discouraging or reducing further violence from the perpetrator.

Extending Love from *Ren* and *Agapē* to the Enemy

The cross-cultural conversation above has revealed humanity's tendency to confine love to "one's family" or "one's neighbor." Jesus' radical command to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:43–48; Luke 6:27–36) decisively transcends these boundaries.

Ren and Agapē to Neighbor and Enemy

Confucian *ren* resembles the Stoic ideal of universal brotherhood, yet in practice it is often limited to family, clan, religious community, or nation, frequently excluding outsiders. By contrast, Paul's teaching in Galatians calls for love across race, gender, and social status (Galatians 3), though he gives particular priority to "the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). In Romans 12:20–21, Paul casts the net even wider: drawing on the cross-cultural theology of Proverbs 25:21–22, he *thinks theologically* about genuine love-love that neither rejects nor retaliates against enemies but "overcomes evil with good" (Romans 12:21). Citing Proverbs 25:21, he exhorts, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them . . . for by doing so you will 'heap burning coals on their heads'" (12:20). The image of "heaping burning coals on someone's head," rooted in an Egyptian cultural motif, signifies bringing an adversary to repentance through unexpected generosity and lavish love.

Paul grasps the core of Jesus's teaching: loving one's enemies embodies a higher righteousness-being

"perfect as your heavenly Father is" (Matthew 5:48; Luke 6:36). Likewise, Jesus' parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10) and Jesus' command of enemy-love transcend Leviticus 19:18's narrower call to "love your neighbor."

Today, Chinese Christians draw from the teachings of Confucius, Jesus, and Paul, integrating them into a rich cross-cultural faith of mutual enrichment. They affirm both Confucius's teaching that Heaven bestows *ren* as inherent in human nature (*xing*) and Paul's exhortation to "imitate God, living in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (Ephesians 5:1–2). For them, the natural moral order symbolized by Heaven is realized in a neighborly love that embraces even enemies, thereby expanding the familial scope of *ren.* At the same time, *ren's* harmony with Heaven broadens Pauline *agapē* to include care for the whole creation, extending beyond humanity itself since "God so loved the *cosmos*" (John 3:16), not just all humanity. Living out this Christian-Chinese ethic of love therefore entails attentive care for the marginalized and neglected, human *and* non-human alike.

Unilateral and Mutual Love amid Shifting Contexts

While both *ren* and *agapē* involve reciprocity, *agapē* is unconditional, whereas *ren* presumes mutuality. *Ren*, as the expression of one's full humanity, is realized through interconnectedness with others in a web of relationships. For this reason, Christian-Chinese ethics may find *agapē*-a love requiring neither repayment nor reciprocity-transcendent, yet at times distant. In contexts such as the enslavement of God's people in Egypt (book of Exodus) or persecuted Christian communities in the first-century Roman empire, the proclamation of a personal and infinite God offering unmerited grace was truly good news. Yet contexts do change, and from the post-Constantinian era to the present, claims of "divine entitlement" by the powerful or wealthy have raised critical questions about the assumptions of chosenness and the privileging of *agapē* for societal elites. Understanding historical context remains essential for responsible application of a theology of God's unconditional love.

Human rejection of God's grace never nullifies God's unilateral offer of his love without discrimination-even to those who refuse it-as seen in the stories of Nineveh's repentance (Jonah) and the prodigal son's return (Luke 15). Yet Jonah's frustration and the elder son's resentment reveal a common struggle of humanity with divine love: while God's love toward humanity is unilateral, human love toward others and inanimate creation is often *mutual, conditional, or even transactional.* Both Jonah and the elder son are confronted with the call to love those deemed "undeserving," embodying the conditional aspect of Confucian *ren* that stands in creative tension with Paul's unconditional *agapē.* In Paul's vision, a mutual indebtedness of love-gifting love to all-fulfills the essence of the law (Romans 13:9). Confucian *ren* has an even stronger conditional language of assertion: without loving others, one's own humanity cannot be fully realized. From a Confucian-Christian perspective, I interpret such gifted love-received from God and shared with others-as fulfilling both the law *and* actualizing *our* humanity.

Love in Contemporary University Discourse

The ongoing conservation between the divinity school and the Chinese department-Paul and Confucius, *agapē* and *ren*, theology and culture-shows that these two seemingly separate areas of the university actually have valuable insights to offer one another. A cross-disciplinary dialogue on how “love fulfils moral history” (O’Donovan 2025, 2) adopts a both-and approach that respects the unique voice and context of each discipline, while avoiding segregation and imposed uniformity.

Expressions of Love in Cross-Disciplinary Studies

Confucius and Paul share a deep convergence on genuine love: an individual or a community’s well-being is inseparable from the welfare of others, whether friends or foes. This cross-cultural exchange advances the Global Faculty Initiative’s mission by exhorting scholars to explore the manifold expressions of the theology of love across disciplines amid our diverse and evolving global context.

In business ethics, might **beneficial love** as a humane process inspire leaders to seek the good (1 Corinthians 10:24) of employees and clients beyond profit margins? Could it shape corporate goals, cultures, and decisions toward holistic human flourishing, mutual trust, and collaboration?

In ecojustice, how might Confucian *ren*—understood as the “unity of all things under Heaven” (*tianren heyi*)—reshape **compassionate** attitudes toward so-called “predators, pests, and toxic species”? Could poisonous plants, valued for their medicinal uses, challenge our assumption that such species should simply be eradicated from an ecosystem?

In medicine, what would healthcare look like if **mercy** and **dignity** guided every **act of care**? In Chinese immigrant communities, herb shops serve not only as pharmacies but also as hubs of social welfare and philanthropy. Could integrating Confucian *ren* and Pauline *agapē* into medical ethics cultivate deeper empathy, greater relational awareness, and an understanding of healing as a form of salvation?

In music, might the **harmonizing power** of music creation and performance be experienced as beauty and **kindred spirit**, overcoming apathy and loneliness? Could it also foster diversity and celebrate artistic distinctiveness at the same time?

Could love itself be considered a fundamental force-one that shapes both **interactions** in sciences, which are governed by appropriate distance, and **relationships** in the humanities, which thrives on freedom in human life? Is the gravitational **pull** that keeps planets in orbit simply a mechanical law, or could it represent also the living movement of God’s Spirit throughout the cosmos, not merely as an analogy but as an actual source of cosmic animation?

In the emergent era of artificial intelligence, are we facing a growing global crisis of loneliness, even as digital **companionship** and professional **networks** such as LinkedIn manifest themselves as novel forms of human **connectedness** and **communion** in love?

Theological-Ethical Reflections on Modern China

All these questions point to a university life that seeks to shape the world by advancing research and learning across disciplines in collaborative service to the public good amid global challenges. Confucian ethics arose in response to a time when traditional rituals and music—symbols of the Zhou dynasty's golden-age social and moral order—were breaking down (*libeng yeuhuai*), particularly during the troubled Spring and Autumn (770–476 BCE) and Warring States (475–221 BCE) periods, when society was disorderly and vice was rampant. In a different context, Pauline theology confronted the predatory power of sin and humanity's estrangement from the Creator under first-century Roman rule. Though their distinct histories and linguistic worlds yield different meanings, dialogue between these traditions remains vital, for both expose how distorted orders corrode persons, communities, and cultures. This raises an urgent question: Can our disciplinary language name the forces that obstruct love-terms such as "the power of sin," "the fall," or "systemic disorder"-and can Chinese and biblical studies together forge a robust theology of love to unmask these realities and offer hope (Yeo 2018)?

This task proves pressing in light of recent "wolf warrior" diplomacy as analyzed by Bloomberg correspondent Peter Martin (Martin 2021): here the Chinese Communist Party's Maoist-Stalinist style of coercion, deception, intimidation, and "great Chinese revival" (*zhonghua minzu weida fuxing*) propaganda not only distorts Confucian virtue and vilifies biblical theology as "Western imperialism," but also advances a reckless "new world order" of grievance, hatred, and systemic destructiveness toward existing international norms. This is unlike Pauline *agapē,* which transcends gender, ethnicity, and status (Galatians 3:28), or Confucius, who defines one's identity in rulers' virtue, *dao*, and *ren* (Analects 12:19) rather than in tribal affiliation. This ideological project weaponizes national identity against both neighbor and stranger. Current CCP leaders flout moral tradition and rule by law, while rhetorically invoking *ren* and harmony, and a "shared future for humankind" (*renlei mingyun gongtongti*), yet betraying all three in practice through belligerent diplomacy and the erosion of rule-based international orders.

Confucian *ren* and Pauline *agapē* converge on trust, interdependence, and mutual responsibility. Together they would critique Beijing's violations of the 50-year Hong Kong Basic Law agreement (1997–2047), repression of non-Han minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang, rising militarism that fuels regional hostility in the Northwest Pacific maritime region, and "unrestricted warfare" (*chaoxian zhan*) through cyber and information infiltration and economic coercion. Genuine love seeks compassion and reciprocity in the midst of high-tech surveillance and social control that treat citizens as "chives to be harvested" (*ge jiucai*), reducing people to expendable resources. In this context, Chinese Christians' pursuit of love-upholding human dignity, freedom, and creativity-appears "counter-political" to the Party-state.

Roman crucifixion once functioned as a public, terrorizing form of "cruciform annihilation" of political threats, yet Jesus' command to "love your enemies" overturns the logic of domination. This injunction resonates with Confucian emphasis on virtue and humane conduct, even toward "barbarians" (*yidi*) at the cultural margins (Analects 3:5), as both cruciform love and steadfast *ren* reject revenge and complicity in dehumanizing systems. That refusal extends, in principle, to the CCP's machinery of "vaporization"

(*zhengfa*: being made to disappear without trace) through torture, psychiatric abuse, forced labor, and alleged organ harvesting. Love of enemies and the virtue of *ren* prioritize non-retaliation that overcomes evil with good and forges a counter-politics that transforms sites of terror into spaces of self-giving love, absorbing violence without reproducing it.

Confucius, Jesus, and Paul all affirm love as life's highest calling, and each bore a profound cost: Confucius as a peripatetic teacher derided as a "strayed dog" (*sangjia quan*; Analects 9:6), Jesus crucified, Paul beheaded. Yet both biblical and Confucian traditions exalt love's sovereignty and the promise of abundant life—Confucius posthumously revered as "uncrowned king" (*suwang*) and "supreme sage" (*zhisheng xianshi*), Jesus resurrected in divine vindication, Paul's martyrdom seeding a global movement of faith. Mercy outlasts judgment, compassion overcomes coercion, and love's light ultimately scatters hatred's shadow as tyrants fall and authoritarian regimes crumble.

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Endnotes

[1] See the collaborative project of scholars from various disciplines in China and diaspora or foreign countries on Chineseness and Christianity, Bible and China, theology and culture in Yeo 2021, especially pp. 1–17 and 251–65. I am grateful to David Rhoads, Allan Bell, and Terry Halliday for reading the first draft of this paper and offering valuable insights.

[2] The Analects, compiled by disciples of Confucius (551–479 bce) in ancient China's state of Lu (modern Shandong Province), consists of 20 chapters of about 500 dialogues, aphorisms, and teachings on moral self-cultivation and ethical governance, aimed at aspiring scholars and rulers. Yeo 2008, 253–302.

[3] All English translations of the Bible and the Analects are mine unless indicated otherwise.

[4] OTB offers a nuanced and rich interpretation of Platonic *erōs* (O'Donovan 2025, 5–6). Plato's intentional use of the genitive "of" in rendering Socrates' understanding of *eros* (as taught to him by Diotima) connects the object of desire (a desire "of the beautiful" and "of the good") to the desiring subject as an ascent to wisdom and beauty (Plato, *The Symposium;* see Benardetge 2001).

[5] Lewis 1971 understands distinctively *storgē* as "affectionate love," *philia* as "friendship," *erōs* as "romantic love," *agapē* as "selfless love." OTB alludes to "the mistake of canonizing one moment of love and discarding the others" in Anders Nygren's understanding (O'Donovan 2025, 5; see Nygren 1953).

[6] Tu Weiming explains that *ren* etymologically combines a human figure (the self 人) with two horizontal strokes (二) symbolizing human relations (Tu 1985, 84).

[7] As Confucius said, “If one observes the rites and rituals and overcomes oneself, one will be *ren*” (Analects 12:1). Persons of *ren* are those who “do not save their own lives but sacrifice them to perfect the virtue of *ren*” (Analects 15:9). In contrast, Buddhism views possessive love (*upādāna*) negatively, especially romantic attachment and selfish craving (*taṇhā*) that cause suffering (*dukkha*). However, Buddhism affirms unconditional love (*mettā*), expressed through loving-kindness and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

[8] A shift from *doing* to *being*, as expressed in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–28; John 13:34), moves focus from external obedience to inward transformation through love.

[9] Within the five cardinal relationships of Chinese society-ruler-subject (justice), parent-child (affection), husband-wife (differentiation), older-younger brothers (order), and friends (trust)—*ren* is embodied in virtues such as loyalty, righteousness, compassion, mutual respect, and trust.

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