

# The Four Virtues of the Yi

**元** **yuán** – first, primary, initial, original, basic, fundamental, native, primal... principal, head, chief, eldest, greatest, supreme... sublime, sublimity, creative... good, benevolent...the source of all that is good... unit, noumenon, thing-in-itself, component, fundamentality, element... Chinese monetary unit/dollar... dynasty of Mongol rule (1280-1368)... black, colorless... nickname for upper canon of Yi Jing (first half, numbers 1-30), upper half of a gua, or the whole book... image of “duality” or “highest aspect” of a “person”

(wood, spring, east)

27 glosses

**亨** **hēng** – second, developing, proceeding, getting through, penetrating, pervading, prevailing... effective, acceptable, successful, accomplishing... correct, righteous...the sum of all that is excellent... auspicious, going smoothly, prosperous, flourishing, prevalence... providing unexpected enjoyment (for the spirits)... the sacrifice, receipt, sacrificial offerings (original Zhou Dynasty meaning)... to offer, aid, help out, give courtesy, seek the right... fully process, boil/cook... image of “lofty” and “ending”

享 xiǎng (ancient variant of hēng) – to enjoy, receive... to gift one’s superiors... to present or accept sacrificial offerings...reception... image of “lofty” and “seed”

(fire, summer, south)

49 glosses

**利** **lì** – third, maturing, gaining, furthering... having advantage, favorable, beneficial... good for, proper, propriety, suitable, righteous, correct, in harmony...the essence of all that is right... sharp, skilled, cunning, witty, capable, fitness... the harvesting of grains, an ancient harvesting tool... image of “grain” and “knife”

(metal, fall, west)

119 glosses

**貞** **zhēn** – loyal, faithful, honest, virtuous, pure, chaste, pious, devoted...dedicated, committed, persevering, steadfast, firm in ethic, constant in purpose... honest, correct, righteous, upright, true, integral, genuine, authentic...the wisdom of knowledge, the core of all that is alive, the clear path and straight line at the heart of all direct experience...to divine, to inquire by divination, augury, predetermination, to find the oracle, to see or fortune-tell, to obtain true insight on the way things are, to know ahead of time...to use wisdom or inherent knowledge, to follow the guts/bones/deep, to trust instincts...to be naturally lucky and fortuitous...the will towards lasting and continual resolve... used to refer to the lower canon of the Yi Jing (second half, numbers 31-64), or the lower half of a gua... fourth, final, closing, the kingpin of all activity...image of “cowrie shell” and “divination mark”

(water, winter, north)

111 glosses

# THE VARIED AND COUNTLESS ATTEMPTS IN ENGLISH

## 元亨利貞

yuan heng li zhen

“original offering favors instinct”

supreme success benefits honor  
original excellence gains oracle  
most effective and righteous faith  
fundamental accomplishment reaps perseverance  
source of going smooth and harvest of oracles  
great, all-encompassing, and proper steadfastness  
supreme offering of favorable divination

Great and originating, penetrating, advantageous, correct and firm.  
Sublime success, furthering through perseverance.  
Sublime success! Persistence in a righteous course brings reward.  
Sublime success. Persistence in the firm and correct is advantageous.  
Great success. Perseverance brings good progress.  
Supremely blessed. It is favorable to keep on.  
Sublime and initial. Prosperous and smooth. Favorable and beneficial. Steadfast and upright.  
The greatest fulfillment rewards persistence.  
Supreme offering. Favorable augury.  
Great accomplishment. Steadiness is favorable.  
Primary receipt, beneficial to divine.  
Grand treat. Favorable determination.  
Creative is successful; this is beneficial if correct.  
Heaven creates, develops, brings about fruition and consummation.  
The creative originates, develops, perfects, and consummates.  
Be creative with these basic yang virtues: initiative, progressiveness, supportiveness, and persistence.  
The source of success: an advantageous trial. Harvesting. Make an offering and you will succeed  
Heaven brings the most profound success. It comes through persistence.  
Pure yang consists of fundamentality, prevalence, fitness, and constancy.  
The origin, a sacrificial offering, profit the divination.  
Supreme offering : favorable auspices

Legge  
Wilhelm  
Blofeld  
Chu  
Shima  
Whincup  
Huang  
Hatcher  
Rutt  
Shchutsky  
Shaughnessy  
Kunst  
Cleary  
Cleary  
Cleary  
Ni  
Karcher  
Jou  
Lynn  
Wu  
Liu Ming