



## **Heroes or villains (depends on who is judging)**

### **Western value:**

How many of you had read and/or seen films about the stories of “Alibaba and the forty thieves” and “Robin Hood”?

Alibaba and Robin Hood are portrayed as heroes in western culture and yet these two are common criminals. Alibaba took a bag of gold from the forty thieves. This is common theft because Alibaba did not have permission from the forty thieves (a thief stole from other thieves).

As for the story of Robin Hood, he robbed from the rich and gave it to the poor. Robin Hood is a robber regardless of his noble cause.

Would you teach your children that it is acceptable to take property from thieves or to rob from the rich?

### **Traditional Chinese value:**

Confucius said, “The gentleman understands what is moral; the little person only concerns with money (君子喻於義，小人喻於利).”

Confucius encourages “People should obtain their fortunes reasonably and properly through their hard work,” “and not through fraudulence and cheating.”

孔子倡導人要靠自己的實幹而合理、適宜地取得財富，不要靠坑蒙拐騙獲取財富。在日常生活中，孔子強調說話做事要守信用。誠實守信，是中國人非常看重的一種道德品質。

We, Chinese greatly value “Honesty” (trustworthiness through demonstration of integrity and credibility). This is how Chinese using Confucius principles to run businesses and develop their reputation and companies’ brands.

## **New Chinese value (results driven):**

Jack Ma, boss of Alibaba said (June 2016):

“The problem is the fake products today are of better quality and better price than the real names,”

“The way of doing business has changed for the brands. It’s not the fake products; it’s not the IP that is destroying them. It’s the new business model that’s revolutionised the whole world”.

Jack Ma is seen as the modern day Chinese Robin Hood. Is he on a Chinese noble cause against wealthy western well-known brands? Is he a Chinese hero for standing up against “imperialists” for the interests of his business compatriots?

Many of our Mainland Chinese compatriots worshipped those who are wealthy and successful. The focus of getting rich is result driven and the means is secondary. This is the age of new Chinese value.

The strong demand for foreign luxurious brands is associated with better quality, style and status symbol. This depends on whether consumers can afford to buy them.

For those who cannot afford to buy the real things, they want to buy counterfeit versions (type “A” products) instead.

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