

## A Global Ethics based on the Confucian idea of Jen (仁): Is It a Possibility?

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### Introduction

The Confucian idea of Jen (仁), contains an essential anthropocosmic sense of the fullness of the humanity and refers to both individual and global humans. In this paper I will argue that Jen provides us with an appropriate and vital undergirding concept of humanity that is necessary for a global ethic and for global democracy.

In the first part, I will demonstrate the background of the need for a global ethic, and in the second, I will show the meaning of the self or human being in Confucianism. In order to understand the Confucian idea of Jen as humanity, presenting a general understanding of self will be helpful. Then, in the third part of this paper, I will go further into the various meanings of Jen. The concept of Jen is an essential virtue in Confucianism. I will define Jen as referring to an anthropocosmic concept of humanity which has special significance for a global ethics that can lead to global democracy. I will adopt the interpretation of Jen as humanity as that word is used in the Analects and in Dr. Weiming Tu's Confucian anthropocosmic philosophy. All humans must be seen as having moral value. Next, I will validate the universality of Jen as a global ethic. In the last part, I address the limits of the human condition and environmental and economic world's issues. In particular, I will argue that America is at the center of the world's unequal and unjust system. Accordingly, I will propose that there should be a global institution as an "organizing center" that differs from the American-centered imperialistic WTO. The "Center" with the assistance and support of moral NGOs and religious organizations would ensure an ethical world democracy.

### The Necessity of Global Ethics

#### *Urgent Global Crisis*

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, human beings have lived in numerous urgent global crises. We encounter economic, social, political and ecological crises. Tu Weiming describes the crises as being environmental as well as socio-political threats. If we are to sustain the planet earth, we require a global ethic. Tu says:

The sense of crisis confronting our human community, occasioned not only by the threat of nuclear annihilation and the disintegration of the ecosystem, but also by the troubling awareness that our species may not even be viable, challenges us to examine the core values that have for decades sustained our form of life...the depth of the air surrounding the blue earth, compels us to think globally and to address the issue of human survival in realistic terms.<sup>1</sup>

Our blue planet is doomed to meet a disastrous end by our careless use of it. Now pollution causes us to buy bottled water and pollution of the air has been disclosed to cause respiratory diseases. Therefore, morality dictates that we "do" something together. That is the basic need for an ethic at a global level. Hans Küng also agrees with the need for a global ethic. Küng emphasizes the importance of "morality". He argues that if we need to deal with current global issues, then we also need a global standard or a global "ethical norm" to guide our decisions in the right direction.<sup>2</sup> Nature is sick and has been dying for some time. This sickness has no geographical boundary. Air can go anywhere and polluted water cannot be locked within a restricted area. Consequently, we need a global ethic to overcome these global crises.

Moreover, a global ethic is demanded urgently not only for ourselves but also for our neighbors. A global ethic is necessary for the survival for ourselves, our environment, and the world. As a whole, Küng highlights human responsibility for our future, for this "third millennium". He emphasizes the preservation and survival of our environment and the world for the next generation.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Difficulty of Establishing a Global Ethic among Diversities*

However, bringing about consensus on a global ethic demands enormous effort. For instance, the original U.N declaration has been criticized for its universality. According to some proponents of diversity,

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<sup>1</sup> Weiming Tu, "Core Values and the Possibility of a Fiduciary Global Community," in *Restructuring for World Peace: On the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Katharine and Majid Tehranian (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1992), 333.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In A Search of a New World Ethic* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

human rights cannot be viewed as having a universal value for the global community.<sup>4</sup> Tu disagrees with this perspective because he has a different understanding of a human being. He insists that the Confucian understanding of human being, or self, has a universal implication. From his point of view, maintaining a universal standard of human rights is possible and, furthermore, a universal human ethic is both possible and necessary,<sup>5</sup> through a new paradigm based on the Confucian understanding of human beings.

### ***The Human Being as a Minimum Basis for a Global Ethic***

Taking into consideration both the urgent need for a global ethic and the difficulty of making a grand theory because of the emphasis on particularity, The global community is morally bound to recognize a certain level of dignity for all humans.<sup>6</sup> Despite our recognition of diversity, the entire world is now, thanks to modern globalization, considered to be one global community.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, some people call the earth a “global village.” I argue that, if we live in a global village, then we need to have an ethical standard that establishes a universally recognized minimum level. Like the Ten Commandments, or an ethical, religious Golden Rule, we need to have a universally accepted minimum ethical standard for all members of that “village” that will prevent wars and unfair international relationships and will prevent environmental disasters that have no international boundary. Michael Walzer refers to a minimum level of global ethic as a thin morality, meaning one that touches each human life. Walzer says,

I want to stress (though it should already be obvious) that “minimalism” does not describe a morality that is substantively minor or emotionally shallow. The opposite is more likely true: This is morality close to the bone. There isn’t much that is more important than “truth” and “justice,” minimally understood...in moral discourse, thinness and intensity go together, whereas with thickness comes qualification, compromise, complexity, and disagreement.<sup>8</sup>

His meaning of thinness should be understood as a universal virtue for all people morally and religiously, in other words, applying the Golden Rule to everyone. This thin morality would, ideally, be shared on a global level.

What constitutes the minimum level of an ethical standard? For Tu, the minimum level is the human being.<sup>9</sup> Human beings have to be the foundational goal for global ethics. “Money, capital, science, technology, and industry” are only means and never ends. K  ng’s ethical viewpoint goes on to say, “a true humanity is the presupposition for true religion.”<sup>10</sup> The good of humanity must remain “an ultimate goal” for a religion and, beyond that, for a global ethic.

For Tu, also, the human being must be the basis for any human project. In Confucianism, the Way is all about learning to be human. Becoming a genuine human being is the way of a sage and the ultimate goal of Confucianism. As a Confucian scholar, Tu emphasizes the understanding of self as a starting point as well as an ending point. Tu explains that Confucians pursue “mutuality between self and community”.<sup>11</sup> A Confucian self always has to do with other human relationships. Robert Cummings Neville also shares Tu’s view about the importance of understanding the self. He says that debating the self is important because of its foundational implication.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the concept of human beings is the profound and necessary basis for a global ethic.

### **A Human Being as the Center of Relationships in Confucianism.**

#### ***Confucianism’s self always lies in the center of human relationships.***<sup>13</sup>

The core concept of the Confucian self as “the center of relationship” has been the clue to understanding Confucianism. Tu points out in *Confucian Thought* that becoming “fully human” requires relationships and

<sup>4</sup> Weiming Tu, “Joining East and West: A Confucian Perspective on Human Rights,” *Harvard International Review*, 20, no. 3(1998), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>6</sup> Hans K  ng, *Global Responsibility*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Weiming Tu, “Core Values and the Possibility of a Fiduciary Global Community, 337.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument of Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1994), 6.

<sup>9</sup> K  ng, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>11</sup> Weiming Tu, “Joining East and West,” 46.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Cummings Neville, *Boston Confucianism* (New York: SUNY, 2000), 167.

<sup>13</sup> Weiming Tu, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (New York: SUNY, 1985) 55.

“communal participation” with other human beings.<sup>14</sup> For the Confucian self, relationships are a necessary part of self-recognition and self-existence. Relationships are at the heart of self-cultivation.

Tu emphasizes one’s capacity to establish relationships and to cooperate with others as two of the essential aspects of cultivating one’s self. Without relationships, one cannot cultivate oneself, and so one cannot make progress in the Confucian way of learning. In addition, Tu understands that the process of establishing relationships differs from person to person, thus self-cultivation is a flexible process.<sup>15</sup> In other words, Tu acknowledges differences in relationships among individuals. Relationships will vary, depending on individual situations and development. Self-cultivation is accomplished through linking with people, and thus the cultivated self is able to form interconnections with others.

The Confucian self is both an interdependent self and an interconnected self. Each self exists by networking with other selves, rather than as an “isolated and enclosed” self.<sup>16</sup> The Confucian interdependent self recognizes that both one’s own self and the other self have the same level of importance.

How are we to think of society or community in relation to the self? Community and society are not extensions of the self. On the other hand, Tu also stresses that the “true self” is not a “privatized,” but a “public spirited” self.<sup>17</sup> This means that the Confucian true self is always a relational self acting in the world, not locking oneself into an isolated personal arena. This true self always perceives the “world at large.”<sup>18</sup> The public and relational self can not overlook public issues. The Western form of self understanding recognizes a clear distinction between self and others, which may lead some to develop an “isolated,” “closed,” and “independent” sense of self-understanding; but in the Confucian understanding, one’s self coexists with other selves in a more cohesive relational way. The child who needs rice and the farmer who needs a person to buy it are interconnected and interdependent. The farmer works for his own household as well as for people outside his family who need rice. The little child eats rice for the sake of her own health, but she also assists the farmer’s effort. The child does not need to think of the farmer’s effort, because her parent acknowledges the farmer’s effort by paying money for the rice. If, however, we acknowledge our dependence on other human beings, we will develop a whole different daily conversation with the world and a different way of conducting our lives.

In short, a Confucian interconnected self is at the center of the Confucian way of learning. The relationship-oriented approach to life is essential to the genuine self. Therefore, global community is also a part of the genuine self in Confucianism,

### **The Confucian Moral Virtue, Jen as Humanity of Mutual Enhancement**

The concept of the Confucian relational self, as this paper has discussed above, is another way of articulating the concept of Jen as presented in the Confucian Analects. Jen represents the fullness of a humanity wherein each embodies the Confucian self. This concept of humanity is the undergirding for a Confucian global ethic.

#### ***Meaning of Jen in its Chinese Character.***

The Chinese character Jen (仁) is a pictograph character that implies human relationships. This character is composed of two parts, 人 which denotes human beings and 二 which also means the number, two. In the literal meaning of the word, Jen means two people together.<sup>19</sup> Mencius sees the importance of human relationships, and perhaps because Jen means “to be human,” he concluded that Jen may be the necessary part of “being fully human”.<sup>20</sup> Just as Mencius points out the importance of human relationships, the concept of Jen also carries a strong literal sense of human relationships.

#### ***Jen as Humanity***

Although Jen can be defined in its literal sense, scholars have interpreted Jen in various ways. For instance,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>19</sup> Sung Bum Yoon, *Ethics East and West: Western Secular, Christian and Confucian Traditions in Comparative Perspective*, tr. Michael C. Kalton (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1977), 73.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 73.

Jen, by contrast, is always understood as ‘Goodness’ (Arthur Waley), “human-relatedness” (E.R. Hughes), “Love” (Derk Bodde), “Benevolent Love” (H.H. Dubs), “Virtue” (H.G. Creel), and “Humanity” (W.T.Chan).<sup>21</sup>

Jen has been understood as having different meanings. There is no doubt that, however it is interpreted, Jen is one of the essential Confucian thoughts that must be seriously considered.

In many scholarly works, indeed as a primary concept in the *Analects*, Jen means humanity.

In Chinese, it [Jen] reads “jen is jen.” [Analec] The first jen means humanity and since there is no gender in grammar, the second simply means a person. As Wing-tsit Chan has pointed out, “it is not just a pun, but an important definition of the basic Confucian concept of humanity, for to Confucianists, the virtue of humanity is meaningless unless it is involved in actual human relationships.”<sup>22</sup>

Wing-tsit Chan states that the idea of Jen contains the same basic meaning of Confucian humanity, which emphasizes human relationships. Leading Confucian scholars, Mou Tsungshan and Tu Weiming, also define Jen as humanity, and they both agree that Jen is a primary Confucian concept.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Peter Boodberg proposes the literal meaning of Jen as “co-humanity.” In the character, the left part (亻) indicates a human being, and the right part (仁) means human relations. Like Wing-tsit Chan, Boodberg understands Jen as humanity that is based on relationships.

### ***Manifestation of Jen as Various Compassionate Characters***

On the one hand, Jen can be interpreted as various characteristics, which lead human beings to be compassionate. Compassionate human characteristics are “courtesy,” “delight,” “fidelity,” “respect,” and “kindness.”<sup>24</sup> These characteristics are based on moral values. More concisely, these characteristics identify human beings’ ethical qualities. Accordingly, if a human being lives with this Confucian moral affection, Jen, which teaches people to cultivate one’s life in an ethical way, one can prevent an evil-grounded life. From a slightly different perspective, Jen can also be understood as “human heartedness”.<sup>25</sup> A Korean Confucian scholar, Sung Bum Yoon, presents a strong argument that Jen is not a metaphysical “principle” but an “existential quality”. He stresses the practical point of view of Jen as something that can be fostered in human lives. In his view, Jen possesses a moralistic quality that enables one to cultivate goodness in one’s life.

### ***Jen as Love***

In particular, however, Jen has been primarily understood as love. In *Bostonian Confucianism*, Tu Weiming deals with the Jen (Ren, 仁) as love,<sup>26</sup> an idea closely related to Jen as humanity. Tu sees love as essential to human nature. For Tu, being a good person is based on the capacity to love.<sup>27</sup> Unless one loves other people, one cannot be a fully human being. Accordingly, Jen can be interpreted as love in relation to humanity -- two concepts closely associated with each other. Sung Bum Yoon also introduces Jen as love. Especially he finds that Jen has been compared with the Western concept of love as Agape.<sup>28</sup> The two concepts of love suggest “readiness for sacrifice”. Van Oyen defines Agape as self sacrificing love, and Confucius also comprehended Jen as sacrificing virtue for preserving Jen.<sup>29</sup> What I see from these two traditions of love is a not a pessimistic sense of sacrifice but a practical sense of action-taking. Morality is essential to a human way. Without practice, a good philosophy or idea is vain and ineffectual. Therefore, Jen requires human beings to uphold this Confucian moral virtue in their daily lives.

### ***Jen as Humanity of Reciprocal Enhancement***

<sup>21</sup> Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, 87.

<sup>22</sup> Tu Weiming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay On Confucian Religiousness* (New York: SUNY, 1989), 50.

<sup>23</sup> John H. Berthrong, *All Under Heaven: Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian Dialogue* (New York: SUNY, 1994) 78.

<sup>24</sup> Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, 85.

<sup>25</sup> Sung Bum Yoon, 71.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Cumming Neville, *Boston Confucianism*, 97. Here, he expressed Jen as ren. But, it is the same meaning as Jen, 仁.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>28</sup> Sung Bum Yoon, 82.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 82.

Thus far, I have shown various meanings of Jen from its basic literal sense to its deeper meaning of love. These definitions and understandings are basic for understanding exactly/precisely what Jen is in Confucianism. I validate the important point of understanding Jen in part to support the idea of Jen as ethical virtue at a global level. However, I also completely agree with Confucius's understanding of Jen as humanity as a condition of reciprocal human enhancement. In the *Analects*, Confucius identified Jen as humanity. Later in the book, Confucius's words explain more about Jen. Confucius defined Jen as the activity of pursuing mutual human enhancement. This perfectly suits a model of global ethics.

You want to be established yourself, then, seek to establish others.

You wish to advance, then, advance others. From what is near to one to seize the analogy (i.e., to take one's neighbor as oneself)-there is Jen's way. ([*Analects*] 6:28).<sup>30</sup>

Confucius emphasized the importance of others, in advance, for developing oneself. Before asserting oneself, one should acknowledge others. That is the basis of human respect and morality. The value of Confucius's comments lies in its mutual enhancement. He implied that human relationship is indispensable for human lives. But he understood that human relationships must involve reciprocal enhancement, rather than one-sided sacrifice or dominance over others. This is the way of Jen. Jen awakens us to be human, to be related to each other, and to proceed together. Encouraging others is not solely for the benefit of others but equally for oneself. A basic human way must be this way of mutual living. The basis of humanity is living together with equality. Only in that way are equal relationships and advancement likely to be accomplished.

From this sense, this Confucian idea of Jen is suitable for a global ethics. A Confucian sense of understanding of self is based on an understanding of the Jen of humanity. A self is not an isolated individual. A self has already a public sense of meaning. The meaning of self has to include the interconnected self. Therefore, self is inclusive of others and a community. Caring for others and a community has the same value as caring for oneself. This mutual and interconnected sense of Confucian philosophy is perfectly revealed in the Confucian idea of Jen. Jen is humanity, and pursuits undertaken for others validate the self.

I also see the value of Jen in seeking to establish a global ethics. At even a minimum level of global relationships, there must be basic respect for humanity as well as mutual hope for reciprocal progress. The other country's rights and development must be immediately considered when one country acts for its own advancement. Therefore, the Confucian idea of Jen is already a global ethic. However, does Jen really apply to the common people? Does it have common grounded philosophy for global ethics for all people, and not just for Confucian people?

## **Jen, Anthropocosmic Humanity as a Confucian Global Ethic**

### ***Jen as Universal Virtue***

Can Jen really be a universal ethic? Confucius answered this question positively. Like other Confucian scholars, in the *Analects*, many pages are spent on the subject of Jen. Confucius worked hard to explain Jen from many perspectives. He, however, had a thorough understanding of Jen as a universal and general virtue. He rendered Jen as "basic, universal and the source of all specific virtues."<sup>31</sup> Although his understanding of universality might be limited in the Confucian worldview at that time, he did not think of Jen as local and specific morality only for local people or in a specific historical period. Accordingly, Jen as a universal virtue is apt for global ethics. A global ethics is inclusive of all times and all people.

### ***Jen as The Central Virtue of Moral Agents***

Jen as the universal virtue of humanity entails the Confucian understanding of human beings. I agree with Mencius that human beings are moral beings. Human beings have been understood as political and economic beings, but Mencius understood that human beings are "moral beings," and that human beings are born naturally good. Intrinsic human goodness is likely to be based on global ethics because moral human beings can be seen as a premise for the enhancement of humanity. His statements are as follows:

He advocates the intrinsic goodness of human nature. Implicit in this particular concern is his strong belief in the perfectibility of human nature through self-effort. He thinks of human beings as moral beings. This does not mean that in an existential sense human beings are already good; it only asserts that the ultimate ground of one's becoming good is located in oneself. In this sense, Jen signifies the fullest manifestation of humanness. A man of humanity represents the most genuine and authentic

<sup>30</sup> Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius- The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 41.

<sup>31</sup> Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, 81.

human being, for he is able to realize that which is *common* to us all. Every human being is capable of love, but the man of humanity embodies love in his daily conduct.<sup>32</sup>

This part shows us hopeful ground for a global ethics. It is on this ground that human beings are understood to be moral beings who are naturally capable of good behavior. At the maximum level, human beings demonstrate their full humanity when they fully embody Jen as the moral guide in their lives. For moral human beings, Jen is a cardinal value for attaining their full humanity. Attaining genuine humanity would be the fulfillment of Jen. The Jen of humanity as undergirding global ethics pursues the achievement of human beings' intrinsic goodness as moral agents. In short, Jen leads moral agents to realize their full humanity. Besides, only a "man of humanity" is liable to entirely behave in everyday moral life. Therefore, Jen entails responsible human practice of morality, and, hence it will be possible to extend Jen to the entire human population.

### ***Anthropocosmic basis***

Another important insight into a Confucian understanding of Jen is its anthropocosmic perspective.<sup>33</sup> The Confucian concept of humanity is located in what is "earthbound" as well as in what is "transcendent". As a result, humanity includes Confucian Heaven, because all human nature came from Heaven. According to Tu, in order to fully reveal humanity, human beings should return to Heaven.<sup>34</sup> The origin of Confucian humanity is in Heaven, and humanity is the revelation of Heaven. Tu's explanation of the relationship between humanity and heaven is as follows.

Humanity is Heaven's form of self-disclosure, self-expression, and self-realization. If we fail to live up to our humanity, we fail cosmologically in our mission as co-creator of heaven and earth and morally in our duty as fellow participants in the great cosmic transformation.<sup>35</sup>

This statement reveals the importance of humanity from a Confucian religious-ethical point of view. Confucian people aspire to achieving their full humanity. In one sense, achieving one's full humanity is the Way for Confucians to grow in their daily lives. In a broader sense, fulfilling humanity as a whole is only possible when Heaven reveals the fullness of humanity in all human nature. From both points of view, fulfilling humanity is a significant process for Confucian people, which Confucianism promises. Human beings, however, are "spiritual" only when human beings are in line with Heaven. We as heaven's partners have a "sacred mission to transform" this world and community and self.<sup>36</sup> Full humanity is the last but on-going life-process in line with Heaven for the Confucian religious-ethical life. This goal also has to consider "the transformation of this world." This perspective can be compared to Christian concepts of God in transcendence and in immanence. Finally, the establishment of full humanity is the Way of morality as well as religious belief in Confucianism. The more humanity is cultivated, the more heaven is revealed. Accordingly, in Confucianism, ethical living is demanded for general human beings as "fellow participants" of Heaven.

### **Jen for an Undergirding Concept for Global Democracy.**

#### ***Realistic Limitations of Fulfilling Jen: Two Examples, Environment and Economy***

Going back to the earlier point, however, let me look at the current global issues in this world. Even though I have worked to validate Jen as anthropocosmic humanity as a possible model for global ethics, in reality, I also see our human inclination to do injustice, breaking interpersonal and interstate peace. Therefore, there is a strong human limitation that prevents the fulfillment of Jen in this world, because of human weakness and the systems of injustice that have influenced the human inclination to be unjust. Therefore, Tu's positive view of full humanity prevents us with the human possibility and an idealistic hope of morality, yet, at the same time, it soon awakens our frustration and concern about the limitations of our human condition. Based on Confucian human understanding of universal and an anthropocosmic perspective, Jen grants us a strong basis for creating a global ethics that can apply to people universally. Jen has been a cardinal virtue, at least for many Confucian people; however, unethical human issues have still been rife.

As I have noted above, Jen as a universal global ethics theoretically sounds feasible. As we face the current global issues of unjust economic systems and environmental problems, we would readily conceive of the

<sup>32</sup> Tu Weiming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay On Confucian Religiousness*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>36</sup> Weiming Tu, "Crisis and Creativity: a Confucian Response to the Second Axial Age," in *Doors of Understanding*, ed. Steven Chase (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1997), 414.

need for a global ethics to take care of immediate emergent issues and, at the same time, feel our inherent harmful inclinations that we see throughout the realities in this world. This is a dilemma. We have been violated and have not fulfilled our humanity. Accordingly, we have recognized the limitations of our human nature. Now, my intention is to raise a voice to discover our general human capacity to fulfill our humanity on a human level in an effort to do something for our dying planet, and I am, once again, appealing for an awareness of the need for a global ethics in this time of global crisis. This awareness helps us to gather our voice, acknowledges the legitimacy of the need for a global ethics; nevertheless, we have only a vague possibility of attaining our full humanity in our painful history.

Why should we try to create a global ethics and practice even though we are seeing the difficulty of the real issues? This is not just a speculative debate, rather it involves dealing with life-threatening earthly issues. Two things we must address together: environment and economics.

### **Environment**

Here is a significant example of environmental problems we are facing now. As I briefly mentioned in the first part, air has no boundary. We cannot hide from polluted air, unless we live on some other planet. For instance, the serious harm of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) has been addressed.

...in the 1970s when scientists discovered that the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) threatens the ozone layer shielding the surface of our planet from the full force of the sun's ultraviolet radiation. Damage to that protective shield would cause cancer rates to rise sharply and could have other effects, for example, on the growth of algae. The threat was especially acute to the world's southernmost cities, since a large hole in the ozone was found to be opening up each year over Antarctica, but in the long term, the entire ozone shield was imperiled.<sup>37</sup>

When we hear of the destruction of the ozone layer, we must assume this is one of the global issues that we must solve together. No one wants to be exposed to polluted sunshine and air. No one wants to be ignored when this problem is dealt with. It is, of course, not easy for us to do this together. However, unless we do want to harm the longevity of our planet, we should bear with the painstaking details of the procedures needed to solve the problem, and we must develop the attitudes necessary to conduct dialogues and make concessions for each other. Accordingly, we should develop global ethics in terms of resolving the environmental crisis.

As another point, the imperilment of the ozone layer has been raised as "the effect of green house gases" and "global warming."<sup>38</sup> All of nature has been affected: the results include warmer oceans, frequent hurricanes and tropical storms, and "wide-spread tropical diseases." Because of the higher possibility of natural disasters, the insurance industry has drastically raised the cost of insurance. Because of this economic change, we have been suffering in our pockets.<sup>39</sup>

These changes in nature have had a global affect, and have the potential of increasing danger on a global level. However, the effect of global warming and greenhouse gases has damaged "poor countries" more than "rich countries".<sup>40</sup> Relatively, rich nations are better able to cope with natural crises in terms of readiness and the financial ability to handle potential danger. and recovery.<sup>41</sup> In poor nations such as Bangladesh, however, many poor people live near the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Most people who live on "mudflats in the deltas" are poor, and so they do not have any place to go to if they must leave their homes. If the sea level rises, they will be seriously injured. But, they have nowhere else to go. "As many as 70 million people" could be harmed in Bangladesh, and a similar number in China."<sup>42</sup> This is the difference between rich countries and poor countries; the difference between the unequal powers of national economies. From this fact it becomes clear that the global issue of environment is not just an environmental issue. Because poor nations are not capable of coping with this issue by themselves, this issue must be addressed by rich nations as well. To address it successfully, it must be addressed as a universal and global issue, but must also be considered in regard to its serious impact on a local level. Out of different situations of nations facing the same earthly crisis, we must work on an international political level to meet the needs of each nation as it is impacted.

Here is a significant case. No matter where we are, we cannot forgive our human good living condition. That is our weakness and reality. This issue of change of climate and nature has finally become a matter of international politics. Without intervention by international agreement, this issue will be ignored or be allowed to steadily worsen.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 18.

Climate change entered the international political arena in 1988, when the United Nations Environment Program and the World Meteorological Office jointly set up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In 1990, the IPCC reported that the threat of climate change was real, and a global treaty was needed to deal with it. The United Nations General Assembly resolved to proceed with such a treaty. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was agreed to in 1992, and opened for signature at the Earth Summit, or more formally, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in the same year. This “framework convention” has been accepted by 181 governments.”<sup>43</sup>

Under the leading work of the United Nations, an international treaty was written and was accepted by 181 nations. This fact inspired our hope for saving earth and stimulating global cooperation. But it soon turned out to be an ineffective resolution because the treaty was not “legally binding.” In reality, carbon dioxide emissions increased. In the United States, in 2000 emissions were “14 percent higher than they were 1999.”<sup>44</sup> This treaty was not put into effect in every nation. The use of CFCs continues to be integral to our modern life in our continued use of refrigerants and containers using propellants. Once again, we are confirming human limitation in its willingness to fulfill humanity. What is occurring is not a sudden natural disaster, but a process of slow death of life and earth itself. Although America has hundreds of organizations and millions of people determined to reduce pollution and to stop using things that damage the earth and harm people, in terms of a globally legally binding policy, as a world leader, America’s national reaction is alarmingly slow.

### ***Economics: WTO***

As we should deal with the environment as a global issue, we must also see the matter of economics as a global issue. The two have a common ground. As global issues, they should be taken care of by all people all nations. As in the environmental case described above, each country may hold a different position based on its own interest. America is well aware of the urgency of the environmental crisis, but it does not practice the principle. Our economic system also has a global basis and the systemic evil that results we must address together.

The World Trade Organization controls world economics and its purpose is to ensure and expand economic globalization. However, globalization has not produced benefits for many of the nations. Instead, the WTO promotes the dominant way of controlling the world economy by the most powerful nation, the U.S. The creation of WTO was as follows.

The World Trade Organization was created by the “Uruguay Round” of talks held by member nations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT. It came into existence in January 1995, and by January 2002 had 144 member nations, accounting for more than 97 percent of world trade. Although it seems as if the WTO is a new organization, it is essentially the successor to GATT, which has been around for fifty years. Its *raison d’être* is also the same as that of GATT, namely the belief that free trade makes people better off, on average and in the long run.<sup>45</sup>

The WTO agreement has been signed by 154 countries in the world. Disputes among the nations are to be settled according to WTO rules. WTO promotes the principle of free trade and according to the agreement, free trade focuses on the reduction of unproductive competition between two parties that want to make the same product. Rather than let both nations produce the same item, free trade encourages each to make different items that can be exchanged between them. In theory that would be the most effective way all nations to conduct successful trade, especially poor nations. However, in reality it does not benefit all nations but only the already powerful states. While in theory the WTO seems to be supportive of poor nations, in reality it is not.

Actually, the agreement is not fair, so each nation cannot raise their objections when they suffer disadvantages under the WTO agreement. First, the procedure is too complicated. The entire agreement is about 30,000 pages long, and member nation’s complaints are considered to be breaking the rules. Nations who do not comply will “be subjected to severe penalties, including tariffs against its [own] good.”<sup>46</sup> As a result, nations that suffer disadvantages cannot easily appeal their complaints because that will only cause them to suffer another reprisal. In *One World*, Peter Singer notes four dangers of WTO. First, WTO has identified economics as the highest priority. In other words, in the name of money, issues of “environment” and even “human rights” can be ignored. Secondly, WTO has disintegrated “national sovereignty”, and thirdly, WTO is not democratic, and

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 56-57.



lastly, WTO “makes the rich richer” and leaves poor nations “even worse off than they would otherwise have been.”<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, although the global economic institution promised to contribute to a sound direction for the world’s economy. In reality, the powers of the world use the global institution for their own benefit. Thus, in the end this global institution has functioned simply as a servant of the powers of the world.

### ***America as an Imperialist Empire***

In the center of the unjust globalization of the world’s economy stands America. America is the center of hegemony in the world. As John Cobb, Jr. points out in his book *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, America has a dream to lead the world like Germany tried in World War II.<sup>48</sup> He explains that America had less damage than Europe had during WWII. Even though America’s nationalism seemed to differ from Germany’s nationalism, America still has its own nationalistic dream to lead the world toward “democracy and prosperity.”<sup>49</sup> American principles espouse both democracy and prosperity. However, during the Reagan presidency, governmental interests turned from a “humanitarian” perspective to an economic perspective. Just after WWII, the American government considered the “Peace Corps” was to be the “idealistic” way of promoting the American dream. However, the Reagan administration decided instead for “economic growth to be achieved by private investments by transnational corporations (TNCs).”<sup>50</sup> Under the new developmental policy, the U.S government created the United Nations and the Bretton Wood Institution (BWI) which established the IMF and the World Bank.<sup>51</sup>

The United Nations and the Bretton Wood Institution were created by America. GATT was part of the Bretton Wood Institution and GATT later became the WTO. Consequently, WTO was mainly created by the initiatives of America’s imperialist dream.

These organization collectively were created in order to further trade throughout the world and, thereby, economic prosperity. This involves reducing the ability of national governments to regulate their own economies. The assumption is that all people will be better off if market forces replace national policies as the primary determinants of international trade.<sup>52</sup>

As mentioned above, in the end, WTO’s main purpose is revealed to be the erosion of local government and the fulfillment of the goal of economic prosperity of the U.S.

### **Democratic Global Institutions against Unjust Global Institutions.**

Our way of saving Planet Earth and saving poor people from our unjust system is is to establish a global union against unjust systems. Global institutions such as WTO have not been democratic. Their agreements seemed to be democratic, but their history proved their undemocratic nature. David Ray Griffin presented his strong argument for global democracy at Claremont School of Theology in the fall of 2003.<sup>53</sup> In particular, he focused on the issue of global ethics for a global democracy. He believed that the U.N does not have power to deal with the world’s issues. America is the center of the United Nations -- as we can see in their close relationship since its origin. What is needed on the global level is an institution for global democracy. The major reason of Griffin’s argument for global democracy is based on America’s imperialistic dominance over the world through unjust global institutions that include legally binding agreements. As a White American scholar, he earnestly denounced America as an imperialistic empire that controls the world.<sup>54</sup> He warned the danger of current American global dominance, and he strongly argued that there should be a global democracy to stand against the global imperialism of America.

Griffin understands well the objections to a global democracy. He is also well aware of global democracy as an idealistic way of resolution.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>48</sup> John B. Cobb, Jr., *The Earthist Challenge to Economism: A Theological Critique of World Bank* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) , 20-21.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 21

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>53</sup> In 2003, he taught his doctoral course called “Religious Pluralism and a Global Ethic.” He strongly supported the idea of Global democracy through the fall semester, 2003 at Claremont School of Theology, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

<sup>54</sup> David Griffin, “Global Imperialism or Global Democracy: The Present Alternatives,” “An American Empire? Globalization, War, and Religion.” Drew University, September 25-27 (2003), 1-14. In this paper, he seriously criticized imperialistic American empire.

An obvious objection to this vision of how enlightened global democratic rule could be is that few if any national democratic governments have approached this ideal. The response is that all such governments have been more or less corrupted by at least two factors [money, competition]. Instead of decisions being made on the basis of the best arguments about what would best promote the common good, decisions have been made to benefit plutocratic interests. All national democracies have also existed within an anarchical, competitive system of states, with its “war of all against all.”<sup>55</sup>

In reality, this kind of idealistic government cannot be imagined because of the inevitable corruption by money and unfair competition. Richard Niebuhr mentioned that only God can fairly cope with the power and goodness.<sup>56</sup> As a result, a local government cannot achieve this level of authentic democracy.

Then is global democracy impossible? Griffin answered that question negatively. He believes it is possible and he defines global democracy in this way:

A global democracy could achieve such an approximation because the collective body, being composed of representatives from all religions of the world, could partly make up for the defects in each individual. That is the ignorance of each representative about most of the regions of the world could be corrected by the knowledge of the representatives from these regions. The indifference that each representative has toward the welfare of peoples from most parts of the world could be made up for by the sympathy possessed by the representatives from these parts.<sup>57</sup>

What he means by global democracy corresponds with the ideal that can combine power and goodness, and also has strong diversity of participation. His insistence on a global democracy sounds aggressive to those who have negative associations with the word “global.” Thus far, all nations have a tragic history of that invariably identifies globalization with global dominance by an oppressive power. However, Griffin’s global democracy is different from the idea of dominance by one super power. Rather, it is a union of all differences and the universality of all particularities. Finally, he suggests a union of the organizations of all world religions and moral NGOs. John Cobb, Jr also supported this idea of a globally collected body. He mentioned “the multiple centers of power” that would be able to break down the imperial powers.<sup>58</sup> He stressed the decentralization of power through divisions of balanced powers.

I support Griffin’s concept of global democracy. Bringing together the world’s religions and NGOs to speak with one voice could be powerful enough to change the world. This form of global democracy could free nations large and small from the imperial power of America. That combined power will be enough to disempower an imperialistic American empire that is leading this world into a perpetual system of war.<sup>59</sup>

However, without careful interpretation of his ideas, the concept of global democracy might easily be misunderstood as supporting the concept of dominance by global institutions. Even the concept of globalization has been imperialistically used.

Finally, I embrace/accept Griffin’s global democracy as a practical tool for realizing global ethics, Jen, and for resolving in a practical way the world issues of America’s imperial power. However, I add words to his idea that I think are necessary in order to avoid an unproductive misinterpretation of the concept: Democratic Global Union of All People. This seems necessary to prevent mis-conceptualizing the concept of global democracy out of diversity. Besides, it is also important for a global institution that has legal binding power/authority for all people in a minimum or thin level. If we have this kind of “organizing center” that is legally binding as a way of ensuring a global ethics -- such as Jen as anthropocosmic humanity -- this will be truly effective for solving world issues.<sup>60</sup>

### Global Ethics for Global Democracy

Global ethics must deal with morality on a universal level. I have argued that global ethics should be clearly defined and must be applied to the business of this world in order to resolve the earthly crises, both environmental and economic. I see global democracy as a practical and political outlet for people who need to change the world from its current form of imperialistic power to one that ensures democratic associations of power. I also defined Jen as anthropocosmic humanity as a form of Confucian global ethics. But, even though I see the importance of applying the values of a global ethics, yet at the same time I want to address the limitation

<sup>55</sup> David Griffin, “Global Imperialism or Global Democracy,” 24.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>58</sup> John Quiring, “U.S Empire: Evidence, Resistance, Alternative,” *Process Perspective*, vol. 26, no.3 (2003),16.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 14,

<sup>60</sup> “Organizing center” is a term used by David Griffin in his paper, “Global Democracy or Global Imperialism.”

of human beings. We need to find an alternative form of democratic power that can free this world from the dominance of American empire. By creating a global democracy, we can change our world system, and also pursue the ideal humanity. In addition, with the collective body of global democracy, there should be an “organizing center” that with the authority to legally bind all nations in the area of basic human rights, such as demand an “end to war.” and having that power could put an end to war and to the arrogance of American power. That kind of unified support for human rights could also force America to reduce the use of CFCs, and other pollutants, and create a budget to improve poor nations’ life-conditions and help them prepare for natural disasters. Through democratic power of people from all over the world based on a global ethics of Jen, poor people will get more help and rich people will share more. Although, idealistically speaking, through the eyes of religious-morality, I also hope for a better world that is not a world of a single culture, but rather one world in which human diversity is both respected and protected.

## Conclusion

So far, I have spoken of Jen as anthropocosmic humanity to be based on a global ethics in this time of environmental and economic crisis. The Confucian concept of self offers an understanding of humans that can have profound implications for human relationships. The reason I focus on human relationships is because of the reality of our one global environment.

Jen would offer a perfect fit as standard for global ethics in this time of crisis. Following Tu’s anthropocosmic human understanding, I suggest the premise for global ethics of Jen -- despite the importance of recognizing the limitations on our ability to realize full humanity because of human limitations and an unjust world system. Through uniting religious-moral NGOs and with the leading role of an “organizing center” as the democratic global institution, it is possible we could overcome our earthly problems and make our common ground for a better and unified world.

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### Abstract

The Confucian idea of Jen (仁)'s as depicted by its Chinese characters includes an important anthroposomic sense of humanity's fullness. In this paper, the author utilizes Weiming Tu's Confucian notion of Jen to argue the necessity of a global ethics from a Confucian perspective. Confucian culture has been incarnated throughout Korea and East Asia. The author points out the importance of global democracy and an ethic for the benefit of addressing global economic justice and supporting global legally binding policies of the climate change treaty. In order to argue the importance of Jen in Confucian culture as well as its possibility for shaping an effective global ethics, I will first demonstrate the importance of a global ethic that addresses the current global crisis, and the difficulties in working together in the midst of global diversities. The author starts from arguing the importance of a global ethics that embraces all of humanity and the Confucian notion of Jen that holds the meaning of humanity. Thus, the author supports the idea of Jen as a possibility for creating a global ethics that is capable of resolving current global problems. Suggesting Jen as a global ethical value, the author elaborates on the diverse meanings of Jen as meaning humanity, compassion, love, reciprocal enhancement all of which diverse meanings articulate important values for a moral humanity. Thus the author insists that Jen offers the possibility of encompassing a global ethics to support the central virtue of humanity as a moral agent. Furthermore, based on its universal moral value, the author pursues Jen as an undergirding concept for global democracy. In order to support the need for global democracy, the author utilizes David Griffin's arguments about American empire, and John B. Cobb, Jr.'s concerns for global economic justice. In the midst of global diversities, addressing universal virtue seems to be dangerous. However, some global issues are inevitably universal, whether we like it or not. Therefore, I will argue that if we set some guidelines for working together on certain global issues and proceed within the framework of a global ethics of Jen, the result will be a beneficial step toward a better global village -- economically, environmentally and morally.

### Key Words

Confucianism, Global Ethics, Global Democracy, American Empire, Jen (仁)

### Introduction of the author

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