

JEN IN CONFUCIUS'S ANALECTS

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Abstract:

Penulis menjelaskan sentralitas konsep 'Jen' dalam filsafat moral Konfusius dan menguraikan sejumlah besar pemahaman konsep ini agar bisa memahami maknanya yang sebenarnya dalam Analects Konfusius. Selanjutnya, konsep 'Jen' dibandingkan dengan dengan paham 'cinta kasih' dalam Injil Yohanes. Kemudian, penulis mengupas arti 'Jen' dalam relasinya dengan konsep 'Li' dan konsep 'Chun-tzu'. Penulis mengambil kesimpulan bahwa 'Jen' adalah satu kebijakan universal yang inklusif dan yang dapat mengantar orang kepada kesempurnaan moral. Realisasi *Jen*, yang berakar dalam cinta, adalah selalu dalam relasi dengan orang lain.

Kata-Kata Kunci: Confucius, Moral Philosophy, Jen, Li, Chun-Tzu, love.

Introduction

One of the most important themes in Confucius' moral philosophy is *Jen*.¹ Why? First, in his research, Professor Wing-tsit Chan has pointed out that in the Analects², 58 out of 449 chapters are devoted to the discussion of *Jen*, and the word appears 105 times.³ Second, *Jen* in Confucius' Analects consists of various rich ethical meanings which are regarded as the highest attainment of moral cultivation.⁴ Third, to understand it we need wisdom and knowledge alone does not suffice, because *Jen* touches every human being's existence and *Jen* is that which characterizes the person.⁵ Up to now there have been many different interpretations of Confucius' concept of *Jen*.⁶ Chinese thinkers themselves, according to Leo Sherly-Price, have difficulty in plumbing the depth of meaning in this concept, and in adequately rendering into words its many subtle and manifold implications.⁷ And, among the sinologists, there are debates on the etymology of *Jen* itself.⁸ Moreover, Stanislaus Lokuang, states that actually there is no European word which can express exactly and exhaustively the content of *Jen*. That is why the translators have tried to translate it according to a contextual

¹ Timothy Tian-Min Lin, "The Confucian Concept of Jen and the Christian Concept of Love", *Ching Feng* 15 (1972), hlm. 162.

² Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* [Vintage Book] (New York: Random House, 1938), 21-26. Analects is translated from the word "Lun Yue", which means "Selected Sayings". The contents of this book itself make itself make it clear that the compilation took place long after Confucius' death. How far can we regard any of the sayings in the Analects as the actual words of Confucius? In searching for such authentic sayings, we must use certain precautions. Obviously, we shall not find them in Book X, which is simply a collection of traditional ritual maxims, nor in Book XX, which is a collection of sentences from texts of the Su Ching type.

³ Wing-tsit Chan, *Ibid.*, hlm. 26.

⁴ Lin Yue-sehing, "The Evolution of the Pre-Confucian meaning of Jen and the Confucian Concept of Moral Autonomy.", *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974-1975), hlm. 184.

⁵ Chi Pe-Ssu, "Essential Points of Chinese Culture", *Ching Feng* 10 (Winter, 1967), hlm. 7.

⁶ In this case I find that each writer has their own stress in interpreting the Confucian concept of Jen, although what they mean by their interpretations is Jen itself. Each has highlighted one particular aspect of Jen. For example, since the time of James Legge, the word "benevolence" has been commonly used, but this is obviously inadequate. Meanwhile, Fung Yu-lan translates it as "human-heartedness", which comes much nearer to the original meaning (cf. Chi Pe-Ssu, *Ibid.*)

⁷ Leo Sherly-Price, *Ibid.*, hlm. 130.

⁸ Cf. James T. Bretzke, "The Tao (Moral Vision) of the Confucian 'Superior Person': A Contemporary Reflection on an Ethical of Virtue." (manuscript) (Roma, University of Gregoriana, 1992), hlm. 14.

sense.⁹ Considering the importance and richness of Confucius' key-thought, which causes the different interpretations, I intend to research the meaning of *Jen* in Confucius' Analects, to see whether it has the equivalent meaning as Jesus' teaching on love according to John's Gospel. The main question that I am going to answer in this analysis is: "what are the interpretations of Confucian *Jen*?"

Etymological interpretation of Confucian *Jen*

The written form of *Jen* is composed of two different words, i.e., *human being* on the left with *two horizontal lines* on the right.¹⁰ Several Confucian experts have tried to understand this word literally and they look for Confucius' meaning.

***Jen* as moral perfection**

In his research and hypothesis, Stanislo Lokuang says that the literal meaning of *Jen* may be twofold: either the love which joins two human beings together or the humanity which teaches how human beings must behave towards others. But he also adds another meaning, that is, the moral perfection which makes human beings become really worthy of their name.¹¹

Lokuang underlines that Confucius has used *Jen* in these three meanings, but overall, he stresses the third meaning: the moral perfection, because it is with *Jen* that Confucius framed his moral system in a central chapter.¹²

***Jen* as human relationships**

Etymologically, according to Huston Smith, a professor of St. Louis, *Jen* indicates the ideal relationship between human beings, which is rooted in their hearts. Here he does not define *Jen* as the interrelationship between two persons only.¹³

Julia Ching, an internationally known scholar of religion and author of the award-winning volume *Confucianism and Christianity*, does not give any etymological formulation of *Jen*. However, she underlines that in etymology as well as in interpretation, *Jen* is always concerned with human relationships.¹⁴

Another interpretation of *Jen* comes from To Thi Anh. She interprets *Jen* etymologically as the interrelationship between human beings which is based on the same humanity. It is true

⁹ Stanislo Lokuang, *La Sapienza dei Cinesi: Il Confucianismo* (Roma: Officium Libri Catholici, 1957), hlm. 92. Lokuang's opinion is true, in so far we see the different dictionaries' translation of this word (*Jen*). Today's Confucian writers, such as Julia Ching and Leo Suryadinata, try to translate *Jen* with love. Cf. Ernst Schwarz, *Konfuzius: Gespraech des Meisters Kung* (Lun Yue) (Muenchen: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmBh & Co. KG., 1991), 174: "...Kein deutsches Wort kann die volle –und oft auch variierende– Bedeutung des Schriftzeichnes "Ren" wiedergeben..."

¹⁰ Lin Yu-tang, *Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage* (Tokyo-Japan: Kenkyusha Printing Co., Ltd.: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1972), hlm. 1251.

¹¹ If I compare Lokuang's explanation with Yue-Sheng's analysis of the evolution of *Jen*, I think that Lokuang's conclusion of the meaning of the character *Jen* is not based on the evolution of *Jen*.

¹² Stanislo Lokuang, *op. cit.*, hlm. 93.

¹³ Huston Smith, *Agama-agama Manusia* (The Religions of Man) (Trans. Saafroedin Bahan) (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1991), hlm. 210.

¹⁴ Cf. Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Tokyo, New York and St. Francisco: Kodansha International, 1977), hlm. 94: "... In its etymology as well as in the interpretation given it by Confucius, *Jen* is always concerned with the relationship between man and man. It is associated with both loyalty (*chung*) – loyalty to one's own heart and conscience – and reciprocity (*shu*) – respect of, and consideration for others – Analects 4:15). *Jen* is also related to *li* (propriety, ritual). The latter refers more to ritual and social behavior, the former, to the inner orientation of the person..."

humanity, the good will, the interrelationship between human beings. This word expresses humanity in its fulfilment and majesty.¹⁵

These interpretations have the same stress as Ernst Schwarz's comment about Confucian *Jen*.

A contextual interpretation of Confucius' *Jen*

Is *Jen* "goodness" or "benevolence"?

In his comment on the evolution of *Jen*, Lin Yue-sheng of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, suspects that the formal sense of *Jen* did not change until Confucius made *Jen* the central concern of his moral discourse, but that the substantive sense of the word gradually widened to include moral connotations in the course of approximately 200 years from the time of the *Shu-yu-tien* to the time immediately before Confucius.¹⁶

The above opinion is much the same as Arthur Waley's. He says that Confucius' use of the term, a use particular to this book, stands in close relationship to the primitive meaning. In an extremely wide and general sense, *Jen* in the *Analects* means "good". In its meaning (6:28)¹⁷ lie unselfishness and an ability to measure other people's feelings by one's own. However, it cannot be said that *Jen* in the *Analects* simply means "good" in a general sense.¹⁸

Waley states that "good" is the only possible translation of the term *Jen* as it occurs in the *Analects*. No other word is sufficiently general to cover the whole range of its meaning; indeed terms such as "humane", "altruistic", "benevolent" are, in almost every instance, inappropriate, often ludicrously so. To distinguish it from another word, *shan*, Waley translates *Jen* with a capital (Good) and *shan* with a small letter (good).¹⁹

Sung-Hae Kim, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Sogang University in Seoul-Korea, has another opinion. Among the different translations (true virtue, goodness, humanity or benevolence), she chooses "benevolence", for it can denote both an inward

¹⁵ To Thi Anh, *Nilai Budaya Timur dan Barat: Konflik atau Harmoni? (Eastern and Western Cultural Values)* by John Yap Pareira (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1985), hlm. 7.

¹⁶ Lin Yue-sheng, *op. cit.*, hlm. 180-183: Lin based his opinion on Book IV, Chapter 7 of the *Analects*, which consists of different translations and interpretations. First, in his comparative investigation of Chu Hsi, James Legge and Arthur Waley, he arrives at the conclusion that the commentators and translators had to twist the plain language of the statement in order to make their interpretation fit in with their notion of *Jen* as "virtue" or "goodness". Besides, he also states that there was an evolution of the meaning of *Jen* by the times of Confucius. Second, we assume that the substantive sense of *Jen* had not widened to include moral connotations by the times of Confucius, we must assert that Confucius himself changed both the formal sense of *Jen* from "manliness" or "manhood" to "goodness" and the substantive of *Jen* from an amoral sense of the qualities of "ai" and "ching". Such an assertion is contrary to Confucius' profound concern for cultural continuity. Third, we assume that the substantive sense of *Jen* (7:19) had gradually widened to include moral connotations by the time of Confucius carried on this tradition of pondering moral qualities in the search for man's identity that he engaged himself in an intensive discussion of the substantive meaning of *Jen* and in so doing subtly transformed the formal meaning of *Jen* from "manliness" or "manhood" to "goodness", we take recognizance of Confucius' genius in innovating change within tradition, which is a characteristic mark of his thought.

¹⁷ The *Analects* 6:28 should be interpreted in relation to *Analects* 17:6; 1:2 and 4:1, which also speak of *Jen*. Confucius' sayings of *Jen* here stress "humanity" and "goodness".

¹⁸ Cf. Sung-Hae Kim, *The Righteous and the Sage: A Comparative Study on the Ideal Images of Man in Biblical Israel and Classical China* (Seoul: Sogang University Press, 1985), 40-41. Confucius always used the term "shan" (good) in combination with the others, such as "shan jen". He used it to indicate the sage (7:26), the contrast with the bad (7:22; 18:24; 17:6; 20:1). Sung-Hae Kim says that the term "shan" is more frequently used in a descriptive way and does not develop into a clear human image in the *Analects*. But, according to Schwarz' interpretation of "shan", Confucius also used it to indicate "fairness" attitude in relationship with animals (See Ernst Schwarz, *op. cit.*, hlm. 206).

¹⁹ Arthur Waley, *op. cit.*, hlm. 27-29.

human quality and an outward good to others, which is essential to the concept of *Jen*. Implicitly, in “benevolence”, we can also find Good or goodness.²⁰

The interpretation of *Jen* cannot be separated at all from its historical background in earlier Chinese philosophy, because Confucius himself kept cultural continuity in his moral teachings (cf. 7:11)²¹ and the meaning of Confucian *Jen* itself evolved. However, this key-word at least consists of goodness and benevolence.

***Jen* is inclusive**

It must be noted that *Jen* in Confucius’ *Analects* is not only a continuation of the traditional concept of *Jen*, because its meaning continued to broaden. Confucius himself broadened the meaning of *Jen* to “general virtue”.²² It denotes an inclusive moral virtue as well as the highest moral attainment that a person can achieve in life by human effort.²³

What are the all-inclusive moral virtues? According to Confucius, they are filial piety (17:21), wisdom (5:18), propriety (12:1)²⁴, courage (14:5), and loyalty (5:18; 18:1). Confucius’ idea of the inclusiveness of *Jen*, according to Lin Yue-sheng, is explained more clearly in the *Analects* 4:2²⁵; 4:3²⁶ and 4:4.²⁷

If *Jen* includes all-inclusive moral virtues, this means that it precludes all evil (4:4). Timothy Lin identified the person of *Jen* with the sage or the superior person (*chuen-tzu*) possessing all moral virtues; the person of *Jen* “never abandons *Jen* even for the lapse of a single meal. In moments of haste, they act according to it. In times of difficulty or confusion, they act according to it” (4:5).

Confucius’ concept of *Jen* entails a notion of the uninterrupted dynamic of moral life. *Jen* can be cultivated and developed from the natural resources of a person’s nature. If a someone desires *Jen*, they can cultivate and develop it at every moment of their life. However, this developing *Jen* has not reached the highest level of moral excellence, because moral excellence is developed rather than generically changed from the distinctive nature of the

²⁰ Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, hlm. 37. Cf. Soejono Soemargono, *Sejarah Ringkas Filsafat Cina (Sejak Confucius sampai Han Fei Tzu)* [Trans. from Fung Yu Lan, *The Short History of Chinese Philosophy (From Confucius to Han Fei Tzu)*] (Yogyakarta: Liberty, 1990), 54. Here Fung Yu Lan says that Confucius also used *Jen* to indicate “human-heartedness”.

²¹ *Analects* 7:1: Confucius said: “I have transmitted what was taught to me without making up anything of my own. I have been faithful to and loved the Ancients.”

²² Timothy Tian-min Lin, *op. cit.*, hlm. 162-163. Here Lin said that Confucius broadened the meaning of *Jen* into general virtue. Meanwhile Lin Yue-sheng said that in the new usage of *Jen*, it denotes an all-inclusive moral virtues. But here I find a new dimension in Confucius’ usage of *Jen*, which we will be seeing in the following pages of this essay.

²³ Lin-Yue-sheng, *op. cit.*, hlm. 184. Our question now is: “What does Confucius mean by man’s highest moral attainment?” Here Lin Yue-sheng gives two important reasons: first, to refer to the distinctive quality of man; second, for Confucius the highest moral attainment is the furthest and perfect development of man’s distinctive quality.

²⁴ Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979), hlm. 6-7. In his interpretation of the *Analects* 12:1, Tu Wei-ming says that what Confucius means by “to conquer yourself” here is in fact closely linked to the concept of “self-cultivation”. What Confucius means by “to return to propriety” here is to bring oneself in line with “*li*”. Instead of passive submission, it implies active participation. According to Tu Wei-ming, the best way to approach the concept of *Jen* is to regard it first of all as the virtue of the highest order in the value system of Confucianism. In other words, *Jen* gives “meaning” to all the other ethical norms that perform integrative functions in a Confucian society.

²⁵ Here Confucius describes *Jen* as having a very important role in human life. With *Jen*, man can endure adversity and with *Jen* man can enjoy prosperity. The man of *Jen* rests content with *Jen*.

²⁶ Arthur Waley uses the word “like” for “*ai*”, but Ernst Schwarz uses the word “love” for “*ai*”. In this case, I choose “love” for the word “*ai*”.

²⁷ Only the man of *Jen* is considered of capable of loving (*ai*) men, capable of hating them.

person; every stage of moral cultivation and development can be conceived as a stage of potential moral excellence; hence statement that “as soon as we want *Jen*, we find that it is at our side.”²⁸

In his research on Confucius’ teaching of the inclusiveness of *Jen*, Stanislo Lokuang departs from the Analects 12:1, 2, 3 and 13:19. In the answers to his disciples (Yen Hui, Tschou Kong, Sse Ma-niu, Fan-tsche), Confucius always gave a new explanation of the same word (*Jen*). This indicates that *Jen* is inclusive of all virtues. *Jen* in Confucius’ mind represents all the virtues and nurtures the point of departure and arrival at sanctity. Lokuang’s understanding of the inclusiveness of *Jen* also influenced his conception of *Jen* as moral perfection.²⁹

***Jen* as the universal virtue³⁰**

The word “universal” here does not derive from Confucius himself.³¹ The universal virtue makes the Confucian person³² fully and perfectly human, that which embraces all other virtues.³³

What is the meaning of *Jen* as the universal virtue? First, *Jen* is universal in the sense that it is applicable to everyone.³⁴ According to Julia Ching, *Jen*, which also has been translated as “charity”, is a universal virtue which embraces and animates all other virtues. Confucius’ teaching has transformed *Jen* into a universal virtue that which can be practiced by all.³⁵ Second, *Jen* is at the very root of human goodness, and all his other virtues are but expressions and aspects of it. *Jen* will express itself through the human medium in loyalty to the human being’s true and highest nature, and in unselfish faithfulness to “whatsoever is true and lovely.”³⁶

The universality of *Jen* can be seen in Confucius’ answer when somebody asked him about *Jen*. He always gave a somewhat different answer. To the disciple Fan Chih, he says it means to “love people” (12:21). To Yen Hui, he speaks of *Jen* in terms of subduing oneself and returning to propriety (12:1).³⁷

²⁸ Lin Yue-sheng, *op. cit.*, hlm. 185-186.

²⁹ Stanislaus Lokuang, *op. cit.*, hlm. 93-94.

³⁰ Actually “te” in the Chinese language also means “virtue”. But, after one has read Confucius’ sayings about *Jen* in the Analects, it is still hard to see how it can be defined more closely than as “virtue” or “complete virtue”. The character “te” rather denotes the equalities of a person or thing, whether good or bad. In the Analects the characters “te” and “Jen” sometimes seem quite interchangeable; this is especially clear in 14:5, when we compare 6:20 with 12:21 (See H.G. Creel, *op. cit.*, hlm. 310-311).

³¹ Julia Ching, *op. cit.*, hlm. 93. In her comparative studies on Christianity and Confucianism, Ching writes that *Jen* offers certain parallels to the Christian virtue of love of charity (“agape”). Here she describes *Jen* as the universal virtue.

³² The Confucian person is one – in their life and in their heart.

³³ The universality of *Jen* seems to be based on the ultimate reference of Confucius: Heaven. Why? Since the raw material of humanity or “te” was conceived as an endowment from *Heaven*, everyone had the responsibility of cultivating this given humanity (Cf. Sung-Hae Kim, *op.cit.*, hlm. 62). This reason is based on Confucius’ saying in the Analects 7:3; 7:6 and 7:23, which highlight that “Heaven is the author of virtue.”

³⁴ Cf. Timothy Tian-min Lin, *Ibid.*, hlm. 164. Lin affirms his opinion by quoting Wang Yang-ming’s understanding of Confucius’ *Jen*.

³⁵ Hans Kueng and Julia Ching, *op. cit.*, hlm. 93 and 109.

³⁶ Leo Sherley-Price, *op. cit.*, hlm. 132-133.

³⁷ Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, hlm. 52: The Analects 12:1 is the famous definition of *Jen*, and here again we see the ideal of harmony between virtue and refinement, benevolence and the rites. Lin Yue-sheng, *op. cit.*, 194. Here Lin gives a critical comment on Analects 12:1. When Yen Hui asked about *Jen*, Confucius said: “To master oneself and return to li is *Jen*.” This statement concerning *Jen* should be understood as signifying: “To master the cultivation of a naturally endowed moral quality within the structure of the proper social and ritual norms is the way to achieve moral excellence.” Many translators of the Analects misunderstood this key passage. James

So, *Jen* is the universal virtue in the sense that it is also love, which can be applied to everyone and it is the basis for all goodness.

Is *Jen* love?

The main question that we will answer here is: “Can Confucius’ *Jen* in the Analects be identified with love?”

Several Confucian translators and writers nowadays claim that *Jen* in the Analects means charity or carità.³⁸ The main reason which causes them to translate *Jen* as love or charity, is the Analects 12:22: “It is to love people.”³⁹ According to the great Confucian thinker, Mencius (321-289?), *Jen* here means affection and love. The person of *Jen* loves each and everyone (7A:46). He also states that such a person “extends their love from those they love to those they does not love” (7B:1).⁴⁰ For Timothy Lin, *Jen* also means “to love people”. More explicitly, one should love all extensively and be intimate with all persons of *Jen*” (1:4).

In addition, the Analects 15:23 (“Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you”) and the Analects 12:2 (“Do not do to others what you would not like yourself.”) will be a strong argument for understanding *Jen* as love. How come? From these three quotations (12:2; 12:12 and 15:23) we know that what Confucius meant by *Jen* is the love of others.⁴¹ Moreover, some Confucian interpreters, such as Julia Ching and Leo Suryadinata, say that Analects 15:23 is “the negative Golden Rule.”⁴²

Legge translated it as “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue.” (Legge, *The Chinese Classics 1*, 250). And Arthur Waley rendered it as “He who can himself submit to ritual is Good.” (Cf. Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, 162). As a matter of fact, Confucius’ answer to Yen Hui stands for the natural and creative tension between *Jen* and *Li*. This means that *Jen* also has an intimate relation with *Li*. *Jen* cannot exist by itself. Cf. Ernest Schwarz, *op. cit.*, hlm. 216-217: In his comment on the Analects 12:1, Schwarz describes that *Jen* does not only have relation with *Li*, but *Jen* also has a universal meaning. Here Confucius asked Yen Hui to practice “Self-limitation” and internalization of ethical norms, so that *Jen* can be realized in relation with other people.

³⁸ In her comparative study, Julia Ching has a tendency to translate *Jen* into “charity” or “love”. She also looks for arguments to strengthen her opinion. Fausto Tomassini, the translator of Confucian texts, also translates *Jen* into “carità” from the beginning of his translation (4:2; 4:1; 12:1). Here Botto gives no reason why he translates *Jen* into “carità” [See Oscar Botto, *Classici delle religioni: Le religioni orientali* (Torino: Corso Siracusa, 1977), hlm. 129, 140, 193.]

³⁹ Ernst Schwarz also translates 12:22 into “Die Menschen lieben.” Cf. S. Soemargono, *op. cit.*, hlm. 53-56. According to Fung Yu Lan, the essence of a human’s duty is to love others. The man, who can really love others is the man who can fulfill his duty in society.

⁴⁰ Hans Kueng and Julia Ching, *op. cit.*, hlm. 68-70.

⁴¹ Ernst Schwarz, *op. cit.*, 192: Talking about his part (12:2), we should pay attention to the Analects 4:15 and 12:12, which has an intimate relation with *Jen*. The realization of *Jen* is always in connection with “chung” (loyalty). According to Dschu Hsi, with loyalty one can do a lot of good things for other people, for parents, the old, the superiors. Loyalty is *Jen* in practice. We can see in the end of Chapter VI of the Analects that the realization of *Jen* is always in a social relationship with others, and we try to help them to reach goodness.

⁴² S. Soemargono, *op. cit.*, hlm. 54-56: The realization of *Jen* is in paying attention to others. Here Fung Yu-lan also interprets that this “negative Golden Rule” is “shu”, which can be translated as altruism. This “negative Golden Rule” can be translated positively as “Do unto others what you like them to do unto you.” This is a positive realization of *Jen*, which Confucius said “chung” (loyalty). It must be noted that “chung” and “shu” are also the principle of *Jen*. So, the realization of “chung” and “shu” can be interpreted as the realization of *Jen*, although “chung” and “shu” have no essence as *Jen*. Tseng Tzu, a disciple of Confucius, has underlined that Confucius’ way is simply this: “chung” and “shu” (cf. 4:15). According to Sung-Hae Kim, “chung” and “shu” were considered the main thread binding together the teaching of Confucius. They are the guide for practice or methodology of *Jen*. The close relationship between *Jen* with “chung” and “shu” is described in 4:5b (See Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, 44).

What kind of love does Confucius mean here? Timothy Lin states that here *Jen* is a love with distinction. Confucius maintained that one must have intimate rather than ordinary love for the persons of *Jen*; one must “repay hatred with uprightness and repay virtue with virtue” (14:36).⁴³ Sometimes the Confucian interpretation of *Jen* is called “a graded love”.⁴⁴ It must be noted, according to Luigi Magnani, the Confucian love of others is not the virtue that requires us to sacrifice ourselves for others, but is instead a form of egoism. This means that this love must be realized towards friends, relatives and others who have done good things for us. We can be indifferent towards others and if they do “*minus malum*”, we can respond to them with justice (14:36). Magnani underlines that Confucian love has no other motive, except personal interest and utility; these are necessary in order that we can maintain good relationships with others (1:1; 15:19).⁴⁵

Our question now is: “How is *Jen* realized?”

Jen and the relationship between young and old

In speaking about the realization of *Jen* as love, Confucius reminds his disciples that veneration has an important place (5:25).⁴⁶ There are two reasons why Confucius himself was aware of this importance, *First*, he understood that the veneration of the old by the young is also a task of Heaven. *Second*, realistically human beings can develop their personal character when they are still young (cf. 17:26).⁴⁷

Lokuang comments that the old, who have fallen into misery because they lack their children’s help, need veneration which naturally includes compassion. That is why society as a whole, and each member of a large family, should think of the old who are in misery. Attention and respect in a family is also a sign of love. Respect is a means which deadens the young.⁴⁸

On the other hand, the young should be respected as well (9:22); such attention should be accompanied by admiration and understanding⁴⁹ (cf. 1:2).

But this does not mean that we put young people in a condition of slavery. Why not? Because in the Confucian tradition there is a type of friendship which links the young and the old with affectionate fraternity.

Jen and friendship⁵⁰

Faithfulness in friendship is a distinguishing mark of Tseng-tze, because he considered friendship as a serious and sacred thing. This is not only to satisfy sentimental needs, but also

⁴³ Timothy Tian-min Lin, *op. cit.*, hlm. p. 165.

Cfr. Julia Ching, *op. cit.*, hlm. 95. Ching underlines that the Confucian interpretation of JEN as universal love, however, differs from that of some other early school of thought, especially the Mohist, that was founded by Mo-tzu. Mo-tzu advocated a love of all without distinction. But the followers of Confucius emphasized the need of discernment, even distinction.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Cf. James Bretzke, *op. cit.*, hlm. 16: Here Bretzke says that JEN expresses itself as a universal love for all humankind, yet it is a love which is definitely not equal towards all. However, JEN is not restricted to the family group (father-son), but is present as well in the relationships of duty and service to one’s nation and to society,

⁴⁵ Luigi Magnani, *Il Libro delle Sentenze di Confucio*, (Parma: istituto Missioni Estere, 1927), hlm. 23-27.

⁴⁶ Cf. Analects 6:28 and 17:6.

⁴⁷ Ernst Schwarz, *op. cit.*, hlm. 212.

⁴⁸ Stanislao Lokuang, *op. cit.*, hlm. 111-112.

⁴⁹ Stanislao Lokuang, *Ibid.* The interpretation of this part, according to Earnst Schwarz, should be connected with 11:25.

⁵⁰ Cf. Analects 1:1b and 12:24, where friendship is mentioned only in the reference to the “chun-tzu” in the Analects.

to reach moral and spiritual finality, although he also found difficulties in gaining perfection.⁵¹

However, in friendship there should be an immutable faithfulness. Social and financial conditions must not change the affection in friendship. Poor persons who become rich and famous and then forget their friends in poverty, are not worthy friends. The principal obligation here is reciprocal attention in difficult situations. Without this faithfulness in friendship, there is no real friendship (16:4).⁵²

Jen and *Li* ⁵³

The relation between *Jen* and *Li* cannot be denied. “If a person is not *Jen*, what have they to do with *Li*? If they are not *Jen*, what have they to do with music?” (3:3). What does this mean? In this teaching, Confucius emphasises that rites and ritual music are not external or formal, or as Scharwz observes “*Seelenlose Handlungen*”, but are also an expression of an ethical and internalized value.

Jen can be seen also in the Practice of *Li*.⁵⁴ Here Confucius emphasized the importance of sincerity or the internal motivation of a person’s actions. One’s actions must be in accord with one’s motivation.⁵⁵ Confucius himself said that those who do not know *Li* cannot take their stand (20:3). In the last chapter of the Analects, Confucius noted that *Li* has a great influence in the realization of ethical attitudes, which is also related to sacred and social norms. Briefly, the person of *Jen* could be recognized in their practice of *Li*.

The interdependence between *Jen* and *Li* is very clear. Without *Jen*, both propriety and music were regarded as empty (cf. 3:3 and 17:11).⁵⁶ According to Sung-Hae Kim, *Jen* must always be structured and expressed by *Li*, and herein lies the importance of cultural education and refinement. Besides, there is a subtle balance between *Jen* as the highest completion of virtue and *Li* as the highest expression of culture.⁵⁷

Our question now is: “Why should *Jen* be related to *Li*?” Lin Yu-sheng argues that *Jen* cannot be developed by understanding natural phenomena alone. *Jen* is a quality different from the intellect; it is a protean quality of virtue which can only be cultivated and developed in inter-human relationships. That is why *Li* as the norm of social and ritual conduct must be presupposed.⁵⁸

The realization and development of *Jen* depends on *Li* too. But this does not mean that *Jen* is the same as *Li*, although those who do not learn *Li* cannot fulfil themselves (cf. Analects 16:13). Why is this so? This is because *Li* is only a means to bring human beings to *Jen*. Rooted in *Jen*, *Li* can be changed and reformed. In his analysis, Lin Yu-sheng states that in the actual working situation, the majority of the rules of *Li* must be suitable for the cultivation of *Jen*.⁵⁹

⁵¹ Stanislaw Lokuang, *Ibid.*, hlm. 112.

⁵² *Ibid.*, hlm. 113-114.

⁵³ The Chinese word for *Li* “ritual” is related etymologically to the words “worship” and “sacrificial vessel” with a definite religious overtone. Today this word is always translated as propriety.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ernst Schwarz, *op. cit.*, hlm. 186. We can also find this thought of Confucius in the Analects 3:4 and 17:11. In 17:11 Confucius also taught about the spiritualization and internalization of the rites.

⁵⁵ Timothy Tian-min Lin, *op. cit.*, hlm. 165.

⁵⁶ Cf. The Analects 8:8: “Let a man be first incited by the Songs, then given a firm footing by the study of ritual, and finally perfected by music.” What Confucius meant by music here is ritual music with sacral character.

⁵⁷ Cf. Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, hlm. 61-62.

⁵⁸ Cf. the explanation of 1. 1. 1 and 1. 1. 2, which also says that etymologically JEN consists of a social dimension.

⁵⁹ Sung-Hae Kim, *Ibid.*, hlm. 196.

Jen and *Li* must be developed in five human relations that are called *wu lun* (five relationships of five humanities)⁶⁰: that is, the relationships between king and minister, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and the relationship between friends. A son has the duty to respect his parents (*Hsiao* or “filial piety”) and he has a duty to foster fraternity with his own brothers (*ti* or “fraternity”). These two principles are based on *Jen*, and should be developed in social relationships.⁶¹

However, the relationship between *Jen* and *Li* cannot be separated, because *Li* is also a means to realize *Jen*. *Jen* is like the soul and *Li* is like the body of the soul. From some texts in Confucius’ *Analects* we know that *Jen* in the *Analects* also means love, which should be expressed in relationships with others and with *Li*, because *Jen* itself presupposes them.

Jen and *chun-tzu*⁶²

What is *chun-tzu*? Literally *chun-tzu* means “ruler’s son”, that is, a relative of a ruler, and therefore a member of the nobility. In this sense it contrasts with *Hsiao jen*, “little persons”, plebeians.⁶³ Nevertheless, in this Confucian period, the literal meaning of *chun-tzu* changed, because not all the ruler’s sons lived according to this name.⁶⁴

What does Confucius mean by *chun-tzu*? In the *ANALECTS* 4:11, he described *chun-tzu* as identified with a person who reveres virtue (*Analects* 14:5). How does a person revere virtue? One of his disciples asked this very question in 12:10, and Confucius’ answer is very important for understanding the relationship between the basic moral endowment and the other virtues⁶⁵. Like *chung* and *hsin*.⁶⁶ Besides, *chuen-tzu* is free from worries and fears (12:4) and helps others to realize what is good in them (12:16). In fact *chuen-tzu* never departs from the way of *Jen*. The way to establish *Jen* is described in the *Analects* 1:2b.⁶⁷ From here we can know that what Confucius meant by *chuen-tzu* has a very close relationship with his teaching on *Jen*.

⁶⁰ Schwarz interprets that children’s obedience to their parents arises from their dependent-attitude on their parents and the weak to the strong. This obedience also develops in the education field. And, this “familiar relation” becomes a socio-political relationship.

⁶¹ Lasiyo, “Etika Menurut Ajaran Confucius” (Ethics according to the Confucius’ teaching) in *Basis 7* (1988): hlm. 252-253.

⁶² Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, hlm. 33: The term “chun-tzu” occurs 107 times in the *Analects* and consistently signifies the ideal that Confucius placed before his disciples. The number of occurrences itself indicate that “chun-tzu” was the central image that Confucius expounded for his disciples. Kim translates “chun-tzu” as “noble man”. Arthur Waley has translated “chun-tzu” into “gentleman”. Meanwhile, James Legge translates “chun-tzu” as “superior man”. And James Bretzke translates “chun-tzu” as “the Superior Person”. However, it must be noted that the original meaning of “chun-tzu” is “a ruler’s son”.

The reason why J. Bretzke does not use terms such as “the noble man”, “the Gentleman” and “the Great Person” is because of their potentially misleading aristocratic connotation. But he also realizes that this term (“the Superior Person”) could also in turn be misconstrued if it were understood in the sense of arrogance, or greater innate worth, or some similar misconception. (Cf. James Bretzke, *op. cit.*, hlm. 6).

⁶³ H. G. Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese way*. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960), hlm. 78: when Confucius speaks of the “chun-tzu”, he is referring to a man who has those qualities that an aristocrat ought ideally to possess, a man of true nobility. “chun-tzu” is not only to indicate “a ruler’s son”.

⁶⁴ I.G. Wibowo, “Pandangan Confucius tentang Manusia” (“Confucius’ Concept of Man”) in *Driyakara 2* (1978), hlm. 54.

According to H. G. Creel, Confucius changed the content of “chun-tzu”, because everybody can become “chun-tzu”, if his attitude is good, kind, just and social.

⁶⁵ According to E. Schwarz, what Confucius meant by virtue here was not the richness, but the existential values of life.

⁶⁶ Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, hlm. 40-43.

⁶⁷ E. Schwarz, *op. cit.*, hlm. 174-175: The “chuen-tzu” has broadened the familial relationship into every situation which is based on the root, that is the equal humanity.

What are the basic characteristics of *chuen-tzu*? I.G. Wibowo has classified *chuen-tzu* into six characteristics, which are based on the Analects of Confucius. First, *chuen-tzu* is a person who does not easily change their mind, but is calm and patient (cf. 13:27). Second, *chuen-tzu* is peaceful, modest and humble. Here *chuen-tzu* always gives respect to others. Third, a *chuen-tzu* person is a harmonized/integrated character, both within the self and in relation to others (3:7). Fourth, *chuen-tzu* is faithful to people who give them confidence (8:6). Fifth, *chuen-tzu* has to be aware of their shortcomings, so that they can receive criticism from others (1:8). And sixth, *chuen-tzu* is independent, because they have the capability of doing many things (8:6).⁶⁸

Briefly, *chuen-tzu* in the Analects is the person who has harmonized virtue and culture, *Jen* and *Li*.⁶⁹ *Chuen-tzu*, according to Antonio S. Cua, is a person in whom *Jen* and *Li* are embodied in personal harmony.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Jen is *Jen*. No one European word can perfectly express the basic essence of *Jen*. Why so? This is because while Confucius tried to transmit the traditional meaning of *Jen* as he received it from the ancients (7:11), he also broadened this traditional meaning with a larger and deeper content.⁷¹

So, what is the basic essence of *Jen* in Confucius' Analects? *Jen* here is not only a universal virtue, but it is also an inclusive virtue, which can lead human beings to moral perfection. The realization of *Jen*, which rooted in love, is always in relationship with others. However, *Jen* in the Analects also means the love of others, and stresses the human aspect. *Jen* has two important elements, i.e., *chung* and *shu*, which play an important role in keeping harmonious relationships with others. The practice of *Jen* is also based on *Li*. *Jen* and *Li* should be developed in *wu-lun* – the “five relationships of five humanities”. And, a concrete embodiment of *Jen* can be seen also in *chuen-tzu*.

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⁶⁸ I.G. Wibowo, *op. cit.*, hlm. 54-56.

⁶⁹ Sung-Hae Kim, *op. cit.*, hlm. 61.

⁷⁰ Antonio S. Cua, “Reflections on the Structure of Confucian Ethics” in *Philosophy East and West* 21 (1971), hlm. 125-140.

⁷¹ Tu Wei-ming, *Ibid.*, hlm. 6. From his interpretation of the Analects 12:1, Tu Wei-ming says that *Jen* is probably still the most difficult to grasp. Although it has been freely translated as benevolence, charity, humanity, love, human-heartedness, and goodness, none is really satisfactory. Here he has the same idea as Lin Yue-sheng.

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