

# BETWEEN CONFUCIANISM AND ISLAM: THE COMPARISON IN THE CONCEPT OF MAN AND ITS RELATIONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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©Ontario International Development Agency ISSN: 1923-6654 (print)

ISSN 1923-6662 (online). Available at <http://www.ssrn.com/link/OIDA-Intl-Journal-Sustainable-Dev.html>

**Abstract:** This paper is concerned with Confucianism and Islamic ideas in the concept of man. An effort has been made to compare these 2 great civilizations in order to find out four relations which between human being and nature; human being and humanized nature (society); human being and other human; human being and himself in order to boost sustainable development which constitutes an important aspect of the great commonness which they are sharing. The study undertaken here comparison between Confucianism and Islamic ideas under the concept of man—will deal with some basic doctrines in Confucianism and Islam such as the sayings of the Analects, the Quran and the Hadith. The attempt is made to see what kind of ideas of the concept of man in these 2 civilizations is eager to build a great moral character from inside out of human. Also it shows us how these ideas helped two civilizations leading their society to the prosperity in the ancient time and today. Human being's power could have good effect to lead the society into a sustainable development; also it could have dangerous effect which we can find out from the present reality. The current natural and social warnings keep telling us that human being's incorrect behaviors has put the whole society into the edge of survival crisis. Comparing to our ancestors, we may have advanced technology, but they had more balanced and harmony society for their people. It is time for us to learn what they looked at human being in their mind and what they expect human for a sustainable society. In addition to this great commonness between them, Confucianism and

Islamic ideas of the concept of man also offers the great spiritual power which people desperately need it today.

**Keywords:** the concept of man; sustainable development; Confucianism; Islam

## INTRODUCTION

A variety of environmental problems now affect the entire world. It brought the whole human being facing the survival crisis. As globalization continues and the earth's natural processes transform local problems into international issues, few societies are being left untouched by major environmental problems. Global climate change, the depletion of the ozone layer, desertification, deforestation, the loss of the planet's biological diversity and the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and chemicals are all environmental problems that touch every nation and adversely affect the lives and health of their populations. Every environmental problem has causes, numerous effects, and most importantly, a solution. Under the circumstance, human being starts to ask why high developed technology brought environmental deterioration; why more knowledge, but still more people feel spiritual emptiness. Furthermore, the reaction between social problems and natural deterioration worsen the global environmental situation.

However, human beings not only play as the victim in this global environmental deterioration, but also

the cause. Almost in every environmental problem, the trace of human beings can be found more or less. The Earth Charter<sup>1</sup> mentioned in its preamble: “We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.”

With highly developed technology, natural resources seemed easily to be obtained; endless desire of human beings entire exposed. National and international wars are provoked by the resources scrambling, some even incited international political conflicts. The Earth Charter Preamble stresses that “we must realize that when the basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.” Now, we have to face its consequence. From the government to individual, almost everyone in the world starts to realize how important a sustainable environment is for human being to live with, and seeking the way to rebuild a sustainable environment became a mutual target.

The phrase “sustainable development” has been bandied about since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, focused attention on the Earth’s degraded state. The OECD mentioned that: “Sustainable development gives us a new way of thinking through and managing human impact on the world – one that can generate long-lasting benefits for us all.”<sup>2</sup> The Earth Charter emphasized: “We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by

which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.”<sup>3</sup> Obviously, the alliance is not just about nations; all the positive elements for achieving sustainable development, either existing in the present or available in history will be concerned.

Islamic and Chinese history both gave us the positive examples which proved their achievements of taking control of being with nature. Farming was not the only purpose for leaning knowledge. Future more, the ethics had been used in teaching people how can be moral. Based on the understanding of both ideology, moral become the reason for gaining stronger principle in self-control.

In both Islamic and Chinese ideology, human development is always concerned as the key to a sustainable development. With positive human development, social and natural environment both could be improved positively. It is the reason in Islam human being is given the role as *khalifa*(trustee). The Qur’an says: “Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth’ (translated by Yusuf Ali)”<sup>4</sup>. Also Confucius devoted his entire life in cultivating people’s moral character in order to set up a prosperous society.

Admonishment from the Confucianism claims that human beings should obey the seasonal contraindication. As the most influential thinking which emphasizes the social sustainable development as well as human development, Confucius never completely prohibited people from haunting or killing animals; but should acquire from nature in appropriate time and appropriate way. Confucius said: “it is not *Xiao* (filial piety) if a man fell one tree or hunt one animal at inappropriate time.”<sup>5</sup>It is impossible to completely ban people obtaining from nature, but how to control the desire is the question. Coincidentally, the Prophet Muhammad always repeated that human being should have kindness to nature. He prohibited killing baby animals and cutting small plants. He clearly claimed : “Human beings must treat all other living creatures with love and kindness.”<sup>6</sup>

Is it just a coincidence for two great civilizations having this common idea towards nature? Or maybe both the ancient wisdoms have deep concern in cultivating human’s character? Since human being

<sup>1</sup> In 1987, the United Nation’s World Commission on Environment and Development issued a call for the creation of a charter that would set forth fundamental principles for sustainable development. An attempt to draft such a charter failed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. It began in 1994 and worked outside the United Nations. Several of the world’s wealthiest and most powerful men crafted their own document, which they named the Earth Charter. According to its founders, the Earth Charter is “a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century.” Superficially, the Charter appears to be a noble concept designed to end social and environmental tensions around the world.

<sup>2</sup> OECD Insights. Executive Director, [Stakeholder Forum: Sustainable Development](#). 2 Dec 2008

<sup>3</sup> The Earth Charter Preamble

<sup>4</sup> The Qur’an:2.30

<sup>5</sup> *Confucius’ Family Sayings. Disciple Tour: 《孔子家语.弟子行》*: “断一树, 杀一兽, 不以其时, 非孝也。”

<sup>6</sup> *The Sahih Bukhari*.

became the main cause for sustainable development, the definition of concept of man in Islam and Confucianism become necessary.

As a philosophical issue, “the concept of man” has various definitions based on different philosophers’ understanding in history.

Usually, the current religions such as Islam, Christian, and Buddhism...have the concept of “the God’s creation”. It is the main idea from early philosophical system. According to the medieval Christian’s theory, Adam and Eva are the first couple who are created by God. But for eating the forbidden fruit, they defied the will of God and were punished and spelled out of heaven. Since then, all human beings are guilty once they are born. Christian thinks that human beings are half sacred for the connection with God, and half guilty for violating the will of God, or the creature of “half angle half evil”.

The second kind of definition of the concept of man from the modern bourgeois philosophers which they used it to against the theology of religious is that human is nature of man. They defined the essence of human from the human’s nature attribute. The humanist of naturalism from French materialisms regarded human being as animal but has stronger ability in sense. They thought the essence of human being is human himself, or is human’s nature. Julien Offray de La Mettrie claimed that human is machine.<sup>7</sup> Claude Adrien Helvetius regarded the human mind as a blank slate, but free not only from innate ideas but also from innate natural dispositions and propensities.<sup>8</sup> The modern bourgeois rationalism raised human from physical entity to psychological entity. They thought that the essence of human is rational. And the rationality is the freedom. Immanuel Kant thought human being is only liberated from control of sense and follow command of self—rational, human being can be regarded as man who controls himself.<sup>9</sup> From perspective of humanism, Feuerbach against Hegel for his definition of man as man is self-consciousness. He thought that as an emotional creature man is just an essence of nature.<sup>10</sup>

In Tang Zhen’s (Chinese philosopher) new book---“*Acceptance and Selection*”<sup>11</sup>, he claimed a new idea

<sup>7</sup> Cosma Rohilla Shalizi, translated: by Bussey. *L’Homme Machine*, 31 March 1995; marxists.org

<sup>8</sup> Egon Wellesz. Frederick Sternfeld. *The Age of Enlightenment 1745-1790*. Oxford University Press

<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Palgrave Macmillan

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach. *The Essence of Religion*. 2006. Kessinger Publishing

<sup>11</sup> Tang Zhen (2009.08). *Acceptance &*

as: Man is the reflection of his objects. In his description, human beings have four relations with his objects: the feeling which formed by the interaction between the original nature and individual. It is called the first object relation; the second object relation is the state of perception and representation which based on the interaction between humanized nature (society) and individual; the third one is the state of Consciousness and language which based on the interaction between individual and other human beings; the last one is the state of self-reflection which is the interaction between individual and self. Tang explains that before the interaction between human and his objects, man is just a blank sheet of paper. There is nothing meaningful. Only in the progress of the interaction with his objects, man formed his meaning of being gradually.

As inspired by the four-relation theory, the researcher would like compare the ideology of human development between Islam and Confucianism in order to prove the positive ethical effect for sustainable development. Following Tang Zhen’s new interpretation, four objects reflect human beings are the original nature, humanized nature (society), the other human beings and self. Tang’s theory implies that a healthy sustainable environment reflects a healthy human development; on the other hand, a crisis-hidden environment or society shows a problematic human ideology. Ancient balanced environmental situation declares that with correct guidance in human development, it will hopefully help in solving the environmental problem and social problem as well.

Having a harmonious relationship between human beings is one of the aims in Confucianism. Confucius encouraged people to always judge people by putting themselves into other people’s situation; otherwise he should try to be tolerant to the mistakes. Confucius regarded *Ren* as the core idea of his ideological system. There are fifty eight chapters in *The Analects* which mentioned “*Ren*” and the word appeared for one hundred and five times in the book. The original meaning of *Ren* is about the relation between human beings; therefore, we can comprehend that one of the purposes of the study of *Ren* is the study of relation between human beings. Mencius said: “the one with *Ren* will have love, with good manner will have respect; the one who loves people will always be loved by others; and who respects others will always be respected by others.”<sup>12</sup> It explains the meaning

*Selection*(China’s Social Science publishing house)

<sup>12</sup> Mencius Jin Xin

Shang: “仁者爱人，有礼者敬人，爱人者，人恒爱之；敬人者，人恒敬之”

why human being needs to love and respect the others. The purpose is to keep a harmonious situation.

*Ren* has two principles in dealing with the relation between human beings. First is “Forgiveness”. Confucius said: “the work you dislike to do, do not give it to the others.”<sup>13</sup> This is a basic requirement in relation between people. It means people should not order others by force; furthermore, people should not assign the work he doesn’t want to do to the others.

Another principle is “loyalty”. Confucius said: “if you want to stand firmly, you should help the others being firmly; if you want to succeed, then first you should let others succeed.” This step for human being’s relationship shows that for achieving the harmony between human beings, people should use kindness to take care of the community, to benefit people and to make the others happy.

The relation between human beings is an important sign for social development; it is the foundation for a stable social development. The ideas such as Forgiveness, tolerance, Loyalty which Confucianism emphasizes above are Confucian ideology for human being to keep a healthy relationship between each other.

Maybe Muslims have different levels of sincerity to Allah, and it selects human beings into different level in front of Allah, but hierarchy is not allowed in the real world. Islam put an emphasis on equality in sustainable development. People never should disdain the others because of his sincerity to Allah. No matter rich or poor, leader or worker, people are equal according to Islamic *Shari’ah* (law). Thus, the communication between Muslims is asked in egalitarian. No matter in the Muslim family or a Muslim society or among different believers, Islam asks people must respect the others.

Muslims believe that human beings are created by Allah—the only God; everyone in this world is an offspring of Adam who is regarded as the first human Allah created. From this perspective, Islam considers the entire human beings no difference but a whole family. Therefore, respecting Allah and loving human become the important values in Islam. “Respecting Allah “shows the harmony between human being and his creator; “loving people “shows the harmony between human beings. Although Islam is misinterpreted as prejudice, ignorance, extremist, terrorist and fundamental religion by western media since the mid-last century, still, the Qur’an and *Hadith* is able to testify the truth about Islam. The Prophet Muhammad said that: “to love the others just

<sup>13</sup> *The Analects: Yan Yuan*: 《论语·颜渊》：“己所不欲，勿施于人。在邦无怨，在家无怨。”

like loving yourself, then it could be possible for you to be a real believer.”<sup>14</sup> It shows that the real faith of Islam is to love the others just like loving self. The Prophet Muhammad also said: “Muslim should love and take care of each other, because they are together just like one body. If any organ of the body gets sick, the whole body will suffer the pain.”<sup>15</sup>

Some important principles about the relationship between human beings have been mentioned in Islamic teaching, such as solidarity, tolerance and loyalty.

The Qur’an said: “And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves;”<sup>16</sup> The Qur’an also said: “Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity. Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: For them is a dreadful penalty”<sup>17</sup> The Prophet Muhammad said: “whoever encourage sectarianism, he doesn’t belong to my nation.”<sup>18</sup> The verses from the holy Qur’an and *Hadith* reveal the importance of being united; on the other hand, it can be understood as commends from Allah in keeping a correct relation between human beings.

The Prophet Muhammad hated division between Muslims. He said: “you should not hate or be jealous or be hostile to each other. You are the slaves of Allah. Therefore, you should be brothers. Muslims will not allow drifting apart his brothers more than 3 days.”<sup>19</sup> Islam asks Muslims to have love to his Muslim brothers, even to other Non-Muslims. Also the tolerance from the harm also has been mentioned if it’s necessary.

Apparently, Confucianism and Islam both consider love and care are important elements in dealing the relationship between individual and other people. But having a harmonious relation is not enough only by loving the others. With respect and tolerance, the harmonious relationship between human beings hopefully could be achieved.

In the discussion of the relation between individual and humanized nature (society), Justice is one of the most important concerns. The key to have harmonious relation between individual and society is how to keep justice in society. Based on the idea of

<sup>14</sup> *The Sahih of Bukhari*

<sup>15</sup> *The Sahih of Bukhari*

<sup>16</sup> The Qur’an:3:103

<sup>17</sup> The Qur’an 3:104—105)

<sup>18</sup> *The Sahih of Bukhari*

<sup>19</sup> *The Sahih of Bukhari*

“people are the foundation of country”<sup>20</sup>, Confucianism set up a justice social construction. There are two main principles.

Firstly, Confucianism put the political harmony as the condition for a harmonious society. Confucius thought that governor should create a fair political environment. As governor of society, he must implement a set of policy which can protect people’s benefit. The core idea is about “policy of *Ren*”. The policy of *Ren* has two parts of explanation. The first one is “moral politics”. It asks governor to gain morality only for the benefit of state affairs. Confucius advocated that the governor should rule people by his morality instead of hegemony. He said: “if conquer people by supremacy and use the way of suppress to control people. The appearance of harmony will not be real. People will hide their indecent ideas just because of fear. If the governor uses morality to influence people to gain morality, people will be shame of being immoral. The management of state will become easier.”<sup>21</sup> The second one is “people are the foundation of country” it means people are the purpose of having a sustainable society. Governor should always have the idea of respect and love his people. Xun Zi said: “what is governor, he is like a boat; what are people, they are like water. The water can support the boat also they can overthrow it”.<sup>22</sup> Mencius also said: “people are the first concern, and then is the God of corps, emperor is the last one. So that is why only by the acceptance from people, the emperor could lead the country. ...”<sup>23</sup> we can see that the idea of “moral politics” and “people are the foundation of country” actually are interconnected.

Secondly, Confucianism regards the harmony of social benefit as the main content of social harmony. The main idea is: “equalization of wealth”. Mencius thought that “only keeping people with a stable income, society could be stable and harmonious”<sup>24</sup>. Confucianism always emphasizes equality in wealth

<sup>20</sup> The Confucian Ancient Scripture: *Poets of Five sons*: 《伪古文尚书·五子之歌》

<sup>21</sup> *The Analects*; Wei Zheng II. 《论语·为政第二》：“道之以政，齐之以刑，民免而无耻；道之以德，齐之以礼，有耻且格。”

<sup>22</sup> Xun Zi: Wang Zhi. 《荀子·王制》：君者，舟也；庶人者，水也。水则载舟，水则覆舟。”

<sup>23</sup> Mencius: Jin Xin Xia. 《孟子·尽心下》：“民为贵，社稷次之，君为轻，是故得乎丘民为天子……”

<sup>24</sup> Mencius: Jin Xin Shang 《孟子·尽心上》：“有恒产者有恒心，无恒产者无恒心”

distribution. Confucius thought that the appearance of the society with justice is like: the old one could live well, strong one could have their contribution, the little one could be directed, and all weak one could be raised.”<sup>25</sup> The purpose of having a harmonious society is for everyone to live in a satisfied life.

The Qur’an says: “We sent aforetime our messengers with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice;”<sup>26</sup> it shows that Allah sent the balance (right and wrong) in order to keep justice in this world. The purpose of sending messenger is to set up an equitable social order, and a justice relation between human beings. The Prophet Muhammad said: “for communicating with the others, he never ill-treated them; talking with the others, he will never lie to them; and making contract with the others, he will never break the contract.”<sup>27</sup> This is what the Prophet asked Muslims to keep justice.

The Qur’an says: “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment.”<sup>28</sup> Here, a behavior without justice is looked as sin in Islam society. Also the Qur’an says: “O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)”<sup>29</sup> Through the meaning of this verse, Islam shows there is no difference between nation, ethnic, class or religion. Human beings are equal in front of Allah. The equality of right and obligation reveals the meaning of justice in Islamic society. Ideologically, the idea of justice in Islam supports its social sustainable development.

Maybe in the aspect of social justice, there is difference between confucianism and Islam. In Confucian ideas, Governor’s policy and morality is considered as the foundation of social sustainable development; instead of the emphasis on decision-makers, Islam cares more in people’s acceptance and understanding in morality. Confucius wanted to put the impact from the top of social class; on the contrary, Islam started from its base. But either from upper class or from the bottom of the society, they both

<sup>25</sup> Rites.li Yun: 《礼记·礼运》：

“使老有所终，壮有所用，幼有所长，矜寡孤独废疾者，皆有所养。”

<sup>26</sup> The Qur’an: 57:25

<sup>27</sup> *The Sahih Bukhari*

<sup>28</sup> The Qur’an:5:2

<sup>29</sup> The Qur’an:49:13

believe that justice is the key to a social sustainable development.

The relation between individual and self has been regarded as the fundamental part in achieving a sustainable development. Confucianism thinks that self-examination is the basic way to perfect humanity and reach morality, also it is the key point in balancing the relation with people, society and nature. Confucianism regards it as the core value of harmony. How to educate people to become the one who has “*Ren* and *Zhi*”(coherence and wisdom) is an important aim that Confucius always wanted to achieve.

Therefore, Confucius summarized a set of method of self-examination based on his long term education experience. Confucianism always believes that human being should use “honesty, sincerity and self-examination to control behavior. Only by this, human being could balance himself and obtain inner harmony. Confucius thought the difference between human beings and animals is because of spiritual life. Morality is a clear sign to distinguish the difference. The core idea of morality is *Ren*. Only human beings have morality as the basic ideological guide, people could deal with the others properly, society could have harmonious statement. The concept of social harmony for Confucianism is the combination of harmony between human beings and the harmony between human and society. It based on human beings’ awareness of morality.

Confucius said: “every day, I self-examine three times. Did I try my best to work? Did I be faithful to friends? Did I teach people the truth?”<sup>30</sup> He again said: “when we meet virtuous people, we should try to be like them; if we meet some disqualified people, we should self-examine to avoid same mistake.”<sup>31</sup> A rich resource has been found about Confucian self-examination idea. The principles of self-examination are “having *Ren* by own” and “self-examination and forgiveness of the others”.

Confucius said: “if the one who wants to support family, firstly he should cultivate his own character into moral; if he wants to reach moral, he should first clear his mind; if he wants to clear his mind, he should firstly be sincere with his wish.”<sup>32</sup> The

<sup>30</sup> *The Analects: Xue Er*. 《论语今解·学而第一》: “吾日三省吾身:为人谋而不忠乎?与朋友交而不信乎?传不习乎?”

<sup>31</sup> *The Analects: Li Ren*  
《论语·里仁》“见贤而思齐焉，见不贤而内自省也”

<sup>32</sup> *Da Xue*:  
《大学》：“欲齐其家者，先修其身;欲修其身者，先正其身;欲正其心者，先诚其意”

emphasis on cultivation of morality is obvious which Confucius guaranteed for a healthy human development. It helps to balance the outer world and human being’s inner world in order to achieve the statement of harmony.

The way to reach harmony by self-examination in Confucianism is similar to Islamic method. Islam teaches Muslims that everything starts from “*niyye*” (sincere wish). *Niyye* here means having a correct idea in the very beginning of the work. A correct *Niyye* will possibly lead to a successful result. The Prophet Muhammad asked people to repent 70times everyday .For everyday’s 5 times prayer; Muslims need to think about the mistakes in front of Allah. Confucius asked people to self-examine 3 times a day to realize moral. Muslims seem even more serious in achieving this level. All these methods and regulation only have one purpose which is helping people to gain moral. Thus, as the basic method of keeping a balanced relation with self, self-examination also becomes the fundamental assurance to balance the relation between human beings with society and nature.

As what we learnt above, the relation between human beings has an emphasis on love which includes tolerance and forgiveness. Once the relation between human beings is in a state of harmony, it will guarantee a better living surrounding. Harmonious relation between human beings is the basic element for a harmonious society. Also, the justice we mentioned before is not just about punishment, but mainly is the concern between governor and people. No matter the religious ideas or secular ambitions, Islam and Confucianism both emphasizes in the achievement of morality. All the relations we mentioned above are based on the relation between human beings and self. Islam and Confucianism both believe self-examination is the key to understand morality and achieve it. With moral, human beings will be guided in building a correct relation with others and with society. They are the basic understanding to help dealing with the relation with nature. How could a man love and care nature if he even has no idea to love and care people in the society? Only with awareness of having a correct relations with self, others and society, human beings will be able to understand how to balance their relation with nature.

It is well known, the idea of “the harmony between *Heaven* and human being” is a Confucian ideal in the relation between human beings and nature. Confucianism always regards human being as part of nature. It is the reason human beings cannot arbitrarily conquer nature. It is an obligation for human beings to respect nature and protect it. The Confucian idea of ecology is epitomized in the idea

of “harmony between *Heaven* and human being”. Confucius said: “how great! Yao is the king, how wonderful, the *Heaven* is the biggest! Only Yao was following!”<sup>33</sup> Since Confucius accepted that the law of *Heaven* can be followed, then it shows that he accepted the law of nature can be followed. Human being and nature are not supposed to against each other. They are independent also interdependent. The relation between human beings and nature is with the interaction force.

“Having morality, utilizing the resources and benefiting human”<sup>34</sup> is the basic Confucian method in balancing the relation between human beings and nature. It reveals the necessity of having a good concern of the first three relations. For Confucius, moral is always the key to any kind of sustainable development. With moral, human beings are able to legitimately utilize the resources from nature. Only with correct way to use nature, human beings could be able to have a real natural sustainable development.

“Having morality”<sup>35</sup> means to understand the morality of nature which is the law of nature supports all creatures to live. According to Confucius’ understanding, the morality of nature is inner connected to *Ren*. *Ren* represents the highest level of morality of human being which appears as “loving family, caring people and caring all nature”.<sup>36</sup> It is the core idea of Confucianism. And Confucius regarded pursuing *Ren* as the highest ambition. Confucianism believes that nature also has love to human just like human beings with *Ren* will love the world. Clearly, the definition of a correct inter-connection between human beings and nature is due to the impact of morality.

The state of “utilizing resources” is based on the understanding of the first procedure of “having morality”. When human want to have natural resource, they should consider the way of exploitation by morality. It should be done in the appropriate season and avoid waste. Confucius said:

<sup>33</sup> *The Analects: Tai Bo* 《论语·泰伯》 “大哉，尧之为君也，巍巍乎，唯天为大，唯尧则之。”

<sup>34</sup> *Shang Shu: Da Yu* 《尚书·大禹谟》之 “禹曰，於！帝念哉！德惟善政，政在养民。水、火、金、木、土、谷，惟修；正德、利用、厚生、惟和。九功惟叙，九叙惟歌。戒之用休，董之用威，劝之以九歌俾勿坏”

<sup>35</sup> 正德： have morality.

<sup>36</sup> *Mencius: Jin Xin Shang*

《孟子·尽心上》 “君子之于物也，爱之而弗仁；于民也，仁之而弗亲。亲亲而仁民，仁民而爱物。”

“it is not *Xiao* (filial piety) if man fell one tree or hunt one animal at inappropriate time.” Confucius himself practically followed this rule in his entire life.

The Confucian ecological ideology broke through the family-society ethnic category, extended to the concern of nature. It completed the idea of “the harmony between *Heaven* and human” and step by step achieved “loving family, caring people and caring all nature”. Confucian ecological ideology is the way gradually from loving human to loving all creatures.

Mainly, there are two relations in Islam: the relation between human beings and Allah; the relation between human beings and the world. The latter one based on the relation between human beings and Allah. According to Islamic ideology, Allah is the only God who created the world which including human beings. It proves to Muslims that human being is not ruler of nature, but part of it. This prevents the occurrence of the Anthropocentrism.

The Qur’an says: Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah Sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they Trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;- (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise.<sup>37</sup> It shows that the law of nature can be learnt. Human beings should discover it when they need nature resources. The Qur’an also says: “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.”<sup>38</sup> Under the first relation, Muslims have total submission to the will of Allah. It implies that Muslims also need to learn the character of Allah. Since Allah is the most merciful one, how could human beings be not like him? Except the love to the other human, they should also love nature and protect it. The Quran uses the story between the king Soloman and ants to emphasize the importance of loving nature. There are also other verses mentioned in the Qur’an about the interconnection between human beings and nature. Islam teaches human beings to have morality with nature; it could bring a wonderful future not only for Muslims but for the entire world.

Except having love to nature, the Qur’an also mentions how to use nature. The Qur’an says: “O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the

<sup>37</sup> The Qur’an: 2:164

<sup>38</sup> The Qur’an:1.1

wasters.”<sup>39</sup> The Prophet Muhammad said: “don’t waste water, even you live beside river or sea.”<sup>40</sup> Islam prohibits human beings from water of nature resources because Islam proves that all the nature resources don’t belong to human beings. The Qur’an says: “To Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth. Verily we have directed the People of the Book before you, and you (o Muslims) to fear Allah.”<sup>41</sup> The Qur’an here reveals the difference between Islam and Confucianism when they face nature. As what we learnt that morality is the key for human beings to face nature and use its resources, Confucianism believes that morality will help human beings in keeping the balanced relation between human beings or nature. Islam not only uses morality, but also the *shar’ia* (Islamic law) which is the will of Allah to strictly commend human beings behaving correctly in the relation with nature.

Islam and Confucianism both have noticed the importance of moral towards nature and it has been recognized as the important content in the concept of man. By understanding the concept of man we realize that the definition of sustainable development is not either from the perspective of society or from nature. A real sustainable development means a thorough achievement which from human development to social development and natural environmental development, and it will finally reach the state which the harmony is among human beings, society and nature. Their relations should be interdependent and balanced. Instead of having emphasis on the knowledge of technology, morality should be emphasized as the priority in education and social ethics.

The present ideologies have difficulty in achieving a sustainable development. Seeking help from ancient wisdom become a necessary option and the commonness of the ancient understandings in morality will be the possibility for the present human beings to achieve sustainable developmen

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<sup>39</sup> The Qur’an:7.31

<sup>40</sup> *The Sahih Bukhari*

<sup>41</sup> The Qur’an:4.131