

TOLERATION: THE AMBIVALENT OBLIGATION, VALUE, AND VIRTUE

Xunwu Chen*

For the last two decades since the United Nations published *Declaration of Principles of Tolerance*, social toleration has become the distinctive political approach to the profound reality of diversity of our time. It has become a wisdom of our time. Social toleration is a family of practice that differs from social indifference, social indulgence, and various forms of social acceptance. It is an alternative to rejection, though its objects are what one morally disapproves and objects. The doctrine of toleration singles out a family of beliefs, practices and people which one includes but does not accept and of which one constrains one's demand of rejection, repression, oppression, and marginalization, but also refuses indulgence.

Today, philosophers are engaged in heated debates on what is social toleration and how best to define the nature, scope, and requirements of social toleration. This is good. As a philosophical topic, the subject-matter of social toleration constellates the concerns of social justice, citizens' rights, duty, obligation, public good, prudence, basic liberty, and virtue. It involves not only moral philosophy and social-political philosophy, but also, to a great extent, epistemology and metaphysics. A critical concept of social toleration may need to team up with hermeneutics and history of philosophy. A liberal view of social toleration may need to be complemented with a cosmopolitan's view of the subject-matter. As a practical matter, toleration is an obligation, value, and virtue and is of great importance and necessity. It is what we live on and live with.

That said, as Jürgen Habermas, Bernard Williams, Thomas Scanlon, Michael Walzer, and various other philosophers indicate, social toleration is, as an obligation, a value or virtue, both necessary and difficult in our time. It is burdensome, irritating, uncomfortable, and most importantly, ambivalent. Rights and obligations are burdens. Ambivalent rights and ambivalent obligations are the burdens plus burdens. Value and virtue are attractive, and ambivalent value and virtue ambivalent attraction. In our time, diversity makes toleration indispensable in terms of social justice. It also makes toleration difficult, or even appear to be impossible in understanding and practice. The difficulty of social toleration is both conceptual and normative. Conceptually, it is to distinguish social toleration from a range of social practices which it borders, but not intersected. Normatively, it is justification of toleration as an obligation, a value, and virtue. It is also to demonstrate that social toleration is part of the spirit of our time.

*Dr. XUNWU CHEN, Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy & Classics, School of Liberal and Fine Arts, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX 78249. E-mail: xun.chen@utsa.edu.

I

It is said that St. Augustine famously claimed that if no one ask him, he know what is time: if he wish to explain it to the one who ask, he know it no longer. It would not be an exaggeration to compare the difficulty of conceptualizing social toleration for us today with the difficulty of conceptualizing time for St. Augustine. We all may know the definition of social toleration. Yet, if we are asked to define it, what is asked of us immediately becomes something difficult to do. We find it to be as hard to define as to define time. More crucially, we generally talk about toleration as if the meaning of the concept is self-evident. But it is not. For example, if one asks: “What is the substantial content of the concept of social toleration?”, or “What are the task, requirements, scope and limit of social toleration?” one finds oneself in an embarrassing position not to have a ready answer.

The 1995 *Declaration of Principles of Tolerance* of the United Nations claims: “Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference.” (www.unesco.org) Needless to say here, if we are asked what toleration in the UN Declaration is, we find ourselves in a dilemma in which we cannot answer the question so easily. In the *Declaration*, respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity are not identical to respect, acceptance and appreciation of the tolerated. Diversity is the condition and reality of existence that both tolerator and tolerated live on, not the tolerated. The tolerated contributes to make diversity. So does the tolerator. Thus, the ideas of respect, acceptance, and appreciation are not the idea of toleration, though importantly related to it. Toleration is supposed to be a practice bordering between rejection and acceptance of the tolerated. That said, how best to conceptualize the relation between toleration and acceptance is still a question. The UN Declaration also claims: “Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.”(ibid) Then, how best to conceptualize the distinction between social toleration and social indulgence?

The Stanford Cyclopedia indicates four conceptions of toleration: the permission conception, the coexistence conception, the respect conception, and the esteem conception. Social toleration implies social permission. This does not mean that the permission conception of toleration is plausible. According to the permission conception, toleration means permission of the tolerated (the weaker) which a stronger party grants to a weaker party. By co-existence conception, toleration is that two more or less equal parties put up with one another. Toleration also implies co-existence, but co-existence is also feature of other social practices such as social indifference. Both conceptions indicate toleration as a kind of constraint on one’s endeavor to reject others. Still, both conceptions do not account for some essential features of toleration. The respect conception is that parties in a relation of toleration mutually respect each other. Meanwhile, the esteem conception is that parties in a relation of toleration mutually recognize each other as citizens. Both conceptions do

not do full justice to the fact that the tolerated may not be respectful to the tolerator. Again, here, to respect diversity is one thing. To respect the tolerated is quite another.

In a final analysis, while toleration is supposed to single out a family of practices bordering with rejection on one end and acceptance on the other end, all four conceptions above have serious deficits in this regard. Also, the permission conception, the respect conception, and the esteem conception need to do full justice to the fact that objects of toleration are what the tolerator morally disapproves and wants to reject, while the co-existence conception needs to indicate the line between toleration and indifference.

From times to times, scholars define toleration as a form of conditional acceptance. This definition suffers self-defeat. If the conception of toleration as conditional acceptance were plausible, toleration would not be an alternative to acceptance, but be a form of acceptance. But toleration as a form of practice is supposed to be an alternative not only to full hearted acceptance, but also to acceptance itself. Also, if toleration could be understood as conditional acceptance, it could also be understood as conditional rejection. If this were the case, toleration would not be a kind of practices bordering between acceptance and rejection, but a form of practice intersecting with both of them, which would in turn mean that rejection and acceptance are one. The concept that rejection and acceptance are one is logically absurd.

In Chinese philosophies, there is a rich conceptual variety for the idea of toleration. The Chinese counterparts for the English word “toleration” include but are not limited to follows: “include the variant and incompatible (兼容 *jian rong*)”, “broadness (宽 *kuan*)”, “broadly include (宽容 *kuan rong*)”, “extensively include (包容 *bao rong*)”, “accommodate (容纳 *rong na*)”, “bear with; putting up with (容忍 *rong ren*)”, and so on. All these concepts are centered on the idea of “taking into; accommodate (容 *rong*)”.

Thus, for example, Zhuangzi said, “if one is tolerant of things, not excludes others, one arrives at the highest horizon of being (常宽容於物, 不削於人, 可谓至极).”(Zhuangzi 1996, 324) That is to say, toleration is an ideal state of existence. For Zhuangzi, to be tolerant is to have a great horizon of mind. To have a great horizon of mind is to have a great horizon of being. Zhuangzi spoke of toleration or broad inclusion (宽容 *kuan rong*) as being able to embrace things.

Xunzi advised us, “To one’s junior whose position is humble than oneself, one should advise him/her with the truth and essence of toleration (遇贱而少者, 则修告道宽容之义).”(Xunzi 1996, 110) He further pointed out,

An authentic person imposes standards on himself/herself, but offers troling others. Imposing standards on oneself, one becomes paradigm of norms. Offering troling to others, one becomes tolerant of others in order to accomplish great things in the world. Therefore, a capable authentic person tolerates incapable persons, a knowledgeable authentic person tolerates ignorant persons, a broad-minded authentic person tolerates narrow-minded person, and a focal-minded authentic person tolerates those whose minds have no focuses. This is called the art of

inclusion (君子之度己则以绳，接人则用榘。度己则以绳，故足以为天下法则。接人用榘，故能宽容，因求以成天下之大事。故君子贤而能容罢，知而能容愚，博而能容濶，粹而能容杂，夫是之为兼术。)(Ibid, 101)

In the above, Xunzi spoke of toleration or broad inclusion (宽容 *kuan rong*) as akin to “heaven and earth that embrace millions of things (天地之苞万物).”

Liu An claimed, “One’s mind should be broad enough to accommodate mass; one’s virtue should lead one to reach far (大足以容众，德足以怀远).” (Liu 1996, 328) To tolerate others is to accommodate others. To be able to accommodate others is a necessary condition for one to be able to reach far in the world. Liu An further insisted, “To *Dao* to rule the great cannot be small, and the system to govern the vast cannot be narrowed (治大者道不可小，地广者制不可狭).”(Ibid, 325) The small cannot rule the great. The narrow cannot rule the vast. To tolerate others is to accommodate others. To accommodate others is to be great and to be broad. All the same Liu An spoke of toleration as accommodation.

Three ideas arise from the rich conceptual variety in Chinese philosophies. First, to tolerate is to include. To be tolerant is to be broad-minded, vast-minded in order to include the different, the variant, and even the incompatible, constraining one’s tendency to reject them and acting alternatively to rejection. Second, toleration is not a passive act, but an active one. Third, tolerance is a virtue characteristic of heaven and earth, and should be one of a person. The inclusion conception in Chinese philosophies differs from all of the four conceptions of toleration above, of which we shall return in a moment. Suffice it here that toleration as inclusion with constraint is a more plausible concept of social toleration.

The difficulty of conceptualizing social toleration comes from various fronts. First, it lies in the absence of archetype cases of toleration. That is to say, in conceptualizing social toleration, we cannot find any universally accepted archetypes of social toleration that give us paradigmatic examples of the nature, scope, object, content, requirement and standard of social toleration. David Heyd points out this succinctly:

In the theory of rights, virtue, and duty, people who radically disagree about the analysis and justification of these concepts can still appeal to a commonly shared repertory of examples. But with tolerance, it seems that we can find hardly a single concrete case that would be universally agreed to be a typical object of discussion (Heyd 1996, 3).

With regard to archetypes of social toleration, Heyd observes: “Courage and *habeas corpus* are standard cases of virtue and rights, respectively. But would we agree on defining the attitude of restraint toward neo-Nazi groups as tolerance, or alternatively, would we describe as tolerance the way the heterosexual majority treats homosexuals?”(Ibid)

Notwithstanding, for some, exercising constraint toward political groups whose view one totally disapproves or constraint toward a group of people whose sexual life-style one totally disapproves are good examples of social toleration. But for

others, either may be a case of indifference or acceptance of other peoples who have different views or life-style. The same can be said of religious toleration. For some, what is called religious toleration is a good example of social toleration. Historically, the concept of toleration became prominent in the context of talking about religious toleration. For others, what is called “religious toleration” is in effect of indifference or acceptance. The bad news is also that there is no universally accepted and acceptable archetype case of religious toleration. For some, political toleration is another good example of social toleration. Thus, the Chinese practice “one country, two social system” is a good paradigm of political toleration. For other, the so-called political toleration is in effect a form of political acceptance. The Chinese practice of “one country, two system” is not a case of toleration, but a case of acceptance. For some, the concept of racial toleration makes sense. For other, it is racial acceptance or racial discrimination; there is no such a thing called “racial toleration”.

The list can be longer, but the main point is clear: there are no any universally accepted archetype examples of social toleration which we can make reference to. The lack of universally accepted archetypes of social toleration means a lack of generally accepted paradigms of conceptualizing social toleration. Paradigm may not be indispensable for conceptualization, but can be of great help or is tremendously instrumental. With an absence of universally accepted archetypes, a united conception of toleration becomes more and more difficult. Thus, we may all agree on practicing religious toleration, but still be unclear as to what religious toleration really means. For example, what is the difference between religious toleration and indifference? What is the difference between religious toleration and acceptance? The same can be said of political toleration. Logically, while we are used to inductive reasoning in conceptualizing things, the lack of any universally accepted archetype cases of social toleration makes conceptualization of it through induction difficult, if not impossible.

Second, the difficulty of conceptualizing toleration is due in no small measure to the relation between social toleration and the concept of rights. The relation is a difficult one because it is indeterminate and thus instable. The instability has two aspects. In one aspect, rights calls for acceptance, not toleration. Meanwhile, toleration is a matter of justice because of rights. That is to say, respect for rights is the necessary basis for toleration, but toleration is not the necessary conclusion of respecting for rights. The concept of rights gives the concept of toleration substantial meaning, content, and value. What should be tolerated is that which a tolerator morally disapproves and has rights to reject in terms of his/her rights. That said, rights call for acceptance. Rights are entitlements, and therefore what is claimed in terms of the rights of the tolerated is an entitlement, which is not something rejectable. What is not rejectable is not an object of social toleration. This contradiction leads to the difficulty to draw the border between toleration and acceptance. The concept of toleration as a form of conditional acceptance is an erroneous conclusion of such difficulty.

Meanwhile, the instability of the relation between toleration and the concept of rights is also that social toleration cannot be fully identified with any particular systems of rights. This non-identification increases uncertainty in conceptualizing the

distinction between toleration and rejection, as well as the distinction between toleration and acceptance. It puts into question not only what can be the legitimate objects of toleration, but also what is toleration in general. That is to say, the difficulty in identifying objects of social toleration leads to the difficulty in conceptualizing toleration itself.

Scanlon observes that the idea of tolerance “can be given content only through some specification of the rights of citizens as participants in formal and informal politics. But such system of rights will be conventional and indeterminate and is bound to be under frequent attack.”(Scanlon 2003, 201) Furthermore,

Although some specification of rights and limits of exemplification and advocacy is required in order to give content to the idea of tolerance and make it tenable, the idea of tolerance can never be fully identified with any particular system of such rights and limits, such as the system of rights of free speech and association, rights of privacy, and rights to free exercise (but non-establishment) of religion. . . . Many different systems of rights are acceptable; none is ideal. Each is therefore constantly open to challenge and revision (Ibid, 198).

Such a conceptual problem makes it difficult for us not only to define what the legitimate objects of social toleration are, but also what toleration itself is.

In connection with the above, there is the question whether those beliefs, practices, and life styles which one morally disapproves and rejects are entitled to be tolerated because of their holders’ rights. And how best to distinguish between social toleration and social indulgence? Here, even if under the rule of law, all citizens have rights compatible to everyone’s rights to have his/her beliefs, practices, and life styles, it does not follow that one has obligation to tolerate other citizens’ particular beliefs, practices, and life styles. Noteworthy here, a citizen’s rights to have his/her beliefs, practices, and life styles are compatible with other citizens’ rights to have their beliefs, practices, and life styles, but a citizen’s particular beliefs, practices, and life styles may not be compatible with other citizens’ particular beliefs, practices, and life styles. Indeed, in the situation calling for toleration, those tolerated beliefs, practices, and life styles are not compatible with the tolerator’s beliefs, practices, and life styles. All the same, one can conceive reasonable here that to tolerate holders of beliefs, practices, and life styles is one thing; to tolerate their beliefs, practices, and life styles is different thing.

Barbara Herman argues:

Someone who exemplifies the virtue of toleration thus need not approve of, be interested in, or willing to have much to do with the object of her toleration. It is a *laissez-faire* virtue. If I must tolerate the public speech of minority groups because suppression of speech is politically dangerous over the long run, I do not have to listen. If we may not prevent groups with special histories and traditions from continuing objectionable practices, we do not have to live with them among us (though we might not be able to pass restrictive zoning, we can move) (Herman 1996, 61).

Herman's argument correctly indicates that toleration of other citizens and toleration of their beliefs, practices and life styles are two different concepts; the former does not necessarily lead to the latter; one can tolerate the former but be indifferent to the latter. And this in turn raises the conceptual question of what does it mean to tolerate other citizens? How can one tolerate other citizens without tolerating their beliefs, practices and life styles? Or reversely, how can one be indifferent to other citizens' beliefs, practices and life styles while not being indifferent to these citizens?

David Heyd's approach underscores the question too. Heyd conceives toleration as a kind of shift of focus from beliefs, practices, and life style to the holder of them. As Heyd says,

I call toleration a perceptual virtue, because it involves a shift of attention rather than an overall judgment. Tolerant people overcome the drive to interfere in the life of another not because they come to believe that the reasons for restraint are weightier than the reasons for disapproval, but because the attention is shifted from the object of disapproval to the humanity or the moral standing of the subject before them (Heyd 1996, 12).

This raises the question of what is tolerated in toleration. The question is also that can we separate the object of disapproval and the subject that possesses the object of disapproval. Suppose we could make such separation, in what sense we just tolerate the subject that possesses the object of disapproval, instead of accepting him/her?

For the sake of argument, we should analyze the concept of so-called toleration of intolerant values and practices. Rawls and others have tried to convince us that from the point of justice, there should be toleration of the intolerant. As I shall understand it, the concept of toleration of the intolerant needs serious qualifications. First, toleration of the intolerant is not to endorse or accept the intolerant or intoleration and therefore the concept of toleration of intoleration is not self-contradictory. Also, when the intolerant is fellow citizen, as long as s/he abides by municipal laws, even if s/he is intolerant, other fellow citizens are obliged to tolerate him/her. That said, there may be no good reasons to tolerate intolerant values and practices. Alon Harel argues, "we have reasons to respect, rather than merely tolerate, intolerant values and practices when they constitute an integral part of a comprehensive world view." (Harel 1996, 117-118) Harel's argument is flawed. That a certain beliefs or practices constitute an integral part of the tolerated's comprehensive world view may not be a plausible reason to tolerate such beliefs or practices. Terrorism is an integral part of a terrorist's comprehensive world view, yet this does not give us any reason to tolerate terrorism even if its holder is a fellow citizen. Harel's qualification that such intolerant values and practices sustain "a minimally supportive community" is a false qualification. No intolerant values and practices sustain a minimally supportive community. Again, we must see the limit of a tolerated citizen's rights here. That is to say, that s/he is entitled to have his/her intolerant values and practices does not mean that his/her intolerant values and practices are entitled to be tolerated. Social toleration is not social indulgence.

The difficulty of conceptualizing toleration lies further in the uncertain relation between toleration and public good. Toleration is obliged by a respect for rights, but also required by the preservation and promotion of public good and welfare of a community. While specification of some public good—for example, public security—and limits of exemplification and advocacy may not be difficult, determination of public goods and limit of exemplification and advocacy in other areas may not be easy. Moreover, in connection with what is said above, it remains a question how best to distinguish between beliefs, practices, and life styles that one not only morally disapproves, but also may be harmed or may also harm public good to a great extent, and such beliefs, practices, and life styles such as rape, murders, and terrorism that doubtlessly do harm. How best to distinguish between social toleration and social indulgence? That is the question!

Because of the relation between toleration and public good, in history, some philosophers also argued that some human members of a society should not be tolerated, though their views may be incorrect. “With [St. Thomas] Aquinas and the Protestant Reformers the grounds of intolerance are themselves a matter of faith.”(Rawls 1971, 216) Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that those who were dangerous to civil peace and order in a society should not be tolerated or otherwise so-called toleration would become social indulgence.

Rousseau thought that people would find it impossible to live in peace with those whom they regarded as damned, since to love them would be to hate God who punishes them. He believed that those who regard others as damned must either torment or convert them, and therefore sects preaching this conviction cannot be trusted to preserve civil peace. Rousseau would not, then, tolerate those religions which say that outside the church there is no salvation (Ibid, 215).

John Locke advocated religious toleration. His “Letter Concerning Toleration” is still a classic in philosophical writings even today. But Locke also believed that we should not tolerate those people, beliefs, and practices that were dangerous to “public order.” (Ibid, 216) Locke also did not All the same, while the concept of public good gives meaning and value to the concept of social toleration, the concept of public good itself is indeterminate.

Perhaps, where there is crisis, there is also opportunity. In light of the above, giving social toleration is intended to be an intermediate between rejection and acceptance and to be different from indifference on the one hand, and indulgence on the other hand, we should conceptualize social toleration as a unique kind of social practice by mapping up some essence or features of social toleration that bring about such distinctions. Given social toleration borders with both rejection and acceptance on the one hand and demarcates from both social indifference and social indulgence, a plausible concept of social toleration must map up its essential components that situate it between rejection and acceptance on the one hand and demarcate it from both indifference and indulgence on the other hand. This returns us back to the inclusion conception—that is, social toleration as social inclusion with constraint.

Social toleration constrains rejection and chooses inclusion instead. That is to say, in social toleration, the tolerator exercises constraint on his/her attempt to reject the tolerated and therefore acts to include the tolerated in the common social-political life. It constrains rejection and is therefore not rejection. About constraint, *The Bible* says: “One believes he may eat everything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats.” (Rom. 14:2-3) Social toleration also means social inclusion, but not social acceptance. It includes and therefore is not indifference. It exercises constraint and is therefore not indulgence. To include X need not mean to accept X. To include X is to have a relation with X in a way that X is legitimate part of a common public life. To accept X is to endorse X. Thus, to include a person of different beliefs, practices, and life styles is one thing. To endorse him/her is quite another. That is to say, toleration does not reject or accept X, but actively bears with and engages X as a legitimate participant, challenger and opponent in the common communal social-political life. The qualification “actively” is important here. Social toleration is actively bearing with the tolerated, while social indifference is inactively co-exist with the co-existing.

The concept of social toleration as social inclusion with constraint is not identical or reducible to the concept of social toleration as social permission, though in social toleration, parties allow each other to be part of the common life. Permission is what a stronger party extends to a weaker party, but inclusion and constraint are what equal citizens extend to each other. Social inclusion with constraint is not a practice in which a stronger party shows compassion or kindness to a weaker party, but a practice wherein equal parties recognize each other’s legitimate rights and mutual obligations to treat each other as equal citizens. The concept of social toleration as social inclusion and constraint is compatible to the concept of toleration as coexistence, but not reducible to the latter. Indifference is a form of coexistence, but not a form of inclusion. Instead, indifference is another form of exclusion. As a form of exclusion, indifference is also not a form of constraint on exclusion and rejection. Also, inclusion with constraint carries out duty, fulfills obligation, and realizes value and virtue. But co-existence does none of these. The concept of toleration as inclusion and constraint is compatible to the concept of respect, but not identical to the latter. Toleration involves respect for the tolerated’s legitimate rights, but not necessarily tolerated beliefs, practices or life styles. In other words, toleration is based on recognition and respect for those who are on the side of the tolerated as equal citizens having legitimate rights, but not on the recognition of the truth and value of those tolerated beliefs, practices or life styles. One can include certain beliefs, practices, and life styles because of their holders’ rights in the common communal social-political life, but not respect them—that is, still morally disapproves and rejects them. And one cannot simultaneously both morally rejects those tolerated beliefs, practices, and life styles and respect them as having truth and value. I would like to make a stronger claim: it is not a respect for the tolerator’s rights to ask him/her to respect what s/he morally disapproves and wants to reject. By the same token, the concept of toleration inclusion and constraint differ from the esteem conception of toleration.

The concept of social toleration as social inclusion with constraint does justice to the fact that toleration is a just response to the conflict between toleration's rights and tolerated' rights. It does not require tolerator to accept tolerated but requires tolerator to constrain his/her rejection of the tolerated. It therefore takes into account both tolerator's rights and tolerated's rights. It does justice to difference and diversity. It also does justice to the possible conflict between tolerated's normal, basic rights and the interests of public good including security. It constrains the tolerated's illegitimate claims on rights and entitlements and therefore prevents social toleration from lapsing into social indulgence.

Admittedly, the concept of social toleration as social inclusion with constraint may have its conceptual problem, but at least it addresses the kind of conceptual problems which we explore above, and plausible than the permission, co-existence, respect, and esteem conceptions of social toleration. It has at least the following merits: (1) it is applicable to most cases of social toleration; (2) it properly defines social toleration as a family of social practice borders social rejection on the one end and social acceptance on the other end and as demarcating from both social indifference and social indulgence; (3) it can account for the tolerator's rights, the tolerated' s rights, and public good; and it can account for the permission conception, the co-existence conception, the respect conception, and the esteem conception but does not suffer fatal flaw of any of the four conceptions.

II

What is said above leads us to the justification problem of social toleration. The question here is first of all whether social toleration is necessary because it is a duty and obligation, or because it is a value or virtue, or because of both. Evidentially, social toleration as a form of obligation requires a kind of justification that differs from justification of social toleration as a value or justification of social toleration as a virtue. Needless to say, none of them is an easy one.

Social toleration as social constraint and inclusion is necessary because, first of all, diversity is a profound color of our age. Isaiah Berlin said: "The world in which what we see as incompatible values are not in conflict is a world altogether beyond our ken; that principles which are harmonized in this other world are not the principles with which, in our daily lives, we are acquainted; if they are transformed, it is into conceptions not known to us on earth. But it is on earth that we live, and it is here that we must believe and act." (Berlin, 1997, 13) Berlin's view may leave much to be desired. But his central claim is valid: ours is an age of diversity. Accordingly, there can be justification of social toleration from both the principle of justice and the principle of prudence.

Walzer points out, "Toleration makes difference possible; difference makes toleration necessary." (Walzer 1997, xii) Toward diversity, oppression can be a possible response. However, oppression of diversity normally always involves violation of rights and breaks away from justice. Meanwhile, acceptance may be a possible response too. However, objects of social toleration are that which the tolerator morally disapproves and rejects. To ask tolerator to accept what s/he morally

rejects would do great injustice and violate his/her legitimate rights. Social indifference does not fare better either. Social indifference does not do injustice and not violate others' rights, fair to say. But it is not just either. Social indifference fails to fulfill the obligation of social justice because it does not do full justice others' rights. Therefore, social toleration is the only just, proper approach in terms of social justice to diversity. Since social toleration is required by social justice, it is a form of obligation. It is a social obligation which citizens owe to one another.

Rawls indicates that the basis for toleration is "solely on a conception of justice." (Rawls 1971, 214) That is to say, social toleration is a categorical imperative of justice, not a hypothetical imperative of practical necessities. That is to say, social toleration is a norm of obligation, not a policy of practical utility. According to Habermas, social toleration is required by "the egalitarian and universalistic standard of democratic citizenship." (Habermas 2004, 10) Social toleration is demanded by "something that calls for equal treatment of the 'other' and mutual recognition of all as 'full' members of the political community." (Ibid) Thus, social toleration is a norm of social obligation mandated by the idea of social justice. Our act of social toleration expresses this belief: even though there are other possible responses to the tolerated, "no way of life can demand, such as prohibiting conduct by others, simply because one disapproves of it." (Scanlon 2003, 197) Our act of social toleration expresses this commitment: justice denies that any practical utility, expedience, or necessity can make it right for us to violate others' rights, not to treat humanity as the end, or not to honor what we owe to each other. Justice obliges us to give due to institutions and beliefs that we disapprove of but that others have rights to hold to. Social toleration brings communal bond to citizens who disagree with each other. Citizens want this kind of communal bond with fellow citizens not because they may be practically much better off, but because they owe it to fellow citizens to have this kind of communal bond, and because they want to be just.

Noteworthy, diversity itself is not an intrinsic value. No all diversity is reasonable or rational. Correspondingly, no all diversity is worth keeping. Diversity that threatens people's basic liberties, rights, and violate human dignity is illegitimate and should be eliminated, not tolerated. For example, evils such as terrorism are diversity, but they should be eliminated, not tolerated. Whether diversity is an instrumental value depends on contexts too. In some contexts, diversity is instrumental to a greater good. In other contexts, diversity has no value at all. Therefore, whether diversity calls for social toleration is determined by whether toleration is the call of social justice as a proper approach to diversity. In short, justice is the foundation for social toleration.

From the principle of prudence, toleration is the unifying force for a pluralistic social-political community. Confucius said, "Tolerance enables one to have the support of the mass." (Confucius 1996, 20.1) According to Confucius, social toleration makes possible for a kind of mutually cooperative relation to exist among members (the mass) of a social-political community amid diversity. That members of a community can cooperate with each other is necessary for them to extend their lives together. That is to say, social toleration is an instrumental value. It is an instrumental

value to public good and necessary for members of a community to extend their lives together and realize their own humanity. Correspondingly, the principle of prudence mandates that social toleration is a norm of social cooperation. This amounts to saying that social toleration is a value, and its justification is its attraction.

Speaking of religious toleration, Habermas indicates, “pluralism and the struggle for religious tolerance were not only driving forces behind the emergence of the democratic state, but remain important impulses for its consistent development up to the present day.”(Habermas 2008, 257) What is true of religious diversity is also true of cultural, social-political diversity. Diversity is the source of the strength of democratic communities, but also source of challenges. Diversity constitutes the inner contradiction that can drive democratic community forward or threatens to tear down democratic communities because it may be a source of unconstrained social conflicts. Toleration allows people of conflicting beliefs, practices, and life styles not only to co-exist, but also to form a common social-political community. Therefore, Habermas points out, “Tolerance protects a pluralistic society from being torn apart as a political community by conflicts over worldviews.”(Ibid, 258)

By the same token, to the question about why there is a need for social toleration, Scanlon says, “The answer lies . . . in the relation with one’s fellow citizens that tolerance makes possible.”(Scanlon 2003, 192) He adds that “any alternative [to tolerance] would put me in an antagonistic and alienated relation to my fellow citizens, friends as well as foes.”(Ibid, 201) According to Scanlon, we value social tolerance today because we want the kind of relations with our fellow citizens that only social tolerance and toleration can bring about. But what kind of social relation is that? Why do we want this relationship in the first place? To the first question, Scanlon indicates what we do *not* want is an alienated, antagonistic relation with our fellow citizens. That is to say, the kind of social relation which we want to have with our fellow citizens is a non-alienated, co-workable communal relation. We want such a non-alienated communal with our fellow citizens on the basis of rights, the rule of law, and the rule of reason. Such a relation itself is a form of good.

From a different direction, Williams also indicates that toleration may be an instrumental value and therefore from the point of view of the principle of prudence, it is worth practicing. As he says, toleration “does require of its citizens to a belief in a value: perhaps not so much in the value of toleration itself as in a certain more fundamental value, that of autonomy.”(Williams 1996, 23)

Toleration is a justified approach to diversity in our time further because tolerance is a human virtue. Practice of toleration is an exercise of tolerance. Tolerance is a human virtue. *Yi Jing (The Book of Change)* reads, “The way of the earth follows nature. An authentic person is of great mind and profound virtue and tolerate things” (地势坤.君子以厚德载物).”(Fang 1996, 25) In Confucianism, only persons of broad-mindedness and great horizon can be tolerant. Toleration makes one tolerant which in turn makes one profound and broad-minded. Both profundity and broad-mindedness are great virtues of humanity. *Dao De Jing* reads: “Understanding laws makes one tolerant. Tolerance makes one fair. Fairness makes one a master. As a master, one follows the way of Heaven. Following the way of Heaven, one follows

Dao (知常容,容乃公,公乃王,王乃天,天乃王).”(Laozi 1996, ch.15) That is to say, not only tolerance is a virtue that one acquires by having understanding, but also a virtue that leads to other virtues such as fairness and excellence in following the *Dao*. Buddhism teaches: The huge belly—that is, the great mind—can tolerate all things in the world, including things that are difficult, even impossible, to be tolerated by the world. According to Buddhism, only enlightened persons can tolerate things. Only persons of the greatest enlightenment such as Buddha can tolerate all things, including things that the world cannot tolerate. That is to say, to be tolerant is to be enlightened. Enlightenment is human virtue. The more tolerant one is, the more enlightened one is. The more enlightened one is, the more virtuous one is. Thus, the more tolerant one is, the more virtuous one is.

Notwithstanding, the force of virtue is attraction, not compulsion. Thus, to argue for social toleration in terms of virtue is to argue for social toleration from the point of view of attraction, not from the force of compulsion. That said, justification of social toleration in terms of virtue is that social toleration makes us better persons. To be is to live to become better persons. This is what virtue about. To be better person here is not merely to be more humanistic, but to become better human individuals, better citizens of a social-political community, and better members of the global human community.

The above described justification of social toleration as an obligation, a value, and a virtue, which I would like to characterize as critical justification, makes metaphysical assumption of human reality and the world we live. For example, it presupposes that diversity is part of the profound reality of the world in which we live. It metaphysically assumes that justice, obligation, rights, and human freedom all are part of the profound reality of human existence. That said, it is critical in the sense that it recognizes that its claims would be subject to criticism and revision. It claims that social toleration is a universal norm, but also recognizes such a claim is subject to further criticism and trial. It is not from a particular metaphysical theory.

III

Our discussions in the preceding chapters indicate that social toleration as inclusion with constraint embodies the spirit of our time that takes justice (both civil justice and global justice), basic human rights, the rule of law, the rule of reason, and democracy as its core values. Social toleration is a norm of justice, geared to redeem the validity claims of basic human rights, depends on the rule of law and the rule of reason, and goes hand in hand with democracy. The internal relation between social toleration and those core values of the spirit of our time mentioned above is evident from our discussion. Here, let us focus on social toleration as a norm of global justice.

Globalization brings together different nations, peoples, cultures, and traditions. The metaphor of the global village is no longer a fairy tale, but connotes a substantial reality. Indeed, the ideal of a constitutionalized global order is constitutive of the deal of our time. Globalization raises questions about balancing the aspiration of modernity and respect for local cultures and nations' sovereignty, defense of the

integrity of modernity and cultural toleration of local diversity. It calls for global justice. In turn, global justice implicates social-cultural toleration to be a norm in global human affairs.

The first call of social-cultural toleration in the global arena is the 1945 Chapter of the United Nations. The Chapter asserts:

We the peoples of United Nations determined ... to affirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human persons, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other courses of international law can be maintained ... And for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours (www.un.org).

In the UN Chapter, tolerance is emphasized as a form of practice serving to advance the goal of the UN to bring forth global justice and global peace.

In 1981, the United Nations published its *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*. The UN 1981 declaration affirms the basic spirit of the 1945 UN Chapter. It proclaims:

It is essential to promote understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion and belief and to ensure that the use of religion or belief for ends inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, other relevant instruments of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of the present Declaration is inadmissible.

The event of the publication of the UN *Declaration* is a significant act of cosmopolitanism, geared to bring about a global institutionalized order. More crucial, what is globalized is social-cultural toleration as a form of practice, as a norm of obligation, as a value, and a virtue. Again, diversity makes toleration necessary, and toleration just responds to diversity, as we discuss above. Like it is in the domestic front, social-cultural toleration in the global front is a requirement of global justice.

The publication of the declaration underscores the importance of social-cultural toleration in global human affairs. It occurred in a historical context in which inter-religion religious intolerance, as well as intolerance between religious peoples and non-religious peoples, became a major source of international conflict. In 1993, Harvard University professor Samuel P. Huntington published a thought-provoking article in the journal *Foreign Affairs* entitled “The Clash of Civilizations?” In it, Huntington claimed that in the 21st century, the main source of international conflict would be differences and conflicts of civilizations. Setting aside some of its controversial claims, from a different direction, Huntington’s essay leads us to see the need for cultural toleration in global human affairs today. Cultural intolerance—in particular—religious intolerance—is a major source of global conflict today. Thus, for example, as Louis P. Pojman notes, “Religion is surpassing nationalism as the foremost threat to world peace and stability.” (Pojman 2004, 965) And religious and cultural intolerance poses the greatest challenges to global justice and humanity today.

This in turn calls for cultural toleration in terms of global justice in global human affairs.

On November 16, 1995, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published its Declaration of Principles of Tolerance and designated November 16 of each year as International Tolerance Day. The declaration indicates that religious tolerance and toleration are of great importance to global justice and humanity. Its preamble states:

Bearing in mind that the United Nations Charter states: “We, the peoples of the United Nations determined to . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, . . . and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors”,

Recalling that the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO, adopted on 16 November 1945, states that “peace, if it is not to fail, must be founded on the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind” . . .

In this declaration, UNESCO points out both the fact that social-cultural toleration is the inherent spirit of the UN Charter and the importance of social-cultural toleration in global human affairs today. Cultural and national diversity is a profound reality, not some passing phenomenon of our time. Accordingly, cultural toleration as cultural constraint and inclusion embodies the timely spirit of global justice. Berlin says: “Different nations, different roots, different laws, different peoples, different communities, [and] different ideals. Each has its own way of living—what right had one to dictate to the others?”(Ibid, 33)

Global justice implicates the norms of social-cultural toleration in global human affairs today. To start with, global justice calls for respect for the national sovereignty of a people. The national sovereignty of a nation-people product the limit for other nation-peoples to interfere what are deemed to be domestic affairs. The national sovereignty of a nation or people also demands that other nation-peoples respect and honor their rights and their due in international affairs. Furthermore, global justice requires follows: (1) constraining and abstaining from rejection of other nation—peoples because their cultures and traditions are morally disapproved by others; (2) including, not isolating, nation-peoples even if we disapprove of them; (3) promoting inter-cultural understanding and communication; and (4) refusing offensive conflicts based on religion, race, or political ideologies.

In short, in terms of global justice, nation-peoples are members of an international community, they and their cultures become objects of social-cultural toleration. They should be shown forbearance and included as legitimate members of the international human community. They should be allowed to hold to their institutions and advocate their beliefs and values in words and actions, in a peaceful manner.

Meanwhile, so far as the requirements of social toleration in global human affairs are concerned, we are always at a point wherein the problem of indeterminacy is aggravated. The exact contents of the requirements of social toleration in the global

front are even less determinate than the requirements of social toleration in the domestic front. Domestically, especially in developed countries where there is the rule of law, the scope and limit of social toleration are well defined in the constitutions and relevant laws. Therefore, the requirements of social toleration are relatively determinate. But in global human affairs, the scope and limit of social-cultural toleration are not well defined in many areas. In some aspects, they are not defined at all.

Notwithstanding, one thing about social-cultural toleration around the globe is always clear: in global justice, a people's rights and sovereignty are always recognized and honored; global justice mandates that a nation or people must be tolerant of other peoples and cultures. Global justice demands peaceful coexistence of nation-peoples, which in turn demands social-cultural toleration in the globe, as the UN Charter and other documents indicate. It may be that ways of life of other nations and peoples are not compatible to one another, but still, global justice demands toleration of incompatible differences, not oppressing them in the shared life of international human community.

A people should defend her values and beliefs, but at the same time tolerate other's values and traditions. Only if peoples tolerate one another can they coexist justly. Modernity and globalization are historical tasks of humankind today. Truth, righteousness, and reason will stand straight in globalization when social, political, and cultural tolerations exist in global affairs and when hegemony, colonization, totalitarianism, oppression, repression, and aggression in international affairs are rejected as unjust.

It is possible that from a certain nation's or people's perspective, other nations' and peoples' values, practices, and institutions are incompatible with modernity. Therefore, in global human affairs, social-cultural toleration exhibits crucial in that one nation-people must not impose its cultural way on other nation-peoples. Here, we should recall Zhuangzi's view that one should not use one's own particular standard as the universal standard to judge others. As he said

One should not take one's finger as the standard and therefore say that others' fingers are not fingers; instead, one should take the universal finger as the standard and see that a particular finger is not identical to the [universal] finger; one should not take a particular horse as the standard and therefore say that other [particular] horses are not horses; instead, one should take the universal horse as the standard and therefore see that a particular horse is not identical to the [universal] horse (以指喻指之非指, 不若以非指喻指之非指; 以马喻马之非马, 不若以非马喻马之非马 (Zhuangzi 1996, ch.2).

As the UN chapter and other documents indicate, to develop a new, just global order, just global laws and institutions need to be developed. New global laws will be just when they embody the aspiration of modernity and also the timely spirit of social toleration amid the historical reality of cultural, religious, and local diversity. Equally crucial, new global laws will be just when they embody the spirit of reason, which in

turn calls for social-cultural toleration, rejecting imperialism, hegemony, and colonization.

References

- Berlin, Isaiah. 1997. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Confucius. 1996. *The Essence and Substance of the Analects (Lun Yu Zheng Yi 论语正义)*, in *Completed Works of Teachers (Zhu Zi Ji Cheng 诸子集成)*. Beijing: Unity Publishing House. Vol.1.
- “Declaration of Principles on Tolerance,” www.unesco.org.
- “Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,” www.un.org.
- Fang, Fei (ed.). 1996. *Zhou Yi (周易)*. U Lu Mu Qi, China: Xinjiang Youth Publishing House.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 2008. *Between Naturalism and Religion*. Cambridge: Polity.
- _____. 2004. “Religious Tolerance—the Pacemaker for Cultural Rights,” *Philosophy* 79:1.
- Harel, Alon. 1996. “The Boundaries of Justifiable Tolerance: A Liberal Perspective”, in *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, David Heyd (ed.), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Herman, Barbara. 1996. “Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment,” in *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, David Heyd (ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Heyd, David. 1996. “Introduction,” in *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, David Heyd (ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Xunzi. 1996. *Xunzi Ji Jie*, in *Completed Works of Teachers (Zhu Zi Ji Cheng 诸子集成)*. Beijing: Unity Publishing House. Vol.2.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72: 2.
- Laozi. 1996. *Dao De Jing*, in *Completed Works of Teachers (Zhu Zi Ji Cheng 诸子集成)*. Beijing: Unity Publishing House. Vol.3.
- Liu, An. 1996. *Huai Nan Zi*, in *Completed Works of Teachers (Zhu Zi Ji Cheng 诸子集成)*. Beijing: Unity Publishing House. Vol.7.
- Locke, John. 1952. “A Letter Concerning Toleration,” in *Locke, Berkeley, Hume*. London: William Benton. 1—22.
- Pojman, Louis P. 2004. “The Cosmopolitan Response to Terrorism,” in *The Moral Life*, Louis P. Pojman (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scanlon, Thomas. 2003. *The Difficulty of Tolerance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Walzer, Michael. 1997. *On Toleration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Zhuangzi. 1996. *Zhuangzi Ji Jie*, in *Completed Works of Teachers (Zhu Zi Ji Cheng 诸子集成)*. Beijing: Unity Publishing House. Vol.3.