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## A REEXAMINATION OF THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF CONFUCIUS' VERSION OF THE GOLDEN RULE

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### *Introduction*

The Golden Rule, when considered as a methodological guide for how one should treat others, is often explicitly expressed in terms of the principle of reversibility or reciprocity, as follows: "(Do not) do unto other persons as you would (not) want them to do unto you." Nevertheless, in contrast to many other moral rules or principles, the Golden Rule is essentially not an abstract, conventionally formulated rule but a presentation of a kind of collective moral wisdom. This kind of wisdom, presented either in some general form or in connection with some particular case, has been found in a variety of cultural and philosophical traditions.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, its concrete versions in different traditions seem to be nurtured by the insightful perspectives and explanatory resources historically developed in these traditions. The enriched contents of these concrete versions of the Golden Rule thus might go well beyond the mere principle of reversibility.

The structure and content of Confucius' version of the Golden Rule (hereafter "CGR") as presented in the *Analects* has been an interesting and significant topic in both Chinese and comparative philosophy. Much work has been done to elaborate the CGR in the last few decades.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in my opinion, there still seem to be some significant aspects of the CGR that have yet to be elaborated or further explained. In the present article, by elaborating three interdependent and complementary dimensions of the CGR,<sup>3</sup> I intend to examine the structure and content of the CGR for the purposes of enhancing our understanding of the ideas and their connections in the *Analects* (the interpretative purpose) and of seeing how these ideas could contribute to our dealing with some fundamental reflective concerns in ethics (the constructive-engagement purpose). My views are as follows.

First, the articulated methodological dimension of the CGR consists of not just the principle of reversibility but also the principle of extensibility; the latter, as I will explain below, is distinct from the former in some crucial aspects.

Second, one central idea, *shu* 恕, in the CGR has two important aspects: its manifest methodological aspect and its substantial aspect; the methodological aspect of *shu* consists of the principles of both reversibility and extensibility and constitutes *the methodological dimension* of the CGR, while its presupposed substantial aspect serves as one starting point for the methodological aspect and constitutes *the internal starting-point dimension* of the CGR. The relation of these two aspects of *shu* is this: the methodological aspect of *shu* intrinsically points to the fundamental and all-embracing virtue of *ren* 仁, as an initial moral sensibility or as its cultivated result;

*ren*, so to speak, provides the internal starting point, that is, the substantial aspect of *shu*, for the methodological aspect of *shu*.

Third, *zhong* 忠, another central idea of the CGR, means one's sincere and devoted moral commitment to those culturally and historically established social institutions such as moral rules and duties, no matter for whom, and constitutes *the external starting-point dimension* of the CGR that provides the external starting point for putting the principles of reversibility and extensibility into play. In this way, the three dimensions (i.e., the methodological, the internal starting-point, and the external starting-point) of the CGR are intertwined as "one unified thread."<sup>4</sup>

My strategy in the following discussion is threefold. First, in the remaining part of this section, before moving on to the substantial elaboration of the preceding points, I will highlight the purpose of this discussion with brief explanations of several methodological considerations that guide the approach taken here. Second, in the second section, I will explain how the articulated methodological dimension of the CGR consists of not just the principle of reversibility but also the principle of extensibility, which enriches and refines the Golden Rule in a way to be explained. Third, I will discuss two aspects of *shu* and its relation to *zhong*: (1) in the third section, I will give a systematic account of these two aspects, and their relation, that serve, respectively, as the methodological dimension and the internal starting-point dimension of the CGR, and (2) in the fourth section, I will explain how *zhong*, as the external starting-point dimension of the CGR, is intertwined with these two aspects of *shu*.

Before examining the structure and content of the CGR, I would like to highlight and briefly explain several methodological considerations that guide my approach in this essay. First, there is the issue of coherence. It is clear that the three-dimensional characterization of Confucius' version of the Golden Rule sketched above presupposes a certain coherence in his teachings (or the ideas) in the *Analects*. One might object that such coherence does not seem to be present in Confucius' disconnected remarks in the *Analects* and that we should not give too much credit to those sayings in the *Analects* that suggest such coherence, such as "one unified thread" (4.15).<sup>5</sup> My thinking in this regard is that the presupposed coherence in Confucius' thought is claimed neither merely nor even primarily on the basis of such textual indications or evidence as may be found in 4.15 and 15.2.<sup>6</sup> Even if there were no such explicit textual indications, the minimal coherence and connectedness of the relevant ideas of Confucius that are involved need to be assumed based on a reasonable methodological principle, namely the principle of charity, to the effect that, when faced with a choice of interpretations of a thinker's ideas, and all else being equal, one ought to opt for the interpretation that maintains at least the minimal intelligence and viability of the ideas in question or the textual expressions of the ideas.<sup>7</sup> The minimal coherence of an account, or the minimal coherent connection of the ideas in the account, is one crucial indication of its minimal intelligence and viability.

By 'minimal coherence' here I mean two things: (1) a thinker's ideas per se are minimally coherently connected and thus unified at the reflective level, and her own language expressions, which are intended to deliver these ideas, have and show the

same degree of minimal coherence; and (2) a thinker's ideas per se are more than minimally coherently connected and thus more than minimally unified at the reflective level, while her own language expressions themselves, which are intended to deliver these ideas, somehow do not *show* the same degree of coherence but show merely a minimal coherence or even deliver some of the ideas in certain seemingly paradoxical terms.<sup>8</sup> In both cases, given that the textual expressions are reliable enough, the minimal *actual* coherence of the textual expressions of one thinker's ideas is assumed, and the minimal coherence of the textual expressions is compatible with more than the minimal degree of coherence of the thinker's ideas per se at the reflective level, although what is assumed here is only the minimal coherence of the ideas of Confucius involved at the reflective level.<sup>9</sup>

Second, one might continually object that given some necessary minimal coherence of the ideas of Confucius involved, they do not seem to possess the magnitude of coherence and connectedness suggested by the explanatory resources resorted to in the three-dimensional characterization of the CGR suggested in the present essay. Fair enough. Obviously, in the *Analects*, Confucius himself did not use these explanatory resources, conceptual apparatus, and terminology, such as 'three dimensions,' 'internal starting point,' 'external starting point,' 'reversibility,' and 'extensibility.'

What is involved here is another, but related, issue regarding the validity of such explanatory and conceptual resources. Note that when these resources are used they are not intended to assign to Confucius (not even to Confucius as a proxy figure who speaks for the ideas in the *Analects*) the same degree of articulated systematization and of mastery of some of the conceptual and explanatory resources, but to enhance our understanding of Confucius and of his ideas as presented in the text. For this explanatory purpose, it is not just legitimate but beneficial to employ clearer or more explicit conceptual resources to elaborate the otherwise implicit and hidden coherence and connectedness in a thinker's ideas that were sometimes less clearly or even badly expressed for lack of the explanatory and conceptual resources that are available to us but were unavailable to the ancients.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that when a thinker's ideas and line of thought are lacking in articulated systematicity in their language expression, this does not amount to saying that the thinker's ideas and line of thought per se go without (implicit and hidden) coherence and connectedness that lie deep within the thinker's ideas. Consequently, we cannot base ourselves merely on this lack of articulated systematicity in language expression and judge that the thinker's text itself is not a philosophical work when the text was indeed intended to deliver her reflective ideas. At this point, with the previous and current methodological considerations in mind, using some adequate conceptual and explanatory resources available to us to further elaborate the thinker's line of thought and her surrounding reflective ideas would be genuinely needed, instead of a mere preference with marginal value for the sake of enhancing our understanding of the thinker's ideas, including their due implications.<sup>11</sup>

Third, there is also the issue of the relation of an explanatory account of a thinker's ideas to the social and cultural source of these ideas. One might say that,

because Confucius' ethical ideas were closely related to his social and political agenda and were historically rooted in his times, any explanatory account of Confucius' thought needs to resort directly to the social-historical context. Some scholars have already explicitly addressed this methodological issue in a way with which I am in agreement. Kwong-loi Shun, for example, has argued that "the relevance of historical and sociological studies does not render a close study of the content of the ideas misguided, and it seems more appropriate to view the two kinds of studies as complementary in that together they yield an understanding of the object of study that is more comprehensive than either can accomplish on its own."<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere, I have provided a detailed discussion of a more general methodological issue in this regard (i.e., at the level of methodological perspective, whether, and to what extent, it would be legitimate or even expected to focus on one, instead of another, of the multiple aspects or layers of the object of study in view of the stated purpose).<sup>13</sup>

Fourth, as indicated above, there have already been many scholarly studies on Confucius' version of the Golden Rule; instead of pretending to be exhaustive, this essay focuses on examining the structure and content of the CGR with the aforementioned purposes and methodological concerns. This essay is not intended to evaluate all of the previous views on the CGR or even the representative ones; what is directly engaged here are some of the most relevant recent views to my approach (e.g., Nivison's and Ivanhoe's views when I examine the internal and external starting-point dimensions of the CGR, and some other scholars' translations and interpretations of relevant texts of Confucius concerning the methodological dimension of the CGR), although I do respond indirectly to some views presented in some of the recent literature on the topic (e.g., whether the methodological dimension of the CGR consists merely of the principle of reversibility—"putting oneself in another's shoes"—or also of the principle of extensibility—"putting oneself in the moral recipient's, rather than another's, shoes").

#### *The Methodological Dimension: The Methodological Aspect of Shu—Principles of Reversibility and Extensibility*

Like its Western counterpart, by which I primarily mean the Christian version of the Golden Rule, the articulated manifest part of Confucius' version of the Golden Rule is its methodological dimension; the two versions share the same core idea to the effect that one can use one's own desires as a guide to how to treat others. Given this shared core idea, what constitutes the methodological dimension of the CGR? Is there any difference that is of interest between the methodological dimension of the CGR and its Western counterpart that would deliver something significant? These are the two concerns in this section.

The Western counterpart of the CGR, as presented in the New Testament version of the Golden Rule,<sup>14</sup> is typically articulated in terms of the following methodological principle of reversibility or reciprocity as expressed in its positive or negative versions:

- (a) Do unto others what you would desire others to do unto yourself [the positive version of the principle of reversibility].
- (b) Do not do unto others what you would not desire others to do unto yourself [the negative version of the principle of reversibility].<sup>15</sup>

In the *Analects*, the counterpart in the CGR of the preceding methodological principle of the Golden Rule appears to be similar. There seem to be three places in the *Analects* where Confucius directly and explicitly refers to such a methodological guide: 15.23 [15.24], 12.2, and 6.28 [6.30]. The articulated methodological principle in 15.23 and 12.2, *ji-suo-bu-yu wu-shi-yu-ren* 己所不欲，勿施於人 (the tentative translation here for the sake of convenience is “Do not do unto others what you would not desire to do unto yourself”), is usually considered to be the counterpart of the negative version of the methodological principle in the CGR. Because this expression appears in 12.2 and 15.23 in exactly the same version, and because the version in 15.23 explicitly introduces one important concept of *shu* in the remark *qi-shu-hu* 其恕乎, we might well consider only the version in 15.23. The seemingly similar counterpart of the positive version of this methodological principle, in 6.28, is *ji-yu-li-er-li-ren ji-yu-da-er-da-ren* 己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人 (the tentative translation for the sake of convenience is “Help others to be established the way you wish to be established, and help others to advance the way you wish to advance yourself”).

Now what is interesting, and significant, as I will explain, is how to understand or interpret the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented by the texts in 15.23 and 6.28. Are the versions in 15.23 and in 6.28 the exact counterparts of the negative and positive versions of the principle of reversibility, respectively? My strategy is to examine the relevant textual evidence through an analysis of its several representative interpretations as suggested or implied by its translations in English. Note that in the last paragraph I give the transliterations of these seemingly similar counterparts in the *Analects* (i.e., the relevant sayings in 15.23 and in 6.28) of the negative and positive versions of the methodological principle, but I mention their English translations merely in parentheses for the sake of convenience of recognition.<sup>16</sup> The reason for doing this is to avoid question-begging; for a translation suggests an interpretation. In any case, how to interpret the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in the *Analects* is what is at issue here.<sup>17</sup>

#### *The Negative Version of the Methodological Dimension*

Let me first consider the issue of how to interpret the passage *ji-suo-bu-yu wu-shi-yu-ren* in 15.23. This passage is typically, or in most cases, translated or interpreted in terms of the negative version of the principle of reversibility. So that we may have a clear idea of the structure and content of the Chinese original, let me offer a textual analysis of the passage in 15.23 by examining the three English translations that are usually considered to be among the most reliable or “classical” ones, namely those of James Legge, Wing-tsit Chan, and D. C. Lau. Here are their respective translations

and interpretations of *ji-suo-bu-yu wu-shi-yu-ren* together with its preceding remark, *qi-shu-hu*:

Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others. (Legge)<sup>18</sup>

It is the word altruism (*shu*). Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you. (Chan)<sup>19</sup>

It is perhaps the word "*shu*." Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire. (Lau)<sup>20</sup>

It is not hard to see that Chan directly and explicitly interprets the passage in 15.23 as the negative version of the principle of reversibility or reciprocity. Legge's translation, on the other hand, is not exactly the negative version of the principle of reversibility, because it is ambiguous and subject to two different interpretations:

(b) Do not do unto others what you would not desire others to do unto yourself.

(c) Do not do unto others what you would not desire yourself to do unto yourself.

According to the previous paraphrase of the meaning of reversibility and reciprocity, what is presented by (b) instead of by (c) is the negative version of reversibility or reciprocity. For only in (b) is the moral agent in the imagined moral situation the moral recipient in the current moral situation (i.e., the situation of "putting oneself in another's shoes"), while in (c) the moral agent in the imagined moral situation is the same moral agent in the current moral situation. That is, in (c), you (the moral agent in the current moral situation) do not do unto the other (the moral recipient in the current situation) what you would not want yourself (the moral agent in the imagined moral situation) to do unto yourself (the moral recipient in the imagined situation). There is no switch or exchange of the moral-agent status between the moral agent and the moral recipient in the current moral situation and the imagined moral situation; the situation is just "putting oneself in the moral recipient's shoes" but not "putting oneself in another's shoes." In other words, what is involved in (c) actually is the negative version of the principle of *extensibility*, rather than the principle of reversibility, to the effect that, in the current moral situation, the moral agent does not *extend* to the moral recipient what the same moral agent in the imagined moral situation would not want herself to do unto herself. In contrast, the positive version of the principle of *extensibility* can be formulated as follows:

(d) Do unto others the way you would desire yourself to do unto yourself (or establish others the way you would desire yourself to establish yourself).

Here the moral agent in the current how-to-treat-others situation *extends* to the

moral recipient what the same moral agent in the imagined or retrospected how-oneself-is-being-treated situation<sup>21</sup> would want herself to do unto herself.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Legge's translation of *shu* indicates that he really means (b) rather than (c). For he interprets *shu* as *reciprocity*, as an abbreviation or summary of the central point of *ji-suo-bu-yu wu-shi-yu-ren*. In this way, in fact, Legge also interprets the passage in 15.23 as the negative version of the principle of reversibility or reciprocity.

Now Lau's translation, like Legge's, is also open to two understandings. By examining the Chinese original, one can see that both Lau's and Legge's interpretations are literal paraphrases without putting into their English versions something that is not in the Chinese original, although Legge's paraphrase of *shu* suggests that he actually interprets the Chinese original as the negative version of the principle of reversibility. To this extent, I believe Lau's translation is most near to Confucius' original in 15.23. But, at this point, one would immediately raise the question: if Confucius' negative version of his methodological guidance *ji-suo-bu-yu wu-shi-yu-ren* in 15.23, as Lau's paraphrase shows, is subject to two different interpretations, (b) as the negative version of the principle of reversibility and (c) as the negative version of extensibility, what does the passage in 15.23 really mean in the context of the *Analects*? Does it mean (b) only or (c) only or both? This is a significant question. For if it means merely (b), then the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR would indeed be exactly the same as the negative version of the principle of reversibility. If it means merely (c), then it would capture some significant methodological point (i.e., the negative version of the principle of extensibility), which does not seem to be shared by the Western counterpart of the CGR, but at the same time it would fail to capture the methodological point presented by the negative version of the principle of reversibility.

However, if the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in 15.23 covers both (b) and (c), then it would capture not only the negative version of the principle of reversibility, as its Western counterpart does, but also the negative version of the principle of extensibility, which the Western counterpart of the CGR does not seem to cover. In this way, the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR would have a richer implication than its Western counterpart in this regard, and it would indeed make a difference in this connection, although it is yet to be seen whether or not it should be considered as making some significant contribution to the Golden Rule.

In the context of the *Analects*, it seems that one can justifiably assign at least the case of (b) to the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR so as to exclude the second interpretation mentioned above, to the effect that it *merely* means the negative version of the principle of extensibility (c). For, in 5.11 [5.12], when Zigong (Tzu-kung) claims himself to be a follower of (b) by explicitly saying "What I would not want *others* to do unto me, I do not want to do unto them" (*wo-bu-yu-ren-zhi-jia-zhu-wo-ye, wu-yi-yu-wu-jia-zhu-ren* 我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人) (my emphasis), Confucius responds that Zigong "has not yet reached (or met) the standard" (*fei-er-suo-ji-ye* 非爾所及也) and thus implicitly endorses this expression of (b) as a (first-person moral) standard.<sup>23</sup> In this way, it is



plausible for Chan to translate explicitly the passage in 15.23 as (b). But the question remains: is (c) also included in the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in 15.23?

Now, before moving on to an examination of the positive version of the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in 6.28, let us bear in mind the two questions raised at the outset of this section, which can be rephrased at this point as follows. First, which interpretation of the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in 15.23 is coherent and most reasonable in the context of the *Analects*—(b) alone or both (b) and (c)? Second, if the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR means both (b) and (c), does it make any significant contribution to the Golden Rule? I try to answer these two questions explicitly in the next subsection.

#### *The Positive Version of the Methodological Dimension*

In contrast to the usual interpretation (i.e., the negative version (b) of the principle of reversibility) of the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in 15.23, the positive version, *ji-yu-li-er-li-ren ji-yu-da-er-da-ren*, in 6.28 [6.30], of the methodological dimension of the CGR often seems to be interpreted as:

(d) Do unto others the way you would desire yourself to do unto yourself (or establish others the way you would desire yourself to establish yourself).

In other words, this is the positive version of the principle of extensibility. The translations of Chan and Lau seem to suggest (d).<sup>24</sup> At this point, there is the question of whether the positive version of the methodological dimension of the CGR means merely (d). Nevertheless, before considering this issue, let us first figure out the implication of (d) or its significance to the first question, which was reiterated at the end of the last subsection: which interpretation, (b) or both (b) and (c), of the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR as presented in 15.23 is coherent and most reasonable in the context of the *Analects*?

Because the positive aspect of the methodological dimension of the CGR involves the case (d) in which the moral agent in the imagined moral situation is the same as the moral agent in the current moral situation, there seems to be no reason to exclude the negative counterpart,

(c) Do not do unto others what you would not desire yourself to do unto yourself,

of (d) from the negative aspect of the methodological dimension. For, generally speaking, when one knows what one desires, one would know what one does not desire to the extent that one typically does not desire the negation of what one does desire; when one knows what efforts one makes, or would make, to establish oneself to become a moral noble person, one would know what one does not desire to do so as to establish oneself to become a moral noble person. In this sense and to this

extent, (d) and (c) are essentially two sides of the same coin. So, if the positive version of the principle of extensibility, (d), is considered to be one indispensable component of the methodological dimension of the CGR, the negative version of the principle of extensibility, (c), would be intrinsically part of the negative aspect of the methodological dimension of the CGR. In this way, because the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR is presented in the passage in 15.23, a most reasonable interpretation of the meaning of this passage should be both (b) and (c) rather than (b) alone.

Now let us go back to the issue of whether the positive version of the methodological dimension of the CGR in 6.28 means merely the positive version (d) of the principle of extensibility or also the positive version (a) of the principle of reversibility.<sup>25</sup> According to the literal sense of the Chinese original *ji-yu-li-er-li-ren ji-yu-da-er-da-ren* of the passage in 6.28, the logical subject of establishing oneself and having oneself reach accomplishment is not given explicitly: it might be either oneself or another. For it is clear that, in the imagined moral situation, the moral agent of establishing oneself or having oneself make it can be either oneself or another. Here, I think Legge's interpretation is more accurate because his interpretation leaves open who—oneself or another—is the logical subject of establishing oneself.<sup>26</sup> However, in contrast, Chan and Lau explicitly interpret the logical subject as oneself. That is, the moral agent in the imagined situation is the same as the moral agent in the current moral situation; as a result, the passage in 6.28 is interpreted as the following methodological guidance:

(d') Establish others (*li-ren* 立人) or have others make it (*da-ren* 達人) the way you would desire yourself to establish yourself (*li-ji* 立己) or to have yourself make it (*da-ji* 達己).

In this way, they actually interpret the passage in 6.28 as the positive version, (d), of the principle of extensibility because (d') is essentially the same as the positive version of the principle of extensibility:

(d) Do unto others the way you would desire yourself to do unto yourself (or establish others the way you would desire yourself to establish yourself).

This interpretation somehow ignores the case in which the moral agent in the imagined situation is the other:

(a') Establish others or have others make it the way you would desire others to establish yourself or to have yourself make it.

Note that (a') is essentially the same as the positive version of the principle of reversibility:

(a) Do unto others the way you would desire others to do unto yourself (or establish others the way you would desire others to establish yourself).

Nevertheless, it seems implausible to think that the methodological dimension of the CGR ignores the positive version of the principle of reversibility. The reason for this does not consist merely of the fact that the literal sense of the passage in 6.28 is compatible with interpreting it as including (a). As shown in the last section, the passage in 15.23 should be interpreted at least to mean the negative version (b) of the principle of reversibility. For the similar reason why the positive version of the principle of extensibility essentially implies its negative version, the negative version of the principle of reversibility essentially implies its positive version. Therefore, it is not merely the case that the passage in 6.28 is compatible with interpreting it as the positive version (a) of the principle of reversibility but that the methodological dimension of the CGR essentially includes it as one component.

Consequently, the methodological dimension of the CGR (the CGRM) in fact consists of two complementary methodological principles with their respective positive and negative versions, as follows:

The Principle of Reversibility of the CGRM:

(a) The positive version:

Do unto others the way you would desire others to do unto yourself (or establish others the way you would desire others to establish yourself).

(b) The negative version:

Do not do unto others what you would not desire others to do unto yourself.

The Principle of Extensibility of the CGRM:

(c) The negative version:

Do not do unto others what you would not desire yourself to do unto yourself.

(d) The positive version:

Do unto others the way you would desire yourself to do unto yourself (or establish others the way you would desire yourself to establish yourself).

#### *The Significance of the Principle of Extensibility*

While it seems that the methodological dimension of one Western counterpart (the Christian version) of the CGR consists of one principle with its two forms, namely the positive and negative versions of the principle of reversibility,<sup>27</sup> the methodological dimension of the CGR, explicitly or implicitly, consists of two principles with their four forms, namely the positive and negative version of the principle of extensibility as well as the positive and negative version of the principle of reversibility. The crucial difference lies in the fact that the methodological dimension of some Western counterpart of the CGR focuses on the case in which the moral agent in the imagined moral situation is the moral recipient in the current moral situation, while the moral recipient in the imagined situation is the moral agent in the current situation. However, through the principle of extensibility, the methodological dimension of the CGR also takes care of the case in which the moral agent in the how-to-treat-others

moral situation is both the moral agent and the moral recipient in the imagined or retrospected how-oneself-is-treated situation. In this case, the moral agent first reviews or figures out the way that she has desired or would desire and in which she has made or would make her own efforts to (morally) establish herself (through self-cultivation) and then extends the way to treat others.

The significance of the principle of extensibility is twofold. First, the principle of extensibility would provide a *distinct* moral reference to regulate how to treat others, which distinguishes itself from what the principle of reversibility does, in the following sense. In our moral practice, in many scenarios that involve how to treat others, we simply take a certain attitude or action toward others by considering how we desire ourselves to treat ourselves, whether or not we would also consider how we desire others to treat ourselves at the same time. For example, when one determines to make all (or some of) one's efforts (say, to take part in some community service, to help those in need, etc.) to establish oneself to become a good person, one might take one's own desire in this connection as one's guide to establish one's child to become a good person—say, to take the same kinds of effort as enrolling one's child in some community service or educating one's child to help those in need.

Second, in some moral scenarios, the principle of extensibility would provide a more *fundamental* moral reference to regulate how to treat others than the principle of reversibility does, to the following extent. As indicated by the text in 6.28, both the principle of reversibility and the principle of extensibility (in their positive versions) claim to take care of the situations in which one considers the ways one desires either others (in the case of reversibility) or oneself (in the case of extensibility) to *establish* (*li* 立) or *advance* (*da* 達) *oneself* in a morally favorable direction—as suggested by the strong moral implications of Chinese characters like *li* and *da* used in the text as well as by the initial moral sensibility, which is supposed to be more or less possessed by the moral agent, who sets out to apply the methods of reversibility and extensibility (this point will be explained in the next section). One's moral cultivation, from Confucius' point of view, is essentially a kind of moral *self*-cultivation that fundamentally involves how one would consciously and reflectively desire *oneself* to treat oneself without involving too much how one desires others to treat oneself. To this extent, and at least in those cases in which the consideration of how the moral agent would be morally self-cultivated would contribute to how to treat others, the principle of extensibility would provide a more fundamental moral reference to regulate how to treat others. For, in many cases of moral self-cultivation that involve adequately treating others, an imaginary result of one's thought experiment in regard to how one would desire to be treated by others can ultimately be turned into some internal power for guiding how to treat others only when the former first genuinely becomes one's own conscious and reflective guidance for one's establishing (*li*) and advancing (*da*) one's own moral character.

In contrast to the principle of reversibility, the principle of extensibility thus directly points to, or is intrinsically connected with, the moral *self*-cultivation, which is one central concern in Confucius' ethical thought. The aforementioned two aspects

of the significance of the principle of extensibility will be given a further illustration when, in the next section, I discuss how the fundamental virtue in Confucius' ethical thought, *ren*, plays its role in the two-step procedure of practicing the principles of reversibility and extensibility.

One might doubt the significance of the principle of extensibility in this way: the Golden Rule is a hypothetical scenario; it does not matter whether what is involved is the way one helps oneself to advance or the way one wants others to help one to advance. Note that whether or not it does matter in which way one desires to establish and advance oneself would depend upon what kind of purpose that making such a distinction is intended to serve. If one intends to capture the common idea shared by both principles or by the methodological dimensions of, say, both the Christian and Confucian versions of the Golden Rule, then it does not matter whether one goes further into the rich content of the CGR. After all, the shared idea constitutes the common basis upon which both the principle of reversibility and the principle of extensibility are considered as two principles in the same methodological dimension of the CGR, and both the Christian and Confucian versions share the same methodological core. However, if one intends to realize how such a common core idea is implemented in some distinct versions of the Golden Rule or to understand the rich content of the methodological dimension of the CGR and its relation to moral self-cultivation, it does matter indeed. For the two methodological principles, as elaborated before, are two distinct perspectives for looking at one's desires; conceptually and methodologically, they are simply not the same thing, and the differences are significant in those aspects examined above. The principle of extensibility in the CGR or in the context of Confucius' moral doctrine, as emphasized above, is essentially connected with the way of moral self-cultivation—one central theme of Confucius' ethics of virtue. In the next section, through a discussion of the substantial aspect of the central concept of *shu* in the CGR, I will further elaborate the point in this connection.

One might object in another way: to make a further distinction between the principles of reversibility and extensibility would miss the point that at the heart of the Golden Rule is merely the idea that one can use one's own desires as a guide for how one should treat others. Two things are worth mentioning here. First, even if this idea could be considered the heart of the Golden Rule, giving a further elaboration of how one's own desires behave in this connection is not only far from missing the point but also would enhance our understanding of this methodological guide, because of the two aspects of the significance of the principle of extensibility as examined above. Second, as I will explain in the subsequent sections, it seems to be inadequate to identify the heart of Confucius' version of the Golden Rule merely in terms of the methodological idea per se that one uses one's own desires as a guide for how one should treat others; this idea is the heart of only the methodological dimension of the CGR. To understand the heart of the CGR as a whole, one needs to consider its other substantial dimensions: its internal starting-point dimension and external starting-point dimension. Let us now move on to these two substantial dimensions.

*The Internal Starting-Point Dimension: The Substantial Aspect of Shu*

*From the Methodological Dimension to Other Dimensions*

In the previous section, I focused on the methodological dimension of the CGR through an analysis of some textual evidence in the context of the *Analects* and explain why the passages in 15.23 and 6.28, respectively, present the negative and positive versions of the methodological dimension of the CGR, which involve both the principle of reversibility and the principle of extensibility. Does the CGR consist merely of its articulated methodological dimension? Philosophers in the Western tradition since Kant have already diagnosed various difficulties with just the principle of reversibility.<sup>28</sup> If the Golden Rule lies merely in a certain methodological principle like that of reversibility, then those difficulties with the methodological principle *per se* would naturally also be difficulties with the Golden Rule as a whole. There seem to be two approaches to how to deal with these problems. One approach is to take it for granted that the Golden Rule consists merely of a certain manifest methodological principle like that of reversibility and to strengthen the Golden Rule by modifying the principle of reversibility so as to avoid various counterexamples.<sup>29</sup> Another approach is as follows. First, it considers the Golden Rule to consist not simply of its manifest methodological principle but also of some other important and indispensable component(s) by which its methodological principle is somehow regulated. Second, its focus is thus not simply on the abstract formulation of a certain methodological principle like that of reversibility but primarily on the way in which a concrete version of the Golden Rule presents itself in a certain cultural and philosophical tradition. It has turned out that such concrete versions of the Golden Rule, although sharing some kind of methodological principle like that of reversibility, actually often involve something more substantial than the simple methodological principle. In this regard, the Christian and Confucian versions of the Golden Rule are considered to be prominent cases.<sup>30</sup>

Scholars who have studied the Confucian version of the Golden Rule almost unanimously agree that the CGR does not consist merely of its methodological principle. For Confucius' version of the Golden Rule is considered to be intrinsically connected with two important concepts in the *Analects*—*shu* and *zhong*—whose ample philosophical implications cannot be exhausted by the articulated methodological principles alone. Moreover, as already mentioned, Confucius emphasizes that *shu* and *zhong* are intertwined together as “one unified thread” through his Way. However, how to understand and interpret the concepts of *shu* and *zhong* and the relation among *shu*, *zhong*, and the methodological dimension of the CGR has been a controversial topic.

In what follows, first I will explain the relation between the methodological dimension and the internal starting-point dimension of the CGR by examining two aspects of *shu* and their relation. Second, by focusing on the relation between *zhong* and *shu*, I will spell out the relation among the external starting-point dimension, the internal starting-point dimension, and the methodological dimension of the CGR.

### *The Dual Character of the Internal Starting-Point Dimension*

We note that Confucius uses a single character, *shu*, to characterize or capture the point of the methodological dimension of the CGR. Now an important but controversial issue is what Confucius means by *shu*; for the concept of *shu* is considered a crucial or even defining concept of the CGR. Because of the evidential connection between *shu* and the methodological dimension of the CGR, actually no one denies that the methodological dimension (at least in its negative aspect) of the CGR constitutes one intrinsic part of *shu*. Now what is at issue is this: does Confucius use *shu* merely as an abbreviation, or a proxy code, for the methodological dimension of the CGR, or does Confucius' concept of *shu* also have a substantial aspect beyond its merely methodological aspect?

Some scholars deem *shu* to be, in various ways, essentially just the methodological principle of the CGR, and they emphasize the crucial role played by *zhong*.<sup>31</sup> This approach has already been subjected to some critical evaluation. Philip Ivanhoe, for example, analyzes some characteristic features of the methodological principle of reversibility, noting that this principle, by itself, is inert because it can end up advocating either one's subjective preferences or a set of unjustified prescriptions for actions. Confucius' Golden Rule, according to Ivanhoe,

combines an explicitly defined set of moral guidelines with a subtle appeal to *developed* human intuitions. . . . It avoids the merely subjective by advocating a set of prescriptions—the *li* 禮 'rituals'—which are regarded as the best possible set of rules for governing human life. . . . Rituals have an additional function; they guide one to develop a sense for what is right. This sense is necessary for a refined understanding of ritual.<sup>32</sup>

"The first step in this process is simply to *practice* the *li*." It seems to Ivanhoe that "to be *chung* [*zhong*] is to serve others according to *li*."<sup>33</sup> Or, more accurately, *zhong* is one's service to others in superior or equal positions by means of one's commitment to follow the *li*; in this way, *zhong* is "the first and primary notion in the Confucian Golden Rule."<sup>34</sup> Ivanhoe's point is that instead of appealing to an innate intuition about what one should do, the first step in the process of carrying out the methodological principle of reversibility is simply to practice the *li*; one cannot develop the moral sensibility needed to engage in this imaginative act until one has become well-practiced in the rites; so to be *zhong*—to serve one's social peers and superiors by one's commitment to follow the *li*—is "the first and primary notion" in the CGR.

Ivanhoe's account has a number of merits. First, if one thinks that Confucius did not hold the view that people have a ready-made innate moral intuition, Ivanhoe's account provides a plausible starting point for carrying out the method of reversibility. Second, his interpretation relates *zhong* to the commitment to following the *li*, although he, following Nivison, identifies as the social peer or superior the direct object that *zhong* serves. Third, he seems to suggest that one can gain the moral sensibility, *ren*, through exercising the method of reversibility, and that *ren* should regulate *zhong*; in this way, he is right to say that "*Shu* is the governor of *chung* [*zhong*]"<sup>35</sup> insofar as *shu* results in such a moral sensibility.

However, despite these merits, there are also some difficulties with Ivanhoe's interpretation. First, if "the first step in this process is simply to practice the *li*," then to what can people appeal in those concrete situations where there are simply no ritual rules to follow? Second, when Ivanhoe emphasizes that rituals "guide one to *develop a sense* for what is right," there remains one question: exactly from where does such a moral sensibility ultimately develop—from the external ritual rule or from the mere behavior of practicing the *li* or from nowhere in regard to something internal? Is there any internal foundation in the moral agent's moral nature? It seems that Ivanhoe does not explicitly answer this question. Third, one obvious difficulty is that if, according to Ivanhoe, *zhong* is only one's service to *social equals or superiors* by committing to following the *li* and if *zhong* is *the first and primary notion* in the CGR, how would those social superiors apply the Golden Rule to those social inferiors? Fourth, if the needed moral sensibility is totally the result of practicing the rituals, and if the very first step in applying the method of reversibility is only to practice the rituals, meaning that *zhong* is the first and primary notion, how could *shu* or the moral sensibility gained through *shu* be the governor of *zhong* at the very beginning? Indeed, it might be the case that these are difficulties with Confucius' own account, if Ivanhoe's interpretation is a correct characterization of Confucius' way in this connection. Nevertheless, before examining the textual evidence in the *Analects* further, one might as well suspend judgment as to whether Confucius' account, or what is delivered in the text of the *Analects*, has the same difficulties.

Setting aside the focus on *zhong* for the next section, in the rest of this section I shall argue that the key concept of *shu* in the CGR consists of two closely related aspects or layers rather than only one. The first is the manifest methodological aspect, which, as discussed in the previous section, comprises both the principle of reversibility and the principle of extensibility. The second, important and indispensable, is the substantial aspect, which constitutes the internal starting point for applying the aforementioned methodological principles in moral practice.

It is important to note that if one intrinsic aspect of *shu* is its methodological aspect, Confucius does not present this methodological aspect as something that one can start with from nowhere. It seems to me that there is clear textual evidence for the substantial presupposition of the methodological aspect of *shu*, that is, the substantial aspect of *shu* that constitutes one starting point for the adequate application of the methods of reversibility and extensibility. Let me begin with some characteristic features of the terminology that Confucius uses to articulate the methodological dimension of the CGR. In his positive version of the methodological dimension of the CGR, in 6.28, Confucius uses the terms *li* and *da* to characterize the moral action of treating oneself and others. In this context, Confucius' use of these terms clearly involves their moral implications, namely to help establish others morally in the way in which one would desire oneself or others to establish oneself. In the *Analects*, to establish one person morally is to cultivate that person into a *junzi*, a morally noble person, whose fundamental virtue is *ren*. In this connection, the moral implication of the terms *li* and *da* points to the defining virtue *ren*, as the intrinsic moral standard,



of *junzi*. If Confucius' use of terms like *li* and *da* only implicitly suggests some substantial implication of his concept of *shu*, the whole context of his presentation of the positive version of the methodological dimension of the CGR arguably articulates the substantial aspect of *shu*. The passage that most clearly and completely presents the structure and features of Confucius' concept of *shu*, in my opinion, is not the most often cited passage 15.23 but the following passage from 6.28:

The *renzhe* 仁者 (person of humanity), wishing himself to be established, helps others to be established and, wishing himself to be advanced helps others to be advanced. To be able draw the analogy from oneself can be called *ren-zhi-fang* 仁之方 [the way of humanity or, more accurately, the way of putting *ren* into practice].

Indeed, it is understandable that, in the context of 15.23, only the prominent methodological point of *shu* is highlighted. In this context, because Confucius is asked to give just one single saying to which one can appeal as an easily remembered *methodological* dictum, he explicitly gives only the methodological aspect of *shu* (actually, the negative version of the methodological dimension of the CGR), leaving certain presupposed starting points of the method implicit. Nevertheless, in the passage in 6.28, Confucius brings out one presupposed internal starting point of the methodological aspect of *shu* and presents the relation of the methodological aspect of *shu* to the moral sensibility of *ren* in a quite direct and explicit way. It is important to note that, according to Confucius' concept of *shu* as characterized in 6.28, the moral agent who is entitled, or ready, to use the methods of reversibility and extensibility is not a person without any initial moral sensibility but a *renzhe*—a person with (a certain degree of) the virtue of *ren* (humanity), a person with at least some initial moral sensibility in this connection.

At this point, one question might be raised: in this way, could *anyone* or only *some people* have such initial moral sensibility and thus be entitled, or take off, to properly apply the methods of reversibility and extensibility, according to Confucius? Note that this question is essentially irrelevant to the issue per se under discussion here, namely the structure and implication of Confucius' prescriptive concept of *shu* and his version of the Golden Rule: if the initial moral sensibility should be a starting point for properly applying the method of reversibility, the moral agent needs to appeal to such an initial moral sensibility in order to apply the method adequately. Whether or not, and to what extent, a moral agent does have this needed initial moral sensibility is a separate, albeit important, issue in moral psychology. Confucius himself only briefly and vaguely addressed it,<sup>36</sup> but Mencius and Xunzi, two subsequent classical Confucians, conducted a thoughtful and significant debate over it. That is, although *shu* presupposes *ren* in its substantial aspect, which constitutes a starting point for its methodological aspect, the concept of *shu* per se does not provide a definite answer to the question of whether, and to what extent, one has an initial innate moral sensibility.

As I see it, the aforementioned point of the passage in 6.28 in connection with the initial moral sensibility of the moral agent seems to be ignored in some interpretations when the passage is quoted to specify *shu*; instead, only *ren-zhi-fang* is

emphasized when the relation between *ren* and the methodological principle of the CGR is sometimes interpreted to mean that the latter is logically and practically prior to the former or that the latter alone ensures the former. This approach seems to be implicit in some English translations of the Chinese phrase *ren-zhi-fang*—for example, ‘the method toward *ren*’ or ‘the method of realizing *ren*.’<sup>37</sup> These paraphrases might lead one to think that *ren* has not yet been made real or come into being before the methods of reversibility and extensibility are applied and that the methodological principle is logically and practically prior to the existence of *ren* in the moral agent. In my opinion, *ren-zhi-fang* needs to be understood as ‘the way of putting *ren* into practice,’<sup>38</sup> for it is clear in the context of 6.28 that a moral agent who is ready to apply the methods of reversibility and extensibility is considered to have already possessed some degree of moral sensibility of *ren* as her internal starting point for appropriately applying the methods of reversibility and extensibility; what is not yet implemented is to put the initial moral sensibility of *ren* into practice to treat others morally by following the methods of reversibility and extensibility.

It is also significant that this interpretation of the primary meaning of *ren-zhi-fang* does not reject, but is compatible with, the idea that the way of humanity in 6.28 also implies the way toward, or of realizing, *ren*, when *ren* here is understood as the result or consequence of putting the initial moral sensibility into practice. Here one needs to make the distinction between *ren* as some initial moral sensibility that serves as one starting point for applying the methods of reversibility and extensibility and *ren* as the result of putting the moral sensibility into practice via the methods of reversibility and extensibility. Confucius’ social ideal was to produce a harmonious and humane society in which people fully develop their virtue of *ren* or humanity; Confucius’ version of the Golden Rule serves this ultimate purpose. And, according to Confucius, the application of the methods of reversibility and extensibility so as to put one’s initial moral sensibility of *ren* into practice, as a dialectical process of one’s moral cultivation, would result in reinforcing one’s initial moral sensibility of *ren* or achieving such a moral sensibility at a higher level. In this way, the so-called *ren-zhi-fang* (way of humanity) in fact has two levels of meaning.

First, or primarily, it means the way of putting *ren* into practice as some initial moral sensibility. Note that ‘initial moral sensibility’ here does not necessarily mean something like a moral sprout in Mencius’ sense (see *Mencius* 2A:6, 6A:6–7, 6A:14). As already mentioned, it might result either from a certain degree of moral conscience in human nature or from cultivating one’s virtue in response to the advocacy of some moral ideal that is not necessarily connected with the principle of reversibility, or from both. Second, it also means the way toward, or of realizing, *ren* as the result or consequence of putting the initial moral sensibility into practice. This dual meaning reflects a dialectical relation between the two aspects of *shu* in the CGR. On the one hand, *ren* as initial moral sensibility provides a starting point from which a moral agent would commence the methods of reversibility and extensibility by starting on the right track. On the other hand, applying the methods of reversibility and extensibility in order to put one’s initial moral sensibility of *ren* into practice, as a dialectical process of one’s moral cultivation, would result in reinforcing and

refining one's initial moral sensibility of *ren* or reaching a higher level of moral sensibility of *ren*.

Considering its purpose and scope, the present essay is not intended to engage in a comprehensive examination of the fundamental virtue *ren* but takes this virtue for granted when focusing on the structure and content of the CGR per se, as indicated in the title of this essay. Nevertheless, I do intend to discuss some features of *ren* with regard to its relation to the CGR when trying to figure out exactly how *ren* serves as the internal starting point of the methodological dimension of the CGR. *Ren* or the Way of the morally noble person (*junzi* 君子) is often characterized in the *Analects* in terms of loving one's fellow human beings (e.g., in 12.22 and 17.4; also see 1.5 and 1.6). Given that the substantial aspect of *shu* points to *ren* in the manner explained above, can we say that the substantial aspect of *shu*, as one internal starting point of the method of reversibility and extensibility, is simply interpersonal love and care? In my opinion, the answer is both yes and no. Let me explain why.

In fact, as far as their internal procedural structures are concerned, both the principle of extensibility and the principle of reversibility consist of a two-step procedure: (1) to figure out or review the way one desires oneself or others to establish oneself, or the way one does not desire oneself or others to treat oneself, in the imagined how-oneself-is-treated moral situation, and (2) to extend or reverse the same way with regard to others in a how-to-treat-others moral situation. In fact, *ren* as one internal starting point presents itself in distinct forms in these two methodological steps. In the second step, when one considers whether or not to extend to others or to reverse the way one would desire oneself or others to treat oneself, one's internal starting point is indeed presented in the form of interpersonal love and care, as Confucius characteristically emphasizes in his teaching "*Ren* is to love your fellow men" (12.22). However, in the first step, the focus is on how one would desire oneself or others to treat oneself morally so as to become a *junzi*; the internal starting point in this step should be something more fundamental than interpersonal love and care, namely the fundamental virtue *ren* itself rather than its extension in treating other people (interpersonal love and care).

For, the first step in figuring out or imagining the way one would desire to be treated (especially in the case of applying the method of extensibility, whose first step is to figure out the way one would desire to be morally cultivated/treated through one's own efforts) does not primarily involve how to treat others; *ren* on such occasions does not present itself primarily as interpersonal love and care. In the *Analects* there is a passage that characterizes *ren* in this way: "Fan Chi asked about *ren*. Confucius said, 'Be respectful in dwelling by oneself, be serious in handling one's responsibilities, and be loyal in dealing with others. Even if living among barbarians, one may never cast away these principles'" (13.19). There is one important point worth noting here: the first item that Confucius mentions—"Be respectful in dwelling by oneself"—does not even concern one's attitude toward others but rather one's attitude toward oneself. As Shu-hsien Liu points out, "*jen* in this sense cannot be interpreted as merely interpersonal love or benevolence; . . . *jen* implies a profound

reverence for one's own life as well as a concern for others' lives. . . . Its meaning is far wider than mere benevolence or even altruism; rather, it is the root of them."<sup>39</sup>

I think Confucius makes or illustrates essentially the same point in passages like 4.5, 6.21 [6.23], 7.29 [7.30], 12.1, 13.27, 15.8 [15.9], 16.10, and 19.6. For this reason, the internal starting point of the methodological dimension of the CGR cannot indiscriminately be identified simply as interpersonal love and care but needs a more refined characterization. In the first step of carrying out the methodological principle, *shu* points to the all-embracing fundamental virtue *ren* as the internal starting point so that one can figure out the way one would desire to be treated, while in the second step *shu* points to the extension of *ren* in treating others, namely through interpersonal love and care, as the internal starting point, so as to extend or reverse the way one figures out and desires to treat others in the first step.

Note that, as emphasized above, because interpersonal love and care is actually an extension of the all-embracing fundamental virtue *ren* in treating others, the two internal starting points involved in the two steps of carrying out the methodological principle of the CGR are essentially the same fundamental virtue, namely *ren*, rather than two distinct virtues. For this reason, I prefer the phrase 'dual character of the internal starting point' or 'dual character of the internal starting-point dimension of the CGR' to the phrase 'two internal starting points,' although the latter saying would not necessarily result in misunderstanding once its meaning is given some necessary clarification.

In the preceding discussion, I have offered a two-aspect interpretation of the concept of *shu*. But this does not constitute the whole story of the CGR; Confucius' concept of *zhong* also plays an important and indispensable role in the CGR. Let us move on to this concern.

### *The External Starting-Point Dimension: Zhong*

#### *Zhong: The Li Commitment—No Matter for Whom*

How to understand *zhong* and its relation to *shu* has been a matter of controversy. I begin with a critical examination of Nivison's interpretation of *shu* and *zhong* as two aspects, or halves, of the Confucian Golden Rule:

(1) What I do to you, if I am in a superior position, should be what I would find it acceptable for you to do to me, if our position were reversed. I should be kind, lenient, considerate; if I am following a rule of action that would lead me to hurt you, I should relax the rule if possible. This I identified as *shu*.

(2) What I do for you, if I am in an inferior position, should be what I would expect you to do for me, if our positions were reversed. I should be "loyal," and so should be strict with myself even when what I am doing might hurt me, observing rules to the best of my ability. This I identified as *zhong*.<sup>40</sup>

Nivison's interpretation has one important advantage that is relevant to the discussion here. It does not restrict the CGR merely to the articulated methodological

principle of reversibility. Rather, it explicitly interprets the CGR as intrinsically involving such virtues as kindness and consideration (in the case of *shu*) and loyalty (in the case of *zhong*). That is, these virtues actually serve as a kind of starting point for applying the principle of reversibility. Nivison makes this contribution to paving the way toward a more reasonable and fruitful understanding of the CGR.

Nevertheless, there seems to be one difficulty with Nivison's understanding of *zhong* as a guide for personal *conduct in regard to one's social equals or superiors*.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, when *zhong* is used to indicate the devoted commitment of one person to other persons, it seems usually to indicate the devoted commitment by a moral agent in an inferior position to superiors (or at most to equals). The textual evidence to which Nivison appeals is the following passage in *Analects* 3.19: "A ruler employs subordinates according to the *li*; subordinates serve their ruler with *zhong*." Nevertheless, this statement was uttered in a certain context, namely when Confucius was asked about the relation between a ruler and his subordinates: "Duke Ding asked how the ruler should employ his ministers and how the ministers should serve their ruler." One can find a similar case in *Analects* 5.18 [5.19]. However, in my opinion, this specific sense of *zhong* is only in its secondary meaning in a specific context. The primary meaning of *zhong* in the *Analects*, especially when it is used together with *shu* to unify Confucius' ideas as a whole, is a moral agent's sincere and devoted commitment to *one's responsibilities and duties* as specified by the *li* (the ritual rules) or by culturally and historically established social institutions; the implementation of such a sincere and devoted commitment as a virtue can involve any moral recipient, regardless of the recipient's social status. The secondary meaning of *zhong* here is only an extension of the primary meaning in the social context, in which the implementation of *zhong* intrinsically involves any moral recipients, no matter what their social status may be. In the *Analects*, the primary object of *zhong*, therefore, is one's responsibilities and duties rather than other persons, much less one's social peers or superiors. In *Analects* 16:10, Confucius teaches us: "The noble person (*junzi*) has nine wishes with thoughtful consideration. . . . In regard to his speech (*yan* 言), he is thoughtful to be *zhong*."

This passage has two implications: (1) *Zhong* as a virtue is supposed to be regarded seriously by all (morally) noble persons, including morally noble rulers, in treating all people from all social levels, and is not restricted to social peers and superiors. (2) *Zhong* here is concerned primarily with something delivered in speech that is not essentially related to the social status of the involved moral recipient, namely the power of one's sincere and devoted commitment to one's social duties and responsibilities as specified by the *li*, which is often delivered via speech.

There are several reasons and further textual evidence for drawing these two conclusions. First, in the *Analects*, the two terms *zhong* and *xin* 信 are sometimes used together as a two-character phrase (see 1.8, 5.27 [5.28], 9.24 [9.25], 12.10, 15.5 [15.6]) or mentioned together (1.4, 7.24).<sup>42</sup> The basic sense of *xin* is 'being true to one's word' (whether the word has been kept to a social superior or a social peer or a social inferior). It seems that one explanation of why these two terms are, and can be, used together in the *Analects* is that both involve some kind of sincere

commitment to obligation and responsibility, no matter who is concerned, that is often delivered in speech.<sup>43</sup> Another relevant text that treats *zhong* in this manner is the passage in 12.23: “Zigong asked about how friends should be treated. Confucius said, ‘Sincerely admonish (*zhong-gao* 忠告) your friends, and skillfully lead them on.’” For one thing, in the context of the *Analects*, what ‘friend’ denotes is clearly not restricted to social superiors or peers; for another, *zhong* here is used to characterize the sincere and responsible nature of one’s spoken admonition.

Second, Confucius reminds us, “Can there be *zhong* which does not involve *hui* 誨?” (14.8 [14.7]). If *zhong* were aimed primarily and directly at persons, the preceding citation would appear to suggest that *zhong* would be turned toward social inferiors rather than social peers or superiors. For the Chinese term *hui* is usually used to indicate the instruction or education of others in inferior positions. For example, parents or teachers *hui* (instruct or educate) their children or disciples, but the opposite almost never happens. The suggested understanding of *zhong* can explain this: when one makes one’s devoted commitment to one’s responsibilities and duties, the moral power per se in such a commitment (*zhong* virtue in one’s character and its manifestation in one’s *zhong* behavior) constitutes a sort of moral instruction.

Third, Confucius says, “When there is action to be taken, be *zhong*” (12.14). It is clear from the context that what Confucius considers here is the action in general rather than any specific kind of action and that even if one’s action can be explained in terms of its social dimension and thus in terms of one’s relation with others, such social connections cannot be exclusively specified in terms of the relation to one’s social peers and superiors.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, from Confucius’ perspective, what is most relevant and important in one’s action is to follow the *li* devotedly. In this way, Confucius’ teaching here suggests that the primary object toward which *zhong* is directed is the devoted commitment to those responsibilities and duties specified by the ritual rules rather than to persons, much less a special group of persons such as social peers or superiors.

Fourth, one can look at how the secondary meaning of *zhong* follows its primary meaning from another perspective, that of Confucius: one’s devoted commitment, or responsibilities and duties, to other persons is essentially a social relation and is eventually regulated and justified by the *li*, that is, the socially established ritual rules; *zhong* is thus primarily and ultimately concerned with a moral agent’s devoted commitment to these ritual rules.

From the preceding discussion, it becomes clear where the characterization here of Confucius’ *zhong* is in agreement with Nivison and Ivanhoe’s line and where they are different. First, I agree with both that being *zhong* essentially involves “observing rules” (Nivison) and fulfilling “one’s obligations as defined by the *li*” (Ivanhoe); I agree with Ivanhoe that, from Confucius’ point of view, the social-ritual rules, to which a moral agent is supposed to be loyal, regulate the moral agent’s desires or wishes, which serve, by analogy, as a guide for how she should treat others. Second, however, *zhong* in its primary sense in the *Analects* is not so much a matter of one’s loyalty to persons but consists of one’s sincere and devoted commitment to those

established ritual rules that provide a guide to treating other persons. Third, the persons treated through one's *zhong* behavior are not restricted to social equals or superiors but can be any person, regardless of social status. In this way, even a moral agent in the most superior position, if she wants to become a *junzi*, has also to confront the issue of *zhong* in treating others, no matter what their social status. Fourth, the primary objects toward which *zhong* is directed are not restricted to the duties or obligations that one usually reserves for social peers or superiors but also include the responsibilities that a social superior has for social inferiors.

#### *Zhong and Shu*

Now there is one further issue: what is the relation between *zhong* and *shu* in the CGR? Because *shu*, according to my preceding discussion, consists of its methodological aspect and its substantial aspect, which constitute, respectively, the methodological dimension and the internal starting-point dimension of the CGR, the issue is actually that of the relation between *zhong* and these two dimensions of the CGR. The issue thus might be divided into two questions: the first concerns the relation between *zhong* and the methodological dimension of the CGR; the second one concerns the relation between *zhong* and the internal starting-point dimension of the CGR.

Consider the first question. One might note that, in my preceding account, I do not refer to the substantial aspect of *shu*, one's initial moral sensibility *ren*, as the starting point for the methods of reversibility and extensibility. For, in the CGR, *zhong* constitutes another starting point for these methods. *Zhong*, as explained already, is the devoted commitment toward the established ritual rules that regulate various social relations such as the relations between a person and her superior(s) or her equal(s) or even her subordinate(s) and between a person and her community. The social-ritual rules, to which a moral agent is supposed to be loyal, regulate the moral agent's desires or wishes, which serve, by analogy, as a guide for how she should treat others. In this way, *zhong* plays the role of regulating a moral agent's desires or wishes when she follows the methods of reversibility and extensibility as a methodological tool. Note that, according to the preceding examination of the two-step procedure involved in the principles of reversibility and extensibility, *zhong* plays its role as one starting point primarily in the first step, in which the moral agent figures out the way one would desire oneself or others to establish oneself or the way one does not desire oneself or others to treat oneself.

It follows from the discussion above that, in the CGR, the substantial point of *shu* (the moral agent's initial moral sensibility of *ren*) and *zhong* constitute the double starting points from which the methodological principles of reversibility and extensibility are brought into play. Now the imminent question is about the relation between *zhong* and the substantial point of *shu*. Because *zhong* intrinsically involves the observance of the *li* and serves the external starting point for applying the principles of reversibility and extensibility, and because the methodological dimension of the CGR is a method of practicing *ren* (putting *ren* into practice and reinforcing it, as explained above), it is no wonder that Confucius emphasizes that "To over-

come oneself and return to the observance of the *li* (rites) is to practice *ren*" (12.1). In this sense, *zhong* bears on the substantial aspect of *shu*—*ren* as initial moral sensibility—through regulating the application of the principles of reversibility and extensibility. Note that almost immediately after the citation above, Confucius also points out that "To practice *ren* depends on oneself alone, and not on others." It doesn't even depend on the observance of the *li*. This suggests that the *li*, and thus *zhong*, should ultimately be regulated by the internal moral sensibility *ren*—the substantial aspect of *shu*. Confucius emphasizes that "If a person is not humane (*ren*), what can he do with the rites?" (3.3) and he talks unfavorably about a person who has the virtue of *zhong* but is without the fundamental virtue of *ren* (5.18 [5.19]).

To sum up this section: first, *zhong* is the *external* starting point for the self-examination of one's own desires and one's treatment of others by virtue of *external* ritual rules in concrete situations, whether one is in an inferior, equal, or superior position. Second, however, the substantial point of *shu* is the *internal* starting point, which points to the *internal* moral virtue within the heart-and-mind of the moral agent and from which one sets out both to examine one's own desires *and* to regulate those rules to which one appeals in the course of the self-examination of one's own desires in concrete situations.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the principles of reversibility and extensibility constitute the methodological aspect of the way of putting into practice *ren* as the initial moral sensibility. In this way, by means of the methodological point of *shu*, the substantial points of *shu* and *zhong* are complementary to, and dependent on, each other, but with the former being the most fundamental. *Shu* and *zhong* thus are intertwined together as "one unified thread."

In fact, the issue of the relation between *shu* and *zhong* bears on the classical issue of the relation between *ren* and *li* because of a number of intrinsic connections between these two pairs.<sup>46</sup> Although I cannot focus on the latter issue here, the discussion of the former issue in the context of the CGR is related to elaborating the relation between *ren* and *li*. For example, a distinction is made between *ren* as an initial moral sensibility, which might result from a moral conscience or from the advocacy of some moral ideal or from both, and *ren* as a consequence of putting the initial moral sensibility into practice through the application of the methodological principles of reversibility and extensibility. If, through the sincere and devoted observance of the *li* rules and duties, *zhong* provides a starting point for applying the methodological principles of the CGR, and if practicing the methodological principles of reversibility and extensibility would strengthen *ren* as the initial moral sensibility and result in *ren* becoming the cultivated moral virtue, then *li*, through *zhong*, would contribute to shaping *ren*. However, *ren* as a whole is not shaped exclusively by *li* through *zhong*; rather, *li* itself and then *zhong* are eventually regulated and guided by *ren* as the initial moral sensibility, which constitutes the determining internal starting point for applying the methodological principles of the CGR. In this way, the relation between *ren* and *li* seems to be a kind of two-way dialectic, a dynamic relation rather than some one-way, mechanistic connection.



A Summary

To help summarize the preceding discussion of the three dimensions, and their relation, in Confucius' version of the Golden Rule, a diagram can be used to schematize its structure and the basic relations among its various dimensions (see figure 1). In the diagram, an arrow with a solid line signifies a regulation-relation (e.g., the substantial aspect of *shu* regulates both its methodological aspect and *zhong*), and an arrow with a broken line represents a dialectical reaction-relation (e.g., the application of the method of reversibility enabling one to put one's initial moral sensibility of *ren* into practice would result in reinforcing one's initial moral sensibility or allowing the achievement of such a moral sensibility at a higher level).

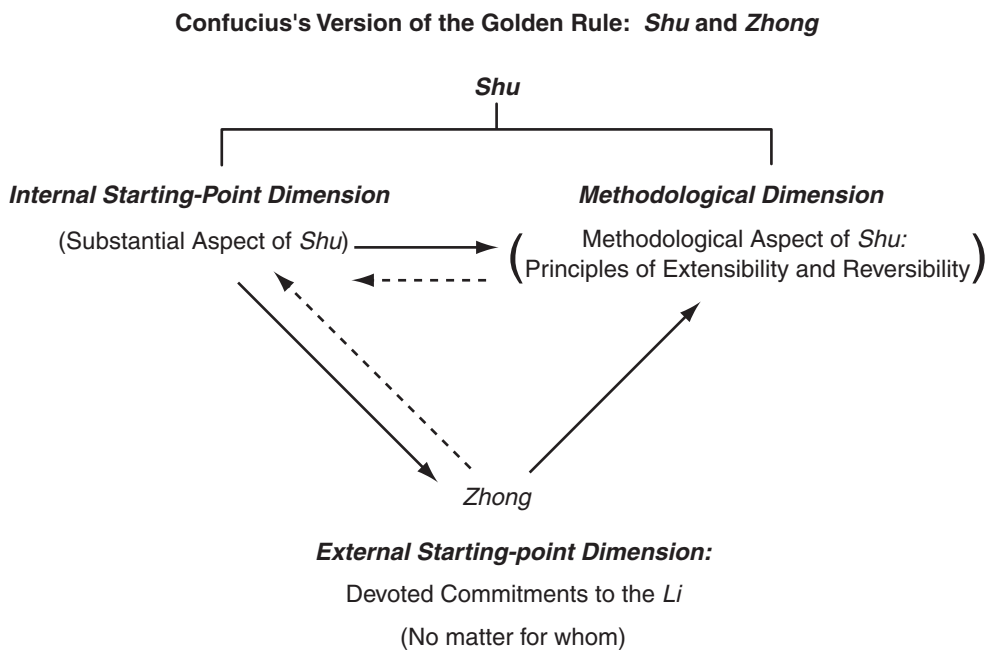


Figure 1

Now, with the aid of this diagram, let me highlight the main points in the preceding discussion. (1) Confucius' version of the Golden Rule presents itself not as a rule-oriented abstract principle but as a virtue-oriented moral guidance that consists of two central concepts, *shu* and *zhong*, and three interdependent and complementary dimensions: the methodological dimension, the internal starting-point dimension, and the external starting-point dimension. (2) The methodological dimension of the CGR, that is, the methodological aspect of *shu*, consists of both the principle of reversibility and the principle of extensibility (I consider the latter to be a significant contribution of the CGR to the enrichment of the Golden Rule as a constructive moral guidance for several reasons). (3) The internal starting-point dimen-

sion, that is, the substantial aspect of *shu*, consists of the internal fundamental virtue *ren*, which provides a kind of initial moral sensibility for putting the methodological dimension of the CGR into play in a twofold way. (4) The external starting-point dimension, that is, *zhong*, is the moral agent's sincere and devoted moral commitment to the responsibilities and duties specified by the *li*, regardless of the social status of the moral recipient. It provides the external starting point for applying the principles of reversibility and extensibility: on the one hand, through external social institutions, it regulates the moral agent's desires, which serve as a guide to how the moral agent treats others; on the other hand, *zhong* itself would be ultimately regulated and guided by the internal moral virtue of the moral agent, which, as the initial moral sensibility, constitutes the internal starting point for applying the methodological principles of the CGR.

#### Notes

I am grateful to Robert Holmes and Lo Kit Hung for their helpful comments on an early draft of this article. A previous version was presented as a paper at a symposium of the Pacific Division 2000 meeting of the American Philosophical Association at Albuquerque in April 2000. I am grateful to the audience at the symposium for their various comments on the paper, and I am thankful to two anonymous referees for this journal for their helpful comments and criticism.

- 1 – For some of its presentations in various cultural traditions as well as in various periods in the Western tradition, see the citations in Jeffrey Wattes, *The Golden Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 9.
- 2 – For example, Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 43–44; D. C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983), Introduction; Herbert Fingarette, "Following the 'One Thread' of the *Analects*," thematic issue 5, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47 (35) (1979): 373–405; Robert E. Allinson (1985): "The Confucian Golden Rule: A Negative Foundation," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 12, No. 3, pp. 305–315; David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 283–304; Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Reweaving the 'One Thread' of the *Analects*," *Philosophy East and West* 40 (1) (1990): 17–33; David S. Nivison, "Golden Rule Arguments in Chinese Moral Philosophy," in Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism*, ed. Bryan Van Norden (La Salle: Open Court, 1996), pp. 59–76; Shu-hsien Liu, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy: Classical and Sung-Ming* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998); Qingjie Wang, "The Golden Rule and Interpersonal Care—From a Confucian Perspective," *Philosophy East and West* 49 (4) (1999): 415–438; Sin Yee Chan, "Can *Shu* be the One Word that Serves as the Guiding Principle of Caring Action?" *Philosophy East and West* 50 (4) (2000): 507–524; and Bryan Van Norden, "Un-

weaving the ‘One Thread’ of *Analects* 4:15,” in Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 216–236. Also see several relevant entries related to ‘*zhong* and *shu*’ in Antonio S. Cua ed. (2003): *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge).

- 3 – It is clear that Confucius himself did not use (the Chinese equivalents of) such explanatory terms as ‘three dimensions’ in the text. These conceptual or terminological resources are used in this essay to capture and elaborate more explicitly and clearly the characteristics of Confucius’ thought in this connection. See later in this section my brief discussion of some of the methodological issues involved.
- 4 – “Confucius said, ‘Can [Zeng Zi], there is one unified thread that runs through all my Way (*wu-dao-yi-yi-guan-zhi* 吾道一以貫之).’ Zeng Zi assented, ‘Yes.’ After Confucius left, the other disciples asked, ‘What did he mean by this?’ Zeng Zi said, ‘Our Master’s Way simply consists of *zhong* and *shu*’” (*Analects* 4.15). In the present essay, unless otherwise indicated, the English translations of the cited passages from the *Analects* are my own based on the version of the Chinese original text that appears in James Legge, trans., *Confucius: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893; New York: Dover Publications, 1971 [republication of the 1893 edition]). Note that the numbering in Legge differs in some cases from other versions of the *Analects* (e.g., D. C. Lau’s translation). When a different numbering occurs in this essay, the chapter number in the other version will be given in brackets when a citation first appears.
- 5 – In their recent book, *The Original Analects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks argue that 4.15 is not a genuine record of Confucius as a historical figure (551–479 B.C.) but an interpolation made by his follower, Zi Gao, around 294 B.C. (Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, pp. 148–149). Bryan Van Norden also challenges the authenticity of 4.15, trying to show that this is an interpolation planted by Confucius’ disciple Zeng Zi (Van Norden, “Unweaving the ‘One Thread’ of *Analects* 4:15”).
- 6 – “Confucius said, ‘Ci [Zigong], would you think of me as one who studies many things scattered around and remember them all?’ He replied, ‘Yes. Is it not so?’ Confucius said, ‘It is not. I have one unified thread that runs through all these’” (*Analects* 15.2 [15.3]). The Brookses argue that this passage was also interpolated by some later Confucian(s) (Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, p. 136).
- 7 – From the standpoint of the principle of charity, when making a negative criticism of a position, one even needs to offer an option that maximizes its intelligence and viability.

- 8 – This is perhaps because the thinker is not especially concerned with how to articulate her ideas in a systematic, intersubjective way but delivers them in the context of specific situations or because, at the time of her thinking, she did not have at her disposal the effective conceptual and explanatory resources that were sufficiently well articulated linguistically for her to deliver her actually coherent ideas in a non-paradoxical way.
- 9 – Some recent authors argue that only some parts of the text of the *Analects* capture the actual sayings by Confucius himself as a historical figure and that what the other parts capture are actually developments under his subsequent followers. (For this, see Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*.) Even if this is the case, it is important to note four things. First, as emphasized in the text, the minimal conference addressed here does not depend on the availability of textual indicators like 4.15 and 15.2, whether or not they were interpolated by Confucius' followers. Second, the primary purpose of the present essay is not to provide a historical account that accurately describes what Confucius as a historical figure actually said and what resources he actually employed, but to enhance our understanding of the ideas delivered in the *Analects* as they are along with their own connections and, furthermore, to see how they could contribute to our dealing with some fundamental reflective concerns. Third, for the aforementioned interpretative and constructive-engagement purposes, Confucius might well be taken as a proxy figure who speaks for the set of ideas delivered in the text of the *Analects*. Fourth, also for the sake of these interpretative and constructive-engagement purposes, it is not simply legitimate but also expected that certain significant implications be elaborated that are indeed implied in the whole ideas delivered in the text, whether or not such implications were *actually* realized by the thinker who expressed these ideas. In this case, then, can these implications be said to belong to the thinker's ideas in the text (and thus fall into what the thinker *truly* means/meant or what the thinker's ideas *truly* has/had)? In an important sense, the answer would be yes; for these implications are *truly* implied by the ideas delivered by the thinker, although one can surely say that these implications were not *actually* expressed by the thinker, and one thus might say that they are not what Confucius actually (or truly?) means/meant. (At this point, one can see that such expressions as 'what Confucius truly means/meant' or 'what Confucius truly has/had' tend to be ambiguous and vague and thus deserve clarification, especially when one intends to make claims about what Confucius *truly* means/meant or what his ideas *truly* has/had.)
- 10 – It is another matter when a thinker intentionally uses seemingly paradoxical remarks to make some points. However, such occasions imply neither that the ideas delivered by these remarks per se are actually incoherent nor that the points in question could not be delivered effectively in clearer terms without paradoxical appearance.

- 11 – For a more detailed discussion of some of the related methodological issues, see Bo Mou, “Three Orientations and Four ‘Sins’ in Comparative Studies,” *APA Newsletter* 2 (1) (Fall 2002): 42–45 (in the portion on comparative philosophy edited by Chenyang Li).
- 12 – Kwong-loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 7.
- 13 – Bo Mou, “An Analysis of the Structure of Philosophical Methodology—in View of Comparative Philosophy,” in Bo Mou ed., *Two Roads to Wisdom?—Chinese and Analytic Philosophical Traditions* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2001), pp. 337–364.
- 14 – Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31.
- 15 – The reason why the methodological principle mentioned here can be, or often is, called ‘reversibility’ or ‘reciprocity’ is that by following the Golden Rule the moral agent in the current how-to-treat-others moral situation reverses or returns to the moral recipient what the moral agent desires and in the way in which the moral recipient as the moral agent in the imagined how-oneself-is-treated moral situation would treat the moral agent as the moral recipient. The term ‘reversibility’ or ‘reciprocity’ highlights the switch or exchange of the moral-agent status between the moral agent and the moral recipient in the current moral situation of how you treat others and the imagined moral situation of how others, as you desire, would treat you.
- 16 – The word ‘mention’ is used here in view of the distinction between mention and use.
- 17 – A methodological note is due here: the appearance of talking about some different translations/interpretations of the Chinese original texts in this section in fact points to the substantial concern with how to interpret the structure and content of the original textual evidence. Such an approach is one way to examine the structure and content of the Chinese original textual evidence. Taking this approach implies neither pretending to be complete in regard to method nor rejecting, or playing down, other ways to look at the original text. The approach is taken here because it is *one* effective way in the current comparative context.
- 18 – Legge, *Confucius: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean*, p. 301. Some of the more recent interpretations can be also classified according to this type of understanding. For example, Irene Bloom translates and interprets this passage as “The Master said, ‘Reciprocity (*shu*)—what you would not want for yourself, do not do to others” (Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, comps., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1999], vol. 1 p. 60). The Brookses translate and interpret this passage as “The Master said, That would be empathy [*shu*], would it not? What

he himself does not want, let him not do it to others" (Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, p. 137); nevertheless, they also interpret 'shu'/'empathy' in terms of 'reciprocity' (see their commentary on p. 137). To this extent, I would render Bloom's and the Brookses' interpretations of this passage essentially the same as Legge's.

- 19 – Wing-Tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 44.
- 20 – Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, p. 154. Note that in Lau's translation, passage 15.23 is numbered 15.24, and 15.1 is divided into 15.1 and 15.2. Some of the recent interpretations of the passage can be understood this way. For example, Gilman Slingerland translates it as "The Master answered, 'Is it not *shu*, 'sympathetic understanding'? Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire" (in Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds., *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* [New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2001], p. 42).
- 21 – Note that, as (d) indicates, such a moral situation does not exclude but includes the situation in which you have actually been treated by yourself in a certain way. In this case, strictly speaking, you see in retrospect what has already happened rather than imagine what has yet to happen.
- 22 – In the recent literature, in contrast to widely identifying the methodological aspect of *shu* merely as the principle of reversibility involving the situation of "putting oneself in another's shoes," Shu-hsien Liu is the only author (to my knowledge) who explicitly points out the component of the CGR that is labeled here 'the principle of extensibility,' although he does not offer further analysis of this, as is given here. He says, "The spirit of this statement [the passage in 6.28] is similar to that of the Golden Rule, and the formulation of the statement is more detailed than its Western counterpart. Not only should you do unto others what you would like others to do unto you, but you should mold yourself into an ideal character and help others to do the same" (Liu, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy: Classical and Sung-Ming*, p. 19).
- 23 – The term *ji* in *fei-er-suo-ji-ye* seems to suggest that Confucius took what Zigong said as a moral standard—the first-person expression of (b)—which Zigong had not yet reached (*ji*).
- 24 – It seems that Chan's and Lau's translations/interpretations suggest (d). Chan translates this as "A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent" (Chan, *Source Book*, p. 31). Lau's translation: "a benevolent man helps others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand, and gets others there in so far as he himself wishes to get there" (Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, p. 55). It seems that the logical subject of "to establish his own character" or "to take his stand" is the same subject as that of wishing.

- 25 – Shu-hsien Liu seems to think that the passage in 6.28 means both, although he does not offer the reason why the passage needs to be understood this way (see note 22 above).
- 26 – Legge's translation is this: "Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing *to be established* himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others" (Legge, *Confucius: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean*, p. 194).
- 27 – One might argue that the teachings in the Bible would also imply the spirit of the principle of extensibility. It is noted that what is focused on here is the articulated methodological dimension of the Christian version of the Golden Rule as presented in such passages as Matthew 7 : 12 and Luke 6 : 31.
- 28 – For various traditional difficulties with the principle of reversibility, see Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James Ellington (1785; Hackett, 1981), p. 37 n. 23; Henry Sidgwick, *The Method of Ethics*, 7th ed. (1907; Macmillan, 1962), pp. 373–390; and Alan Gewirth, "The Golden Rule Rationalized," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 3 (1978).
- 29 – See Marcus Singer, "The Golden Rule," *Philosophy* 38 (1963): 293–314; Alan Gewirth, "The Golden Rule Rationalized," pp. 133–147.
- 30 – For an elaboration of the Christian version of the Golden Rule, see E. W. Hirst, "The Categorical Imperative and the Golden Rule," *Philosophy* 9 (1934): 328–335. For a recent systematic examination of these two prominent cases, see Jeffrey Wastes, *The Golden Rule*.
- 31 – For example, D. C. Lau's interpretation in *Confucius: The Analects* and Herbert Fingarette's in "Following the 'One Thread' of the *Analects*." See Ivanhoe's review of those preceding representative interpretations in "Reweaving the 'One Thread' of the *Analects*."
- 32 – Ivanhoe, "Reweaving the 'One Thread' of the *Analects*," p. 24.
- 33 – *Ibid.*, p. 31 n. 23.
- 34 – *Ibid.*, p. 24. Although I agree with Ivanhoe about his connection of *zhong* with the commitment to follow the *li*, I disagree with his restriction of *zhong* to the commitment made by those merely in inferior or equal positions. Because his view on this aspect is essentially the same as Nivison's interpretation of *zhong*, I will explain why I disagree when discussing Nivison's interpretation later.
- 35 – *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 36 – See *Analects*, 6.17 [6.19]: "People are born with uprightness"; 7.29 [7.30]: "Is *ren* really remote? No sooner do I desire it than it arrives here"; 17.2: "People are alike by nature"; and 19.22: Zigong, one of Confucius' trusted senior disciples, who was known for his being able to express well the Master's ideas, explained from whom Confucius learned: "There is nobody who does not

possess something of the Way of Wen and Wu in him or her." Based on these passages, it does seem that Confucius believed that people would have more or less initial moral sensibility.

- 37 – Chan, *Source Book*, p. 31.
- 38 – To my knowledge, translating *ren-zhi-fang* along this line can be traced back to Fung Yu-lan's translation, "the way to practice *jen [ren]*" (Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 43).
- 39 – Shu-hsien Liu, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy*, p. 18.
- 40 – Nivison, "Golden Rule Arguments in Chinese Moral Philosophy," p. 73.
- 41 – As noted before, Ivanhoe's interpretation of *zhong* in this aspect is essentially the same as Nivison's account. My discussion of his view on this aspect is given in my examination of Nivison's view here.
- 42 – The two concepts *zhong* and *xin* are clearly not exactly the same concepts; that is, they represent two related but distinct virtues. For a helpful discussion of how the two concepts developed from early Confucianism through Neo-Confucianism, see Kwong-loi Shun: "*Zhong (Chung) and Xin (Hsin): Loyalty and Trustworthiness*," in Antonio S. Cua, ed., *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 885–888. Nevertheless, what is stressed here is an aspect of their connection so as to identify some characteristic feature of *zhong*.
- 43 – Ivanhoe correctly points out that both of them are involved in being trustworthy regarding obligations, and he also indicates that the basic sense of *xin* is to be true to one's word (Ivanhoe, "Reweaving the 'One Thread' of the *Analects*," p. 21). However, in relating *zhong* to *xin*, what I emphasize here is not the same as his argument: while he stresses the 'being trustworthy' or 'having trust in' aspect of the basic sense of *xin*, my emphasis is more on the 'no-matter-for-whom' aspect of the basic sense of this term.
- 44 – Cf. *Analects* 1.4, where *zhong* is not related to one's social superiors but to anyone in general.
- 45 – Cf. *Analects* 15.28 [15.29], "The human being can expand the Way; it is not the Way that expands the human being," and 11.1, "Confucius said, 'Those who first advanced to (creating) the rites (*li*) and music (*yue*) are rustics, while those who later advanced to the (established) rites and music are gentlemen. In putting the rites and music to use, I follow the former's way.'"
- 46 – For one recent discussion of the issue of the relation between *ren* and *li*, see Kwong-loi Shun, "*Ren and Li in the Analects*," *Philosophy East and West* 43 (3) (1993): 457–479.



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