

ABSTRACT

“Rationalizing the Golden Rule: A Buddhist Perspective”

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Recently a good deal of attention has been given to why the Golden Rule needs to be “rationalized” and how this is accomplished within the Judeo-Christian and Confucian traditions. The most comprehensive study to appear is Jeffrey Wattles’ book, *The Golden Rule* (1996). However, Wattles simply is incorrect in holding, “only in the Confucian and Judeo-Christian traditions did the rule become a prominent theme for sustained reflection.” (1996, 9) Even though, as far as I am aware, the Buddhist understanding of the Golden Rule has not been discussed in the western philosophical literature, it has received sustained reflection in the meditative practices (and commentaries thereon) of Buddhists worldwide.

In this paper, I first explore why the Golden Rule needs to be “rationalized” in light of a supplementary principle if it is to function as a standard of moral conduct; secondly, how, generally, the Christian and Confucian traditions generate quite distinct “supplementary” principles to the Golden Rule--principles that ground the notion of “right conduct;” and, thirdly, why it appears that neither tradition allows for the Golden Rule to generate a standard for how one is to treat others generally. I then propose a way of “rationalizing” the Golden Rule from a Buddhist perspective to generate such a general standard. I conclude by noting several advantages of the foundations of moral reasoning long established in the Buddhist tradition.

RATIONALIZING THE GOLDEN RULE: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Richard Reilly

In the broadest sense “the Golden Rule” is the notion that one’s own desires can serve, by analogy, as a standard for how one is to treat others. This notion can be formulated either “positively” or “negatively.” For instance, the most well known formulation in the Christian tradition is: “Do to others as you want them to do to you” (*Luke*, 6:31; cf. *Mathew*, 7:12); whereas the Confucian tradition emphasizes the negative formulation: “Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you” (*Analects*, 15.23; 12.2). In one form or other, the Golden Rule functions in most of the world’s great religions. [1]

Indeed, it appears that once cultural reflection on the grounds of acceptable conduct reaches a point of theoretical sophistication, some formulation of the Golden Rule is appealed to. Despite its pedigree, however, Western moral philosophers since Kant have dismissed the Golden Rule as a sufficient and reliable criterion of moral conduct. As we shall see, on the one hand, the Golden Rule stands in need of a “supplementary” principle in order for it to be counted on to provide moral guidance; but, on the other hand, any such “supplementary principle” itself stands in need of clarification of what constitutes what is “right” or “good.” Since different cultures give different meanings to what is “right” and “good” there is not cross-cultural agreement on how one ought to treat others even among cultures which invoke the Golden Rule.

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Western philosophers generally see the Golden Rule as an “imperative” that prescribes how one ought or ought not to behave.

Thus the Golden Rule sets forth a criterion of the moral rightness on interpersonal actions or transactions. This criterion consists in the agent’s desires or wishes for himself *qua* recipient: what determines the moral rightness of a transaction initiated or controlled by some person is whether he would himself want to undergo such a transaction at the hand of other persons. (Gewirth, 133)

Understood as providing a criterion or standard sufficient for moral discernment, the Golden Rule has been dismissed by western philosophers since Kant. In a well-known footnote to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant claims of the Golden Rule:

It can be no universal law because it contains the ground neither of duties to oneself nor of duties of love to others (for many a man would gladly agree that others should not benefit him if only he might be excused from showing them beneficence), and, finally it does not contain the ground of duties owed to others; for a criminal would argue on this ground against the judge punishing him, and so forth. (Kant, 1996, 80n)

Even if one is skeptical of Kant’s notion of “duties to oneself,” it remains true that many people have very diminished views of themselves and how they wish themselves to be treated; and, clearly, condoning treatment to oneself that goes against one’s own long-term good surely should not give one the “right” to similarly treat another person. Put otherwise, “the agent’s wishes for himself *qua* recipient may not be in accord with his recipient’s own wishes as to how he is to be treated” (Gewirth, 133). Moreover, as with Kant’s criminal, what one might wish for oneself might go against justified social rules or practices; what then? This so-called “particular interpretation,” according to which it is an agent’s particular wishes or desires that are to serve as standards of conduct towards others, has received near unanimous rejection. [2]

However, there is also a “general interpretation” of the Golden Rule that some Western philosophers endorse. On this view, as expressed by Marcus Singer, “I am to treat others *as* I would have them treat me, that is on the same principle or standard as I would have them apply in their treatment of me.” (Singer, 1963, 300) If the Golden Rule, under such a general interpretation, is meant to be a necessary and sufficient condition for the acceptability of “principles or standards” of morally “right” or “permissible” conduct, then it too fails.

In so far as the Golden Rule provides a principle of consistency or “universalizability” in moral reasoning, then it yields, at best, “fairness” but not “rightness.” R.M. Hare

famously argued that the principled Nazi must wish that he would suffer the same fate as Jews, i.e., extermination, if it were to come to light, say, that one of his grandparents was a Jew. If a Nazi could will the Jews' outcome for himself ("if the roles were "reversed") then, according to Hare, this demonstrates his "fanaticism;" but, nevertheless, he is acting according to the Golden Rule and, so, according to ethical principle—however deficient or false that principle may be! Hare's example rather shows that to act "on principle" is necessary but not sufficient to act on a justifiable "moral principle." [3]

It seems then that the Golden Rule needs to be supplemented if it is to be a standard for moral conduct. Gewirth suggests (138) that the Golden Rule be "rationalized" to read: "Do unto others as you would rationally want them to do unto you." Interestingly, Gewirth shows (141-143) that this formulation is equivalent to: "Do unto others as you have a right that they do unto you." Since rationally one would wish for whatever is necessary for one to be a purposive agent, then if "freedom" and "well-being" are so necessary (as Gewirth claims), it is sensible to say that one has a "right" to them. This strategy responds effectively to the sort of concerns raised by Kant; for instance,

...every person insofar as he is rational must desire that he be the recipient of ...superogatory actions in relevant circumstances; hence, according to the Rational Golden Rule, it is right or fitting that he performs such actions towards others. (Gewirth, 145)

The Rational Golden Rule does not allow one to generate standards of conduct solely from one's own desires *qua* recipient, since, rationally, just as one would want others to respect her *own* freedom and well being, so one must be willing to respect the *other's* freedom and well-being; and this often requires, as we shall see, that one act towards another differently than how one would like oneself to be treated if one were in the other's situation.

II

Jeffrey Wattles, arguably the foremost commentator on the Golden Rule speaking from the Christian tradition, emphasizes the point, "Counterexamples will only harass the rule if it is abstracted from every context, taken literally, and made to function as a necessary or sufficient condition for sound moral judgment or as the sole normative axiom in a system of ethics." (1996, 139) In an earlier article (1987), Wattles cites and interprets the context within which Matthew presents Jesus' teaching of the Rule.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who seeks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them;

for this is the law and the prophets. (RSV, *Matthew*, 7:7-12)

He then comments, "Here the rule of how to treat others is juxtaposed with the teaching of how God treats us. It is as though our treatment of others were to be like an answer to a prayer." (Wattles, 1987, 122) This perspective is explicated in the concluding paragraph of the essay:

If our primary relationship is with God, then we discover who we are, first and foremost, in that relationship. Knowing who we are, we each gain our deepest intuition about how we want to be treated—as God's creature, a son or daughter of God. We then come to regard others as being in a comparable situation.... (*Ibid.*, 124-25)

Commentators often identify Jesus' teaching of the Golden Rule with the commandment "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Wattles sees that the commandment to love others is given within a context of the revealing of the nature of divine love: "Jesus made the rule more concrete when he said, 'Love one another as I have loved you' (*John* 14:34)." If one sees oneself primarily as a son or daughter of God, then it is as God's son or daughter that one would like to be treated; and, naturally, the model of such treatment is God's ways of loving us. The highest level of meaning of the Golden Rule, at least within the Christian tradition, therefore is understood by Wattles to be: "Do to others as God want [sic] you to do to them." (*Ibid.*, 107) [4]

As the Golden Rule is thought to express the "law of love" in the Christian tradition, it often is thought to express "considerability" (or "altruistic concern") in the Confucian tradition. The Confucian understanding of the Golden Rule consists of two notions—*chung* and *shu*—which comprise the "one thread" of the Way of the *Analects*. [5]. *Shu* denotes a kind of "fellow feeling" or "consideration" for others that emerges from placing oneself in the other's position. While commentators identify *shu* with the negative formulation of the Golden Rule, "*shu* gives me no guidance... as to what specific values I should invoke in making my ultimate judgment." (Fingarette, 387) The term *chung* is usually rendered as "loyalty," referring not so much to an external authority but to *li*, the "ritual" practices that are culturally rooted within the "hearts/minds" of the members of a community. (Wang, 420) The spirit of *li* grounds one's integrity and commitments to others as members of community. The Confucian Golden Rule, then, may be summarized this way: *shu* as the governor of *chung* is the method of *jen*, "humaneness" (Ivanhoe, 26-27), that is, is a means leading to or cultivating *jen*. It works roughly as follows. With regard to one's superiors (and equals), one acts according to ritualistic propriety as one would want or hope, as a superior (or equal), to be treated; here one would tend to act with utmost mindfulness of what propriety strictly requires as one would wish inferiors to act toward oneself. However, placing oneself in the positions of one's inferiors, and understanding the stresses and issues they face, one should not demand from them perfect compliance or loyalty to *li*. Taken together, following the Golden Rule expressed "considerability" and fosters humaneness first by not demanding/expecting all that one might be due from an inferior; and, second, by inspiring

one to give to the superior (or equal) a perfected loyalty over and above what the superior might demand but which, nevertheless, appropriate and pleasing

The Chinese Golden Rule as here stated—and so perhaps as always intended—does not say ‘treat another as you would have that other treat you,’ but ‘treat another as you would have anyone else related to you as you are to that other treat you.’ (Nivison, 65)

It might seem that the Christian commitment to “love one’s *neighbor*” and the Confucian commitment to *li* would imply that the Golden Rule operates, in both cases, within a community of shared faith (loyalty) and practices. For this reason, the story of the Good Samaritan challenges one’s understanding of how the Golden Rule is to be understood or applied from both the Christian and the Confucian perspectives. Recall that in response to, “Who is my neighbor?,” Jesus responds:

A man who was on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho fell in with robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. And a priest, who chanced be going down by the same road, saw him there and passed by on the other side. And a Levite who came there saw him, and passed by the other side. But a certain Samaritan, who was on his travels, saw him and took pity at the site; he went up to him and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine into them, and so mounted him upon his own beast and brought him to an inn, where he took care of him...Which of these, thinkest thou, proved himself a neighbour to the man who had fallen in with robbers?

Luke, 10: 30-36

The Hebrew priest’s passing by, on some accounts, is due to the Uncleaness of the battered traveler (also a Hebrew) and the priest’s duty to maintain ritual purity. This sort of role-based “morality” is precisely what Jesus’ teaching of the Golden Rule is meant to counteract. Should we not treat even the outsider, the stranger, as a “neighbor,” particularly when he or she is close at hand? But, still, what does it mean to treat the other as you would wish to be treated? Following Kant’s lead, one might suppose that many a man would not want an “other”—e.g., an “outsider”—to assist him if only he would not be obligated to assist an “other.” To transcend such “ego” driven preferences, Wattle proposes that the Golden Rule be understood to mean that one is to do to others as God wants us to. And the teaching of this story precisely is that “being a Good Samaritan” to others, even strangers, is what God/Jesus wants us to do. However this approach gives rise to two difficulties. First, while the Christian Golden Rule is often identified with the law of love, Christians sometimes point out that God also wills for us to treat others in ways consonant with “justice” and/or “righteousness;” but, to do so sometimes requires that one forego treating another with “mercy” or compassion. Is it always clear, then, how we are to treat the other? Even if Kant’s judge realizes that were she in the condemned criminal’s shoes she would plead for mercy, does it follow that she should show mercy to the condemned criminal? The second, more intractable problem is that if one assumes the truth of the premise, “One ought to treat others as God wants us to,” and believes that how God wants us to treat others is revealed sufficiently in sacred

scripture and/or religious tradition, then the Golden Rule is completely superfluous as a standard for right conduct.

Let us now turn to the question of how the Confucian understanding of the Golden Rule is to apply to the case of the Good Samaritan. At first it might seem that the priest's passing by would be consistent with our analysis of how *shu* governs *chung*; for, if the priest puts himself in the place of the battered stranger, he might reason, "For me, an Uncleaned one, to want a priest to render aid would mean that I am willing to defile a priest and that would bring to me more harm than benefit; I better wait to see who else might come by." On the other hand, since the Samaritan is not a member of the Hebrew community, to what *li* might *chung* make reference in his reasoning? The Confucian practice of the Golden Rule provides for considerability within a shared social framework, but how can it apply between people of distinct cultures? Indeed, Professor Wang insists that the virtue of the Confucian Golden Rule is that yields "communalizability" rather than "universalizability," the latter being an illusion born of an alleged "transcendent" moral authority addressing "pure consciousnesses" rather than being rooted in the flesh and blood experience of human beings. (Wang, 426ff) [6]

III

The foundational moral category for the Buddhist is "compassion." Fundamentally, Mahayana Buddhism teaches that one is "to do good" and "to avoid evil" understood in light of the notion of suffering: one ought not to cause suffering but, instead, where possible, relieve and protect beings from suffering. This notion is rooted in The Buddha's discourses; for instance, *Samyutta-nikaya*, 1.75 reports Buddha saying,

"Having surveyed all directions with the mind, you did not discover anything dearer than the self. Similarly, the individual self is dear to others. Therefore, one who is desirous of oneself should not hurt others." (Kaluphana, 59)

Kaluphana insightfully remarks:

...the Buddha's conception of society hinges on the self-interest (*sankhara*) of both oneself and others. 'Love thy neighbor not for any reason but because that person has the same self-interest as thine.' (*Ibid.*, 60)

The (Tibetan-Buddhist) meditative practices of "equalizing" and "exchanging" self and others serve as profound means of cultivating compassion. [7] These practices are featured in Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* (*The Way of the Bodhisattva*), composed in the early eighth century, C.E., shortly before Buddhism was established in Tibet.

Strive at first to meditate
Upon the sameness of yourself and others.
In joy and sorrow all are equal.
Thus be guardian of all, as of yourself.
(Ch. 8, verse 90)

Just as I defend myself
From all unpleasant happenings, however small,
Likewise I shall act for others' sake.
To guard and shield them with compassion.
(Ch. 8, verse 110)

In my own experience of being introduced by Shyalpa Rinpoche to the ground of compassion, I have come to see that it is "rational" to commit oneself to a principle that prohibits the intentional causing of suffering by "internalizing" (making one's own) the following line of reasoning:

1. As a living being, I have a will to live and to prosper and to avoid unnecessary suffering.
2. All living beings have a will to live and to prosper and to avoid unnecessary suffering.
3. I would not wish for any living being to cause me unnecessary suffering.
4. One ought not to treat any living being as one would not wish to be treated.
5. Therefore, I ought not to cause any living being to suffer unnecessarily.

A similar line of reasoning, utilizing a positive formulation of the Golden Rule, yields a principle to protect/relieve beings from unnecessary suffering.

- 1a. As a living being, I have a will to live and to prosper and to avoid unnecessary suffering.
- 2a. All living beings have a will to live and to prosper and to avoid unnecessary suffering.
- 3a. I would wish for other living beings to protect/relieve me from unnecessary suffering.
- 4a. One ought to treat other living beings as one would wish to be treated by them.
- 5a. I ought to protect/relieve other living beings from unnecessary suffering.

Premise (1)-(1a) incorporates the awareness of one's own suffering, of the numerous ways in which one is vulnerable to suffering. At the root of one's vulnerability is the very nature of "life" or "living being." "Death," "old age," "disease" or "illness,"

“pain,” “want,” “disappointment,” and so on constitute (part of) the fabric of “life.” One’s own experiences as well as one’s reason and imagination regarding one’s vulnerabilities enable one to recognize the extent of our own suffering or potential to suffer. Premise (2) then carries this awareness over to all living beings; for the general vulnerabilities to suffering that I have are shared by all other beings, who, like me, are “living.” In short, what one sees is that “they are me.”

The proffered “rationality” of the principles of compassion clearly relies on the “Golden Rule” in step (4) and (4a). When the “Golden Rule” is combined with premises (1)-(3) or (1a)-(3a), then it is not simply “how one would wish to be treated” that establishes the ground of acting towards others (or even towards oneself), but rather it is “one’s will to avoid unnecessary suffering” that establishes this ground. Just as I would not want others to cause me unnecessary suffering, I ought not to cause others to suffer unnecessarily. Notice that this formulation is not “subjective” in the sense that it presumes that what brings suffering to others is what brings suffering to oneself. To be compassionate is to identify with the suffering of others and to strive with others for its alleviation. To put it crudely, to see oneself *in* one’s neighbor’s shoes or to see oneself *wearing* one’s neighbor’s shoes, is not to “see,” “feel with,” let alone “identify with,” *the neighbor* who is wearing quite different shoes from one’s own. Paraphrasing Schopenhauer (1995, 165-66), to suffer with another is not to feel “our pain” in his shoes, but to share in *his* suffering and to strive with him for its alleviation. What might remedy the pain *we* would feel in another’s shoes might not remedy the pain *he* is feeling. [8]

IV

Leslie Mulholland (1987) provides a provocative response to the question, “Who are the others? or who is my neighbor.” She first notes that the Golden Rule, within the Christian tradition, does not mean that we are to love all others equally.

We are not to love God as ourselves—we must rather love God much more. While we are to love our neighbours as ourselves, we are to love God with all our hearts, minds, strength, etc. We are not expected to love our neighbour with such totality. Moreover, we are informed that we are better than creatures such as sparrows and fish. We are not expected to treat them as we would ourselves be treated. We are allowed, for instance, to eat fish. But who would want to be eaten by a shark? (Mulholland, 89-90)

What is instructive here, for our purposes, is the presumption—so common in the West—that the “others” (“neighbors”) with respect to whom the Golden Rule applies, are one’s “equals.” This might go back to Aristotle who apparently reserves unqualified Golden Rule consideration for “friends” while also holding that true friendship is grounded on love between equals. (Cf. Wattle, 1996, 37f.) Mulholland takes Kant to have suggested that “a being is my neighbor and a moral equal if he is able to obligate me morally reciprocally with my capacity to obligate him.” (*Ibid.*, 93) If we take Kant’s Categorical

Imperative to be a rationalized Golden Rule, then we can agree with the point Mulholland makes:

In effect Kant identifies two factors that determine who the others are in the application of the golden rule [*sic*: Categorical Imperative]. First, the others must be rational beings, secondly they must be sympathetically related to oneself. That is, one must be able to imagine oneself in their position. (*Ibid.*)

And, “to imagine oneself in another’s position” means, for Mulholland, that “[the] other must be one whose position is a real possibility for ourselves, and thus within the scope of natural possibility.” (*Ibid.*)

Surely, this view yields absurd results. As David Hume observed over two hundred years ago, it is quite possible for a man to sympathetically share in the sufferings of a woman giving birth, without thinking that this is a real possibility for him! The Confucian application of the Golden Rule requires precisely that one “identify” with the positions of others, whether “superiors” or “inferiors,” and this too does not mean that there is a “real” (“natural”) possibility of actually reversing roles with or obligating similarly (all of) the others to whom one is relating. While one who is subject to the Golden Rule, by adopting it as a standard of conduct, *ipso facto* is a “moral agent,” this does not entail that only “other moral agents” are to be treated in accordance with it. Moral considerability is independent of moral agency, let alone “moral equality.” To treat another being “equally” is to treat it “impartially,” that is, with the same “utmost” respect that one would wish for the being for whom one cares the most (which, in many instances, is oneself).

To conclude, then, I suggest that there are three distinct advantages to a Buddhist perspective on the Golden Rule. The first follows from the fact that the supplementary principle, “Living beings have a will to live and to prosper and to avoid unnecessary suffering,” is of a kind quite distinct from those operating within the Christian and Confucian traditions. It does not specify directly what “right actions” are; rather it is a statement about the nature of living beings, one that is widely subscribed to on grounds independent of metaethical issues. [10] Unlike a principle such as “Do to others as what God wants you to do to them,” it is not a general principle that has the effect of defining “right action” independently of the Golden Rule in a way that makes the Rule superfluous. And, unlike the Confucian principle that “right action” is defined by reference to (the spirit of) *li*, it has application cross culturally (and cross species). Indeed, one’s “neighbor” is any being whose plight one is able to share, embrace.

The second advantage of this perspective is that it recognizes both the negative and the positive formulations of the Golden Rule, without the quite dubious presumption that the two are “equivalent;” it also allows one to circumvent even more dubious contentions regarding which formulation is superior to the other. The proposed analysis does see the negative formulation as being more basic in that it is more incumbent upon one generally to “avoid doing evil” than to “do good.” There just is not a persuasive account for why one who would consent to one formulation would not also consent to the other, even if they are not equivalent in meaning. [11]

Finally, the impulse to “do good” and “avoid doing evil” should be recognized as applying to all of creation. The Buddha’s path certainly permits our acting towards others in socially acceptable and honorable ways with the spirit of considerability that Confucius so profoundly articulated. In addition, it allows for cross-cultural recognition of the sufferings of others as calling forth, making claims on, our compassionate concern. Indeed, it is no longer feasible to think that one can act justly without consideration of the integrity of life in all its manifestations and, even, of the environments that nurture and sustain life. Buddhist practice offers a “rationalized” Golden Rule, then, underlies and embodies a profound view of the scope of moral responsibility.

ENDNOTES

1. For a listing of such references see Gewirth, 146 fn 1. Jeffrey Wattles’ book, *The Golden Rule* (1996), is the most extensive, accessible treatment of the topic I know and it includes a helpful bibliography.
2. Gould offers a perceptive defense of Kant’s view. Singer dismisses the particular interpretation of the Golden Rule as does Gewirth, Fingarette, Wattles, and, most recently, Trapp (among others).
3. *Freedom and Reason*, Ch. 9. According to Wattles (1996, 137), “[Harry] Gensler relates a report of an actual case of a Nazi who, upon discovering that he had Jewish ancestry, arranged for himself and his family to be put in concentration camps and killed.” We might say that here one’s unwillingness to “respect” the “outside-other’s” human rights and interests becomes “internalized” and, as a result, one denies one’s own humanity.
4. In *Luke* (6:36) the statement of the Golden Rule is soon followed by “Be merciful even as your Father is merciful.” “Love thy neighbor as thyself” follows the ‘greatest commandment’ to love God with one’s whole heart, mind and soul. It is in loving God whole-heartedly Christians (hope to) establish their will in God (or, that God’s will is established them) so that one then acts with the mercy of God or as God wills one to act.
5. Ivanhoe, 1990, 17. Over the past two decades there has appeared an insightful series of essays analyzing and comparing the Christian and Confucian understandings of the Golden Rule. (Fingarette, Allinson, Ivanhoe, Nivison, Wattles [Ch. 2], Wang.) In this paper, I will not attempt to capture, let alone evaluate, the profoundly rich and intricately textured strands of analyses that have been offered. I should point out, however, that Fingarette claims instructive parallels between the twofold ground of the Golden Rule in both traditions; also he sees “the one thread” as weaving throughout a broader set of concepts do many of his successors. In any case, my aim simply is to show how both Jesus and Confucius presuppose a certain context within which their proclamation of the Golden Rule acquires a more definite meaning than what might otherwise be supposed; in doing this I will appeal to relatively common ground among scholarly interpreters. My

overall aim is not to argue for a particular scholarly interpretation of either the Christian or the Confucian teaching, but to show how the Buddhist understanding of the Golden Rule is quite distinct and, perhaps, more fruitful for contemporary purposes.

6. Robert Allinson (1992) claims to discern a teaching of “universal love” in Confucius. His analysis presumes both that *shu* is a negative formulation of the Golden Rule and is not expressible in a positive form and that *shu* is not in need of *chung*; from this the paradoxical result follows that *shu* “does not counsel us to take action towards others.”

8. For a discussion of these practices, see Appendixes 2 and 3 (180-192) to Shantideva, 1997. Interestingly, often it is “one’s mother” rather than oneself which serves as the basis of “exchange” with others and, thus, the basis of how one should treat others. Gyalwa Gendun Gyatso (The Second Dalai Lama), 1993.

9. In a forthcoming paper, “Constructing an Ethics of Compassion,” I clarify and defend in more detail (1)-(5) and (1a)-(5a) and go on to show how “moral precepts” or rules can be derived from (5) and (5a). I point out there how premise (1)/(1a) is reflected in Aristotle’s analysis of living being *qua* animal (cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, 11-12) and how this is supported in some recent studies.

10. Allinson (1985) argues that Confucius offers only the negative formulation of the Golden Rule and its meaning is not expressible in positive terms. That Confucius never directly defines what it means to act rightly or “the good” (Dao), according to Allinson, is consistent with the values of “naturalism” and “humanism” and reflects Confucius’ “epistemological modesty” and “ethical humility.” I do think that Allinson is correct in holding that for Confucius (as for Shakyamuni Buddha) human nature is inherently good and if one is free from obstacles, right conduct flows as the spontaneous manifestation of one’s nature. What Allinson fails to appreciate sufficiently, however, is that the *Analects* is preparation for the cultivation of character, e.g., for the removal of obstacles to the manifestation of one’s inherent, non-self centered, nature. Just as the practice of filial piety by a young person enables one, when older, to act with consideration for others generally, so, too, the latter practice (i.e., following the Golden Rule), if perfected, leads to, or enables one to achieve, *jen*.

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