The Helping Amelioration in Theravada Buddhist Philosophy

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Abstract

Theravada Buddhist philosophy offers indiscrimination to solve the problem of selfishness through building mental equality. The Most Venerable Phra Phrom Kunaporn (P.A. Payutto) has called it "compromisation" - a process of reducing our own needs and that of the others to the level of the mutual agreeableness. This is through enacting regulations with the aim of human development rather than mental coercion. As a result, it leads to helping others without Lobha (greed), Dosa (hatred), and Moha (delusion) or Akusala-mūla (unwholesome roots) (D.III.275; It.45)

Consequently, helps in Buddhist philosophy is to develop through three development perspectives, i.e. 1) Saññā (perception)- it is possible to help under dogmas such as laws, disciplines, mores and common practices coded as the cornerstone one must not infringe without prior common agreement and consensus. 2) Viññāṇa (consciousness) - helps which is ministration emphasizing righteousness in accordance with Dhamma and not for oneself and anyone else. 3) Paññā (wisdom) - helps under prudence which are not just only supporting Dhamma or promoting righteousness but also enabling the persons under assistance to achieve self-development through self-reliance rather than leaving them forever awaiting helps from other people.

Keywords: *Helping Amelioration, Theravada Buddhist Philosophy*

INTRODUCTION

Migration comes from many causes such as wars, politics and poverty and so on. The reports of the Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB) propose a problem of the Myanmar-migrated Rohinya. Myanmar denies their citizenship. In addition, in 1948, the Myanmar armforces uprooted them. Hundreds of their villages were burned down and thousands of them were slaughtered which brought them exodus to Eastern Pakistan at that time. Here was the genesis that the Myanmar officers attempted to threaten and expel them in the aftermaths. The emigrants surges by surges flooded to Pakistan and later to Bangladesh (TACDB: http://www.tacdb-burmese.org) on account of slaughters and denial of this group without Burmese nationality. The perspective was that they are the Bangladeshi-origin Muslim who sought wars and attacked Buddhist temples and Buddhist believers during the Burma fought wars with the British. It fuelled vengeance within the Burmese until today. News about the Rohinya death in the sea due to no countries welcomed them. This issue attracts multination about the perspective of human-human helps.

Garrett Hardin propositions that environmentalists compare this world as a "spaceship". They explain that it includes homes and humans and all should involve with it and none or any organizations annihilate or pollute it rather than resource sharing. However, the problem is whether each one on this world deserves equal rights to evenly share the resources.

The idealists such as the religious groups view that we should share our resources to all even migrants including help strangers but his leads to some ethical problems contradicting an idea that this spaceship might not have lavish areas as such. It is commonly compared to a rescue spaceship because it is subject to the commands of a captain. No spaceship survives if all make decisions but this world spaceship may not have such captain. Even the United Nations (UN) commands inadequate armforces to coerce its disputing members to calmness.

While we are considering the matter that this world spaceship is without its captain or helpless captain, it leads to a problem that who deserves to allocate these resources. Rationally, victims of disasters should be helped or share their means of living such as havens, and some meals. It steps to another problem that how residents of a nation or in the spaceship should react. In addition, if they want to help, they should examine the following problems, i.e. 1) the congested size of the rescue spaceship, i.e. 1) a territory of a nation accommodates restricted size affordable to their population, and 2) the resource crisis we lost from this helps (Garrett Hardin, 2008:337). With the problem perspectives, we find that there are opinions about helps in both philosophy and the Theravada Buddhist philosophy to further synopsize such problems.

THE CONCEPT OF HELPS IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

With the western viewpoints considering helps through debates of equality by Aristotle, it is viewed that humans are equal under the same rule and it is the principle of equality (Surin Intharat, 2008: 35-38). It allows Aristotle views fairness as equality but emphasizes individual. All should have equality with their own rights that all equally earn every sharing. It is the parity from the sharing of health, honor

and safety measured by sentiment and that is acceptance from all (Charles M. Young, 2006:184-185).

However, J.S. Mill sees that equality is depended on elements rather than equality with its own values because, had it been considered by any rules; it had to be evaluated through utilities primarily emerged with social. Such equality is intangible and cannot be measured by other reasons besides the occurred utility and for the majority due to when the equality is viewed as a matter of ethics; it should be seen as the matter that all in society should commonly share the consequential utility in order to retain the equality within societies (J.S. Mill, 2006:111-112).

On the other hand, Immanuel Kant finds that equality has its own worth within. It is unnecessary to rely on any conditions or any factors. We should be equally treated since humanness is within humans and equality is not only the right thing but also the way to treat humans. The Kant-based ethics emphasizes human values and the idea of justice as equality; they become the critical roots of the ethical rights system. He postulates, "Treat human regardless you yourself or fraternal humans counting that they are the destination in themselves and never count them just as tools" (Immanuel Kant, 1985:47). Consequently, equality is considered under the condition that it is primarily the individual rights or social utility.

An American philosopher like Michael Walzer advocates pluralism and calls the ways to build social, which shares residence and helps each other. Walzer attempts to seek something to propose a status of a policy to prevent migrants, which draws a subsequent question whether cities deserve rights to close down their borders to prevent migrants. His answer is, it is possible because they hold authority to close down their borders as they favor but they cannot curtain and segregate social from each other or divide the world. They cannot do as such.

The decision of border closure or denial of helps is possible but Walzer is comparing the political communities and associations. For example, members in an association may say, "each one of us all reasons why are we selected and those not being selected should not own rights to join." Walzer consider the infer is unlikely perfect because such status is rather like a small family. They claim about the morals to open their home doors not to admit whom they do not want to welcome them. However, if they were the same ethnicity as they own or had they thought they were the same humans as they were; then they deserve to enter. Such excuses about family are just the better foundation for the migrant policy (Peter Singer, 2008: 394-350).

Developing pluralism is more apparent especially about its social solution at the first place rather just focusing on individuals to own liberty. Had the social truly own equality; it were not just that it saw only itself but seeing it in a common dimension, i.e. the "equality" of the entire world rather than of any individuals or any groups. Such equality should come before the existing liberty of each one. This concept helps solving the pluralistic problems in societies. Therefore, such problems are to examine the matter of liberty and equality where which one should be primarily emphasized. Had each one thought just liberty; all would attempt to secure their own gains or pave alternatives where one could minimize loss. Such welcomes selfishness, lulling just about oneself and alienating other who shall pilfer advantages from him/her. Consequently, one attempts to exclude them through discrimination and unready to help others but just oneself.

Yet, if we looked at other side, we should find the pluralism endeavoring to see everyone is non-alien from the same family. All should own more than liberty and that is equality, believes in humanness of all and believes that this world is the only spaceship where none should float in the sea because there are adequate rooms for us to help. In addition, had there be problems of difference; then just leave it to the law to identify equality as the social issue at large rather than just only individual liberty.

THE CONCEPT OF HELPS IN THE THERAVADA BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

A hypothesis is first required to consider in the religious discussion is that if the problem began from a group of people living in a safe place and wants to help those who are in misery; how would possibility happen? If two groups were considered by a group was on the land while the other group was in the water; we might seek ways to rescue them in various ways such as, finding wood, life buoy or rope to be thrown out, for examples. And if both groups are traveling in the same cruise ship and meeting a shipwreck; then a group is on the ship while another group is in water and under the limitations of the rescue ship; then what should we do? The problem we should think before rescue is out limitations. For example, a ship is possible to accommodate 50 passengers; we can help just only 50 of them and what should we do with another 100 people? Anyone who can refer to the moral principles will have number of reason such as the Christian-based concept see all as fraternal or Marx-based concept see their needs and so on. We should take all 150 people on board even the ship can board just only 50 passengers; the ship may sink and all will die. This fairness can turn into tragedy (Garrett Hardin, 2008:338). We all are seeking reasons to the problem all are looking for whom should be helped on board and who should be left floating in the sea. De facto, this world chooses the rich rather than the poor, the wise rather than the stupid and the thing make both sides feel not guilty is those who are on board will talk about morals.

Therefore, calling about the help by social perspectives helps speakers feel good. However, as such the Theravada Buddhist philosophy digs deeper – helping other with kind spirit and compassion is counted helping oneself (SN.19/361/186). Saving oneself her is not just talking or thinking only but doing something too. For example, the case of Phra Paisarn Wisalo, the Abbot of Wat Pa Su Khito of Chaiyaphoom province expresses His Most Venerable opinions about the situation of solving the problems of the Rohiya abandoned in the sea. His Most Venerable says, "Abandoning friends dead amid the sea is not the way to do. At the same time to adopt the entire burdens is hard. What we can drive it happens is sharing the burdens among neighboring countries funded by international countries. On the other hand, it requires cooperating from the upstream country to intercept the long-term migration. There are many exits but primarily it is the intention to help them as the fraternal humans and with the consciousness of being humanness (Matichon Online: http://www.matichon.co.th).

Offering such help is not the matter of rationalization but the matter of sentiment where all should offer to each other (MN.12/530/405). Perceiving life loving of oneself is equally important to loving the lives of others. It is the reflection of kindness in term of equality because such attribute is the one that Buddha equally treating both humans and animals with mindfulness, both the optimists and the pessimists, i.e. Phra Devatas, the archer, *Aṅgulimāla* the robber, *Rāhula* and *Thanabāla* the elephant (KN.Ud. 32/8/43). Such equality is critically focused at the mental level only but when individuals still cannot own such mentality, Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto) proposes solution to rescue such different concept named compromise among needs to demand others to level their needs to the one who has reduced his/her needs (Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto), 2007: 99). This hypothesis comes from reflecting the real human problem who needs others reducing their needs but one must reduce one's too. This might become reluctance, which allows the richer, or the wiser just rather talk terms of morals or rules of practice than any real actions are taken. An example of a journal reports, "The new exploration results people around the country in the Wall-Street journal and NBC show that concerns and awareness of environments are prevailed except to prevail on everyone. The 8 in 10 Americans claim they are environmental conservationists. Half of them claim that they are strong conservationists. The Americans claim that they are willing to sacrifice to have better environments but what they do is another thing. At the time to really purchase things; many of them are not environmental conservationists as they have claimed….. A New Yorker market researcher claim that many people who ardently concern and are willing to suffer themselves in order to do something patronizing environments" (Phra Brahmagunabhorn, 2007: 99-100).

When all parties attempt to recall equality but fail, this is because it is impossible to authentically create equal mentality *(Samacita)*. It is due to the *Kilesa* (defilement): *Taṇhā* (desire/lust) which each one owns. The Buddhist principles thus begin with compromise between lust and self-development. It begins with moderation, - "development without coercion". Meaning it is not to coerce all living things to spend their lives and to seek the same happiness. At the meantime, compromise is applied among each desire who wants those4 happiness. They have to be related to the focus of self-development through laws and morals as the control. However, these laws need to reflect on each one and if the person did not yet develop; there must be laws or mandates but if there were training of development; there are problems, and rules were just the common signs (Phra Brahmagunabhorn, 2007:166-167).

Consequently, equality begins with free principle, which is the principle of freedom focusing that all own the rights of decision making in every action. A content claims, "all animals own their karma, are karma successors, have karma as their origins, their tribes and their resorts. Karma distributes the bad animals from the good ones" (MN.14/596/292). This content indicates that action or deed causes and enables all to freely choose. Every time to choose creates karma consequence (*Vipāka*) – possibly making the good people (refinement) or the bad people (defilement). With such principles, it indicates a human nature that humans always own liberty to choose doing everything.

Such above are not dogmas Buddhism uses in teaching or guiding for all to practice because karma on the other hand owns perspectives similar to children working on examination papers which they have to choose between "A" or "B". Tendency to choose by fact is eventually probable between 50-50. However, if the truth is that "A" is right but it does not mean that "B" is wrong. It is just "A" is more correct than "B". Buddhism will reflect that how could "A" be chosen more than "B".

"Building motivation" or "*Cetanā*" (volition) is the exit from the problem by adding adequate information for decision making to optimize a choice. There are two modules of the motivation or the data, i.e. 1) "*Kusala*" or "goodness" founded on a) *Alobha* or non-greed, b) *adosa* or non-hatred, and c) *Amoha* or non-delusion; 2) "*Akusala*" or "unwholesomeness" rooted in a) *lobha* or greed, b) *Dosa* or "hatred", and c) *Moha* or delusion (DN. 11/228/163). Therefore, choosing the most correct one is "*Kusala*" and the variable leading to wrongly choose is *"Akusala"*. Thus, adding probability of *Kusala* more than *Akusala* is compared to building the choice for the more correct number.

For example, in the case of *Sikkhāpada* (precept) on prohibition to touch woman but if the torrent floods the mother away; the monk does not deserve to touch his mother with hand but should find a boat or a plank or a banana trunk or a log to give her. But when there is no boat, a blanket is possible but the monk should not say, "Mom hold this cloth" or his mother slips and the monk catch hold her hand; he should not abandon her but lead her to the bank. It is remarked that the best thing is not to touch (VvA. 1/3/173). This example provides a choice between "A": immediate assistance and no thinking; and "B": assistance with condition of not infringing any rules. If the situation is flashing with both deadly torrent and with immediate rescue; those choosing "B" such as reflecting whether Buddha has modified the infringement for the benefit of *kusala* or for virtuous cause because any woman who she is either being our mother or our daughter or our younger sister due to being any women; they are all the enemy of celibacy (VvA. 1/3/173). The mother might be taken by the torrent and immediately jumping into the deadly torrent as in "A" might secure her.

However, when the monk chooses as such; it is also the pundit subjectivity, yet the issue is we are reflecting on helping and must be done on time and helping mainly relies on the driving power instilled in the mind, i.e. *Kusala* or *Akusala*. In this case, we may find the answer that the power of *Kusala* is certainly the key. However, it is heeded that *Kusala* is earned from what kind of practicing or training, i.e.

1. The *Saññā* Model: perception-knowing everything as it is. In *Visuddhimagga*, Phrabuddhakosajaraya compares it like an infant who is innocent. When it sees a silver coin, it knows only the round, thick and hard shape but cannot call it and how to use it. It does not know that the coin is valued and can buy things one wants for eating. Such infancy knowledge is called " *Saññā*"

2. The *Viññāṇa* Model: enlightenment - it is the comprehension from learning more like the adult or common people who understand about the silver coin and they can spend for purchasing what they want but they do not know details of what is the real coin and what is the fake coin.

3. The *Paññā* Model: wisdom - it is the knowledge acquired from education and explicitly understanding details like the artisan who sees a silver coin and knows which one is real and which one is fake, who does it, where it is made and what material, it is made of (Phra Buddha Kosajaraya, 2005:3-4).

When all the three models have been adopted to decide the monk's ministration whether to help his mother falling into the torrent or not. The answers are as below.

1. Refection on the level of "the *Saññā*", it aims at the persons for help is a woman according to the covenant that a monk should not touch a woman. The monk concerns on this fact counted that this rescue is improper because the person who falls into the water is a woman and the covenant evidently prohibit. An infringement is to violate the covenant. Then help is likely impossible if the first Model is reflected. However, it eases to clearly judge on right or wrong with the doer and it contribute equality with regards to rules which all co-existing in the *Sangha* must abide and even the *Arahants* are not exempted.

However, reflecting this matter requires additional provisions. For example, in the case that Buddha permits monks to foster their mothers who raise them and the statement in *Maṅgalatthadīpanī* that all children who unlikely disregard laity; they should repay their former debt with fostering their mother sand fathers as such. Fostering should be seen what has been stated called fostering mother and father is the duty of lay persons and it should be understood that what had been stated on fostering mother and father; monks should not do. Due to, the statement of normally, the religious persons should be free from all debts but in fact mother and father should be fostered by any children (Mahamakutrajwittayalaya, 2006:212-213). The help is thus possible and in danger; they can be helped without delay. All these statement are inscribed in details in the canon or in the *Vināya*.

In the case of helping others beside father and mother, it is possible in the case of mercy under the principle of contribution and sacrifice. However, it must abide in the stipulation of not overacting until depleting the critical rules. Assistance at this level unlikely takes sentiment surpassing the existing rules as its reference for gaining benefits of the social peacefulness. As in the case of *Cakkavattisutta*, it inscribed about a king solving problems through contributing treasures to robbers plundering others so that they can adjust them. When people witness the king doing as such; it made people become robbers more. The king later found that contributing treasures was not the way to solve the problem; therefore, he changed into arresting those robbers for penalization (read details in (DN. 11/33-50/43-60). Therefore, rules are possible for so that people, who help, adhere to the codes of practice while the persons under assistance are focusing on their self-development rather than awaiting just only assistance.

2. Refection on the level of "the *Viññāṇa*", it is the start to reflect more details that this woman is the mother and being her child, there must be affection and commitment. When the mother is in misery; the child has to help with clear duty at this level that the child must treat his mother with the principles of six directions, i.e. mother and father are in the front and the son must foster them with five statuses. They are (1) with intention that they foster us and we must return their contributions. (2) Their affairs must be succeeded. (3) The family clan must be retained. (4) It needs to behave oneself worth to inheritance. (5) Upon their death, it needs to do *Kālakiriyā* and dedicate the merits to them (DN. 11/99/144). Being the child responsible for its father and mother; such code of practices is the principle of goodness rather than being the regulations. There are no enforced laws and no punishments if fail to abide. Supremely, in the case of the mother falls into water; even the monk himself has to mainly adhere to the *Dhamma* principles in immediately selecting to help and not being coded by someone to impose or mandate. It is but the consciousness in *Dhamma* which might be reflected to the principle that "sacrificing treasures to save organs; sacrificing organs to save life and sacrificing organs, treasures and life to save *Dhamma*" (Khu.J.1.28/382/99). It is to build sentiments that rules and regulations are not more important than *Dhamma* or Virtues those one must do by oneself because what is important to decide to help anyone is beyond any conditions. The more we raise conditions; the more we shall encounter difficulties in decision making. To prove goodness demands to abide in the intention or the virtuous drive and focusing on not losing other people's benefits. By practices, they must be evident and direct and that is the unconditional help and focusing nothing more than helping only.

3. Refection on the level of "the *Paññā*", it is the sensitive decision making in the case of witnessing the mother falling into water. At this level, it is not just the assistance with just righteousness or fairness only but also the benefits which will be consecutively happened. Consequently, the way to help is not just assistance only but also to teach to secure oneself in the aftermaths in order to realize self-reliance. It is the change of being helped by others into self-reliance. Had it be to help the mother, the monk has to teach her to be more careful or teaching swimming or helping others; they must be taught on self-reliance rather than awaiting help from others. Such method might be seen applying rigid way of assistance because people unlikely favor because normally, people favor begging rather than giving or favoring assistance rather than getting to work by themselves. Therefore, Lord Buddha hints, "I shall not foster you as the potter foster his earthenware so long. I shall not foster you as the potter foster his very raw earthenware. When I pressure, I shall tell; praise, I shall tell. Anyone owning the gist shall stand" (MN.14/356/193). It could be recalled as applying rigid measures. It is similar with the case that *Phra Kumarakassapa* who attempts to help his mother to achieve enlightenment because since his birth she never fosters him. In the *Aṭṭhakathā* (Commentary), it is inscribed that the tears flow from her eyes for 12 years. She is in misery by her separation from her son. Her face is wet with tears travels to seek nunhood and when she meets him on the road she shouts, "Son, Son and rushes to hold him. She falls with the wet monk robe and she touches the monk. The monk thinks, "If my mother hear sweet words from me; she will be worse. I should speak to her with rough and rigid sounds." Then the monk speaks to his mother-nun, "What are you preoccupied with and just love you cannot detach." She hears this and think, "Oh, are these my son's words; he is so rude." She responds, "What do you speak?" The monk speaks the same statements. She thinks then, "I weep for 12 years because of this son

but he never own sympathy but speaks with rude words. Why should I think about him again?". She suddenly turns her back and detaches her love for her son and achieves being an *Arahant* on that day. The method looks violent and might be found as ingratitude, however, in fact, it is to leverage her self-reliance to her benefit she deserves because at the end, the best help is to enable one to own self-reliance rather than relying on other things for dependency (Thai Tipitaka,1996). It is similar in helping other - primarily securing them from misery and needed to also secure them to own self-reliance else such help is wasteful or valueless.

CONCLUSION

About the case of help, the author has reviewed both western concepts critically advocating liberty and equality leading to helps that some groups prioritize the liberty on decision making of everyone but it turns to be the one having greater power holds the rights over the less powerful ones. Help is then the matter of individuals who want to protect themselves. It finally creates selfishness. However, a concept of pluralism has been postulated that all should be socially altruistic having social agree to accept the same rules for co-existence of interdependence.

Similarly, the Theravada Buddhist philosophy agrees with building equality but mentally like Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A. Payutto) using the word" compromise" which is to reduce *Kilesa* (defilement) in ourselves and in others to the acceptable level. This is through enacting laws for human development rather than enforcement. The reflection on the non-enforced principle of help might be focused on cultivating the mind to own *Kusala*: goodness. It is without greed, without anger and without delusion through the process of reflecting help under the three (3) perspective frames, i.e. 1) The *Saññā* Model: perception - the help under imposed rules critically relying on their covenants without infringement and if infringement be; it demands referential data or through debates until gaining epitome or quintessence. 2) The *Viññāṇa* Model: enlightenment - to support *Dhamma* or altruism neither for oneself nor anyone else. 3) The *Paññā* Model: wisdom - besides supporting *Dhamma* or altruism or righteousness; it is necessary to promote the persons under assistance to enable them to further develop themselves with self-reliance rather than leaving them awaiting forever assistance or help.

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