Implications of the Ethics of Mahayana Buddhism for International Relations.*

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Mahayana 大乘 Buddhsim shares in basic ideas of the Theravada 上座部 tradition, but unfolds a development of its own which is distinctive, It recognizes the Buddha personality in Shakyamuni, (釋迦牟尼) his teaching of the Four Noble Truths 四聖諦 and the discipline of the noble Eightfold Path 八正道 to bring about the cessation of suffering. In its literature of elucidation (***abhidharma*** 論) however. it expands certain ideas of another early school of interpretation known as the ***Sarvastivada*** (說一切有部) This school placed emphasis on a concept which conditioned their understanding of ethical norms, Their highest ideal for man was the ***bodhisattva*** (菩薩) i. e. one who seeks for perfect wisdom, not primarily as intrinsic good for himself, but ***in order to save others*** from suffering. As the Fourth Century philosopher Vasubandhu (世親) puts it in his great compendium of ***Sarvastivadin*** doctrine, the ***abhidharmakosha*** (俱舍論);

> The bodhisattvas seek for enlightenment..... (and) undertake infinite labor for the good of others because they want to become capable of pulling others out of this flood of suffering. But what personal benefit do they find in the benefit of others? The benefit of others is their own benefit because they desire it.....growing in pitying solicitude for others they are ready to suffer a thousand pains for this solicitude.
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> (See *L'Abhidharmakosa de Vasubandhu.* Traduit et Annoté par Louis de La Vallée Poussin. Paris, 1923-5, Chapitre III, p. 191)

This identification of one's own good with the good of others is the all-encompassing aim of practice in the Mahayanist way of life. It is a selfless altruism springing from the spontaneous force of compassion which arises in one truly sensitive to the universal suffering in the world. As a scripture in the ***Prajnaramita*** (般若波羅密多) (or Perfection of Wisdom) literature puts it:

> He becomes endowed with that kind of wise insight which allows him to see all beings as on the way to their slaughter. Great compassion thereby takes hold of him.....and he radiates great friendliness and compassion over all those beings, and gives attention to them thinking: "I shall become a saviour to all those beings, I shall release them from all their sufferings."
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> (*Ashtasahasrika,* xxii, 402-405. Tr. by Edward Conze in his *Selected Sayings From The Perfection of Wisdom,* London, 1955, 35f.)

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From this it is evident that the first great urge to the higher ethical life is thought of as compassion (*karuna* 慈悲). It arouses in the noble-minded individual the "thought of becoming enlightened" (*bodhi-citta* 菩提心) in order to rescue beings from the sea of misery which is the world. This is the counterpart, I take it, to the emphasis on *metta*, or world-embracing love, in Theravada thought. *Karuna*, or compassion, furnishes in Mahayana Buddhism the ground for interpretation in terms of active good will which may be extended to broad international perspectives. As an original and pervasive force it is the bodhisattva's guiding star, motivating all his l abors for the sake of others. (All this has been shown through analysis of relevant literature in Har Dayal's noted monographic study *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London, 1932).

Mere feeling of compassion, untrained and unregulated, however, does not in itself guarantee effectiveness in devotion to the welfare of others. Mahayana teachers have recgnized that there are virtues to be cultivated if the bodhisattva is truly to become a saviour of suffering beings. The larger *Prajnaparamita* texts analyze six of these in particular, calling them the "six *paramitas*" 六波羅密, or perfections. Since our purpose in this study is to detect and state ethical principles of one great religion in order to weigh their implications for conduct in international relations, it is necessary to examine the *six perfections* with considerable care.

1. The first virtue to be cultivated is *giving* (*dana* 施) A bodhisattva gives liberally to all who ask, whether of his material or his spiritual possessions. In the didactic stories to illustrate this his generosity knows no bounds. By parting with everything, even life itself, he shows forth his great compassion and willingness to sacrifice for the welfare of all beings. The stories are arresting by their very extravagance. We should note, however, that the virtue of giving is saved from absurdity by a wider principle of discrimination. Giving is not perfect unless controlled by wisdom and dedicated to the highest good of all recipients. The bodhisattva is expected to exercise skill in the means he employs in giving. He must have wise judgment on what to give and how to give (including with holding gifts that may do harm) as well as feel the motive in compassion. (Cf. Har Dayal, op. cit., pp 175-181)

If the principle of wise giving is extended and made to apply to international giving the implication would be about as follows. Actions of states in their dealings with one another should be conducted primarily with a view to the good of the whole society of nations. Aid, when given by one nation to another, should be for constructive purposes that reduce the sum of suffering in the world, and not be in such form as to increase the probability of international conflict. The potentiality of the gift for doing good or doing harm to both the recipient and others should be seriously weighed. The essential aim in international giving should be not war but peace. If the extreme inference is drawn, the citizenry of a nation, acting collectively like a bodhisattva, would be willing to sacrifice even nation hood for global good. Giving in such dimension would mean acquiescence in a world state. In view of heightened national consciousness in Eastern countries as well as elsewhere in the world today, however, we may not expect to see

this implication acted upon in fact.

2. The second ethical principle governing a bodhisattva's conduct is the perfection of *morality* (*sila* 戒). He observes ten ways of wholesome action. 十戒 These are, in fact, abstentions--from taking life, from taking what is not given, from wrong conduct as regards sensuous pleasures, from intoxicants, from lying, harsh, malicious or careless speech, from covetousness, ill-will, and wrong views. (Cf. Conze, *op. cit.*, p. 67; and Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 193-209) In Buddhist literature these are analyzed in great detail. Since theyare all precepts for personal conduct, however, the detail need not detain us. For the wider area in which we are interested the general implication is a familiar thought. Men responsible for weighty matters of government and international affairs should be menof good, reliable character. Wisdom dictates that they should keep themselves fit for leading the nation in cooperation with other nations in ways for international good. Men who disregard recognized principles of morality are unsafe guides as leaders of nations, more liable to increase evils in international relations than to reduce them. For democracies the obvious moral is: let good character be among the important criteria for electing men to office. We cannot say that actual Mahayanist literature does make these specific deductions, for its concern is with the minutiae of personal morals as such, but the possibility of such wider application remains open.

3. The third virtue for a bodhisattva's practice is *patience* (*ksanti* 忍). In the *Prajnaparmita* (Perfection of Wisdom) literature we find it described as follows:

> A bodhisattva is firmly grounded in the power of patience when his attitude towards all beings is free from ill-will and a desire to harm then.
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> (Satasahasrika, x 1460. Conze, op. cit. p. 67)

In an extended treatment of the subject Har Dayal shows that patience includes *forbearance, endurance,* and *acceptanceof* (or acquiescence in) *the truth.* 三忍 (Cf. *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 209-213) The quality of forbearance he describes as follows:

> A bodhisattva cultives this virtue in its full perfection. He forgives others for all kinds of injury, insult, contumely, abuse and censure. He forgives them everywhere, in secret and in public. He forgives them at all times, in the forenoon, at noon and in the afternoon, by day and by night. He forgives them for what has been done in the past, for what is being done at present, and for what will be done in the future. He forgives them in sickness and in health. He forgives them with his body, as he never thinks of striking them with his hands or a stick or a stone; he forgives them with his speech, as he never utters harsh words; and he forgives them with his mind, as he harbours no anger or evil thoughts against them. Even if his body is destroyed and cut up into a hundred pieces with swords and spears, he does not conceive an angry thought against his cruel persecutors. He forgives all without exception, his friends, his enemies, and those who are neither. He forgives even weak and socially inferior persons, who may insult or injure him. He forgives terrible and unendurable pain and loss on him for a very long time. Being reviled, he reviles not again; being beaten, he beats not again; being annoyed, he annoys not again. He does not show anger towards one who is angry. He is like a dumb

sheep in quarrels and squabbles. In a word, his forgiveness is unfailing, universal and absolute, even as Mother Earth suffers in silence all that may be done to her.

(Har Dayal, op. cit., p. 209 f. The passage is based on *Bodhisattva-bhumi*, *Mahavastu*, *Siksasmuccaaya*, *Sukhavati-vyuha*)

In Santi-deva's ***Bodhicharyavatara***, the bodhisattva endures whatever suffering, insults, or derision others may heap upon him, without retaliation in kind, because he reflects that while they do evil through passion and ignorance, returning evil for evil brings no salvation to anyone. (Cf. Ch. VI in ***Bodhicharyavatara***, as tr. by L. D. Barnett: ***The Path of Light***, especially pp. 62-64)

Here again, illustrations of the virtue are drawn from the field of inter-personal relations. Patience in the presence of great provocation is more immediately understood there. Yet if the principle is thought of in connection with international relations, the implication is suggestive. Governments too should act with cautious restraint in the presence of irritating conduct of other nations that may turn out to be rooted in misunderstanding, misinformation or ignorance. If the common aim of all nations is conceived as the total good of world society, a given nation ought not quickly to take offense and act in anger in the name of national self-interest and national honor. Forbearance under sharp provocation is undeniably a difficult virtue on any level of action, but Buddhist teachers evidently see it as a necessary part of devotion to ultimate truth and deliverance from suffering in an inter-related world.

4. The fourth principle of higher conduct is ***vigor*** (***virya*** 進). As defined by Santi-deva, this means "vigor in well-doing." He who is devoted to saving all beings will toil unremittingly through countless reincarnations toward that end, in spite of all temptations to defeatism, fear and despair. Neither pleasures nor hardships should divert him from working with continuous energy for the good of all. Contrary to this are faintness, clinging to base things, despair, inaction.

From inaction, delight in pleasure, slumber and eagerness for repose springs a spirit that feels no horror at the miseries of life, and from this arises faintness.

(See *Bodhicharyavatara*, Ch. VII, *Path of Light*, p. 73)

To be strong to overcome in himself whatever may hinder his service to others is a moral obligation for the bodhisattva.

If this principle of moral vigor is applied to the conduct of international affairs, it suggests a continuosly active search on the part of governments, looking toward ends universally good. It would mean upholding before the public mind attitudes of good-will and cooperation among nations rather than allowing drift into fears, suspicions, and hostilities that generate division and strife. It would say that persistent energy should be expended more on shaping measures for the good of all than merely implementing the self-interests of each. It would rate preparations for peace higher than those for war. In short, Buddhist wisdom would direct interacting national energies in ways fundamentally humane.

5. As we pass to the fifth counsel of perfection which is *concentration* or meditation (*dhyana* 定). we seem to have a principle wholly individual in its application. It is the withdrawal from the distractions of life whereby the bodhisattva in solitude cultivates the thought of highest enlightenment. "It is well," says Santi-deva, "to forsake the world and put away vain imaginations." (The Path of Light, p. 82) In exposition developing this, however, he pictures a kind of inner self-examination wherein aspiration is turned away from self-advantage, and the spirit is exercised in "helpfulness and tenderness towards the world."(*Bodhicharyavatara*, Ch. VIII, Barnett's tr., p. 89)The discipline of meditation is thus regarded as a means of strengthening the bodhisattva for more effective discharge of his social task. This is by no means all one finds in Mahayana literature on concentration. The practice is also used to attain other states of mind known in the experience of ascetic monks in monastic seclusion. These are not to our purpose here. The relevant point is that in so far as meditation is used to strengthen compassion and friendliness it has altruistic, social reference that is capable of wide application. Extended to the international sphere, the principle would uphold approval of all means to increase international good-will. A nation's practice of meditation is the complex of educational processes by which it sets goals to itself. If all nations could intelligently aspire to achieve together the higher values in their relationships they might more readily find solutions to the problems which beset them. Devotion to national interest as supreme appears not to be the way out.

In this connection it is significant that we have from a modern Japanese priest of the Zen Sect (the one most devoted to the practice of meditation) the following words:

> I am appealing as a Buddhist to the whole world, especially to the people of the leading classes, stating my belief and opinion on the realization of peace by mankind. What has brought this opposing contention to the earth which mankind can hardly solve? Where can the cause be found? I do not hesitate to say that it is because man has not been faithful to the teachings of Sakyamuni and Christ. Though there are differences in the teachings of Sakyamuni and Christ concerning the interpretations of the universe and human life, they both agree on what is to be done for the happiness of mankind.
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> Sakyamuni preached mercy, or benevolence, while Christ taught love. Though mercy and love are slightly different in their expression, they are identical in spirit. Both start from the view-point where no distinctions are made between oneself and others, considering life and fate of mankind as one body, "do to others as you would be done to by others."·····
>
> Therefore the supremacy of nationalism must be abandoned and the world must be considered as one and dealt with as a whole. This is the World State. With the thought of the United Nations of the world, mercy and love must be realized.
>
> (Sogen Asahina in a pamphlet on *Zen* published in both English and Japanese in 1954)

This is a statement of an individual, not a pronouncement of Zen Buddhists as a group. Yet it shows the direction in which inference can go when reflection is turned upon the practice of Buddhist virtues in the international sphere.

6. The sixth and last perfection is *wisdom* (*prajna* 般若). In the Perfection of

Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) scriptures this is extolled as the highest and most inclusive of all virtues, necessary to the perfection of all the others. It is the state of all-knowledge, the source of light, dispersing the gloom and darkness of delusion, and giving guidance along sure paths of good. (Cf. *Ashtasahasrika* VII, 170-171; Conze, ***Buddhist Texts Through the Ages***, New York, 1954, p. 146) On examination, the all-knowledge here referred to appears to consist chiefly in intuitive awareness of ultimate reality as ineffable, indicable only as ***Emptiness*** (***Sunyata*** 空). This, however, is not the whole story, for distincion is made between two levels of truth, absolute 眞諦 and relative 俗諦. Absolute or ultimate truth is inexpressible. Relative truth (lit. veiled truth) is our ordinary understanding of things. It is on the level of relative truth that we find the bodhisattva seeking practical knowledge for his beneficent ends. It is appropriate for him to learn useful secular arts for carrying out his compassionate ministry to suffering beings. Thus he learns mathematics, medicine, different forms of literature, knowledge of metals, astrology, interpretation of dreams, etc. (Cf. Edward J. Thomas: ***History of Buddhist Thought***, p. 208 and Har Dayal: ***The Bodhisattva Doctrine***, p. 288) His search for wisdom, whether ultimate or relative, however, is always

> for the welfare of all men, out of pity for the world, for the interest, the good, the welfare of all creatures, gods and men.
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> (*Samdhinirmocana Sutra* 解深密經), 5.1. Cf Etienne Lamotte's French translation from the Tibetan, Paris, 1935, p. 184)

In this conception of highest wisdom and fullest knowledge dedicated to universal good, we can detect an ethical principle of wide application. In our time, penetration into the secrets of physical nature is more effective than ever before. Our knowledge of processes, psychological, economic, social and political has certainly increased. Communications among peoples are more numerous. Our movements about the earth are more swift. Our control of atomic energy is portentous of untold good or untold ill for mankind, depending on what motive controls its use. In all this we have learned to the full the meaning of Francis Bacon's dictum, "Knowledge is power," But power, unguided by humane wisdom, does not necessarily arrive at humane results. Knowledge as an instrument of action is not enough. Used by violently competing national self-interests, it brings colossal increase of suffering instead of its reduction for the common good. Hence the problem which faces us--how to inform international relations with a wisdom that devotes all instrumentalities to the good of all, The Mahayana teaching of a perfection of wisdom motivated by a great compassion and a great resolve is certainly supportive of the general desire to find just and adequate solution of the problem.

So far we have considered conceivable implications of ethical principles in Mahayana Buddhism. We may now properly inquire how far they are explicitly developed by contemporary Buddhist thinkers in reflecting on international relations. Professor Slater of Harvard has shown* to what extent pronouncements have been made in Theravada

*In a paper also presented at the Church Peace Union Symposium, 1959.

countries. General appositeness of Buddhist teachings to international problems is recognized, he concludes, but beyond "the discrimination of some possible first principles or relevant Buddhist premises" reflection has not yet entered the field of world programs and systems. In Mahayana countries the situation is about the same, as may be seen from the statements which follow.

More than thirty years ago, the Chinese Buddhist reformer, Tai Hsu 太虛法師. expressed himself as follows:

> We are living at an epoch when all nations are becoming more and more interdependent, and this itself should suffice to show that in reality Humanity is a whole. To help others is to help oneself, and to hurt others is to do oneself double injury, and yet, we find all nations today (1928) living in mutual distrust and preparing war under cover of apparent peace. Such a policy is not only inhuman, it also shows a lack of intelligence.
>
> My humble desire is to teach the Buddhist doctrine in a way that will help eliminate these abnormal desires and enlighten the world. The Buddhist doctrine alone can make us abandon the false conception that life is necessarily based on struggle and competition, and bring us to adopt a policy of mutual aid by which we can attain to lasting peace.
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> (Tai Hsü: *Lectures in Buddhism*, Paris, 1928, p. 25f)

More recently, in Japan, an outstanding Mahayanist scholar, Susumu Yamaguchi, writes of the function of Buddhists in terms of cultural contribution. After demonstrating cogently that supreme wisdom must issue in the great compassion which is the "wisdom that purifies the world," he refrains from discussing this in relation to the whole of world culture, and says that the best way for Orientals to contribute to world culture is to "bring home to people the real significance of non-ego."

> (Susumu Yamaguchi: *Dynamic Buddha and Static Buddha*, Tokyo, 1958, pp. 68F. and 98f.)

Another Japanese scholar, Hajime Nakamura, discussing the outcome of Mahayanist ethics in service, writes

> In China and Japan there have been many institutions such as hospitals, orphanages, and schools, which have been motivated by the Buddhist spirit. Particularly in Japan, Buddhism has always emphasized the ideal of working for the people, a concern which is manifested in its vast panoply of social work. In the interests of benefiting mankind, Japanese priests have been allowed to accumulate money to cure the sick, to build roads and bridges, and perform other similar services for the country.
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> (See Professeor Nakamura's chapter on "Unity and Diversity in Buddhism" in *The Path of Buddha*, edited by Kenneth W. Morgan, N. Y. 1956, p. 389f)

The thought of service is not further developed, however, to explore possible application in the wlder sphere of international relations.

From Tibet, noted example of a Mahayanist ecclesiastical state, it is too much to expect a considered analysis of international relations as such. The chief desire in the

past has been to keep as free from them as possible. The present struggle with Chinese Communist forces is to resist domination and prevent traditional institutions and way of life from being destroyed. Neither of these is conducive to wider reflection on the subject. As an expression of general attitude, however, we may note the following words from a scroll handed to Lowell Thomas, father and son, at Lhasa on September 7, 1949.

> We have iearned that unfortunately, throughout this world at the present time. there is an absence of peace and happiness--this because of troubles between peoples, and disturbances and conflicts of many kinds. We, the government and people of Tibet, are much worried, deeply concerned over the present state of the world in which we all live. And we are eager to have it known that here in Tibet, a land that is especially dedicated to religion, all of cur peoples, both lay and monk, are earnestly praying that God will grant happiness and ever-lasting peace to all humanity,
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> (Lowell Thomas Jr.: *Out of This World*, N. Y., 1950, p. 311)

Judging from the above statements it would appear that present-day Mahayana Buddhists, although not always overt in expressicn, are sensitive to the serious problem of international tensions and rivalries, and desire to see them reduced in the interest of world peace. Lack of detailed analysis, however, shows that they do not look for causes in outer material conditions, but in the minds of men who are lacking in the spirit of wisdom and compassion which Buddhism essentially teaches, In this they are at one with the rest of the Buddhist world. As is said in the resolutions of the Second World Buddhist Conference held in Japan in 1952,

> We earnestly vow to establish an eternal peace by realizing universal brotherhood, giving due respect to the freedom and independence of all nations and in promoting mutual help among men……Men by becoming slaves to ignorance, greed and ego-centricity, commit grave sins. Self-superiority constitutes the nucleus of all discriminations and also the exclusion of others, and consequently leads to antagonism, violence and war. On the contrary, the principle of the Middle Way 中道 based on Nibbana 涅槃 worksin favor of the abandonment of prejudice and antagonism, leads men to justice, and creates the spirit of equality of friend and foe, so as to allow peace to permeate deep into the souls of men.
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> (Reported in the Japanese Buddhist quarterly *The Young East*, Decenber, 1952, p. 21)

How is this to be implemented? Examination of the resolutions on ways to act shows that the Buddhists rely on such measures as the establishment of more Buddhist schools, including a World Buddhist Institute, promotion of mutual understanding between Southern and Northern Buddhists, compilation of scriptures to be used by all Buddhists everywhere, fuller exchange and cooperation among Buddhists in different countries, protests against persecutions or oppressions of religion, and cooperation in the movement for preventing cruelty to animals. To these measures the Third World Buddhist Conference, meeting in Rangoon in 1954, added advocacy of abolition of capital punishment in every country and,

Request to all nations and governments for the prohibition of the manufacture and use of all atomic. nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and for the utilization of atomic energy only for peaceful purposes.

.and

Cooperation with other religionists to remove laws creating discrimination on grounds of colour, race, creed or caste.

(*Young East*, Spring, 1955, p. 25.)

On the whole, it would appear that present-day Buddhists, on the basis of their ethics, believe they can best contribute to peaceful international relations by strengthening themselves for spreading Buddhist teachings everywhere, and by urging governments to act with a wisdom motivated by compassion in dealing with affairs of groups of men interacting in a common world. Such belief implies an open-ness to cooperation with men of good-will of other faiths who on grounds of their own religious ethics seek reduction of suffering and the higher welfare of mankind.

大乘佛教倫理學對於國際關係的涵義

漢穆敦著

這篇文章原來是爲一九五九年紐約的一次討論各大宗教倫理學對於國際關係的涵義的會談所準備的。它檢討大乘佛學的道德原理，看出從它們可以引發怎樣的對於國際關係的提示。它分析了「菩薩」(Bodhisattva) 的六種德行，而菩薩代表大乘佛教文獻中描寫的理想人格。

這六種德行或圓滿(Paramitas, 波羅密多)便是：(1)施，(2)戒，(3)忍，(4)進，(5)定，(6)慧，首先分析了它們以後，然後才由個人的倫理學範圍擴展出去應用於國際行爲，結果發現它們可以引生一些重要的提示。

(1)「施」(Giving) 的涵義是，國家之間的互助應該爲了建設性的目的，減輕世界的苦惱和國際間的爭鬪的可能性。

(2)「戒」(Morality) 的涵義是，爲政府和國際事務負重大責任的人應該是一些道德健全的人物，同時獻身於國際的以及國家的利益。

(3)「忍」(Patience) 的涵義是，在其他國家挑釁的時候，國家需要節制。如果共同的目的是整個世界社會的利益，一個國家就不該很快的着惱，而借着國家榮譽和自利的名義憤怒地採取行動。

(4)「進」(Vigor) 的涵義是，各國政府應該不斷主動的尋求實現對於世界有益的目的的方法。經久的努力應該是爲了全人的福利，而不該只成爲各國自利的工具。

(5)「定」(Concentration) 的涵義，就它可以用來增進同情和友誼來看，也有博愛的社會性的關懷。它提示，如果所有的國家能够在智慧上嚮往在彼此的關係之中創獲更高的價值，它們就可能更容易找到它們之間共同問題的解決。

(6)「慧」(Wisdom) 的基本原理是最完全的知識和智慧應該供奉於全人的利益。它的涵義擴大便可以說，國際關係應當用一種智慧來燭照，一切行爲工具都是爲了實現全人最高的福利。

這便是從研討大乘生活方式的六種德行所抽引出來的推理，文末是分析一些當代佛教領袖的話，他們已經表示出對於國際問題的認識，而顯示出他們相信，只要處處能够推行佛教的教義，敦促政府和人民用更大的智慧和同情來爲了促進國際的利益，他們就能够對和平的關係有最大的貢獻。