




Bodhisattva Aspiration: Principles and Means to dominate the entire Society

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[Abstract]

The article is entitled “Bodhisattva Aspiration: Principles and Means to Dominate the entire Society” to be an attempt to propose the way how Boddhisatva has done with the power of virtue aspiration. All activities in society could be done under the Bodhisattva principles and means to solve the problem in society. The article is based on both Theravada and Mahayana perspectives. The virtue of Bodhisattva is the real aspiration driven all activities to be beneficial and advantageable in the entire society. By the virtue aspiration as the inner leadership, society is flourished and developed in several dimensions. There consists of 4 vows, 3 qualification and 6 perfections. They are the principles and Means which could be dominated the activities in society. All are as the virtue aspiration of Bodhisattva to lead them to help and support about what should be done in any suitable situation. They aim at how to fulfill their perfections to be a next Buddha, not to be as a worldly emperor. By such aspiration, the entire society is able to develop sustainably. The Bodhisatva aspiration should be cultivated into the bottom heart of all citizens as the root of wholesome blooming.

Keywords: Bodhisattva Aspiration, Principles and Means, Dominate the entire Society

Introduction

As we have seen leaders in the world who lead the country or the kingdom since the previous till now, mostly they would like to show their ability and wisdom to rule the society for their empowerment and dignity. The result of such a ruling causes some tears of others and some difficulties of people. Because they have to use their power to control people freedom. By this way they could rule and govern the society to what they want to be. Some rulers tried to destroy those who were their enemy or the opposite side by different ways. And for some governors, they didn't like the intelligent citizens because they could not control them. So they tried to suppress their wisdom as a bonisi. That is why the society is not a blooming nature, but the ugly way.

When we turn to the Bodhisattva as a ruler or leader. We will find that all Bodhisattvas in the previous time till the present do the opposite way. Since human beings have been governed from long time ago, according to Buddhist chronological scripture, Jataka Bodhisattva accumulated his perfection as a king, an Emperor or an even as a minister both in human and animal birth. By his government society was flourished and developed in several dimensions. For example, when he was born in the name of Mahajanaka Bodhisattva (Khu.Jataka II. 37/132/204), he governed the country with high leadership. People in his kingdom lived happily with both physical and mental aspects. Let's trace nearly back in the reign of the Emperor Jayavaraman II, he ruled the kingdom of Angkor in 16 century B.E. Some monuments where remained to be a heritage are regarded as the Civilization at the time. Particularly the hospitals (Arogayasala) were settled along with the territory road throughout the kingdom. It was very amazing and incredible about his aspiration to humankind. It has been shown the light on the compassion and loving kindness to sentient beings. Let's pay attention on the activities of the late Rama IX king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, His majesty had done for his people the useful projects throughout the country. Whether he claimed himself as a Bodhisattva or not, but we can assume that the role and activity is driven by the power of Bodhisattva's aspiration.

Not only in Thailand, the Mahayana countries use to be applying the Bodhisattva's principles to cultivate in all activities. The virtues are regarded as the main dominant aspiration and inspiration to the Mahayana people. So we can find in the Japan, China, Taiwan, Vietnam and others the leaders who strongly apply the Bodhisattva's principles to their policy. In Taiwan, monks, nuns and lay-disciples of the main constitutions of Mahayana could help the economy, infrastructure, hospitality, education, culture to develop the countries. The essential root of their activities is based on the principles of Bodhisattva's virtue.

Owing to this condition and signification, the article is emphasized on the root of aspiration in order to pave the way to be a concrete idea built as the policy and strategy in the society. We need to pick up and search for the root of aspiration generated in Buddhism to set up as the common aspiration of people.

Bodhisattva Aspiration

Bodhisattva refers to the person who will be enlightened as the Buddha in the future (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A.Payutto), 2011: 278). In the commentary, it gave the meaning of the word Bodhisattva as an enlightened animal. In addition, the Bodhisattva is another meaning given that those who have kindly are in the foreground. He is the one who would like to accumulate the perfections in Buddhism. Due to the perfections, it means that aspiration is consisted of all perfection therein. It seems to be as the dynamic fusion in the Bodhisattva's mind. The Bodhisattva attempts to fulfill each perfection to complete a degree of virtue. The aspiration is also more or less depending upon the accomplished perfections. So the perfections are needed to be done all the time.

The Bodhisattvas, therefore, are divided into two types according to the period in which the perfection is performed, namely Aniyata Bodhisattva and Niyata Bodhisattva. In other words, the period of accumulating perfection is divided into three durations, namely long time (Dure), not to long time (Avidhura) and near present (Santike).

Aniyata Bodhisattva refers to one who sets up his mind to be the Bodhisattva by thinking and proclaiming in word. At this period it is also called Dhure because it could not tell the time just like the before life of Sumedha Tapasa. After he meets the Dipangkara Buddha and gets the prediction to be the next Buddha named Gotama Buddha onward till the time of being as the Santusita Deva is called Avidure period. It is also called Niyata Bodhisattva, because he definitely exists in the position of the near Buddhahood. Finally, the Bodhisattva was born as the prince Siddhattha till before attaining the Enlightenment is called Santike period. The Bodhisattva after completing the Bodhisattvamarga enters into the seventh bhumi, or Durangama Bhumi. Now he commences practicing a different and superior part (Nalinaksha Dutt, 1976: 127-128).

From time to time the Bodhisattva's mind is pushed and driven by the virtue aspiration called perfections or Paramita-hood. It is the state of spiritual perfection achieved by a Bodhisattva on his path to Buddhahood (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), 2016: 334). From the time of Niyata Bodhisattva, the destination of his life directs to the Buddhahood in the happy realms without going to the suffering realms. By this way, he always accumulates the perfection with gradual degree to get accomplishment of Buddhahood. His aspiration, therefore is not going to be wrong as the one who knows the way properly is surely not getting lost the way. Based on the aspiration for attaining his own perfection, his aspiration is the empowerment to push him to work and compassionate for the welfare of all sentient beings. This is the right and white aspiration as we are focusing in this article.

The Bodhisattva Qualification

According to Mahayana tradition, the Bodhisattva qualification refers to the three kinds of Bodhisattva virtue, namely 1) the great compassion 2) the great wisdom and 3) the great technique (Suvin Ruksat, 2009, p.95). All factors are very important to generate in the Bodhisattva's wholesome psychic factors. We can say that all Bodhisattva could not be

the Bodhisattva without the virtue qualification. Let's go in detail each one.

1. The great compassion (Mahakaruna)

Whenever the Bodhisattva performs, works, helps or acts in different activities, he has done with the great compassion all the time. Just like the doctor helps the patients, he has to help with his full capability. The great compassion is the second factor of the 4 Brahmaviharas in Buddhism (P.A.Payutto), 2016: p.124). The Bodhisattva uses to lead the compassion in front of the loving kindness and the rest. The great compassion means the great mind of action to help others. It is the giving of all accumulated roots of virtue to all living beings (Thurman, R. A.,1976). His life is based on helping others without hesitation. In the contrary way, all sentient beings are a mean of accumulating perfection of the Bodhisattva. So, owing to this condition, the Bodhisattva has to get the opportunity to fulfill and accomplish his perfection with the great compassion. By this perspective, the great compassion is much difficulty of helping others in which non general people could be done. Only the Bodhisattva who composes of the great compassion could be helped incredibly. According to the Bodhisattva's motto, it shows that "if the Bodhisattva does not go to hell, who will go." It means the Bodhisattva can help others in the difficult place and way. Such as a passage in the Vimalakirti Sutta, Vimalakirti replied to Manjusri Bodhisattva that

Even should he enact the five deadly sins, he feels no malice, violence, or hate. Even should he go into the hells, he remains free of all taint of passions...He may follow the ways of desire, yet he stays free of attachment to the enjoyments of desire. He may follow the ways of hatred, yet he feels no anger to any living being. He may follow the ways of folly, yet he is ever conscious with the wisdom of firm understanding (Thurman,1976)

Dealing with the above passage, the great compassion has been done by the Bodhisattva in the opposite way as normal people do. It shows the

power of aspiration to help others is most important than oneself.

2. The great wisdom (Mahapaññā)

Paññā in Buddhism is not just meaning as panna generally. It means the wisdom in which one knows the cause and effect of all phenomena concerning with living life. Paññā particularly means to understand what a situation really is. The state of Paññā starts at cognition of sense objects by way of the six senses, with a mind that is equanimous and mindful, not swayed by pleasure or aversion (Bhikkhu P.A.Payutto,2018: p 555). When we concern about the great wisdom, it specifically means the knowledge and intelligence composed by virtue perfection of the Bodhisattva only. How the great wisdom does play role in the action? It has been shown some light on what the right action and performance which has been done by the Bodhisattva in helping others. He uses to help with full capability of what derived from his experience. The great wisdom that has been getting from learning, from thinking and from meditation. Whenever the Bodhisattva is being aware of all expected situation that will happen, the right action and the right result will be done accomplishing undoubtedly. The great wisdom really understood as the great education that has been using for the beneficial helping all sentient beings.

3. The great technical application (Mahaupaya)

Mahaupaya refers to the way how to apply the great wisdom to help others. Usually those who would like to help someone particularly the beloved one think only the way to help without double thinking. It means they will help immediately what they need to get some help. Suppose they are hungry; people usually give food for them. That is not the way of Mahaupaya. Whenever the Bodhisattva uses to help sentient beings, he needs to overview what should be done about it. Just likes Vimalakirti had done before in pretending his ill in order to converse about Dhamma with the learned ones. He played with the great super knowledges. He had attained the power of incantations and the fearlessness's. He was liberated through the transcendence of wisdom. Having integrated his realization with skill in liberative technique, he was expert in knowing the thoughts and actions

of living beings. Knowing the strength or weakness of their faculties, and being gifted with unrivaled eloquence, he taught the Dharma appropriately to each (Thurman, R. A., 1976). The great technical application of capability is needed to complicatedly think to encourage them to stand by themselves without getting helps from others always. For example the Avalokitesvara in the avatar of the princess, Miezana helped her father who got serious ill. She would like not only help the physical ill, but the mental ill of her father. So she cut off her hand and donated her eyes to be as the medicine for such diseases. After being well, the king would like to see whom gave a great donation like this for him. Later on, he knew she was his own daughter who was without any anger what he had done to her. From that time onward the king changed his behavior from the fierce king to the gentle one (Stein, 1993). In order to use the great technical application as the great compassion the Bodhisattva has to seek for the best way to cultivate them to grow in the wholesome way. As much as the great technical application concerned, the great aspiration exists also therein as the inner force to help all sentient beings. We may see someone who can do incredible skill that we have not seen before to help people. The incredible skill of mind set is particular emphasized here. It is called the skill in liberative technique or the great technical application (Mahaupaya).

The Bodhisattva's Vows

Firstly, a man who would like to be a Bodhisattva must take a vow. It is just like the oath of those who comes to receive the important position. They have to proclaim what they will do and behave during existing in the position. Whenever they go wrong opposite from the oath, the sin or all bad luck will approach to their lives. So they have to keep the oath perfectly. The Bodhisattva's vows are the same oath, but the vows are profound as the destiny of aim to lead the Bodhisattva to the Buddhahood. There are 4 vows, namely

1. However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them.
2. However inexhaustible the defilements are, I vow to extinguish them.
3. However immeasurable the dharmas are, I vow to master them.

4. However incomparable enlightenment (Buddhahood) is, I vow to attain it (<http://www.bbc.co.uk>).

All vows are the blueprint of the Bodhisattva to conduct himself on the right track. Let's analyze each vow. The first vow is supporting the great compassion without hesitation to help sentient beings. It is as the bottom heart of the Bodhisattva mind. Without helping sentient beings, all perfections are not being fulfillment. Really speaking, the first vow is the first priority and the first qualification what should be done. Sentient beings seem to be the objective perfection that could not be missed. The second vow is supporting the great wisdom and the great technical application. Without studying or learning, Buddhist principles could not be disseminated to others. Bodhisattva must learn all Dhamma in order to practice for himself and to suggest sentient beings to know what is right or wrong. Unless he does not understand what the Buddha taught, he easily miss the right way. According to Buddhism, there are plenty of scriptures composed the Buddha teaching therein. Among them, there are the important suttas that concerned with the cultivation of mindfulness. The Bodhisattva, therefore must study all Dhamma as much as possible.

The third vow is approaching the realm of mental practice. It stands for meditating how to control, subdue, reduce and eradicate all defilement or bad emotion. Five hindrances are the core defilements in the meditation sphere. The Bodhisattva has to overcome them all by attaining this vow. The last vow, "however incomparable enlightenment (Buddhahood) is, I vow to attain it" seems to be the highest destination of Bodhisattva goal. All activities what have been done by the Bodhisattva are paying for attaining the Buddhahood or destining to attain Bodhi. The Buddhahood is the state of highest ability of human being. This state is needed to fulfill the complete sphere of all perfections. The Buddha is the great man in the world who finishes one own burden and can come over the life circle everlastingly.

All Bodhisattvas have to make up their mind to carry on the 4 vows throughout their lives, not only during the present lives, also the next lives. Though we leave the Bodhisattva idea, the 4 vows are needed to be as the aspiration for all human

kinds. Man has to concern with people as the society animal. Man has to get help from others, in other word, he has to help others automatically at least from his family. Man must study with having no choice, because he has to live with his knowledge. Man has to manage his own emotion both good and bad. Otherwise the emotion will make him trouble. Furthermore, man has to set the aim for life, at least for a good family or a good position or a good life. No man lives without what he needs. In this context, the 4 vows are very important for human kinds.

The Bodhisattva Perfection

The Bodhisattva's behavior or conduct (Bodhisattvamaggacariya) is based on the perfection. The perfection is regarded as the path leading the Bodhisattva to the aim. The perfection is the mental quality that the Bodhisattva needs to accomplish by performing activities. The mental quality will increase volume till the highest degree. According to the Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra, the statement given that

“Their mindfulness, intelligence, realization, meditation, incantation, and eloquence all were perfected. They had attained the intuitive tolerance of the ultimate incomprehensibility of all things. They turned the irreversible wheel of the Dharma. They were stamped with the insignia of signlessness(Thurman, R. A.,1976).”

So in conclusion of the statement, there are 6 kinds of perfection, namely; Giving Perfection (Dana Parami)

- Precept Perfection (Sila Parami)
- Patient Perfection (Khanti Parami)
- Effort Perfection (Viriya Parami)
- Meditation Perfection (Jhana Parami)
- Wisdom Perfection (Paññā Parami)

According to Theravada tradition, there are 10 kinds of perfection. It also consists of 5 more in different perspectives, namely; 1) loving kind-

ness perfection (Metta Parami), 2) renunciation perfection (Nekkhamma Parami), 3) honest perfection (Sacca Parami), 4) equanimity perfection (Upekkha Parami) 5) taking vow perfection (Adhitthana Parami) . But they are same in the essence. There can be concluded into 3 factors, namely; 1) Giving perfection (Dana Parami), 2) Precept perfection (Sila Parami) and 3) Wisdom perfection (Paññā Parami).

How can it be done on the perfection as the quality of mind of the Bodhisattva? It is very important understanding on how the perfections should be implemented in the society. For generally, people always play their role on the same state of virtues mentioned above. They use to be implied for some proposes, such as their work, money, family, duty, order, position, profit, awards, rewards, etc. By doing with this aspiration, it is not the Bodhisattva aspiration. Because the Bodhisattva aspiration has been gained through perfections that have been done without worldly needs. It is just like the word duty for the sake to duty. Here is perfection is for the sake of perfection fulfillment.

According to the Vajraprajnaparamita sutta, the Buddha told to Ven.Subhuti on the patient perfection which had been done by Khativada Tapasa or hermit that “Subhuti, the Khanti Parami is really spoken without the state of the patience, it is just called the name of Khanti Parimi only... Even I was cut my body by the Kali Raja king, I do not attach with self, personality, state of being and state of living” (Thurman, R. A.,1976). The Buddha tries to accomplish the patience perfection. He fulfilled the patient perfection at that time on the birth of Khantivada Tapasa. His aspiration is based on the Buddhahood in the future. By this aspiration, the Bodhisattva carries on all perfections as his life.

All perfections are analyzed into two parts, for cultivating oneself and for developing others. They are very profound in application. Because whenever they have been used, the selfness is more reducing till without attachment in oneself.

The Bodhisattva's Virtues to dominate the entire society

As the principles and means are concerned, the Bodhisattva spends full effort to manage his own quality, vows and perfections as the principles and means to dominate the entire society. Let's emphasize the conduct of Buddhisattva's virtues.

According to Mahayana tradition, all sentient beings are the Bodhisattva. Because they have the enlightened seed in their mind. Particularly in Taiwan, the 4 poles of Mahayana foundations dominate the entire society in each different approach. The Fo Guang Shan dominates society in the engaged approach. The Fah Gu Shan dominates society in the education approach. Zhong Tai Shan dominates in the meditation approach. And Tzu Ji dominates society in compassionate relief approach. Of course, we give the example of the 4 poles of Mahayana foundation in Taiwan in order to show that all principles and means are implemented in their roles and activities. The wide and vast scale of helping sentient beings is included into the individual activity which has been done to dominate the entire society.

Let's trace back to the reign of Jayavoraman empire, we also see the principles and means of Bodhisattva's virtues had been dominated throughout his empire. Particularly the hospital (Arogayasala) had been built along with the main roads in different directions. We could not imagine what a compassion the Bodhisattva does. Coming nearer, the world already knows what the late Rama IX king, Bhumibol Adulydej, the great, did for the Thai kingdom when he ruled the reign. More than three thousand projects which has been dominated the entire society. All projects have been done for helping Thai people and foreigners. Looking into the economy sufficiency philosophy, the infinite value of this philosophy used to be implied to different angles of work. When we emphasize on the role of the late Rama IX king, Bhumibol Adulydej, the great, doing, it is regarded as the Bodhisattva's deeds.

In order to show some important domination, it can be seen in the Bodhisattva's principles and means which could be dominating society as the below

figure.

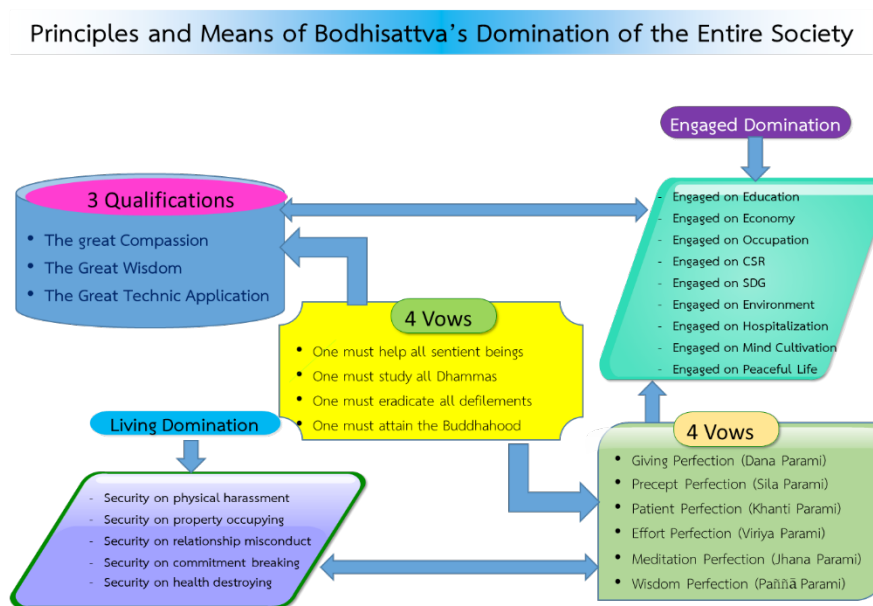


Figure 1 : Suvin Ruksat

Security and Engaged domination is a main virtue of the Bodhisattva. In order to drive the Bodhisattva aspiration, all factors of principle and means should be integrated and implied dynamically. What should be kept in mind is a fulfilment of perfection. The less attachment is the more accomplishment to achieve the highest goal. That's why the motto is told that do not use the ordinary thinking compare the higher one, it refers to thinking to Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva's aspiration is full of ambition and inspiration to help sentient beings by mean of perfections.

Conclusion

As much as the principles and means of the Bodhisattva is concerned, the article is emphasized on the aspiration as the force driven in all activities that have been done. 3 keys factors that could be dominate the entire society are of 4 vows, 3 qualifications and 6 perfections. Those who have the aspiration driven by all principles and means are called Bodhisattva. He is

the one who can change society to flourish in many dimensions. The society could be dominated from the profound level to the manifested environment. The profound virtue is to cultivate the Bodhicitta to bloom as the root of Buddhahood. In the social level, the secured and the engaged aspects are dominated for the welfare of all sentient beings.

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