

# The Concept of Charity in Buddhism Philosophy

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## Abstract

Thai society is Buddhism society due to most of people respect Buddhism and Buddhism is the religion of Thailand. Almost all cultures and traditions of Thailand, has been influenced from Buddhism. According to the attitude of the people in the society, they will see the people who follow the principle of Buddhism that are good people and deserved to be praised from the society. On the other hand, if someone doesn't follow the principle of Buddhism, they will be perceived as bad people.

Thai society in the past is real Buddhism society. People in the society, are persons who are generous, honest, calm, kind, cheerful, make merit, support Buddhism by presenting four requisites to monks in order to give the opportunity to monks to study, practices the Dhamma and then bring the Dhamma to spread, teach to Buddhists. Especially, teaching of Buddhism related to "Merit, Sin"

The word of "Merit" is the name of intelligence or cleverness that has the opposite meaning with "Evil ways" such as the word of "Proficiency" that means the cleverness, masterfulness, skill and expert. All are composed with 3 intelligences liked the message appeared in perceived object of one book of the Tipitaka, the book of divisions, that are; Proficiency as to again or progress. Proficiency as to loss or regress. Proficiency as to means and method.

Proficiency Science (Proficiency+ Science), Science means knowledge and Proficiency means cleverness. The thing that get rid of evil. The word of "Proficiency" generally means goodness, beauty. Good things are always used with merit, that re called, "Merit" and this word will "sin" So the new word is "Good deeds" this means merit, goodness, good deeds as well. Proficiency or Merit is such as donating, religious rule, praying or ten principles of bad man etc.

The idea is that nature can shake or destroy all sins that graduates hate. So, the name of that nature is "Proficiency"

**Keywords :** Concept, Charity in Buddhism, Philosophy

## Introduction

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The word of "Merit" is the name of intelligence or cleverness that has the opposite meaning with "Evil ways" such as the word of "Proficiency" that means the cleverness, masterfulness, skill and expert. All are composed with 3 intelligences liked the message appeared in perceived object of one book of the Tipitaka, the book of divisions, that are;

1. Proficiency as to gain or progress.
2. Proficiency as to loss or regress.
3. Proficiency as to means and method. (*Dīghanikāya. Pāthikavagga. (Thai) 11/753/484-485. MCU. 2539*)

Proficiency Science ( Proficiency + Science), Science means knowledge and Proficiency means cleverness. The thing that get rid of evil. The word of "Proficiency", generally means goodness, beauty. Good things are always used with merit, that are called, "Merit" and this word will be used with "sin". So the new word is "Good deeds", this means merit, goodness, good deeds as well. Proficiency or Merit is such as donating, religious rule, praying or ten principles of bad man etc.

The idea is that nature can shake or destroy all sins that graduates hate. So, the name of that nature is "Proficiency".

Generally, the word of "Merit" and "Proficiency" can be used together as one word in Thai proverb that is "Merit". With the reason, this means the merit thing. At the same time, when we talk about proficiency in Buddhism. Everything is same. When we speak about merit, this means the proficient thing. At the same time, when we speak about proficiency, this is merit. So the word liked this, this is not speech that used to communicate only. Because of the academic of Buddhism or in Buddhism bible, there is explanation as well. The example is in *Monkaladatheepanee*, the part of "Puuppekkatapoonyata". He has explained in one part that the name of merit person in the past, was the person who had accumulated proficiency because of mentioning of Buddha, Pratyekabuddha and Buddhist Saint in the last life. So this person could be Buddhist Saint if he listened to teaching

of Buddha.(Manghaladipanī (Pali) 1/92/99. MBU. 2554)

Another meaning, Buddha had said about the heart trouble in Tapaneyasuit Koontoknikai Thammabot about morality was the cause of real trouble. This morality, the blessed one had said already, the sentence was, “All monks, morality was the cause of 2 troubles, What was 2 moralities? Because some people in this world, didn’t do good things or proficient things, merit that would resist the fear of suffering. They did bad things, low, ferocity. First, he thought that “If we didn’t do good things, we faced trouble. Second, he thought that “If we only did bad things, this would give the trouble to all monks. Both 2 moralities were those things”. (Khuddakanikāya. Dhammapada.(Thai) 25/30/377)

However, the decision to conclude that merit and proficiency are the same in Buddhism because of using of those words generally, the explanation in the book or the words of Buddha without considering cautiously, this may give the mistake in understanding of teaching in Buddhism because some words or some Dhammic principles in Buddhism, may have different context although there is same word, this may give the content or different in shallow and deep meanings.

For merit and proficiency, although general information will tell that both has same meaning but we should study to understand clearly. There is important thing that we should notice such as when we talk about proficiency. This will connect with “Good deeds”, “Charity Fair” and “Charity”.

When we talk about merit, we always hear the word of “Destiny” that can’t be compared with “Charity Fair”. For the word of “Destiny” and “Spiritual Merit”. There is no appearance to accept or use both of 2 words for substitution. If merit and proficiency are the same. We can use both of 2 words for substitution in every cases. With this reason, there is fundamental hypothesis that merit is different with proficiency in Buddhism. And with this hypothesis, this makes the author interested in studying and analyzing to find the conclusion from Tipitaka, exegesis and other Buddhism textbooks.

### **The meaning of “Merit” and “Proficiency”**

“Merit” means the good quality of mind. When we receive merit, this means that we got the good quality of mind. “Sin” means bad quality of mind. When we sin, this means that we make our minds to fail. Buddhism teaches people to do merit because merit will bring us happiness and also teaches us not to sin because it will bring us suffering liked words of Buddha says;(Khuddakanikāya. Dhammapada.. (Thai) 25/116-118/67-68)

“The people who do good thing, will prohibit mind from sin”.  
“Because when we do merit too late, mind will be happy in sin”.

“If man sins, he won’t do it often. He won’t be satisfied in sin because the accumulation of sin will bring us suffering”.

“If man do merit, he will do it more often. He will be satisfied in merit because the accumulation of merit will bring us happiness”.

The word of “Merit”, we can understand that this is good thing but if we analyze the meaning from the root. The word of “Merit” came from Pali language, “Poonya” that has 2 meaning as follows;

1) Cleaning machine of telepathy in order to make it pure. That is the idea that “The nature is the cleaning machine. This can make telepathy pure. This is called , “Merit”.

2) Qualification leads to respectful and worshipful. The idea that “The nature that is worshipful, this is called, “Merit”.

From the meaning of the root for 2 meanings. This can conclude that merit means cleaning machine to make telepathy pure until this can be worshipful and if we would like to make it more clear, we can compare the meaning of “Sin” in the opposite thing. The word of “Sin”, has the meaning in the root for 2 meanings as follows;

1) The morality, that is sin. It is ugly. There is analysed picture that “The nature, that is no growth. This is called , “Sin” that is the opposite thing of “Merit”.

2) Depraved state, that is the opposite thing of “Merit”. It means a good state.

Besides, there are words of Buddha in that shows the meaning of “Merit” very clearly. This includes the Satakanibahtangkutaranikai where “All monks, please don’t fear to do merit because merit is the name of happiness. We know that the result of merit of we have already done is from the desired result, satisfied result that we have already eaten for all times. We grow in kind heart for 7 years. We won’t go to this world for 7 Sangwattakup and Wiwattakup etc.” This shows that merit is related to happiness and can’t be separated. The explanation of the word of “Merit” clearly. We should say happiness comes from our desire and love for every other lives also.

So if we would like to gather all meanings, that is the meaning according to the root as mentioned above. The meaning of the opposite thing of sin and the meaning according to the words of Buddha as stated. We can conclude that the word “Merit” in Buddhism is the cleaning machine to make our mind pure until this is worshipful and brings to growth, good things and happiness. For the word of “Proficiency”. We can generally understand that this is good deeds liked “Merit”. But if we mention this as stated in the root. The word of “Proficiency”, is came from Pali language “Kusol”, that has 4 meaning as follows;

1) Morality that destroy sin. Morality that is ugly. That is the idea that “Morality that has sin. Morality that is ugly. That it is moving, making it shake. This is getting rid of sin. This is called, “Proficiency”.

2) That Morality can get rid of ugly sin. There is analysed picture that “Morality that can get rid of, this gets rid of sin or those ugly evil ways”.

3) That morality can hold wisdom. There is analysed picture that “Morality that people can hold, this is wisdom”.

4) Morality that cut sadness like cogon grass is the idea that “Cogon grass can cut both two hands, those morality can cut evil ways. Those evil ways are happened and unhappened sadness. The morality that can cut cogon grass. This is called, “Proficiency”.

The meaning of 4 meanings, we can conclude by considering to the important characteristic of each meaning. 1st meaning, 2nd meaning and 4th meaning, show about the duty to get rid of. Those are called, “Proficiency”. This means morality that can get rid of sin or evil ways. For 3rd meaning, this shows the component of proficiency. This is wisdom. This shows that proficiency is the morality accompanied with wisdom.

By concluding of all meanings, we can conclude that “Proficiency” in Buddhism, this means the morality can get rid of sin or evil ways. This will be accompanied with wisdom. There is no wicked things and this brings us happiness back.

### **The Important of merit and proficiency in Buddhism**

We have already known that Buddhism is the religious of practicing. Because Buddha is from the Lord Buddha who set up Buddhism. He is the person who teaches about the principle of doing. By the true content of Buddhism, this focuses on practicing in order to attain the good thing by having high target that is the end of suffering or nirvana.

The principle of teaching about merit and proficiency in Buddhism, is the important thing because this is related to practicing in order to attain the good thing according to Buddhism objective. In this section, we will tell about how does the important of Buddhism with merit and proficiency. We will separate into 2 main issues. That is the important of merit and the important of proficiency.

#### **1. The important of merit**

Normally, the most important thing of all living creatures is happiness. Especially for human life, we can see clearly that everyone try to struggle to find happiness incessantly with other guidelines according to each believes, understandings and the capacity of each person. Although Buddhism still has the result from desire to find true happiness. When Siddhattha prince focused the true of life that there was old, sick and dead as normal. This made his mind feel that there was a lot of suffering in life. He decided to become a monk and complied with vigor until he could attain to be Buddha. The attainment was enlightenment of Buddha. This made him teach everything he knew to others in order to please everyone by pointing out the true happiness in happiness in the world level and happiness beyond the world.

Merit that he teaches, is the one way to seek happiness. Because merit and happiness are something related together or both can be the same thing like in *AnkuttaranikaiSattoknibaht* that “See first, all monks, all of you shouldn’t fear merit because the word of merit is the word of happiness” or like he says that “If men do merit, they should do it of tenly. They



should be satisfied in that merit because the accumulation of merit will bring happiness back". The principle about merit, will have value for every lives. In Buddhism, there is mentioning about merit liked the treasure that everyone should accumulate because outside treasures are not real happiness and continue to re existence.(Khuddakanikāya. Dhammapada. (Thai) 25/6-10/18) Besides, the content of the last nitikun. There is the words of Buddha, that shows about the important of merit in many issues. By conclusion, we can say that merit is the desired treasure. This is treasure for human beings, heaven treasure and nirvana treasure. We can say that personality, subordinates, rank, happiness, professional in subject and nirvana including skill in the exposition of dharma, release from human affairs, the founder of the religious, pajjekphoto and Buddhist landscape. All those things are the important foundation of perfect of merit that we have already behaved merit acts.(Khuddakanikāya. Dhammapada. (Thai) 25/11-15/19) From above mentioned, we can see clearly that merit is the cleaning machine of mind which makes it pure until be worshipful. This will bring growth, goodness and happiness. This has the most important in the guideline to attain true happiness and this will be the origin of other good things in the society. Especially for the last thing, we can see that Thai society binding with merit for a long time. Besides, merit makes the Thai society calm. Merit is the origin of culture, good tradition that is the unique of the nation. A lot of teachings of merit, has the dominant role in Thai society.

## 2. The important of Proficiency

The overall important of proficiency, is not much different from merit they are both related to a happiness that all living creatures desire. But we separate in order to analyses the point of agreement and different points of merit and proficiency further.

In Buddhism, proficiency is very important because the background of Buddhism started from the great man would like to find real proficiency until he found that the true proficiency was the morality that was the machine that brought suffering out when he enlightened. Liked He said with PhraSuphatta that, "Saw first, Suphatta, I was 29 years old, I became a monk and searched that what was proficiency. Since I became a monk at the age of 51 years. Although recluse of people in dharma, was out. There was no outside only this discipline".

After enlightenment, there was setting up of the important principle that was the heart of Buddhism. This was called that, "The principle teaching". By this important principle, there were;

(1) Don't do all sins.

(2) Doing the charity.

(3) To Purity mind. (Khuddakanikāya. Dhammapada. (Thai)

25/11-15/19)

The principle that said about proficiency directly was (2). This showed

that the principle teaching of proficiency was very important because this was the one in the heart of teaching in Buddhism.

Besides this, other principle teaching was roots of good that meant the root of proficiency, the fundamental rule of the order the 227 disciplinary rules. There was 3 things as follows; Non-greed (This meant no greed, the morality that was the enemy with greed. There was generous or charity. Non-hatred (No injuring, the morality that was the enemy of rage. There was kind. And Non-delusion (Not to be enchanted by, the morality that was the enemy of being enchanted by, wisdom). All three things were the important reason that would make the people to do charity and create good things to get in nirvana as the Buddha said .

“Saw first, all monks, roots of good had 3 things, that was Non-greed, Non-hatred and Non-delusion. Non-greed was proficiency, Non-hatred was proficiency. The people who had no greed, hatred and delusion. Those people would do anything with body, speech and heart. Although that sin was proficiency. Those people had withdrawn all roots of greed, hatred and delusion. This would resemble a sterile person. This would have no more branches. Those people would live in the current situation without suffering, anger, trouble. Those people would attain nirvana in the current situation.

### **The principle of practicing merit and proficiency in Buddhism**

The principle of practicing merit and proficiency in Buddhism, is the thing that Buddha has placed in the system. The principle of practicing merit, will focus on the format of expressing since the fundamental until to the high level. For the principle of practicing proficiency, will focus on the behavior of three gates that are body, mind and words.

#### **1. The principle of practicing merit**

This principle is called, “Items of meritorious action”. This can translate according to the term that, “The site of doing merit”. There are 3 things as follows;

1. The way of making merit ; consisting in alms giving or charity.
2. To be gained through morality
3. To be gained through meditation (Dīghanikāya. Pāthikavagga. (Thai) 11/38/269)

When we do 3 things, Buddha separates the reward of merit. He tells that practicing merit by donating and observing the precepts when we die, we will get treasure for human beings and heaven treasure differently depended on the level of doing merit. We can conclude as follows;

Doing merit by donation and observing the precepts a little bit. Don't do dharma activities, we will get treasure for human beings but still suffering.

Doing merit by donation and observing the precepts moderately. Don't do dharma activities, we will get absolute treasure for human beings.

Doing merit by donation and observing a lot of precepts . Don't do dharma activities, we will get heaven treasure. We will reborn as angel in the four guardian deities, second heaven where Indra dwells, yama, dusit, the realm of the gods who rejoice in creations, poranimmitwasawattee level connectively.

From above mentioned, we can see that practicing merit for 2 things which is donating and observing the precepts. There is the result of merit that is attaining treasure for human beings and heaven treasure according to the reason. Merit from practicing acts of merit is high level merit. If we practice completely, they will have Brahma and no suffering as a result of merit.

There are a lot of types of merit. No matter we do, we will get merit. There are types of merit in Buddhism that are called, "Items of meritorious action" for 10 things as follows;

1. meritorious action consisting in generosity ; merit acquired by giving
2. By observing the precepts or moral behavior
3. By mental development
4. By rendering services
5. By humility or reverence
6. By sharing or giving out merit
7. By rejoicing in others' merit
8. By teaching the Doctrine or showing truth
9. By listening to the Doctrine or right teaching
10. By straightening one's views or forming correct views

Right view is the most important morality in Buddhist because this is the origin of proficiency, all good things. When we have right view, merit and proficiency will follow like the sun when the sun is rising and everything will be lighten. Buddha had said about the important of right view that, "We didn't see any moralities that made unhappened charity fair to be happened or happened charity fair would be more grown liked right view (resolution)". The person who has right view, he will be lucky very much. He will be grown in presence life and when he dies, he will go to heaven surely. He is liked lighten person. The mind set in the right way, will be grown liked others can't do. Liked Buddha had said that, the mind set in the right way, would get the good result that parent couldn't do or cousins couldn't do. When right view had many advantages, wrong view would have many disadvantages. There had more many disadvantages than sins with five heaviest punishment. This was the most heavy sin in Buddhism. There are 5 sins with heaviest punishment and that are (1) killing your mother (2) killing your father (3) killing a Buddhist saint (4) hurting Buddha until bleeding (5) disagreeing with monks. The person who did one of five things, will surely go to hell when he dies. There was no merit that



could help him so this was called, “sins with five heaviest punishment”. This was sins that no space for other sins but the person who went to hell for this sins, still had the opportunity to reborn when sins was faded away. This wasn’t liked the person who had wrong view. When he died he would go to hell and had no opportunity to reborn again. Wrong view had a lot of punishment liked Buddha had said that wrong view was thing that had no morality, good view was thing that had morality. Doing much sins because of wrong view. This factor had no benefit or liked Buddha had said that the mind set in the wrong way, this would be more damage than thief seeing thief or enemy seeing enemy. For the characteristic of wrong view, there was the opposite thing, that was right view as mentioned.

## **2. The principle of practicing proficiency**

This is called, “the ten fold wholesome course of action”. When we translate according to the term, this is called, “The way to do proficiency”.

Besides, there are a lot of calling. Liked Buddha had showed in mosquito net such as “Sathutham”, “Noble Dhamma”, “Charity fair”, “Observance of righteousness” and “Somjariya” etc. There are 10 dharmic principles by separating into Bodily action 3, Verbal action 4 and Mental action 3. In Saleoiyoksuit, Buddha had showed the result of merit of practicing proficiency according to ten principles of an honest man that, “Saw first, all brahmen and wealthy person. Some kinds of animal, when it died, it would go to heaven because observance of righteousness and Somjariya. If the person who had observance of righteousness and Somjariya, when he died, he would be the great king, great brahman, angel in other levels. As mentioned above, we can conclude that merit and proficiency in the morality in Buddhism. There are 3 levels for practicing in the society such as Practicing 5 precepts that is preliminary level, Practicing the ten fold wholesome course of action that is middle level and Practicing the Noble Eightfold Path that is high-grade level. The principle of practicing proficiency in preliminary level. The principle of practicing proficiency in middle level. The word of “ten fold wholesome course of action” means the way of charity fair, the way of good thing, good deeds that is the way led to the growth or heaven. There are 10 things that are The principle of practicing proficiency in preliminary level such as

1. To refrain from killing.
2. To refrain from taking things not given.
3. To refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. To refrain from lying.
5. To refrain from taking intoxicants.

The principle of practicing proficiency in middle level such as

1. Bodily action 3
2. Verbal action 4

### 3. Mental action 3

The principle of practicing proficiency in high-grade level such as

1. Right View ; Right Understanding
2. Right Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration (Vinaya Pitaka. Mahāvagga. (Thai) 4/13/21. MCU.2539)

From above 3 levels, we can conclude that there are 3 items of meritorious action or 10 items of meritorious action.

### **The relationship of merit and proficiency in Buddhism.**

From all above mentioned, we will see the different of merit and proficiency but it may be not dominant because the meaning may be different by the language may be mixed. We can say that merit is the cleaning machine to make mind pure, bring us happiness. Proficiency is the morality to get rid of sadness sin and bring us happiness. By the content, it is not different. Because both means good things that will bring good things back. Later, in the important issue, this can be mixed. Both merit and proficiency are important in the position that have the principle to bring the happiness or give treasure for human beings, heaven treasure and nirvana treasure. And in the way of practicing, although this is separated for 2 issues but this is focus point to show the way to attain only happiness.

Items of meritorious action and ten fold wholesome course of action, we can connect them. That is donating happened from the mind without greed, having goodwill (No vengeful) and having right view that is the part of activities of mind. Precepts are also matched with body acting and verbal action. Because this is the body behavior and verbal action behavior. Praying is matched with activities of mind. Because this is matched with mind and wisdom. However, when we see overall things, we will see that the important content of all things is from one corner. Especially, proficiency is only mentioned in the corner of acting only. This is where we can evaluate that proficiency and merit are the same. Both can be substituted. This is not wrong when the word of “Merit”. When we say about acting, we can say, “Merit and sin” and “Proficiency”. But when we say about acting, we can say, “Good deeds”. Another corner that we don’t mention. This is the corner of principle of nature. This will connect to the mind that is related to abstract that is the trend of factor reason. When we say about principle of nature, In the part of merit, there is no appearance liked proficiency much. Because merit is always said about the corner of action only.

## Summary

There are 3 ways in doing merit that are called, “The three doors” that are bodily action, verbal action and mental action. Body action such as not killing animals, robbing, and/or sexual misconduct etc. verbal action such as don’t lie, don’t instigate, don’t say rude thing and don’t drivel etc. mental action such as don’t be greedy to want things of others, don’t be vengeful and don’t do anything wrong etc. Most of general people think that body acting and verbal action are important but mental action aren’t important because this is only thinking and no action and therefore no result. But in Buddhism, mental action are the most important. Bodily action and verbal action are only expressing from the mind only. Because the mind can order to do anything by body or speak. Right-Wrong, Bad-Good is from thinking. This is different with the world or law. Right-Wrong, Bad-Good can be showed by body acting and speaking only. There must be evidence if this will be wrong or right. So the rule in Buddhism is quite soundly, deeply mellow than the law. Mind activities are the high-grade job, delicated job. Thinking of good things, will have merit. Thinking of bad things, will have sin. In Buddhism, the person who don’t do merit in body acting and verbal action but do merit in mind activities, when he died, he will reborn in the heaven liked the story of Mattakuntaleemanob.

The important of the tenfold wholesome course of action. By meaning, this is the principle of education. This is important for developing human beings in the current situation because this principle can help human beings to develop and live in the society happily. This can reduce the problem of the country much. This can make the world more calm because this principle covers the development of human beings in 3 ways that are bodily action, verbal action and mental action. When human beings develop for 3 things and their mind are in the right way. This will help for lives in the society. First, This will make the people to be good and practices to other people well also. When everyone do good things to others much. The society will be good society. More good societies will be the country level. More countries will have good citizens. And at last, the world will have good people. If the people study and practice rightly, this will give a lot of benefit. This is important to develop people to get rid of trouble or other suffering in this world. The problem in this world, is happened because there is no development in the people in the principle. Buddha has used this principle to solve problem to teach people to follow. This will make people have precepts and do good things that will be benefit for this world and next world. Buddha uses 10 principles to teach. But he teaches some of 10 principles for matching with situation in that places. The people who do it, will receive good things in this world and in the heaven also. Buddha praises developed people to be superb people that are better than all animals because those people can develop until to be Buddha by practicing from worldly person to be good person and to be holy person at last.

Besides, there is support teaching that Buddha had said to rely

on ourselves, that good deeds are from the result of trying. Like the word of Buddha in attawak from thammabot. The content was, “We should rely on ourselves, others couldn’t be living place because the person who practiced well, he would get living place very difficult”. Buddha had said that every human beings would get in what they do to themselves. Worshipping to God or Buddha, would be no meaning than practicing. Like Buddha taught that brahmen or monks were only leaders in spirit only or they were those persons who pointed out the way only. Like in the Buddha’s word in Tipitaka that, “You should try by yourselves. Buddha is only person who pointed out. The person who practiced this, would liberate from the commitment of devil”.

This was not the media between human beings and liberation. Liberation from metempsychosis, was depended on trying and true knowing of each person. This was not depended on any great men, teacher, god or Buddha. Buddha had taught that “Please try to liberate by yourselves with carefulness”. So the person who would like to attain nirvana, he must depend on himself. Like the message in Chakkawattisuit that “Saw first, all monks, all people, please rely on yourselves. There was no living places. Please use the morality as living places. No need to use other things.

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