

Is Buddhist Ethics Deontological or Teleological? (A Review on the Interpretations of the Selected Modern Scholars)

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With development of the language philosophy in Contemporary Period, some new interpretations were given to ethics and moral philosophy. According to analytical philosophy of the Contemporary Philosophers, study of Normative Ethical Theories is basic matter of moral philosophy. The role of Normative theory is to recognize of moral philosophy, evaluating, and guiding to moral life. Contemporary philosophers admitted all moral concept and theories, from Greek Period to Contemporary Period, under the category of normative ethics. The language of philosophy was one of main themes of Contemporary philosophy. Therefore, Contemporary philosophers stressed that many philosophical problems arise due to the language since, they employed the analytical theory for the purpose of excluding metaphysical characters from philosophy. Under their verification theory they analysed all the metaphysical concepts in philosophy including ethics. This theory formed some philosophers to introduce new theories in moral philosophy, like Normative Ethics and Meta Ethics.

The term ‘normative’ is an adjective which comes from the word ‘norm’, also comes from the Latin word “Norma”. The word means a ‘standard’, or a ‘rule’; Therefore, moral norms is standards or principles that people are abided by agreements. Obviously, scholars have different ideas about what these standards are, so the various Normative theories of ethics therefore, focus on what people claim makes an action

a moral action: on what things are good or bad, and what kind of behaviour is right as opposed to wrong. What kind of action should be done and what kind of action should not be done. There are two basic normative theories that illustrate two different sets of ideas about how our moral behaviour should be. They are,

1. Teleology (with having an ultimate goal or expectation the action should be assented)
2. Deontology (The action should be done as obligation or ought to do. e.g. ought not be tell lies)

The word ‘Teleology’ derived from the Greek word ‘telos’, which means ‘end’, ‘goal’, or ‘purpose’. Therefore, according to the teleological theory the individual behaves ethically with the purpose of achieving a specific goal. The German philosopher Christian von Wolf (1728) coined the term Teliologica in his famous book Philosophia Rationalis Sive Logica.

For this theory, if one wants to find out how one should behave morally, he needs to decide what the ultimate goal of ethics is. For an example, some devotees do religious activities to be born in heaven. ‘To be born in the heaven’ is the ultimate goal or consequence of doing religious activities.

According to the teleological theory, the methodology of evaluating of a moral action depends on the achievement of expected ultimate end of that action. For an example, ultimate goal of refraining from sexual misconduct is to keep the peace in family life. Thus, according to teleology, the action “refraining from sexual misconduct” evaluates as a good action considering its utility to keep the peace in family. The action can be evaluated as good by comparing its result with result of the opposite action of that action. For an example, when it is investigated

the result of sexual misconduct and result of refraining from it, if the action refraining from sexual misconduct brings a good result than the result of sexual misconduct, it considers as a good action. For this evaluating theory the individual must consider his past experiences. For an example, person has past experiences on the result of sexual misconduct and result of refraining from it. “Teleological moral theories locate moral goodness in the consequences of our behaviour and not the behaviour itself. According to teleological (or consequentialist) moral theory, all rational human actions are teleological in the sense that we reason about the means of achieving certain ends. Moral behaviour, therefore, is goal-directed.” (Ronald F. White, web.). Thus, teleological ethical theories are always based on theory of goal directed or seek the result of action.

The word ‘deontology’ derives from the Greek word ‘deon’, which means ‘obligation’, ‘necessity’ and ‘duty’. As it bases on the duty and the obligation, deontological theory emphasizes what moral duties are. Deontological theory holds that the moral value of an action measures as good when it is done as duty or obligation, oppose to considering the consequences of an action. On the other hand, this theory consider ‘rights’, as a moral because your obligation to follow rules and duties implies that there is an intrinsic value of doing so. If you follow the rule, ‘do not steal’, then you implicitly have the right not to be stolen. Deontological theory can be explained by using the moral word, ‘ought to do.’ One should be considered these actions ought to do or ought not to do because acts are intrinsically right or wrong. The rightness or wrongness of an action can be accessed by reason, or by studying the world nature or by knowing the will of God.

Immanuel Kant's ethical theory is based on the deontological theory. Kant argued that an action was moral only if it was done in obedience to a rule; other motives such as personal gain or satisfaction were discounted. Kant gave the example of a grocer who is kind to his customers, not because he sees that as his moral duty, but because he wants customers. Instead of being kind because of the intrinsic goodness of kindness, the grocer is kind simply because he wants to achieve the best consequence for himself. Moral goodness from his action has been lost because he expects results or personal gains (gaining profit).

With this brief introduction to teleology and deontology, this article focuses to investigate whether Buddhist ethics is teleological or deontological. For this purpose, first of all it is better to make a brief literature review on this topic. Many Foreign and local scholars who interested in this topic have given some interpretations about Buddhist Ethical Theories in relation to teleology and deontology.

Goodman argued Buddhist ethics as a type of consequentialism in his book, *Consequences of Compassion: An interpretation and defense of Buddhist ethics*. Goodman argument is that Buddhist ethics is universal consequentialism. Goodman here draws attention on the agent-neutral approach of universal consequentialism and the agent-relative approach of virtue ethics to understand Buddhist ethical theories. The agent relative approach distinguishes the different agent and their relative aims and goals while agent neutral approach emphasize common ethical aims or goals to the all the agents. The agent-neutral approach of Universalist consequentialism emphasizes the important of action like self-sacrifice and neglect one's own beloved one by thinking the benefits of many. While holding this opinion Goodman emphasizes the Buddhist

ethics as agent neutral Universalist consequentialism. Goodman considered Buddhism as Universalist consequentialism basically with reference to the Mahayana texts. Especially work of Asaṅga, and Śāntideva. But he has also paid attention on Theravada ethics and it also marginalized as consequentialism. He argues that “the doctrine of karma provides evidence that the Theravāda tradition defines actions as right or wrong in dependence upon their consequences. He holds this opinion because Buddhism always emphasizes the wellbeing of whole beings and always seeks the benefit of all (Sabbe satta) than seek the benefit of numbers of beings.

Paul Dahlke, an early German pioneer of Buddhist philosophy interpreted Buddhist ethics as an Utilitarianism. His interpretation somewhat implies Buddhist ethics as egoistic-utilitarianism. His interpretation has given in relation to Morality (sīla) and Kamma. He claimed that ‘Virtue’, ‘is not something to be striven after for its own sake; it is merely the ladder to the highest [referring to one’s own well-being]’. And he further said ‘The one striving for awakening, however, does so based on ‘a purely egoistical impulse’. Even though Dahlke marginalized Buddhist ethics as egoistic utilitarianism, he suggested that ‘The whole moral scheme in Buddhism is nothing but a sum in arithmetic set down by a clear, cold egoism; as much as I give to others, as much will come again to me. Kamma is the most exact arithmetician in the world’. Here, Dahlke theory of Kamma and its result recognised as cold egoism. Because as Buddhism explains the individual will received result of his action as he has done. ‘As the seed, so the fruit, who does good receive good, who does bad receive bad’. This system of Kamma in Buddhism seen by Dahlke as egoism, as it is prima facie appeared as individual process.

Rhys Davids interpreted a Buddhist as ‘a hedonist’ and he is on the opinion that ‘his morality was dependent or, in the phrase of British ethics, utilitarian, and not intuitionist’. Same time, I.B. Horner also claimed to be held the view that Buddhism is hedonism. Both these scholars have drawn attention on Buddhist practice and claimed that ‘the overcoming of suffering (dukkha), to be clearly analogous to the goal of maximizing happiness (and its corollary, the minimization of suffering) set forth in classical Utilitarian doctrines’. However, according to the Buddhism the individual who attains the Nibbāna, ultimate goal does not experience any happy feeling as he has already transcended worldly feelings. Nibbāna is neither pleasurable nor painful. It is a neutral state where there are no any worldly phenomena. So I.B Horner agreed that ‘Arahat is above good and evil, and has transcended both’.

Har Dayal described Buddhist ethics as pure hedonism while referring the Buddhist concept of Puñña. He argued that ‘Buddhists have developed a precise quantitative view of puñña (merit), which seems to controvert their much-vaunted ethics into a sordid system of commercial arithmetic’. So he mentioned that ‘Pure hedonism thus seems to be the ruling theory of Buddhist ethics’. J.B. Prat recognized Buddhist ethics parallel with Stoicism. He mentioned that ‘the principle underlying and justifying [the Buddha’s] Stoicism, to which he makes appeal when argument is needed, is his fundamental utilitarian or (altruistic) hedonism’. But he believed that this as just one side of Buddhist ethics.

Mark Siderits seems to be recognized both teleological and deontological aspects of Buddhist ethics. He used the concept of non-self as key element for proving his argument. He mentioned that first ‘consequences of non-self for the part of ethics concerned with how we should live our own lives’ and

second ‘how the doctrine of non-self affects our obligations toward others’.

Damien Keown in his value book, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* described Buddhist ethics parallel to the Aristotelian and Kantian ethics and he recognised both teleological and deontological aspects of Buddhist ethics. He viewed both Eudaemonia of Aristotle and Nibbana of Buddha as *Summun Bonum* that achieved through the human endeavour which are closely connected with teleological theory. He states that ‘Eudaemonia and Nirvana are functionally and conceptually related, in that, both constitute the final goal, end and *Summun Bonum* of human endeavour’. On the other hand Keown described Buddhist ethics in relation to the Kantian deontological ethics. He interpreted the *Kusala* as moral theory which is inherent with intrinsic good as it is regardless any secondary consequences. He stated that ‘*kusala*’ (moral excellence) refers to the goodness of an action as intrinsic, regardless of secondary consequences of the act such as satisfaction and praise’.

Georges Dreyfus is another scholar who brought teleological approach to the Buddhism. But his argument is that to evaluate the result of any given action, it is essential to rely on scriptural tradition of Buddhism as the result described in the Buddhism is long term and there is no any immediate result of any action. He mentioned that ‘Buddhist virtues fail to bring immediate positive results, and the result described concerns the long term’....., ‘To decide which action produces positive effects, we must rely on the testimony of an enlightened person as found in a scripture’. Here, Dreyfus has attempt to give an epistemological answer for Buddhist ethical theories. According to his view Buddhist ethics is beyond the consequentialism as there is no method to evaluate the result of action other than relies on what has explained in Buddhist texts.

David Bastow paid attention on doctrinal factors of Sāmaññaphala Sutta and suggested Buddhist ethics as a teleological system. He goes through the moral development of the individual explained in Sāmaññaphala sutta and mentioned that ‘sutta presents a progression from self-restraint to emancipation’. The emancipation is the highest goal yielded through the self-restrain.

Besides those scholars, some local scholars like David J. Kalupahana, Gunapala Dharmasiri, K.N.Jayatilake, and P.D. Premasiri etc. also have given some interpretations on Buddhist moral philosophy. Davids J.Kalupahana explais the Buddhist notion of happiness but contrary to the happiness of Western Utilitarianism. He sees the different between Western Utilitarianism and Buddhist notion of happiness. He mentioned that ‘(in Buddhism) the quality of happiness that one achieves through renunciation is certainly superior to that achieved through attachment or craving’. He distinguished a superior aspect of Buddhist notion of happiness that achieved through the emancipation. For Gunapala Dharmasiri in Buddhist ethics contains both teleological and deontological aspects but on the other hand, somewhat it transcends the both these Western concepts. He mentioned that ‘teleology is doing an action with the expectation of result for oneself. Deontology is doing an action merely for the sake of doing it. Kant was the major exponent deontology in West. Deontological actions are treated as superior because they tend to De-emphasise oneself and emphasise the others. It contains both these aspects, while at some stage it transcends this dichotomy as well’.

K.N Jayathilake’s opinion is, Buddhist ethics is related with the teleology than deontology but he agreed that there are some deontological theories also in Buddhist ethics. He emphasized that ‘The Buddhist theory appears to be teleological

rather than deontological. It determines the nature of right and wrong actions in terms of motives and consequences rather than on the basis of their being done out of a sense of duty, regardless of consequences...., This does not, however, mean that it ignores duties and consequences. The Buddhist ethical theory considers fundamental duty of man is to strive to attain the ultimate good and a person who has attained it is deemed to have discharged all his obligations (katakaraṇīyā)'.

The above are interpretations more given by some scholars on Buddhist ethical theories in relation to teleology and deontology, also compatible to consequentialism and utilitarianism. Prima facie Buddhist ethics appeared as deontology or teleology that is why many scholars tried to marginalize Buddhist ethics into those two basic categories and sometimes they look at Buddhist ethics as an utilitarianism, consequentialism, altruism , hedonism or rule theory ; the sub-theories of the above two main theories. However, many of those scholars while explaining Buddhist ethics in relation to deontology and teleology have seen some extra new theories of Buddhist ethics beyond the both deontology and teleology. For an example, Gunapala Dharmasiri argues that Buddhist ethics transcends the above Western dichotomy. Gunapala Dharmasiri recognised three levels of Buddhist ethics as 01) Karmic level, 02) Path level and 03) Enlightened level. Karmic level is doing action expecting the worldly result or doing Kamma with purpose of getting result in samsaric level, for an example, giving charity while expecting its good result in this life or life to be come. This kind of Kamma is inferior because it is connected with greed. So, Buddha did not give priority to this kind of action but he sometimes explained about merits (Puñña) to motivate the individual towards the ultimate liberation. However, in the Kammic level the individual engage in Puñña

with a goal or expectation, so such actions for Gunapala ‘are clearly teleological’. In the path level there is no such worldly expectations or worldly gains. The path action is disinterested and the individual who entered to the stream (sōtapanna) never pay attention on the good result (worldly) but only the action. But for Gunapala Dharmasiri even in this level it can be seen slight teleological aspect ‘because the path action is performed for a particular purpose namely, to achieve disinterestedness that would lead to the enlightenment’. But he mentioned that though this subtle teleological elements is there the nature of this teleology is highly paradoxical because the idea of enlightenment is a form of disinterestedness. According to Gunapala intention of path action is however deontological but even in deontological action also has slight teleological aspect because ‘here one has ethical perfection as the goal’.

As it is mentioned in the above in the path level the individual does action (good) without expecting a result because he has realized the absolute nature of world (sūnyata). This was clearly explained in Vjracchdikā Pragñāpāramita Sūtra, " moreover, Subhuti, a Bodhisatva who gives a gift should not be supported by a thing, nor should be supported anywhere, when he give a gift he should not be supported by sight objects, not by sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or mind objects. For Subhuti, Bodhisatva, the great being gives gift in such a way that he is not supported by notion of sign”. He cannot think for an example, that there is a receiver of the gift because all things are ultimately no beings and, if in a Bodhisatva the notion of a being should take place, he could not be call ‘Bodhi Being’. And why? He is not to be called a ‘Bodhi Being’, in whom the notion of a self of a being should take place, or the notion of a living or of a person.

Gunapala Dharmasiri while paying attention on the above quotation of Vjracchedikā Pragñāpāramita Sūtra mentioned that at the path level, beside the teleological aspects, there are some facts which explain the reality of the world. So, for him those facts (above explanation on charity) transcend even the deontology because, as explained in the above Bodhisattva, a great being does not think about any conventional concept (deontology or giving as a rule or conventional concepts related to the charity), when he is giving charity as he has realized the absolute nature of the world or Sūnyatā.

In Sutta Nipāta it is mentioned that the enlightened one is said to be gone beyond the good and bad. The different between an ordinary person and an enlightened one is an enlightened one is intrinsically good but ordinary person is conditioned by good (silavā hoti no ca sīlamayo). So, action done by an enlightened one considered as a mere action (kiriyaṃatta) or neutral action. For Gunapala Dharmasiri, such action is, ‘it is more happening than a doing’. Such action considered as only mere action as he has no any expectation or goal by doing so and he has no intention that he should agree with certain rule as he is intrinsically good. Considering the above nature of enlightened one Gunapala Dharmasiri concluded that the action of the enlightened one is beyond the deontological aspect as he is intrinsically good, so he mentioned that ‘ A Buddha need not and does not practice charity. Charity is his very nature. His acts can be characterized only as spontaneous happenings. It is here we see how Buddhist ethics transcends the dichotomy between teleology and deontology’.

K.N. Jayatilake argues that Buddhism is teleological rather than deontological because even in the duties explained in the Buddhist ethics that should be performed towards the others have some teleological aspect, for an example such

duties sometimes performed by the individual out of a desire for selfless service, love etc.so, there are some teleological aspect in duties in Buddhist ethics. Jayatilake mentioned that the perfect person (Arhat) has spontaneous sense of selflessness, love and understanding but he has no any sense of duty or worldly expectations or divine glory. It should be mentioned here that the actions of the perfect person is neither worldly nor transcendental but it is neutral (sūnyatā). Jayatilake is on the opinion that Buddhist ethics is teleological but he seems to be slightly gone beyond his view as he recognized the Buddhism as Universalism. He mentioned ‘ So the ethical theory of Buddhism is one of ethical universalism, which recognises the relativity of and the subjective reactions regarding moral values without denying their objectivity to be measured in terms of the motives with which the acts are done as well as their psychological, social and karmic consequences. It is teleological rather than deontological in character’(ibid). So here Jayatilake recognized Buddhist ethics as Universalism in relation to the deontology.

As it seen in the above, David J .Kalupahana argues Buddhist ethics as a pragmatism while going beyond the teleology and deontology. He distinguished the specific nature of Buddhist ethics parallel to the Utilitarianism. His argument is the Buddhist path of happiness achieved through the emancipation is superior, as it does not attach to the craving but happiness of the utilitarianism includes pleasure derived from the senses that related with the craving. So, he emphasizes that ‘Buddhism represent an ethics of pragmatism’ But Justin Sloan Whitaker mentioned that according to the J. S. Mill (1806 -1873) hierarchy of pleasures Kalupahana’s this notion is more mature version of Utilitarianism.

Goodman, as mentioned in the above argues Buddhist ethics as Universalistic consequentialism. He draws attention

on both Theravada and Mahayana text and concludes that Theravada moral principles represent Rule-consequentialism and Mahayana moral principles represent act-consequentialism. On the other hand he emphasized that both Theravada and Mahayana represent Universalistic consequentialism. He basically referred Mahāsattva Jātaka , Śāntideva's text, How to Lead an Awakened Life and moral teaching of both Theravada and Mahayana to come the above conclusion.

Goodman referred monastic Vinaya disciplines of Theravada Buddhism and explained it as ‘ important aspects of the moral outlook of Theravādins that seem to be clearly non-consequentialist. For many Theravādins, the precepts are absolute rules that must not be broken even to prevent terrible consequences. For example, the tradition tells us that Saints, who perfectly exemplify Theravādins moral ideals, would never kill any sentient being, whether person or animal, under any circumstances’. He emphasized that there are such inflexible rules in Theravada text but those rules are justified by considering the consequences of following them. So, he recognized this theory of ethics in Buddhism as a form of rule- consequentialism. Daniel Timothy Aitken opposes to the Goodman argument said that Buddhist Kamma theory considers the psychological state of the agent at the time he engaging the action rather than considering the consequences of the action. He further said that ‘ Theravāda monks follow the Vināya rules not because of concerns about consequences, but in virtue of the importance of adherence to vows regardless of the consequences of their actions’. That is why Buddha said that a monk, volition, I say, is Kamma, having thought or willed it creates kamma through the body, speech and mind. Daniel Timothy Aitken argues that Theravada Buddhist ethics cannot be marginalized as consequentialism because it is a form of mental domain rather than a form of consequentialism.

Goodman while paying attention to the story of Mahāsattva Jātaka, recognised the story as most important character of Buddhist Universalistic Consequentialism. According the Mahāsattva Jātaka Bodhisattva sacrificed his life to a starving tigress. The ethical message is given through the self-sacrifice of Bodhisattva seen by Goodman as ‘foreign to common sense moral thought,’ but “quite similar to the very demanding character of Universalist consequentialism’. He concludes that only “consequentialism shares both the noble altruism and the frightening extremism of Buddhist ethics”. Through this story Goodman described Buddhism as Universalistic Consequentialism. However, Daniel Timothy Aitken oppose to Goodman explanation mentioned that in the story Bodhisattva sacrificed his life for the purpose of fulfilling his perfection and to attain enlightenment and help others. Therefore, he argued’ We therefore cannot use instances of self-sacrifice to infer that a Buddhist ethical system is closer to Universalistic consequentialism than to ethical systems that promote personal cultivation, such as virtue ethics’.

Next, Goodman pays attention on Śāntideva’s text, How to Lead an Awakened Life, Here Śāntideva explained ethical teaching based on altruistic self-sacrifice. He mentioned “See, I give up without regret my bodies, my pleasures, and my good acquired in all three times, to accomplish good for every being”. In this text he was ready to sacrifice all his possessions including his own life for the well-being of others. This ethical philosophy of Śāntideva is recognized by Goodman as universalistic consequentialism specially, as an act-consequentialism.

Damien Keown describes Buddhist ethics as a type of virtue ethics illustrating Aristotle’s virtue ethics. He recognizes similarities between the Buddhist ethics and Aristotelian virtue ethics. First he compares Eudaimonia of Aristotelian ethics

with the concept of Nirvana and he argues that both concepts described as the highest goods (summum bonum) and that the nature of their relationship with moral and intellectual virtues is similar. The Similarities between the Nirvana and Eudaemonia describes his own words as ‘whatever else nirvana is, it is indisputably the summum bonum of Buddhism and may be characterized, like Eudaimonia... (a) It is desired for its own sake; (b) everything else that is desired is desired for the sake of it; (c) it is never chosen for the sake of anything else. Next, he compares the Buddhist concept of cetanā with the Aristotelian concept of prohairesis (or wise person) and argues the moral choice and judgment of Buddhist ethics occurs in the same way as in the virtue ethics of Aristotle. Thus, illustrating these examples Keown recognizes Buddhist ethics a type of virtue ethics. But Justin Sloan Whitaker denied the Keown argument and mentioned while illustrating the statement of Collins that Buddhist concept of Nirvana is beyond the Eudaemonia. He argued, ‘ However, the substance of Nibbāna, is a thoroughly beyond Eudaemonia. As Collins states, ‘nirvana is “wholly other” than all conditioned Existents’ and yet is still something (dhamma). He continues, ‘[Nirvana] is, ontologically, but it is not the origin of things, the ground of being.

For Daniel Timothy Aitken Buddhist ethics is neither type of Virtue ethics nor a form of consequentialism. He mentions ‘ Buddhist ethics is not a type of consequentialism, because for a system of ethics to be consequentialist, it requires that the moral standing of an action be judged solely upon the consequences that follow from it. Buddhist ethicists, however, do not assign a moral value to actions based only on their consequences. The Buddhist doctrine of karma, for example, clearly prioritizes the intention or motivation of an action when assessing the moral value of that action’. Again, he argues ‘ Buddhist ethics is also

not a type of virtue ethics. For a system of ethics to be virtue ethics, it must be primarily concerned with the cultivation of virtues, and these virtues must be constitutively related to the final good as described by that system. Virtues as described in Buddhist ethical writings, however, they do not do the same type of work that they do in systems of virtue ethics. He denied the acceptance of some scholars the Buddhist ethics as a type of virtue ethics or a form of consequentialism because in Buddhist ethics it cannot be seen basic characteristics in relation to western ethics that essential for understanding Buddhist ethics as virtue ethics or consequentialism. Therefore, he recognized Buddhist ethics as a moral phenomenology. He mentions, ‘my argument that phenomenology is the central concern in Buddhist ethical thought is in part grounded in the observation that the mental domain is of foremost ethical significance in Buddhist texts. This is indicated by the fact that in Buddhist psychological treatises, such as those of Vasubandhu, Asaṅga, and Buddhaghōsa, the description of mental activities includes an assignment of a moral value to each mental activity.

Conclusion

When we considered the above interpretations and arguments made by the both foreign and local scholars, it is very easily can be understood that they have made different arguments and interpretations on Buddhist ethical theories parallel to Western ethics. Many scholars have attempted to compare Buddhist ethics with Western ethical theories, such as theories like Teleology (consequentialism, Utilitarianism, altruism, hedonism etc.), deontology, virtue ethics etc. But their comparisons and arguments are not wholly correct as Buddhism has unique features on its own ethics. Prima face Buddhist ethics appeared as teleology or deontology. Because Nibbana is the summum bonum of Buddhist ethics that based on the Morality (Sila), concentration (Samadhi) and wisdom

(Pañña). It seems to be that one should morally behave with the expectation of attaining Nibbana or ultimate goal. This teaching of Buddhism appeared as teleology when it is compared with Western ethics. On the other hand Buddhist ethics explains duties and obligation (for an example, Sigalōvada Sutta) etc. that should be fulfilled towards the family and society without expecting any gains. Through this teaching of Buddhism one can be argued Buddhism as a type of deontology. This appearance of Buddhist ethics does not represent the real nature of Buddhist ethics because in Buddhist ethics, there are its own unique features. To understand the nature of Buddhist ethics, Buddhism should be studied without comparing it with the Western ethical theories. Because according to Buddhist ethics in the absolute state (Paramatta) everything is empty (sūnyata). There is no any deontological or teleological appearance in Buddhist ethics in the state of *Paramatta*.

End Notes

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