

Fritz Jahr and Integrated Bioethics

費茲雅爾與整合生命倫理學

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"That person is my own, and the other one is not my own is a thinking of small-heartedness. For the generous ones the entire humanity is one family"

Verse 137, Tantra 5, Panchatantra

"May all be happy; May all be free from disease; May all look for the good in others; May no one suffer

Prayer composed by Adi Sankara

Similarly, the expressions of altruism and human solidarity are deeply entrenched in the Indian cultural though as a duty to donate. In holy Gita which is equivalent to holy Bible or Quran, the donation has been described as a pious human act in the following verse-

"Donation at the appropriate place and time to a needy person without of expectation of anything in return is a pious human duty" Verse 20, Chapter 17, Holy Gita

I. Introduction

Hippocrates who existed about 2500 years ago in ancient Greece has been regarded as the father of modern medicine and also the pioneer of medical ethics. The modern medical ethics, however developed in middle of 20th century by the impact of the development of new medical technology. Bioethics also came into being around the same time. Medical ethic is an applied ethics to medical settings. Bioethics, however expands its concerns to a wider prospective of rapports of man toward environment, society and clinical relationship.

Who coined the word Bioethics ? Most people would answer Van Rensselaer. Potter of USA . Undoubtedly, Dr. Potter published his book bearing the title " Bioethics, Bridge to the Future" in 1971 in which he said " human ethics cannot be separated from a realistic understanding of ecology in broadest sense.... " and argued that " the science of survival must be built on the science of biology and enlarged beyond the traditional boundaries to include the most essential elements of the social sciences and the humanities ..."[1]. He also said that a holistic biology should be concerned with the whole animal and the whole situation" [2]. These ideas sound pretty familiar when we read Jahr's works published long before Potter's.

Only recently the emerging concept of a 'Bioethics Imperative' by Fritz Jahr from 1927 has come to light [3]. Fritz Jahr argued in his works that the concerns of bioethics should be extended from human to all forms of life. Van Potter 's appeal to a holistic ethics simply echoed Fritz Jahr's theory. Hans Martin thus wrote that Fritz Jahr is the Father of Bioethics. [4]

II. The Bioethical Imperative

Jahr proposed that moral obligation of human kind cannot only be toward humans but should be towards all forms of life. He traced to Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) who showed an example of great love towards all forms of life and the entire nature. Jahr also indicated that Indian philosophy, especially the school of Sankya taught that under no circumstance should human kind be allowed to live at the expense of co-creatures. For instance, the followers of Jainism in India wear veil to prevent

inhaling even a small living being. Theologian Schleiermacher declared that it is immoral to destroy any life and formation as they are if there is no reasonable cause to do so [5]. Philosopher Krause requested a respect to every being including plants, animals and asserted that all forms of life hold the similar rights as human beings to survive. Schopenhauer claimed a sentiment of compassion toward animals as well. Jahr also quoted the Scripture “wolves shall dwell with lambs and the leopard shall lie with the young goat and the calf and lion and the fattened calf together and a little child shall lead them....” (Isaiah 11) to describe a peaceful bioethical garden of the world. When God made the covenant with Noah, He included all creatures as the Scriptures say in the book of Genesis. It was a covenant not only with human kind, it was a covenant God made with all nature.

In Jahr’s article Bio-ethics, he wrote: “If we have a compassionate heart toward animals then we will not withhold our compassion and help towards suffering humans. If someone’s love is great enough to go beyond the borders of human only and sees the sanctity even in the most miserable creature, he or she will find this sanctity as well in the most poor and lowest fellow human, will hold it high and will not reduce it to class of society, interest group, one party or what else may be considered” [6].

Jahr therefore proposed his bioethical imperative to be : “respect every living being in principle as end in itself and treat it, if possible, as such” [7]. Surely enough, Jahr was not an extreme thinker proposing a total ban of animal killing but voiced for a total kindness toward all forms of life. He said that all plants and animals have similar rights as human but it is not equal right, thus when there is reason when human rights are to be observed more precious than the animal rights, human kind may be allowed to exert what is reasonably justified but it must be carried out in a manner and sense of compassion toward other beings. He used an example of what Eduard von Hartmann said “whenever I see a rose in a glass of water, I cannot fight the unpleasant thought that a human being has murdered a flower life for the sole purpose to enjoy his/her eye, while dying, heartless enough eyes, not to sense an unnatural death under the appearance of life [8]. What Jahr upheld was that unless there is a rational reason, humankind should not destroy any forms of life. He hinted that there rational reason must be presented when any forms of life should be sacrificed for human’s sake. Thus he said in his bioethical imperative, “respect every living being on principle as an end in itself and treat it, if possible as such “. Like Schleiermacher, Jahr requested to kill animals only when a reasonable cause demanded it. This bioethical concern is not a single-minded endeavor but extended from human to animal, from individual to society, from society to the whole environment. When applying this to human health, the bioethics proposed by Jahr will therefore be a integrated concern, not only individual’s physical wellbeing but also psychological, mental and spiritual wellbeing,

“Bioethical imperative in a broad perspective, described by Sass, include individual health responsibility and public health obligations but position it into concrete actual challenge of his times and into the wider vision of global, universal and integrated bioethics.” [9]

III. The Inspiration of Fritz Jahr’s thought to Bioethics

a. Three aspects of Bioethics

Jahr’s concern is that bioethics should not only be a discipline with human individual’s wellbeing but asking for an ecological justice covering all forms of life on earth. If we regard bioethics is only a biological or medical concern toward human body, our understanding will be short-sighted. According to Jahr, bioethics has a broader scope that include biomedical, environmental and social concerns. Therefore bioethics is in the same time, a land ethics, environmental ethics, animal ethics,

plant ethics, sexual ethics, corporate ethics, social ethics...

This view echoes my description of bioethics in my book “ Medical Ethics and Humanities “ in which I argued that bioethics should at least include three aspects, namely, biomedical, social and environmental. Since ethics, according to Asian understanding, is a science of relationship aiming to enhance the balance and restore the harmony of different forces in cosmos [10] and its approach laid on the foundation of mutual respect among all relations including man to man, man to self, man to nature and man to God, bioethics, therefore, has to be holistically integrated. Jahr’s insight coincide this Asian belief of ethics that extends from man to man, to nature, to whole universe and to the ultimate reality.. An integrated bioethics cares not only about human’s health, communitarian well-being, social harmony, but also the condition of the earth including all forms of live therein. We respect life and will try to make sure that all relationships in life are mutually enhancing and cherished. In Jahr’s words, respect every living being in principle as an end and treat it, if possible as such.

Biomedical ethics cares about how a medical decision is made regardless if it is within clinical settings or experimental engagements for new drug and renovated medical procedures. We must consider whether or not those undertakings fair to all concerned ? Is the motivation for the public good ? Are the approaches taken carefully considered for the benefit of all concerned ? will they enhance the relationship and are the endeavor and application based on mutual respect ? These concerns echo the biomedical principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, justice, compassion, integrity, dignity, responsibility...

Environmental ethics is a major part of bioethics because if our living environment becomes hostile to our survival, no other bioethics concerns can be needed. In other words, how to take care of our living environment is the uttermost important issue in all ethical concerns. Jahr’s insightful emphasis of the importance of extending our ethical concerns to all living forms on earth is exactly an expression of this environmental ethics. If bioethics intends to promote the harmonious relationship among all, we have to start to learn how to live peacefully with our nature. In harmony. Bioethical relationship must be integrated among the relationship among men, and men to nature of all within the universe. Human are but the stewards of the earth rather than the master of nature. We have to humble ourselves and take care of the earth in which we are placed. Human kind is but a creature, same as all other beings and must live in harmony with all existences.

Social relationship is an extension of human relationship beginning from one to self to one to others. None can not live in isolation and must learn to relate peacefully with others. Social ethics has always been the emphasis of Confucian relationship. Each person has been given a certain responsibility and must comply to it. Confucius based his teaching of benevolence in human relation. Each person is given certain duty and obligation and must exercise accordingly. The so-called Five Relations is the basis of this social relationship in Confucianism, namely, father-son, ruler-subject, husband-wife, brother-brother and friend-friend [11]. Everyone plays a different role in different situation and must act accordingly based on compassion, righteousness, propriety and integrity.

b. Bioethics has to be holistically integrated

Bioethics at least is three-dimensional as we have just discussed above therefore it must be integrative.

Jahr inspired us to extend ethical concerns from human to animal. He first looked into the modern psychology that includes all living beings in it research. He called it a Bio-psycik that assumed moral duties not only towards humans but also towards all living beings [12]. In other words, bioethics is progressively inclusive as a person is not only a physical being, he, in the meantime, is also a social being bearing responsibility toward whatever he/she attempts. Thus bioethics, when attempting to

humanize human relationships and to bring wellbeing to human kind, physical aspect must not be the only concern. Health cannot be the absence of diseases but rather the wellbeing of whole existence and must be cared for holistically. Thus, the bioethics that promotes human wellbeing needs to be integrative.

Asian bioethics emphasizes the importance of the balance of a person's body, mind and spirit [13]. In other words, Human kind is not only a biological beings, he is also a psychological and social being never being isolated or insulated from other influences. The biomedical ethics of an integrated medicine emphasizes not only physician-patient relationship, it extends to include patients' family and his surroundings because a complete health in the sense of the balance of body, mind and spirit within a person should be the focus of medical attention. A person is not only affected by his own physical condition, but also by his living environment, social association and family.

The discovery of the importance of bio-medical ethics in the late 20th century proved that human kind has come of age for recognizing the health of a person has to be holistic and integrative.

With the rapidly changing technology, the distance between west and east, north and south have been greatly abridged . The communication among people has also become instant. These progresses however come with a price. The ecological crisis, the deteriorating human relationship, the commercialization of social activities, the privatization or socialization of health care.... have down-graded human closeness and trust. No wonder the term “ dehumanized human relation “ or “ the lost generation “ have been used to describe our modern day human condition. Though technologies bring convenience to people, it also alienates human relation and depletes earthly resources. Air pollution and water pollution suffocate our environment and damage our natural ecosystem. No wonder Van R. Potter voiced that for human kind to survive the future, we must develop a new ethics that is responsible to the world and to nature.

Fritz Jahr, a philosopher, a pastor, an ecologist and a bioethicist called for a moral obligation in all human endeavors and voiced that we must be responsible toward all forms of life. His bioethical imperative that appeals for a “ respect for every living being and life should be treated as an end in itself “ has extended the human-centered relation to a broader scope of biological world. Based on his theory, we can assume that his ethics is not only physically oriented but goes deeper to the total being with biological, social, psychological and spiritual formation. Bioethics needs to be integrated and holistic.

Jahr wrote: “ From Bio-Psychik it is only a step to Bio-Ethics, i.e. the assumption of moral obligation not only towards human, but towards all forms of life. In reality, bio-ethics is not just a discovery of modern times. An especially attractive example from the past is the figure of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) with his great love towards animal, his warm sympathy for all forma of life, centuries before Rousseau's romanticism for the entire nature” [12]. He continued: ...the guiding rule for our actions may be the bio-ethical demand: respect every living being on principle as an end in itself and treat it if possible as such [14].

c. Mutuality as the basis of bioethical effort

Jahr argued if we have a compassionate heart towards animal, then we will not withhold our compassion and help towards suffering humans. If someone's love is great enough to go beyond the border of human-only and sees the sanctity even in the most miserable creature, he or she will find this sanctity as well in the most poor lowest fellow human, will hold it high and will not reduce it to class of society, interest group, one party or what else may be considered. On the other hand, senseless cruelty towards animals is an indication of an unrefined character dangerous towards the human environment as well [15]. What Jahr tries to say is that unless we can care one among the least of all, we cannot care about the others. This view underlies the

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foundation for an integrated bioethics because an integrated bioethics will make sure that all related factors in life must be brought in and considered so as to find a mutual respect among all related things, beginning with the relationship between patient and physician, husband and wife, among social interactions, earthly living environment and the world. “ Do to others as you like others do to you [16] “is a golden teaching in China and in Christianity. This mutual respect and enhancing should become the basis of an integrated bioethics. In his article on the duty of self preservation, he said; if one protects oneself in this regard against harm, one does at the same time, good to one’s neighbor, actually to one’s entire country [17].

Three aspects of mutuality must be considered in clinical sense:

i. Mutual communication: the gap between patient and physician must be bridged to ensure the line of communication is smoothly open and comprehended. Without this candidness, no trust can be established. Mutual communication fortifies the four basic rights of a human kind, right to be heard, the right to be informed, the right to safety and the right to choose. When the line of communication runs uninterruptedly without any hindrance and hesitation, can a good patient physician relationship be established.

Mutuality ensures that the two parties are in equal position and function as partners rather than the master and the servant. Patients do not exist for physicians nor physicians for patients. They establish and fulfill each other.

ii. Mutual subjection: patients should be aware that physicians have the knowledge and skill that the patients do not have. Patient comes because he needs help and here physician offers his expertise. Patient, in a sense, is subject to physician. But physician cannot correctly diagnose the problem of patient unless patient honestly and thoroughly provides information of his condition. Though medical technology can detect something that cannot be discovered through dialogue, still, this mutual subjection plays an important role in patient-physician relationship. They need each other and serve for each other.

iii. Mutual respect : the principle of autonomy is an expression of respect but it is to be based on justice. Justice refers to treating the like cases alike and treating every patient with similar earnest without showing favoritism due to patients’ social status, gender, color or religion. The dignity of patient as a human person is undeniable and physician must show due respect in caring attitude. So is vice versa.

d. Interdisciplinary nature of Bioethics

The tremendous development of medical technology in the last few decades has changed the face of medicine. Medical sciences can no longer isolate itself from the rest of academic world but must act in absolute solidarity with other disciplines by initiating a sincere dialogue with behavioral sciences, philosophy and theology.... Without this new attempt, medicine may lock itself in an ivory tower seeing man only from a narrow diagnostic-prognostic angle.

Because of the broad scope of medicine, prophylactic, therapeutic and planning for the future, medical scientists must seek a holistic vision of man. The modern physician can no longer approach biological and medical decisions without being ready to face the complicated social factors that effect human wellbeing. Medical scientists must take a serious look into the social responsibility they bear for the whole humanity when pursuing a breakthrough of new medical horizon.

In facing new realities and changes in genetic biotechnology, medical educators need also to reconsider the content of medical curriculum. Is the goal of medical education simply to train physicians skilled in treating diseases yet unaware of human predicaments and the complicated social fabric that make a person what he is?

The main concern of medicine used to be human physical condition, as it was believed that a person’s illness was due to physical problems. But this understanding has been challenged. The role of medicine has been expanded from

merely a bio-medically-oriented science to a holistic bio-psycho-social-environmental emphases. The physicians of tomorrow must know not only how to treat physical diseases with empathy but also to take his responsibility seriously as healers of whole person to the whole Human society.

An emphasis on medical humanity is one of the moves we must take to respond to the new reality of medicine. Medical humanity, literally speaking, refers to those humanity courses having to do with medicine based on a bio-psycho-social understanding such as medical sociology, biomedical ethics, medical psychology, history of medicine, communication between physicians and patients...etc. In reality, medical humanities, when properly planned and offered, will enable medical students to develop a new understanding of life and a concern to social justice. It is a design to help students develop a new value theory so that they will become people-oriented physicians. But in order for students to understand the basic human nature, more courses must be considered as social customs, religious beliefs, cultural traditions... all effect our attitudes toward health, life, and even death. Thus, a philosophy of life, religion and cultural anthropology must also be introduced. Medical humanities cover a wide spectrum of social sciences and humanities. The purposes of introducing these courses are no other than:

1. to cultivate a holistic understanding of personhood
2. to enable medical students to know the human side of medicine and the effect of environment and life-style on health
3. to provide students opportunities for continuing reflections on themselves as they grow in medical knowledge
4. to foster a sense of “ Medicine as Vocation”
5. to study ethical theories and their applications to the clinical decision-making.
6. to promote a consciousness of physicians’ social responsibility.

In one word, medical humanities attempts to equip students with a better understanding of human being so as to produce physicians of tomorrow who are not only effective healers of diseases, but also restorer of human wholeness (a person of harmonious combination of body, mind and spirit) and promoter of social justice.

E. Empathy for right and fairness, compassion and love...

Jahr discussed the tensed discrepancy between egocentrism and altruism and said that these two are not necessarily contrasting against each other, and “ not necessarily incompatible ethical adversaries “ as there is altruism in egocentrism and egocentrism in altruism. In his words, “ egoism is not without altruistic aspects so is altruism not thinkable with any egoism” [18]. Egocentric attitude can be instinctual for survival and it can becomes “ ...a conscientious reasoning form of thinking in regard to a potentially justified struggle for life attitude and the best methods in such a struggle [19] “. He however felt that Altruism is naturally present in human and should carry a much higher recognition in public. Jahr listed justice, compassion, pity, love...as expressions of this altruism.

Interestingly enough, Mencius, the Second Sage after Confucius in Confucianism, has the similar observation of human kind. He said; “ all men have a mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others...if now men suddenly see a child is about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress... ” [20]. This inner sense of concern echoes to Jahr’s description. The nature of egocentrism and altruism exist simultaneously within human kind and at times conflicting each other, we must excel for a higher value. Even Apostle Paul experienced the similar conflict

within himself. He said “ the good that I desire I don’t do, instead, I do the evil that I hate “. Paul however admonished himself to overcome the desire for selfishness. In order to guide people to make sure the higher values are observed, precept, law, principle... have been given.

The question of “do we need principles or guidelines ?” has been debated ever since Georgetown scholars published the principles of medical ethics. The opposition to princpleism seems to be louder in Europe and Asia. For example, Prof. Sakamoto of Japan argued that we must do away with “ reasonable, well organized and principle-oriented “ bioethics and Prof. Carl B. Becker, an American teaching in Japan, explained: “ perspectives from cultures like Japan, which do not subscribe to absolute value structures, cast doubts on the universality and applicability of principlism to modern medical ethics.” [21] Still, principles provide a good guide to those who are not sure which way to turn in a dilemma.

For an integrated bioethics, principles can indeed help. Here are some suggestions from Asian perspectives, or shall I say, the Asian principles for an integrated bioethics.

1. *Compassion*

Compassion is central to Confucian teaching. Mahayana Buddhism also sees it as a fundamental virtue. Mencius believes that all men are endowed with a concern toward others, in his own words, “a man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity...” [20] Buddhism has taught compassion for all living creatures, including animals.

Compassion cannot be directed only toward humankind, it has an impersonal goodwill to all living beings. This reflects Jahr’s basic concern to extend ethics to bioethics including all forms of life. From the perspective of integrated bioethics, compassion is not based on sympathetic feeling, it is more empathy than sympathy, as Jahr said it : Empathy for right and fairness, compassion and love...

2. *Ahimsa*

Asians have always upheld the idea of non-violence, especially in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Ahimsa goes beyond the concept of non-maleficence to extend “Do-no-harm” to all living creatures. Ahimsa, from the Sanskrit, is normally translated as nonviolence and reverence for life. In practice, it means abstaining from animal food, relinquishing war, rejecting all thought of taking life, regarding all living being akin. This noble thought reflects the idea of non-maleficence to the point that we should not harm our fellow humankind, or any living beings. The loving care should be extended to all life forms.

In the Confucian tradition, Ahimsa is expressed through filial piety. Our body is a gift from our parents and we must safeguard and cherish it.

3. *Respect*

Respect is based on the spirit of filial piety. According to the Confucian tradition, children are required to pay due respect to their parents and elders. Furthermore, this piety is to be extended to a larger scope of family, where brotherly love is emphasized along with mutual respect required for social dealings.

Mencius was once asked if men love their neighbors’ children in the same way as they love their brothers’ children, he answered: “ treat the aged in your family as they should be treated and extended this treatment to the aged of other peoples’ families. Treat the young in your family as they should be treated and extended this treatment to the young of other people’s family “. [22] This

notion of respect to all living is surely the foundation of integrated bioethics.

4. Dharma--responsibility

Dharma is a Hindu concept meaning “ pattern of right living”. Every one in his/her social station is endowed with duties which must be carried out. Without following this, disgrace descends on all who flee their duties as illustrated in the Hindu epic, the *Bhagavadgita*. In one passage the Hindu deity *Krshna* answered *Arjuna*, a warrior who was afraid to fight as a soldier in fear of acquiring *karma*. *Krshna* said that real duties of life must not be abandoned. Performing duties of station in life is a service to God thus no *karma* will be created. On the contrary if a person refuses to carry out his duties, disgrace descends upon him. [23]

Applying this *dharma* to bioethics means that we have to take care not only our own body but our environment and the whole nature including all life forms.

This principle of duty is also expressed in Confucianism through the concept of the Rectification of Names. Names refer to social stations of each person. When asked what is the rectification of names, the master answered: “ let the ruler be ruler, the minister be minister, the father father and the son son ” [24] meaning that each person should act according to what a person is expected to do in his profession and station in life. Every name contains certain implications which constitute the essence of that class of things to which this name implies. Doing should agree with names. The ruler must bring wellbeing to his subjects, minister loyal to his master, father care to his young and son filial to his superior.

When God created the world he charged humankind to be a steward of the universe taking care of the earth. Integrated bioethics will emphasize that human kind has a responsibility to fulfill his duty as a good steward not only to himself, his fellow men, his environment but also to the whole universe. We must be responsible therefore comes the bioethics imperative: “ respect every living being on principle as an end in itself and treat it, if possible, as such “.

IV. Conclusion

The integrated bioethics respects all forms of life and takes all things into consideration, it is open to all possibility and calls for justice, compassion, love, tolerance and responsibility in all its endeavor.

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