Jonathan Quang 11/21/14

Global - Mr.Badgley 1WW

Film Study of Buddhism

1. Using the story from the film give two examples for each of the following Buddhist concepts.

1a)Reincarnation/Samsara  
One example of Samsara is the cycle of apprentice and master. As the master dies, his apprentice, the boy, becomes the new master. The new master eventually comes across a child to take in as his apprentice.  
Another example of reincarnation also involves snakes. When the original master commits suicide due to old age, a snake appears. The snake moves into the floating cabin and lives there as if the cabin was its home.

1b) Karma  
One example of karma occurs when the boy ties a rock around various animals, and his master ties a rock around him as punishment. The boy did not do a good job of being a monk, so he has to atone for it.  
Another example of karma is when the boy goes against his master's words and lusts after the daughter. The end result is that the boy kills her because she was cheating on the boy. He suffered because he desired something he should not have.

1c) Attachment/Desire  
One example of desire is when the boy lusts after the daughter. When the daughter leaves the cabin, the boy chases after her. Several years later, the boy kills the daughter because she cheated on him. As a result of the boy's lust, he must suffer through the anger of having a love that cheated on him and the guilt that comes from killing.  
Another example of attachment of the woman to her son during the winter scene of the movie. The woman was expressing her sorrow through crying because she had to abandon her son at the floating cabin.

1d) Moksha/Nirvana  
One example of Nirvana can be found during the winter scene where the boy brings a statue and a stone wheel up the mountain. The stone wheel represents the stone the boy was carrying in his heart due to the death of the animals the boy ties a rock around during the spring. The boy is getting rid of the guilt by getting rid of the stone wheel.  
Another example of Nirvana is the first master. He is never really angry or disappointed. The few times he seems to punish his apprentice, the master is only punishing the boy to teach him a lesson. When the master commits suicide, he does not appear to suffer from second thoughts. The master was the one who was closest to achieving Nirvana.

1e) Impermanence  
One example of impermanence is with the woman and her son during the winter scene. The woman has clearly bonded with her son, so she expresses great sorrow when the bond must be broken so that the child may reside on the floating cabin. The bond between the mother and her son was not permenant.   
Another example of impermanence is when the master writes with water. After writing a few characters on wood, the water dries up. This may seem useless, but to a practitioner of Buddhism, writing with water is enforcing impermanence. All work simply does not exist, thus if the work is lost, then it should not matter.

2) The Old Monk's teaching style involves having the student learn from his actions and punishments. When the boy ties rocks around three animals, the Old Monk ties a rock around the boy and asks him to untie the animals. If any of the three animals died, then the boy would have to carry a stone in his heart. The boy does find dead animals, so the boy feels guilty. Through this guilt and hard labor, he learns his lesson. This method of teaching would be effective, but also unethical. Hard labor and inducing large amounts of mental stress tends to stick well in the minds of humans. However, forcing children to hard labor, such as tying a rock to a child and expecting them to do certain tasks, may seem cruel.

3) The message of the *Heart Sutra* would be helpful to the young man because it would teach him to let go. The *Heart Sutra* teaches that everything is nothing. By realizing this and acting accordingly, all suffering is removed. If the boy realized that his lust was really nothing, then he would have been able to let go and not chase after the daughter. The murder would never have happened.

4) The movie is titled *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring* because the movie is a cycle cut up into parts just as the seasons are parts of a cycle. The movie begins with the boy's childhood where the boy ties rocks around animals, representing the spring segment of the movie. Then, the movie moves to the boy's young adulthood where the boy gives in to lust, representing the summer segment. In the next part, the boy kills the daughter because she was cheating on him. As a result, the boy is eventually arrested. The result of the boy's lust represents the fall segment. In the winter segment, the boy returns to his cabin, and practices Buddhism, even taking in another child. The second spring segment shows the child that was taken in fooling around with animals. This only serves to reinforce the concept of a cycle.

Bonus:

The snake represents anger. The snake is tortured by the boy in the beginning of the movie and can be interpreted as a reincarnation of the master. However, the reincarnation of the master as a snake does not seem to bother anyone who enters the cabin. This may convey that many things cause anger, but anger can always be controlled.  
The rooster represents lust. When the boy runs after the daughter out of lust, the boy takes the rooster with him. If the boy had acted more intelligent, the boy would have realized that chasing after the daughter would only result in a bigger mess.  
The cat represents expelling of evil spirits and misfortune. The cat is present when the boy arrives and leaves the cabin following his crime. It may have been used to convey that the cabin was a place of spiritual recuperation. When the boy arrived, he was full of anger, and when the boy left, he was at peace.  
The fish represents good fortune. The boy tortures and kills the fish in the movie. The boy also ends up with a few misfortunate events, such as his love cheating on him and him getting arrested. The filmmaker may be trying to convey that if one brings misfortune to anything, then that person will also experience misfortune.  
The dog represents obedience. If the boy had listened to his master and the teachings of Buddhism, the boy could have avoided the lust and murder fiasco as well as the tying of rocks around animals fiasco.   
The turtle represents longevity and foreshadowing in Korean culture. The turtle in the movie is tortured by the boy and his apprentice. This is foreshadowing future troubles with life and good fortune. The boy eventually kills the daughter he lusted for and faces arrest after the murder.