



Introduction to Buddhism

BSTC1004

Lesson 1

Lesson of Time- KARMA



When a Bird is alive.. it eats Ants.
When the Bird is dead..Ants eat the Bird.
Time & Circumstances can change at any time.
Don't devalue or hurt anyone in life.
You may be powerful today. But remember.

!
cks...
llion trees..

Blame it
on Karma!

WHAT KARMA IS, AND WHAT IT DEFINITELY

WHO CONTROLS YOUR WORLD

1- JESUS

2- SATAN



Internal vs. External Locus of Control

Internal

Believe they are in control
and take responsibility for
their own actions

External

Blame external forces for
their own circumstances



WHO'S IN
CONTROL?

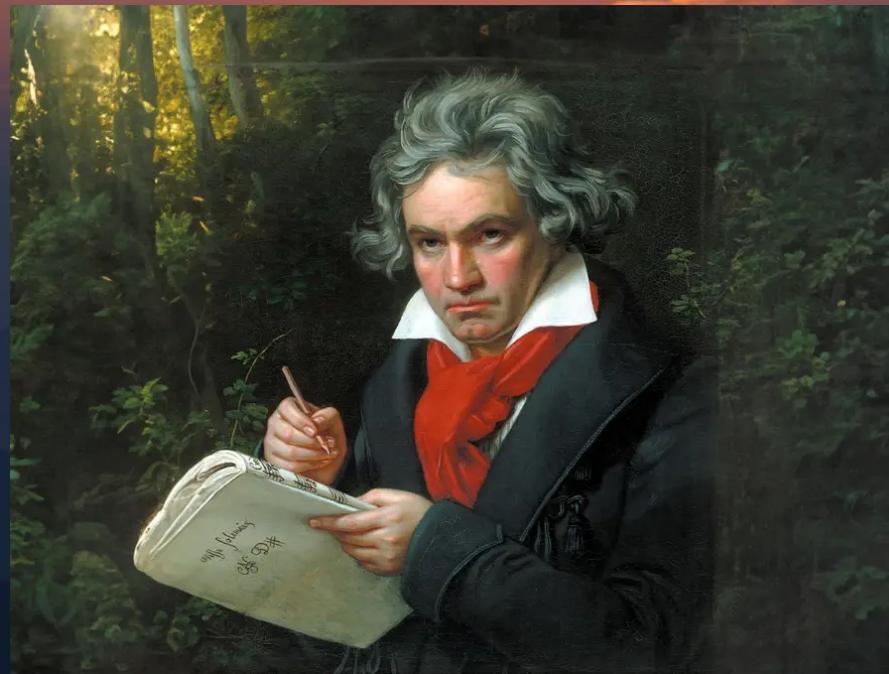
Who is in control of our life?

The Way of Dao
Is Natural



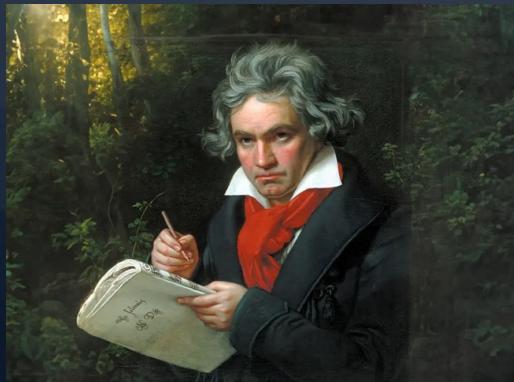
人法天地
天地法自然
自然法人

Life Story of Beethoven



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kSEi9QL0Qc>

Let's Discuss Beethoven Life!



1. Life Influencing Conditions Inherited at Birth
2. Other Factors with Varying Levels of Controllability That May Affect Well-Being
3. How genetics interact with key controllable factors and the net controllability

Life Influencing Conditions Inherited at Birth

Condition	Description	Impact on Well-Being and Happiness	Controllability
Genetic Makeup (DNA)	Inherited traits including predispositions to health, personality (e.g., temperament, intelligence baseline), and vulnerabilities (e.g., to diseases or mental health issues).	Strongly influences baseline happiness (about 50% per twin studies), health risks, and emotional resilience.	Uncontrollable - fixed at conception.
Biological Parents	Genetic contributions from mother and father, plus immediate family environment (e.g., prenatal care, parental health).	Affects early attachment, nutrition, and genetic health; poor parental health can lead to developmental issues.	Uncontrollable - determined by birth.
Time in History (Era)	The historical period of birth, including global events, technology, and societal norms (e.g., born during war vs. peace).	Shapes opportunities, stressors, and cultural values; e.g., access to modern medicine boosts life expectancy and happiness.	Uncontrollable - fixed by birth date.

Condition	Description	Impact on Well-Being and Happiness	Controllability
Location of Birth	Geographical place, including country, urban/rural setting, climate, and resources.	Influences access to education, safety, and economic prospects; e.g., birth in a stable vs. conflict zone affects security and stress levels.	Uncontrollable - set at birth, though migration later may alter effects.
Family Socioeconomic Status	Parents' income, education, and social class at birth.	Impacts early nutrition, education quality, and stress exposure; lower SES correlates with higher adversity and lower baseline well-being.	Uncontrollable at birth - inherited from family.
Cultural and Societal Context	Norms, values, religion, and community structures of the birth society.	Forms early worldview, social support, and identity; e.g., individualistic vs. collectivist cultures affect relationship priorities and happiness sources.	Uncontrollable - embedded in birthplace and family.

Other Factors with Varying Levels of Controllability That May Affect Well-Being				
Factor	Description	Impact on Well-Being and Happiness	Controllability	Degree of Control
Social Relationships	Networks of friends, family (beyond birth), and community built over time.	Provides support, reduces loneliness; strong ties can increase happiness by 20-30%.	Highly Controllable	High (70-80%): Actively nurture through effort, though birth society may influence starting access.
Physical and Mental Health Practices	Habits like exercise, diet, sleep, and therapy-seeking.	Improves mood, energy, and resilience; poor health can erode well-being significantly.	Partially Controllable	Moderate (50-70%): Choices dominate, but genetic predispositions limit full control.
Mindset and Personality Development	Cultivating optimism, gratitude, and resilience through experiences and practices.	Enhances coping and life satisfaction; optimistic traits predict higher happiness.	Partially Controllable	Moderate (30-50%): Therapy and habits can shift, but genetic baselines constrain.
Economic and Career Choices	Education, job pursuits, and financial management.	Ensures security and autonomy; income beyond basics adds marginally to happiness.	Partially Controllable	Moderate (40-60%): Dependent on birth SES and society, but personal effort influences outcomes.

Factor	Description	Impact on Well-Being and Happiness	Controllability	Degree of Control
Sense of Purpose and Engagement	Pursuing meaningful goals, work, or hobbies.	Boosts fulfillment and reduces depression risk by 20-40%.	Highly Controllable	High (70-90%): Self-directed through reflection and actions.
Lifestyle Habits	Daily routines including nutrition, physical activity, and rest.	Directly affects energy and mood; consistent habits can improve well-being by 15-25%.	Highly Controllable	High (80-100%): Mostly choice-based, barring health barriers.
Response to Stress and Events	Coping with challenges like losses or changes.	Mitigates negative impacts; effective strategies preserve happiness.	Partially Controllable	Moderate (40-60%): Events may be random, but responses are trainable.
Environmental Adjustments	Changes in living situation, such as moving or community involvement.	Alters daily stressors and opportunities; e.g., relocating can improve access to resources.	Partially Controllable	Moderate (50-70%): Feasible with resources, but tied to birth location and economy.

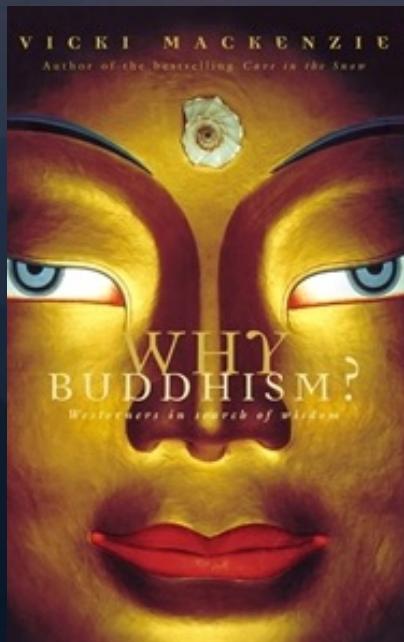
III. How genetics interact with key controllable factors and the net controllability

Controllable Factor	Genetic Influence Example	How It Affects Decisions	Net Controllability (Degree)	Mitigation Strategies
Social Relationships	Introversion/neuroticism predisposes to isolation.	Harder to initiate/maintain ties.	High (70-80%): Effort can override via skills training.	Build EQ, join structured groups.
Lifestyle Habits	Impulsivity affects habit adherence.	Reduced motivation for sustained changes.	High (80-100%): Genetics set baseline, but routines adapt.	Start small, use apps for accountability.
Mindset Development	Low optimism heritability (~40%).	Slower adoption of positive reframing.	Moderate (30-50%): Therapy modifies expression.	Gratitude practices, CBT.
Response to Stress	Anxiety proneness amplifies reactions.	Poorer coping without intervention.	Moderate (40-60%): Trainable despite genes.	Mindfulness, reframing.

Deliberate Attitudes, Thoughts and Actions!

- While approximately 50% of happiness is influenced by genetics and birth conditions, the remaining 40% is within an individual's control through intentional choices and behaviors.
- We have significant agency to enhance our well-being through **deliberate actions** such as cultivating relationships, adopting healthy habits, and developing a positive mindset.
- By leveraging strategies like **mindfulness, gratitude practices, and purposeful engagement**, individuals can maximize their potential for happiness and resilience, despite genetic or environmental limitations.

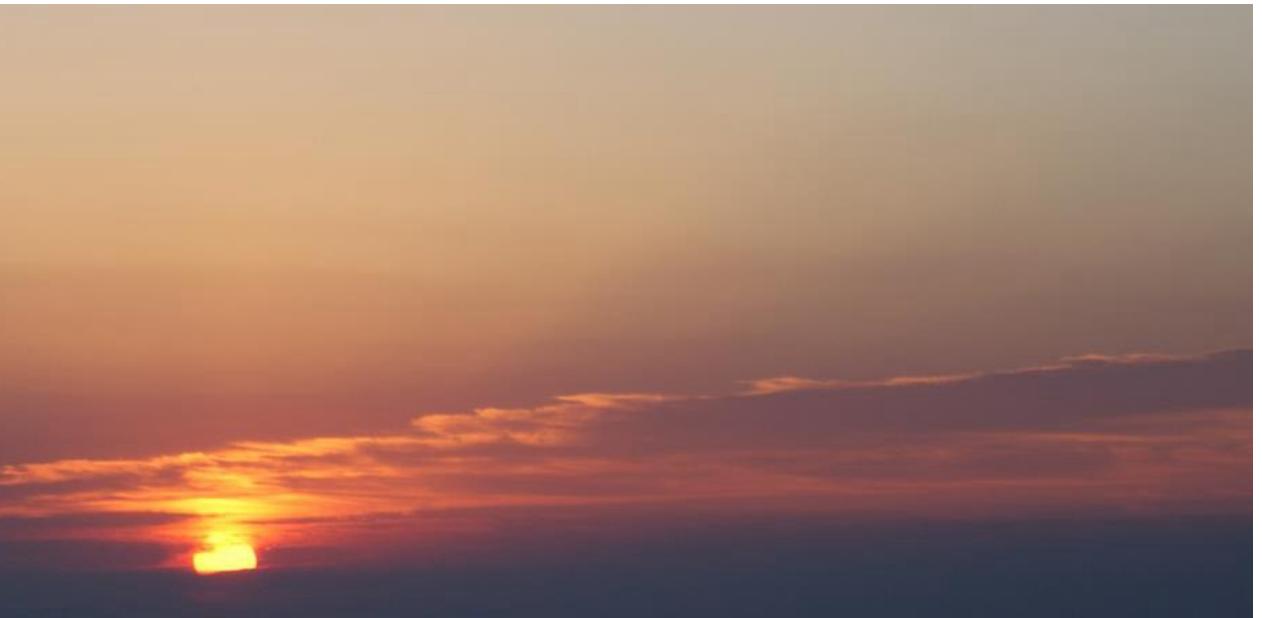
Why Buddhist Teachings?



Ads Slogans for Buddhism

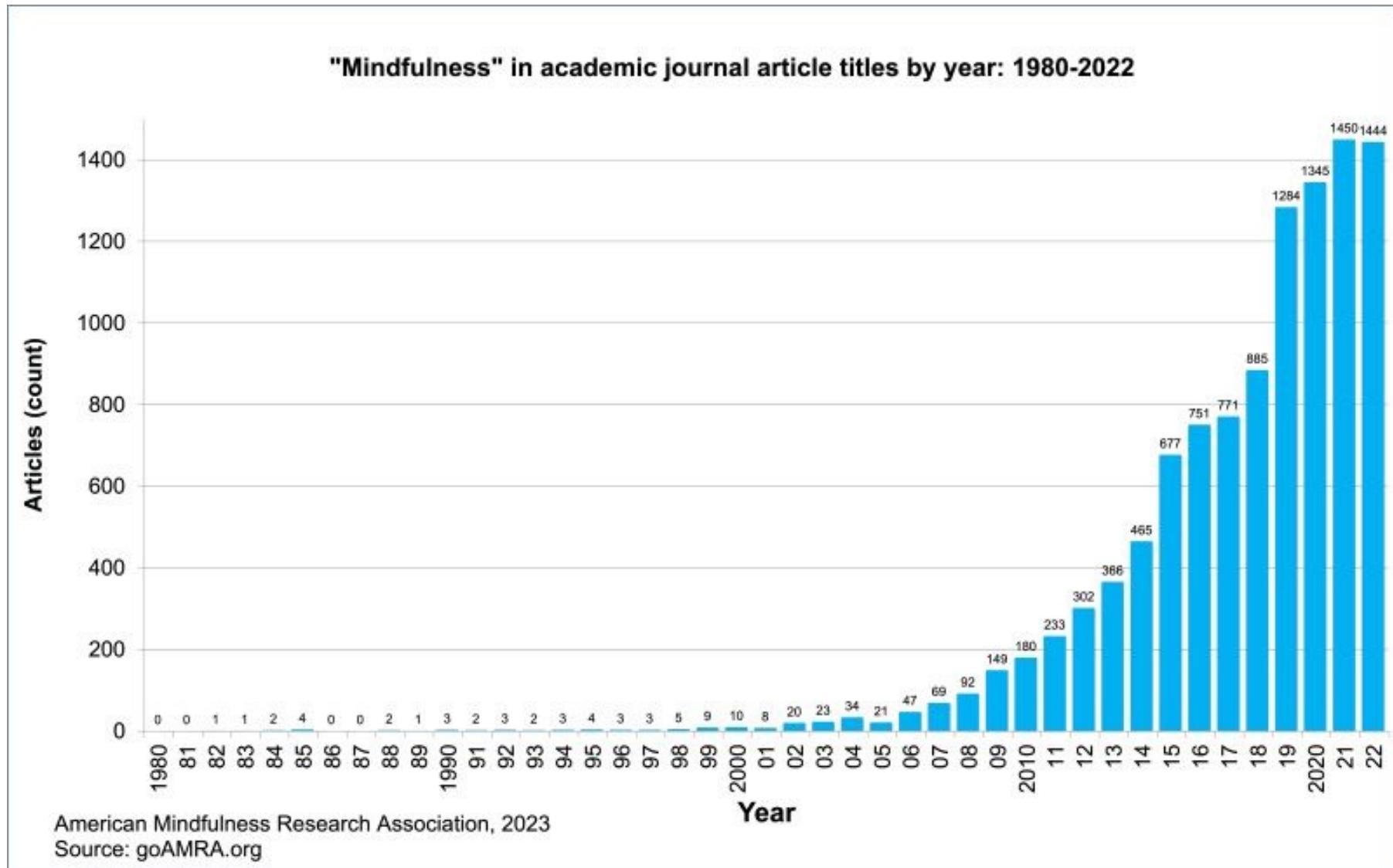


- Tired of suffering? Try Buddhism.
- Life's a Bitch,
Then you Die.
Again!
- Fearful of your mind or
mindful of your fears —
you decide



- Don't Believe Everything You Think
- You have nothing to lose
- You can still choose

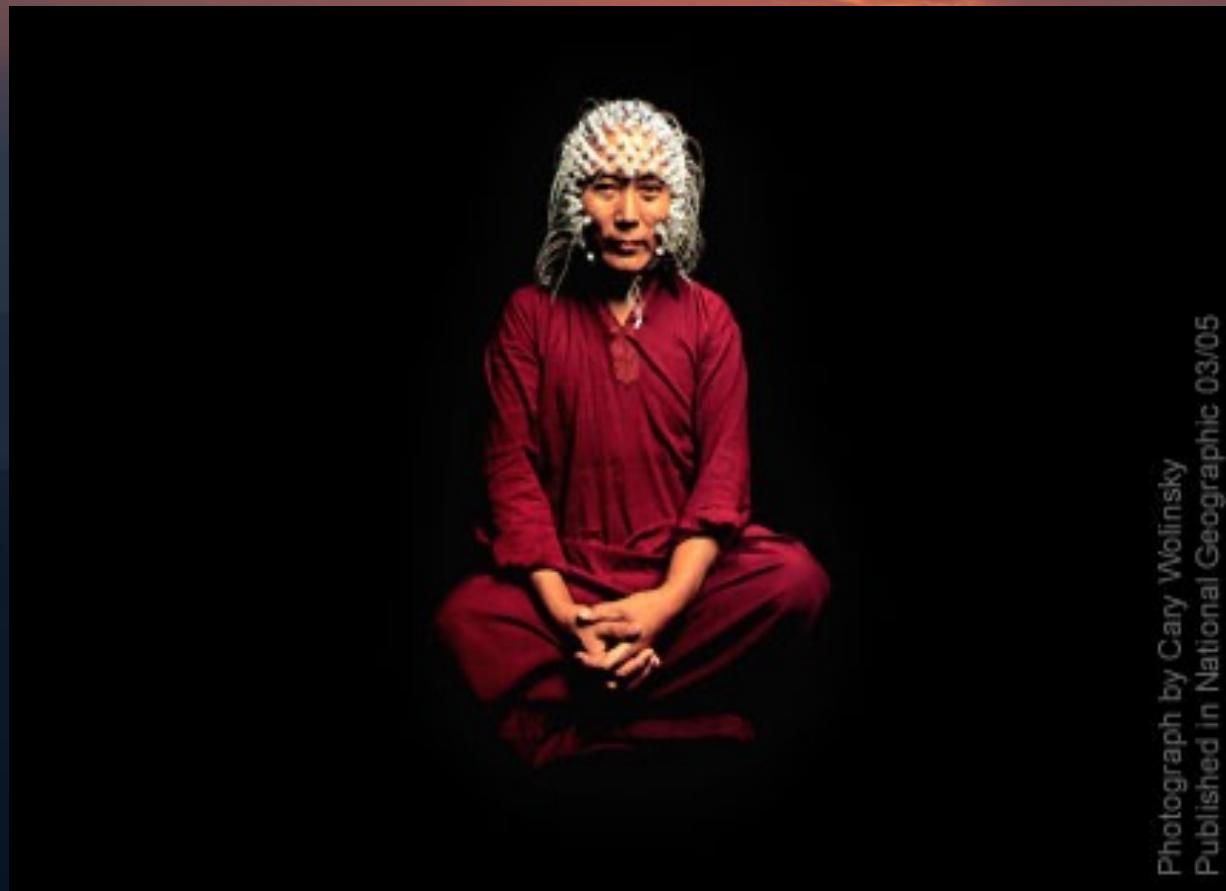
Development of Mindfulness-Based Interventions



The Science of Buddhist Meditation

- Richard Davidson, a neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin, said that the results unambiguously showed that meditation activated the trained minds of the monks in significantly different ways from those of the volunteers.

Buddhist monk with electrodes



Photograph by Cary Wolinsky
Published in National Geographic 03/05

Meditation Gives Brain a Charge

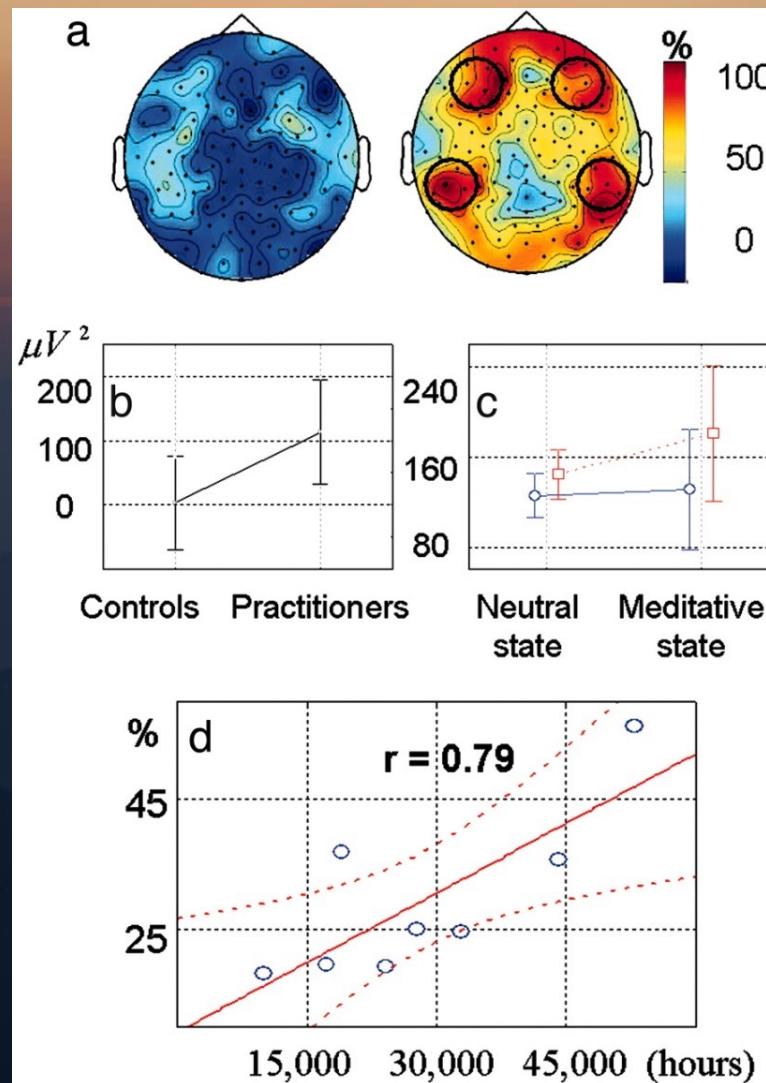
- Most important, the electrodes picked up much greater activation of fast-moving and unusually powerful gamma waves in the monks, and found that the movement of the waves through the brain was far better organized and coordinated than in the students.
-

Long-term meditators self-induce high-amplitude gamma synchrony during mental practice

Scalp distribution of gamma activity during meditation. Color scale shows the percentage of subjects in each group that had an **increase in gamma activity** during the mental training

Gamma variation between neutral and meditative states

Relationship between **how long people have been meditating** and their levels of gamma brain activity



Brain areas showing coordinated activity



Lutz, Antoine et al. (2004) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 101, 16369-16373

PNAS

Buddhist monk with electrodes



Photograph by Cary Wolinsky
Published in National Geographic 03/05

These data suggest that mental training involves temporal integrative mechanisms and may induce short-term and long-term neural changes.

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.0407401101>

“Buddhists really are happier”

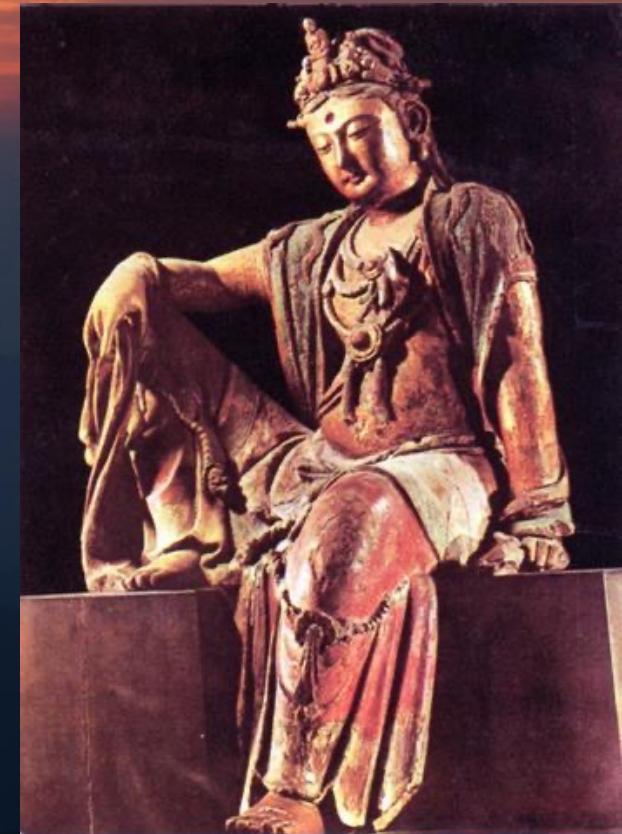
- Davidson's research is consistent with his earlier work that pinpointed the left prefrontal cortex as a brain region associated with happiness and positive thoughts and emotions.
- Using functional magnetic resonance imagining (fMRI) on the meditating monks, Davidson found that their brain activity – as measured by the EEG – was especially high in this area.



Who is the Buddha?
The Enlightened One

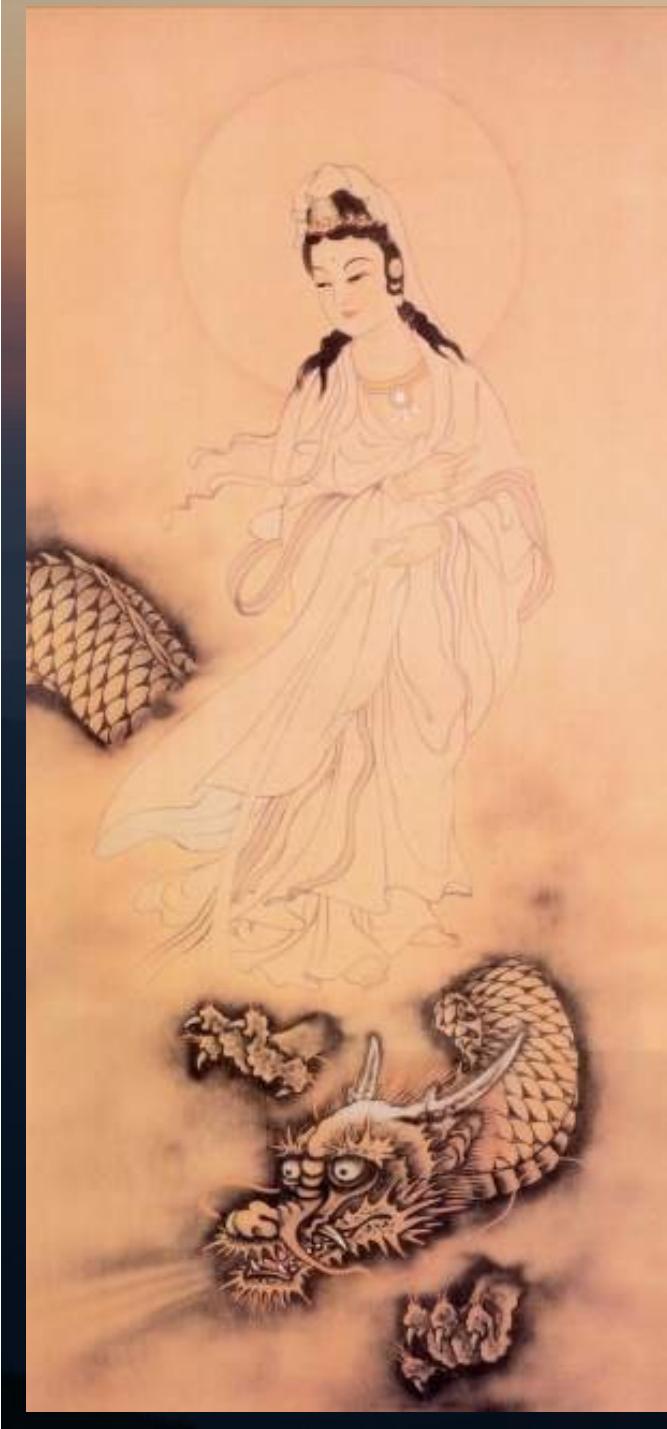
Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara

觀世音菩薩



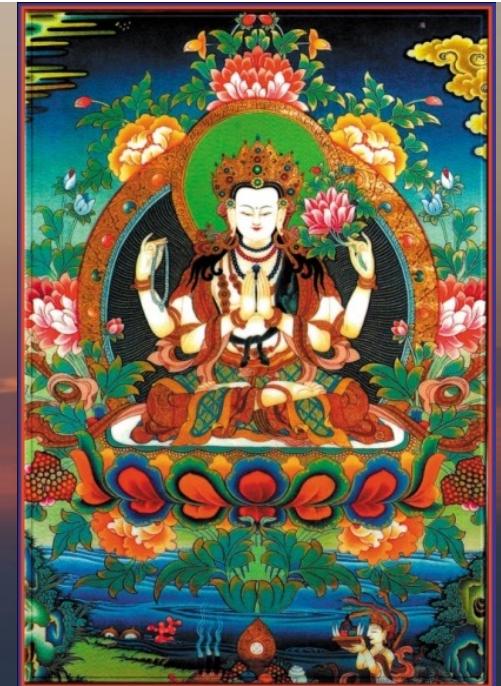
Universal Gateway Chapter

- "Good Man, if all the countless hundreds of thousands of millions of living beings tormented by misery and pain hear of Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva, and with all their hearts invoke his name, Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva will immediately respond to their prayers and set them free.



Om Mani Padme Hum

唵嘛呢叭咪吽



Om : ultimate reality and perfect Wisdom

Mani : the jewel that symbolizes compassion, love, and wealth

Padme : the lotus flower that symbolizes purity, wisdom and peace of mind

Hum : the wish to attain Buddha hood so that all sentient beings will be free from suffering

We can all be the Buddha,
We all have the potential to be enlightened

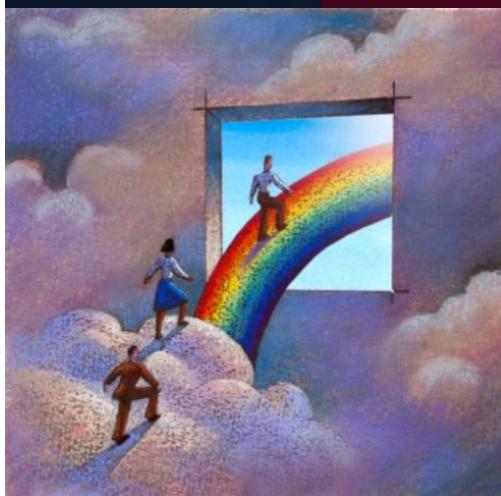
We all have the abilities:

to be conscious,
to learn,
and to be enlightened

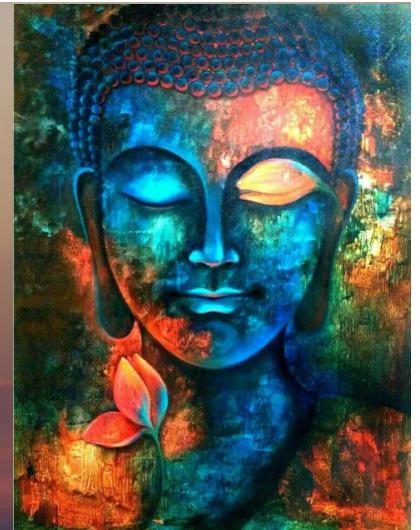


The Process of Enlightenment

- Education: learning from other
- Contemplation: careful consideration
- Practice: To learn through actual practice and experience



Who is the Buddha?



- Through the process of education, reflection and practice, a person can become fully enlightened.
- He would comprehend the ultimate law of the universe.
- He would have the wisdom to bring an end to all suffering
- He would untiringly teach others the way to end all suffering.
- He is the Buddha!

1 From Prince to Seeker – Renouncing Luxury for Truth

The Buddha was born into wealth and power, yet he gave up everything after witnessing the realities of sickness, old age, and death.

👉 Why it inspired me: His decision to abandon privilege and comfort in order to search for the truth shows an extraordinary courage and deep compassion for all beings. It reminds me that true freedom begins with self-awareness and choice.

2 The Struggle and Enlightenment – Finding the Middle Way

After years of extreme asceticism that nearly cost his life, the Buddha realized that both self-indulgence and self-torture are futile. He then discovered the “Middle Way.”

👉 Why it inspired me: This moment reflects profound wisdom – the ability to learn from failure and find balance between two extremes. It shows that enlightenment is not escape, but understanding.

3 Teaching Others Until the End – Compassion in Action

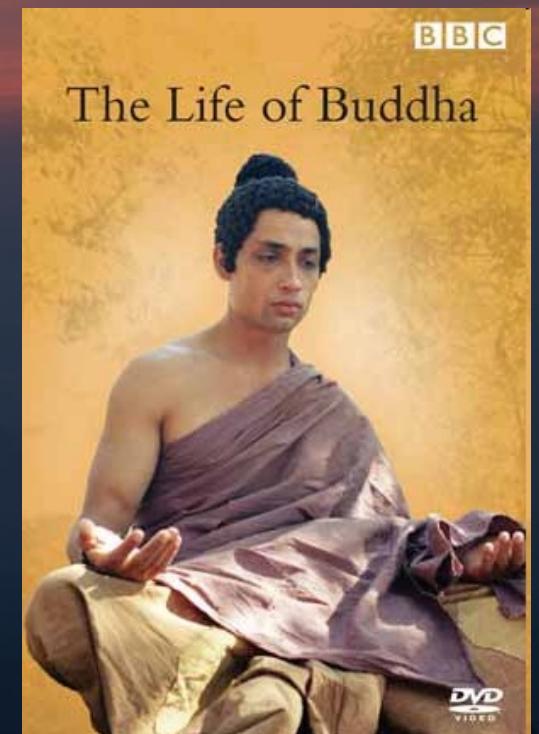
After enlightenment, the Buddha spent forty-five years tirelessly teaching the path to end suffering. Even before his passing, he told his disciples: “All things are impermanent. Work out your own salvation with diligence.”

👉 Why it inspired me: His lifelong dedication to helping others awaken, and his final emphasis on self-effort and mindfulness, reveal the essence of true compassion and wisdom.

Who is the Buddha?

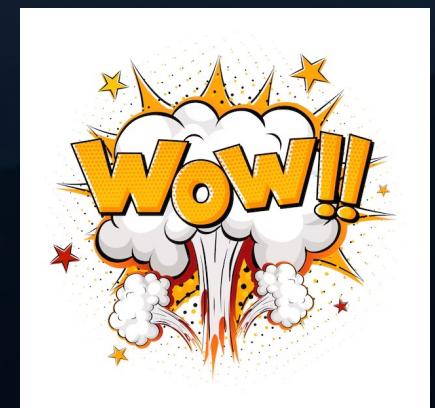
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x152c_db_the-life-of-the-buddha-bbc-documentary_people

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZQ9OZ_JACA



Inspired and Wowed!

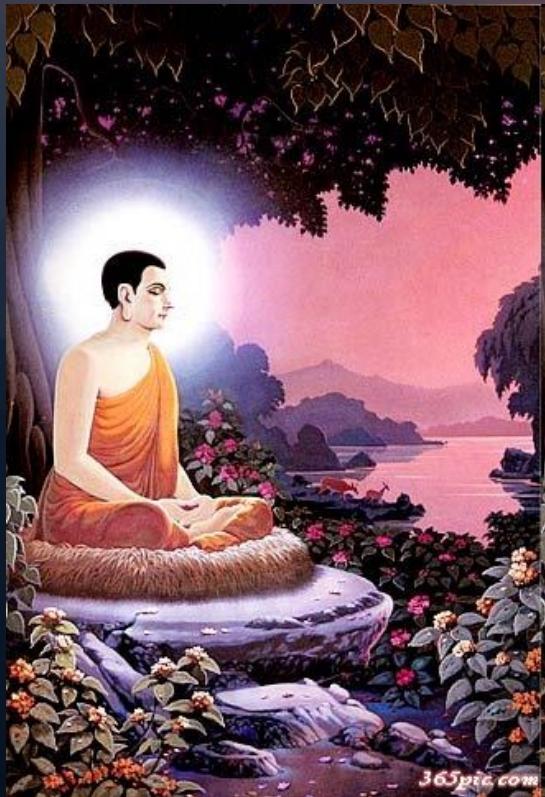
- Write down three points from the videos about the Buddha's life that inspired or ^{文本}wowed you the most and briefly explain why.



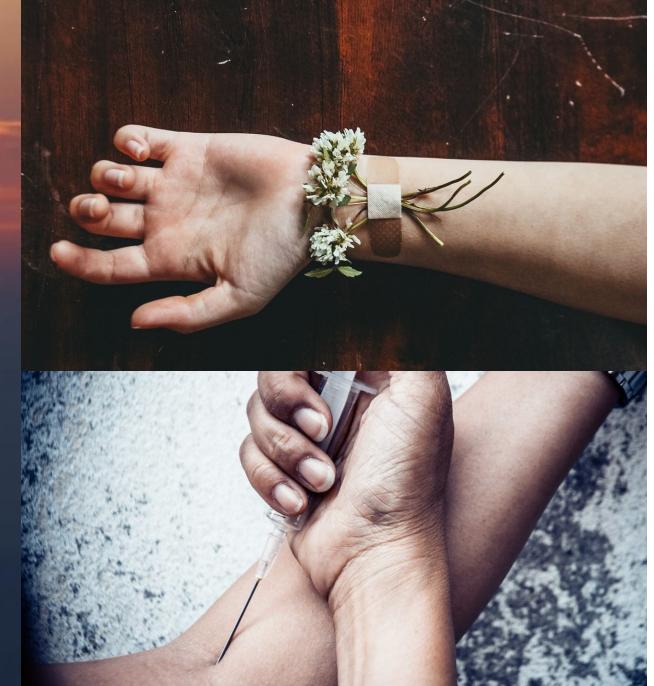
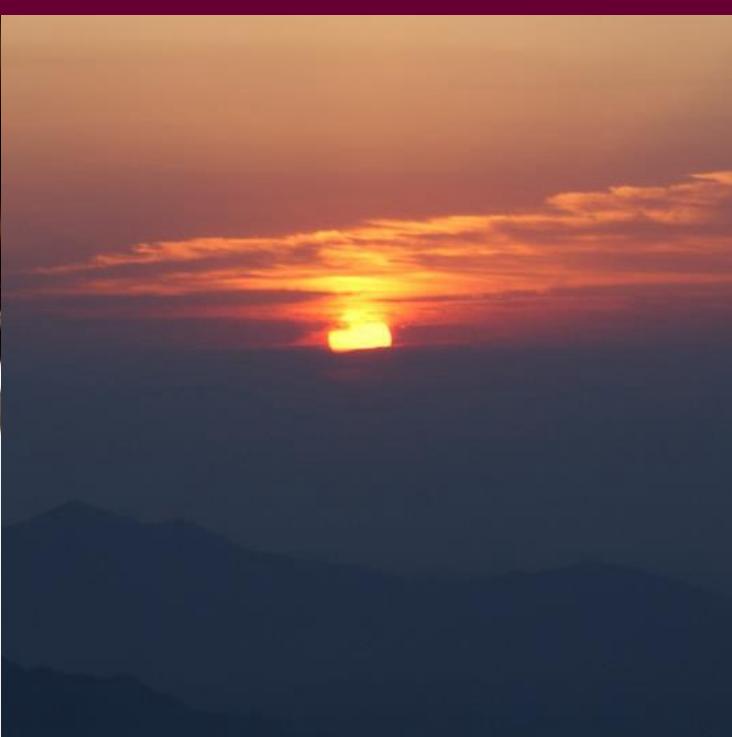
7. The Bodhisattva paths to enlightenment: Asceticism and Māra, the devil



The Enlightenment



The Middle Way



- Do not indulge in the two extremes
 1. Sensual pleasure: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable;
 2. Self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable.
- Avoiding both extremes

The Middle Way



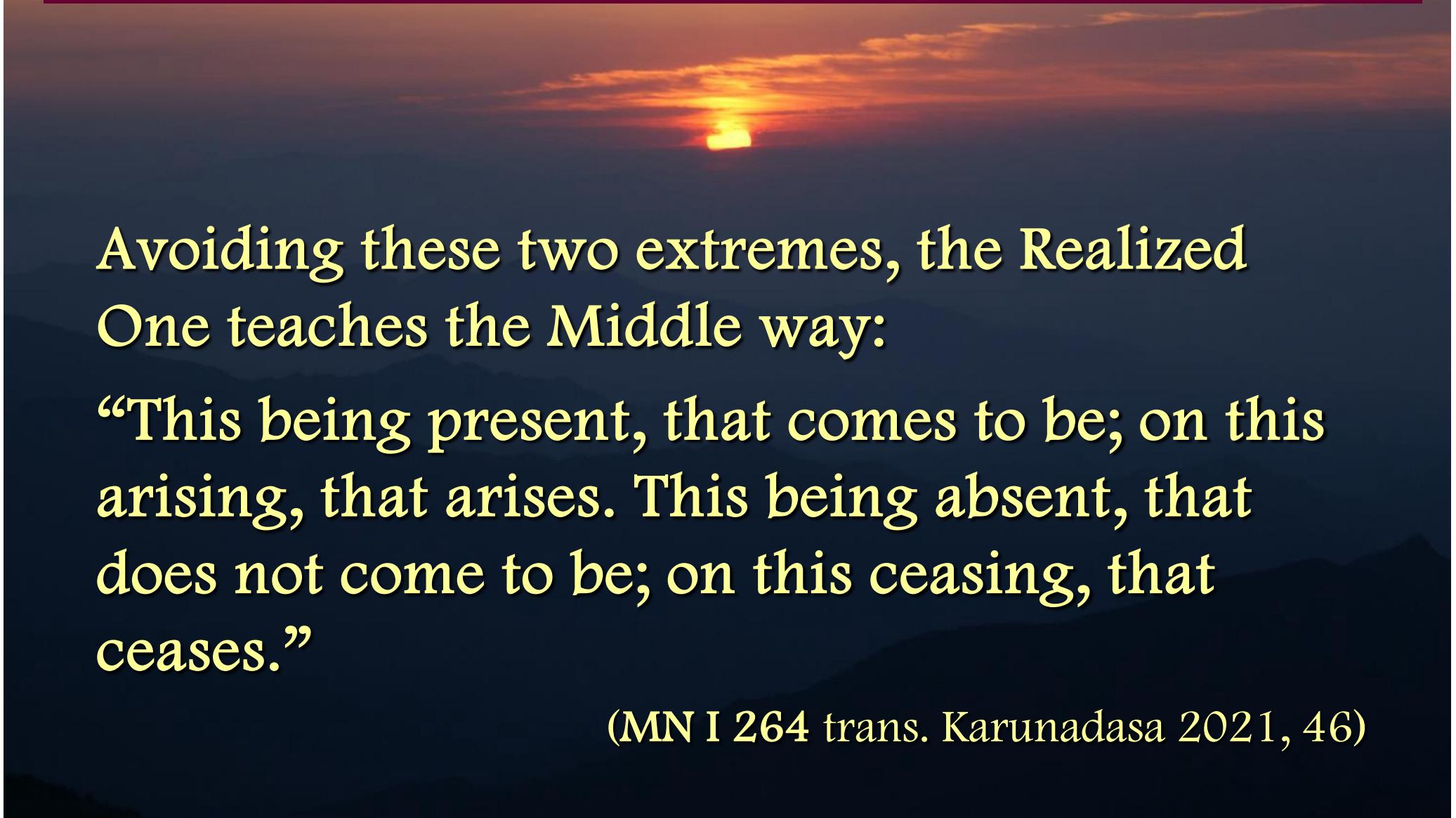
- Avoiding both extremes
- The middle way *produces vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.*

The Middle Way Philosophy: Dependent co-origination

Avoidance of two extreme views:

1. Externalism (*sassatavāda*): the existence of an eternal self, for example, a soul (*ātma*); the world is maintained by a permanent entity, for example, God.
2. Annihilationism (*Ucchedavāda*): A person is totally annihilated after death; there is no coming back

The Middle Way Philosophy: Dependent co-origination



Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One teaches the Middle way:

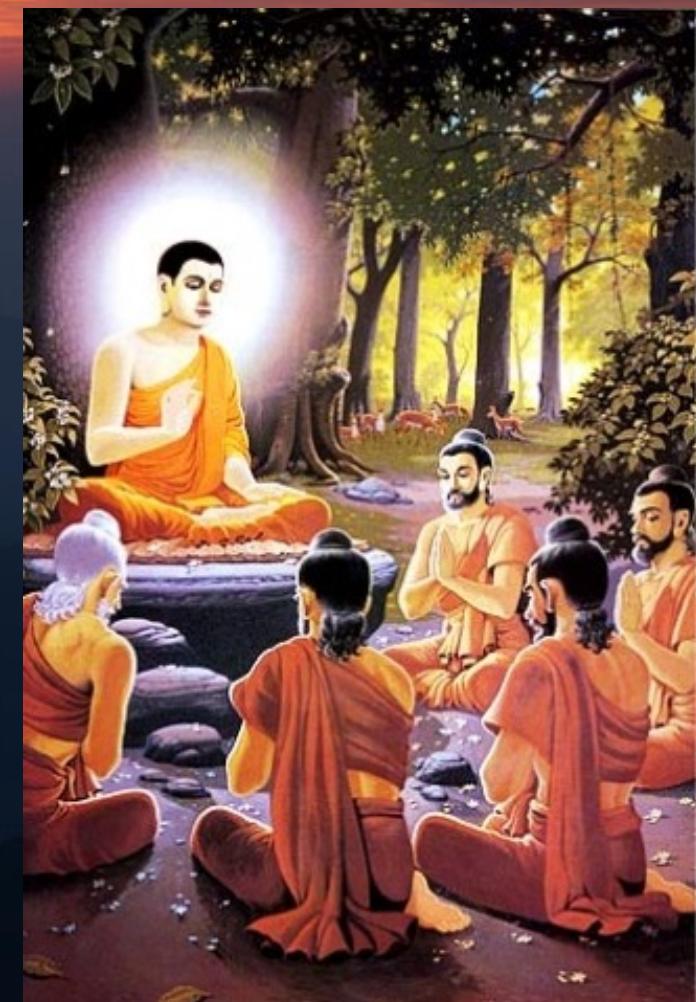
“This being present, that comes to be; on this arising, that arises. This being absent, that does not come to be; on this ceasing, that ceases.”

(MN I 264 trans. Karunadasa 2021, 46)



Same or Different?

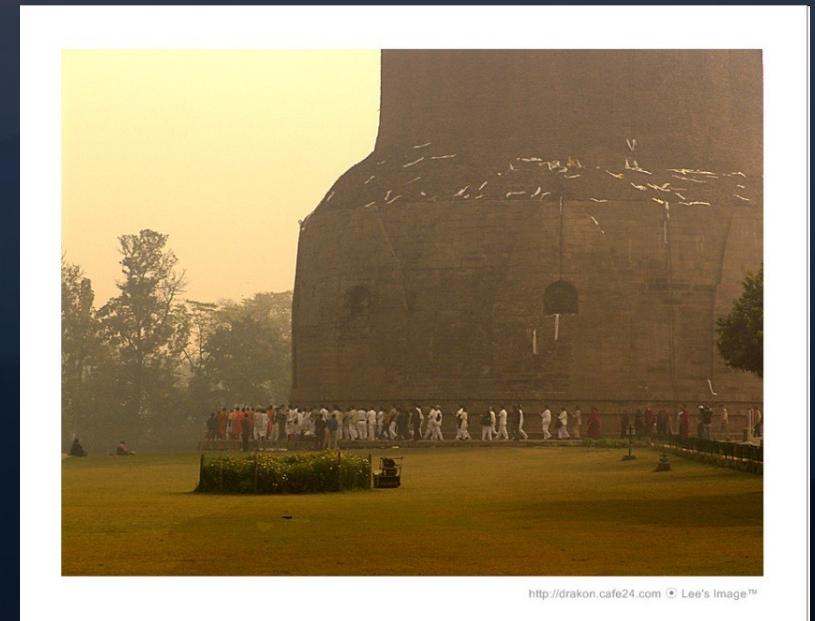
After the First Turning of the Wheel, the Buddha taught for Forty-five years



*There is *Suffering* and
there is a way to end suffering!*



Sārnāth: Deer Park



<http://drakon.cafe24.com> Lee's Image™

His Students: The Sangha



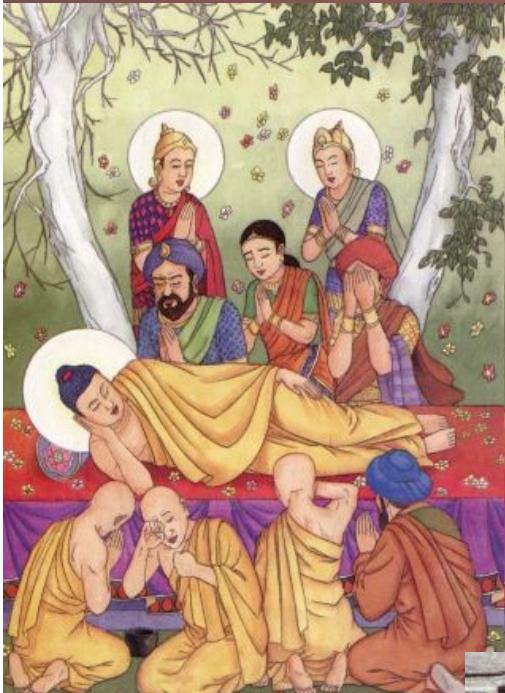
- "Go forth, monks, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, for the good, for the happiness of gods and men.
- Let not two go together.
- Preach the doctrine that is beautiful in its beginning, beautiful in its middle, and beautiful in its ending.
- Declare the holy life in its purity, completely both in the spirit and the letter."

The Buddha's Last Words

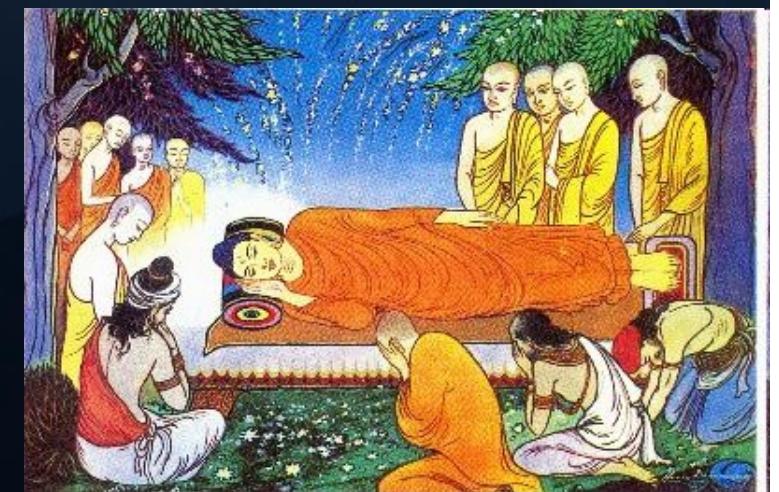
- The Buddha spoke to Venerable Ananda. "It may be, Ananda, that some of you will say, 'without the Buddha, the Sublime Teacher, there is no teacher for us'.
- No, Ananda, you should not think in this way. Whatever **doctrine and discipline taught and made known by me will be your teacher** when I am gone."
- "Behold, O monks, this is my last advice to you. All component things in the world are changeable. They are not lasting. Work hard to gain your own salvation."



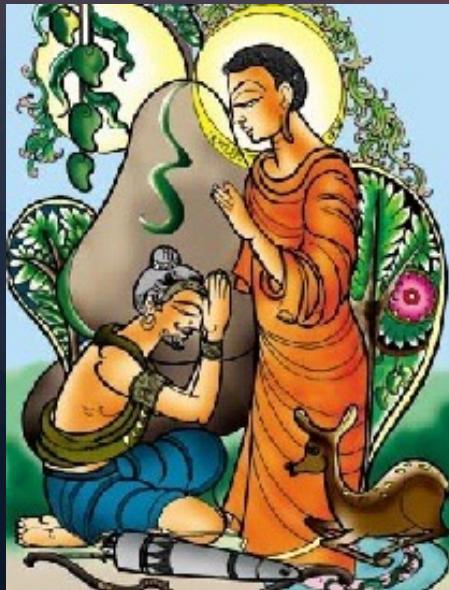
10. Mahā Parinibbāna



- The passing away of the Buddha occurred in 543 B.C. on a full-moon day in the month of May, known in the Indian calendar as Vesak.



How should we approach and learn Buddhist Teaching?



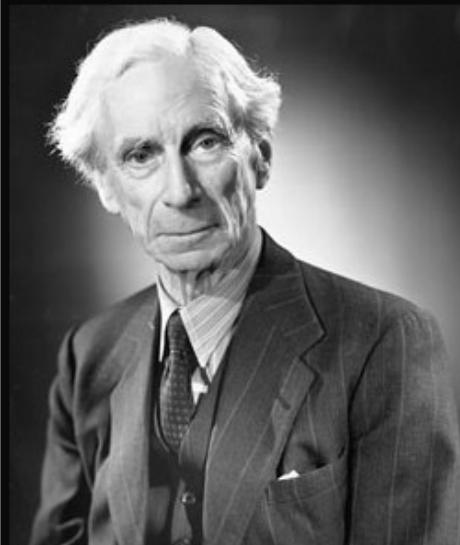
Most People are Sheep



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEhSk71gUCQ>

Bertrand Russell's Advice for Future Generations

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtJmnDC0yMo>



Religion is something left over from the infancy
of our intelligence, it will fade away as we adopt
reason and science as our guidelines.

(Bertrand Russell)

izquotes.com

How should we approach Buddhist Teaching?

- The Kalama Sutta :
The Buddha's Charter on Free Inquiry



Inspired and Wowed!

- Write down three points from the Kalama Sutta that inspired or wowed you the most and briefly explain why.

1 “Do not believe simply because it is said.”

👉 Why it inspires me: It shows a spirit of free inquiry and rational thinking – centuries before modern science, the Buddha was already teaching critical thinking and personal verification.

2 “When you know for yourselves that something leads to harm, abandon it.”

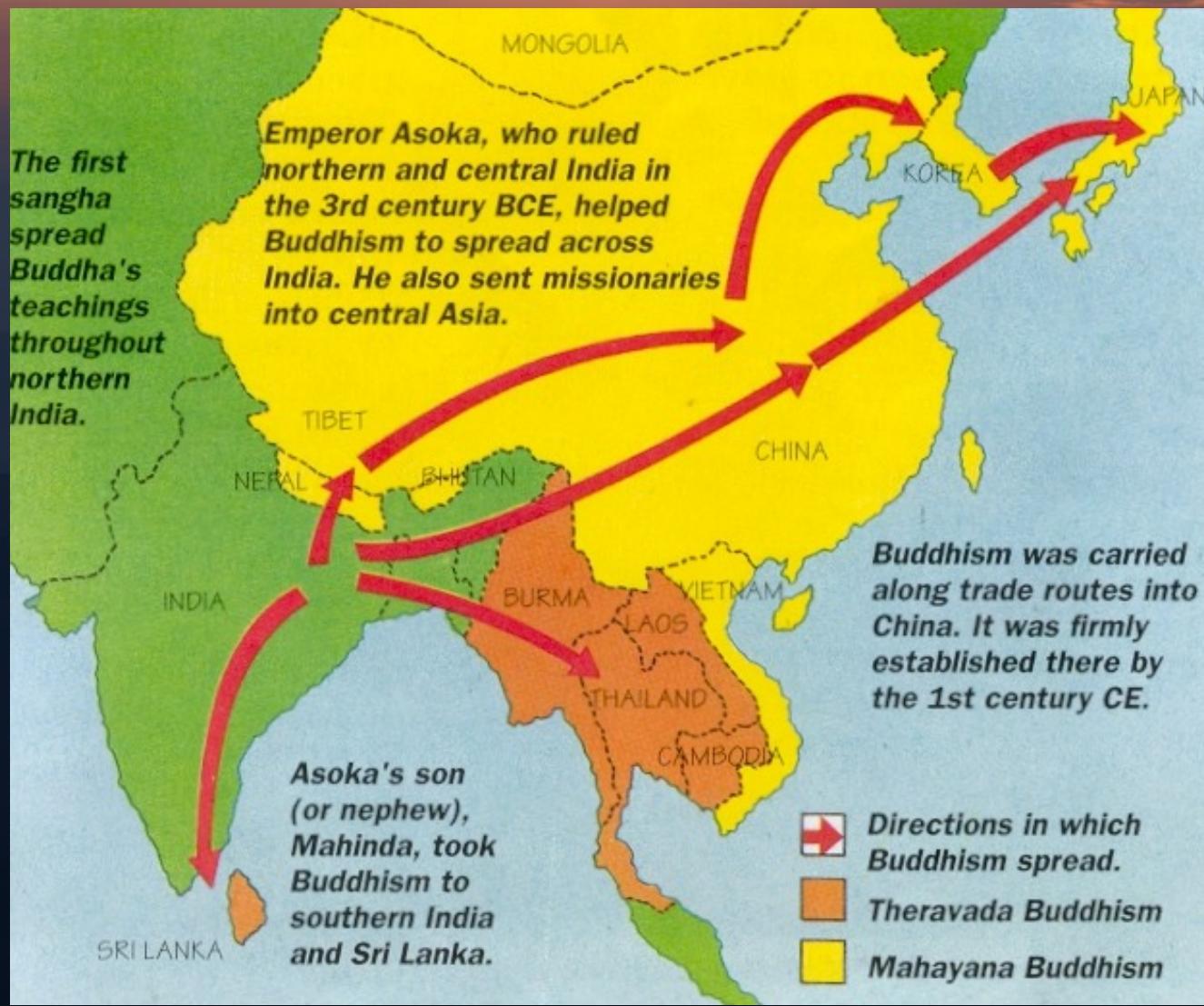
He asked followers to judge actions by their consequences, not by authority.

👉 Why it inspires me: It gives ethical responsibility back to individuals, emphasizing awareness and compassion rather than blind obedience.

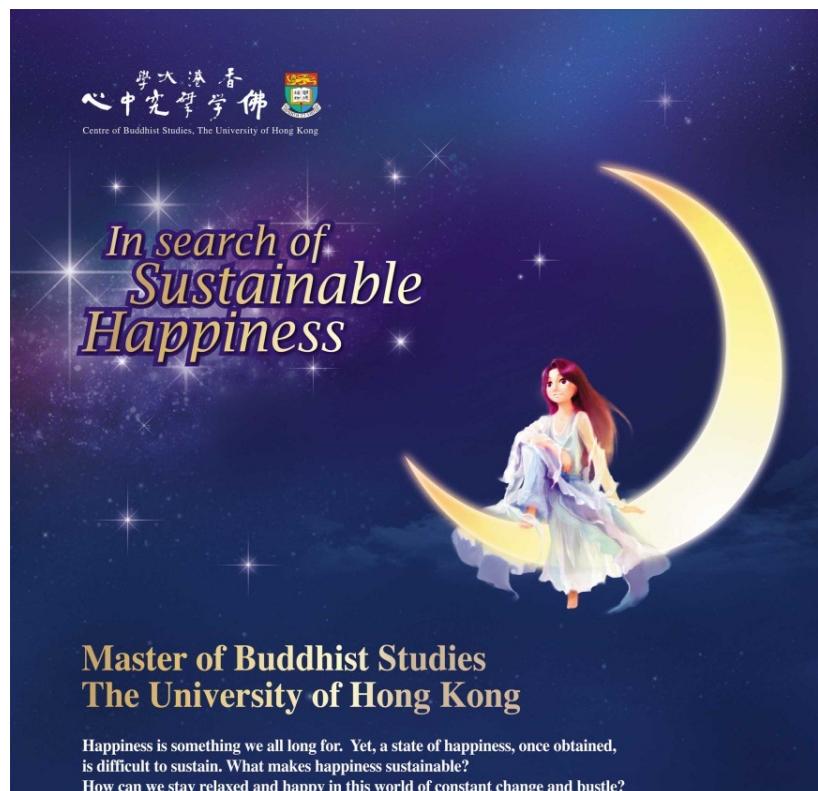
3 “When you know for yourselves that something leads to welfare and happiness, follow it.”



The Buddhist World



What is Buddhism About?



It is about:

- Understanding suffering and the elimination of suffering
- The possibility of Sustainable Happiness

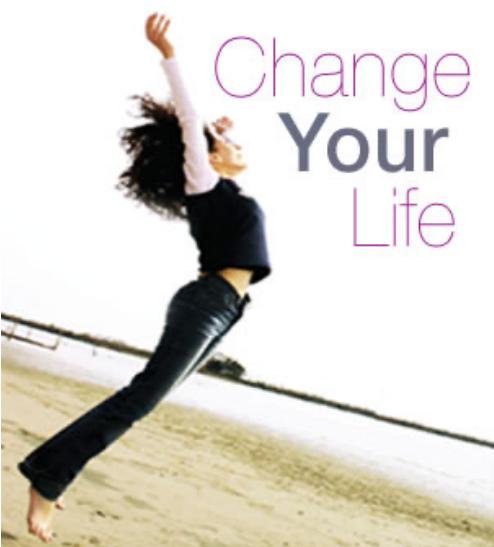
What is Buddhism

About?



It is about the possibility of living a
better and happier life through:

- :Learning,
- :Contemplation and Reflection,
- :Observing and Experiencing
- :Developing right view and making better decisions





According to the Buddha: There are Two Paths in Life



Unaware and Mindless

- Not knowing the why, how and what
- Easily swayed by the circumstances
- Nourishes ignorance

Aware and Mindful

- **Become aware and understand the situation**
- **The ability to choose wisely**
- **Nourishes wisdom**

Levels of Awareness and Understanding

The Obvious and Immediate:

The Hidden and Long-term:



The Obvious and Immediate May not represent the Whole Picture and would Often Result in Unnecessary Suffering!



头条 @鄂东三农

The Obvious and Immediate May Not Be
Representing The Whole Picture and Would
Often Result in Unnecessary Suffering!



Love is beautiful



Broken Hearts Are Truly Painful

Nevermind, I'll find Someone like you,
I wish nothing but the best for you, too.
Don't forget me, I beg,
I remember you Said,
"Sometimes it lasts in love.
But sometimes it hurts instead."
Sometimes it lasts in love,
But sometimes it hurts instead.



Love could be beautiful, But, suffering is highly probable

- Maintaining a healthy relationship is a lot of hard work
- Be prepared for the challenges and difficulties that come with a relationship

These slides use love and heartbreak as a relatable example to show how attachment leads to suffering, and how awareness of impermanence can bring wisdom and peace



Recommended Reading

Life of the Buddha

- *Thich Nhat Hanh; Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha, Parallax*
- *Schumann, H.W. The Historical Buddha. London: Arkana Books, 1989. Penguin Press, 1991*
https://books.google.com.hk/books?id=h2Qh2zzNkNkC&pg=PR3&hl=zh-TW&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false
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Thank You For Listening!

See you next week!