

Introduction to Buddhism



BSTC1001:
Lesson IV

The Power of Paying attention



- The importance and power of making an effort to pay attention (作意) (*manasikāra*)
 - What to pay attention to
 - How to pay attention

The Content of Buddhist Meditation

- *Śamatha* : tranquility, concentration, 專注、靜止
- *Vipaśyanā* : insight, observation, 觀察、了解

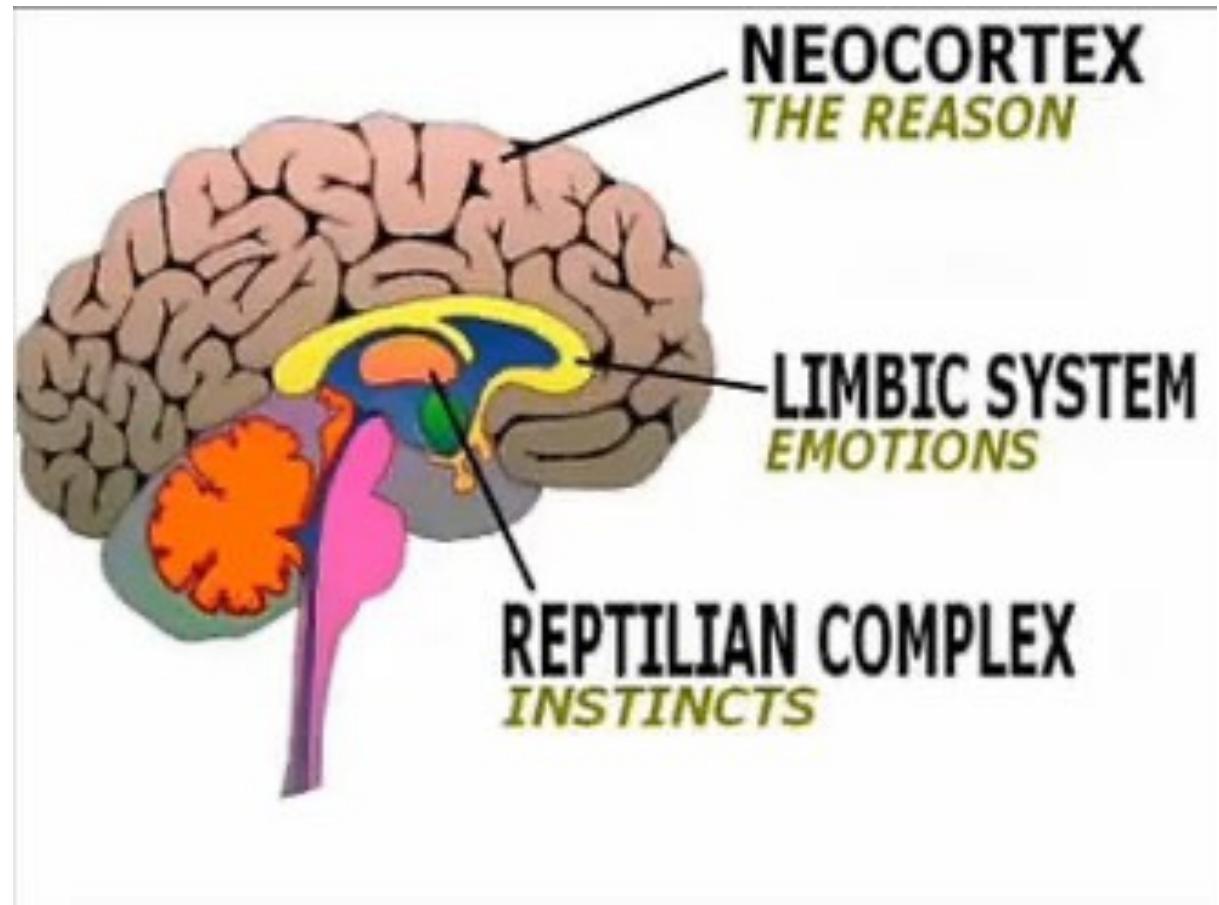
What is Buddhist meditation?



- Buddhist meditation is an English term that refers to the Buddhist practices of mental cultivation, which, according to the Buddha, could develop merit and wisdom and forsake evil and ignorance.
- Such **mental cultivation** involves the practices (i.e. drills) of *bhāvanā* (mental development, 禪修) such as:
 - *samatha* (tranquility, concentration, 止禪)
 - *vipassanā* (observation, insight, clear seeing, wisdom, 觀禪)
- And the attainment of *jhāna/dhyāna* (one-pointedness of mind, mental absorption, 禪定).

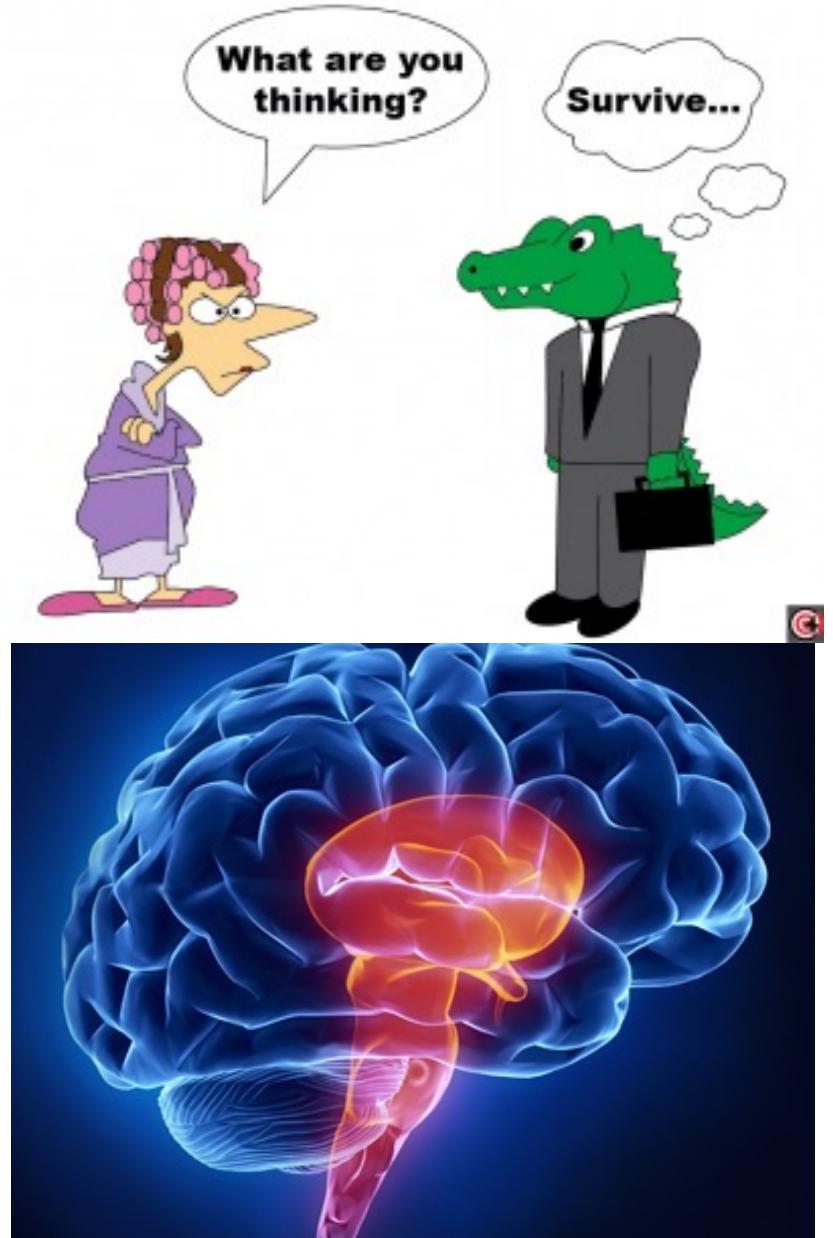
A Simplified Understanding of the Brain Structures

- Evolution-designed
- Structure determines function and behaviors
 - I. Perception
 - II. Emotion
 - III. Cognition



Brain Stem (Reptilian Brain)

- Vital for **Survival** (hard-wired into our **brain stem**)
 - Our instinct for **Self-preservation**, existence.
 - cardiac and respiratory function
 - Fight or flight response, Hunger and thirst
 - Production of hormones that help regulate the autonomic nervous system. The autonomic nervous system supports automatic, non-conscious functions such as thirst, hunger, heart rate, and regulating the body's internal clock.
 - Consciousness/sleep cycle
 - Instant death if damaged

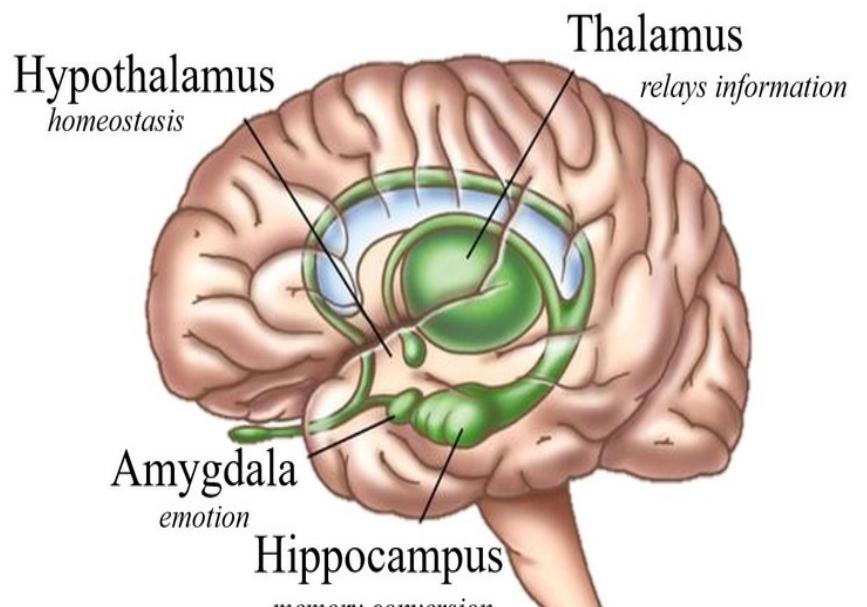


Mammalian Brain Limbic System

- Emotion and behavior
- Feelings of motivation and reward
- Learning
- Formation of memories

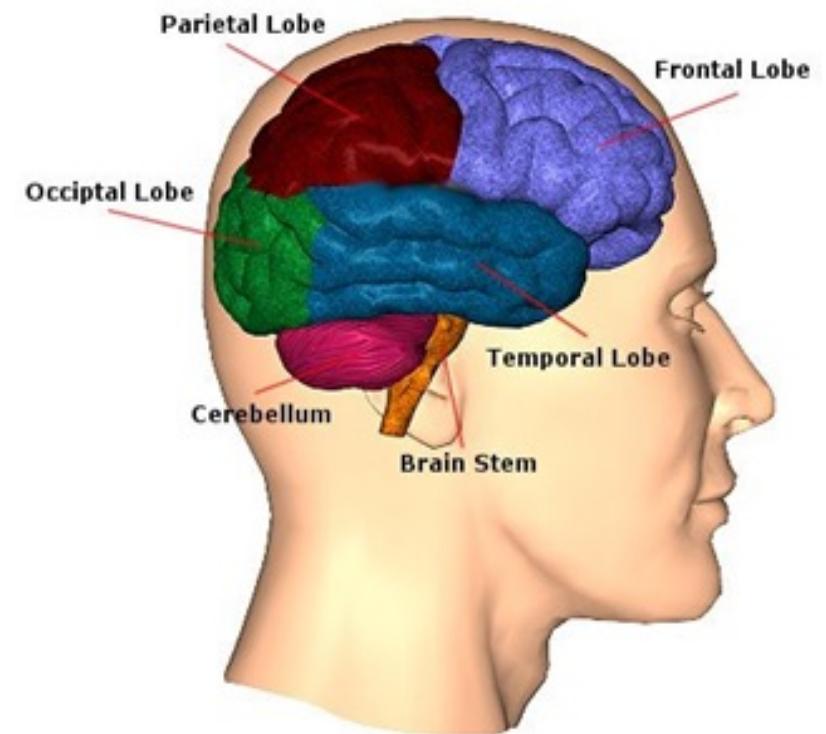
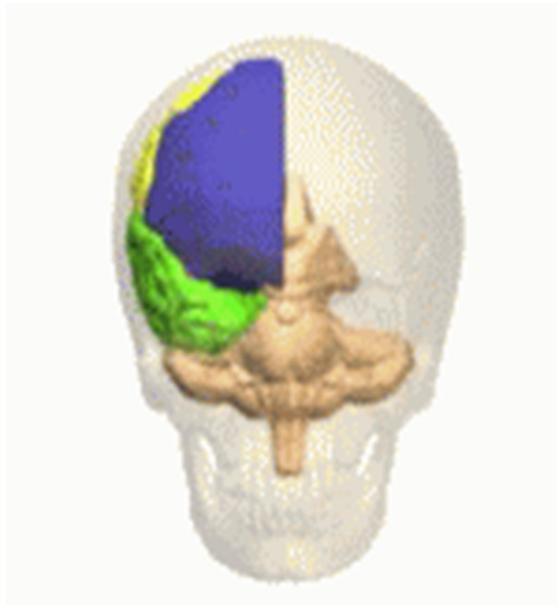


The Limbic System

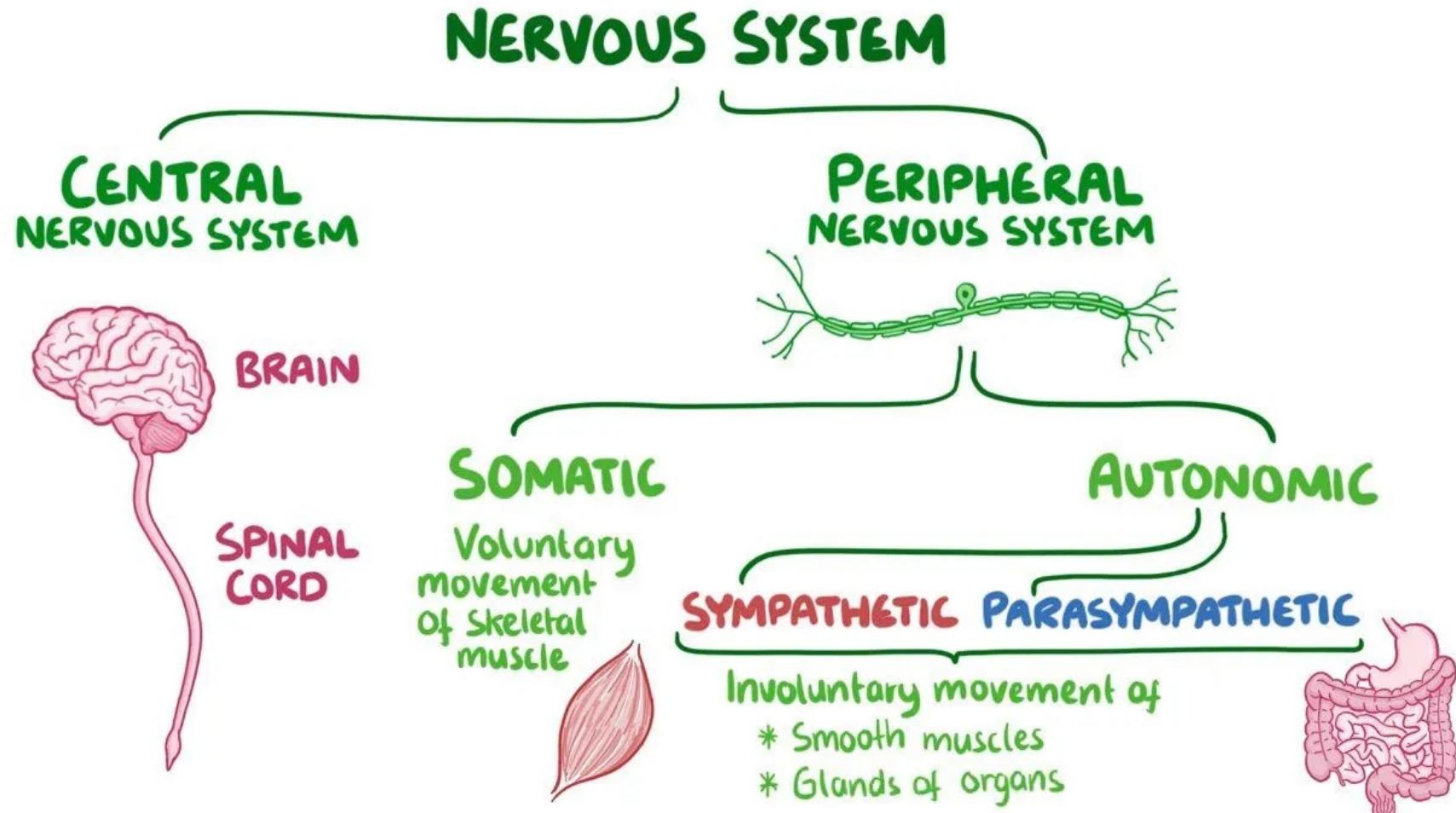


Neocortex (Logical Brain)

- Most recently evolved part of the cortex
 - Cognition
 - Reasoning, intelligence,
 - Social brain,
 - Prediction and strategy.



Why the Practice of Mindful Breathing is Important?

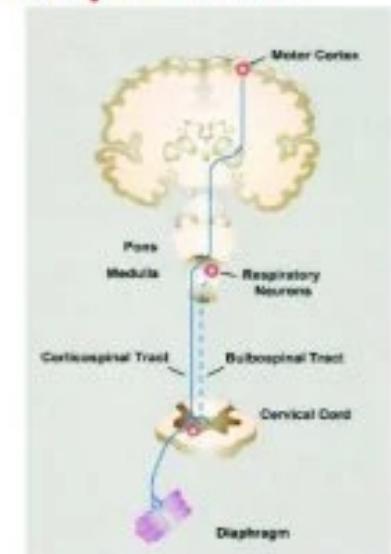


Neural Control of Respiration

- Voluntarily Controlled by Awareness
- Unwarily controlled (involuntarily) by the autonomic nervous system.
- A bridge of consciousness and subconsciousness?

Regulation of respiration

- ✓ Voluntary regulation
(Cerebral cortex)
- ✓ Involuntary regulation
 - 1. Neural regulation
 - 2. Chemical regulation



The Autonomic Nervous System Explained



The Sympathetic Nervous System

- Fight or flight
- Prepares the body for stress
- Cortisol and adrenaline
- Increases heart rate and blood pressure
- Decreases digestion

The Parasympathetic Nervous System

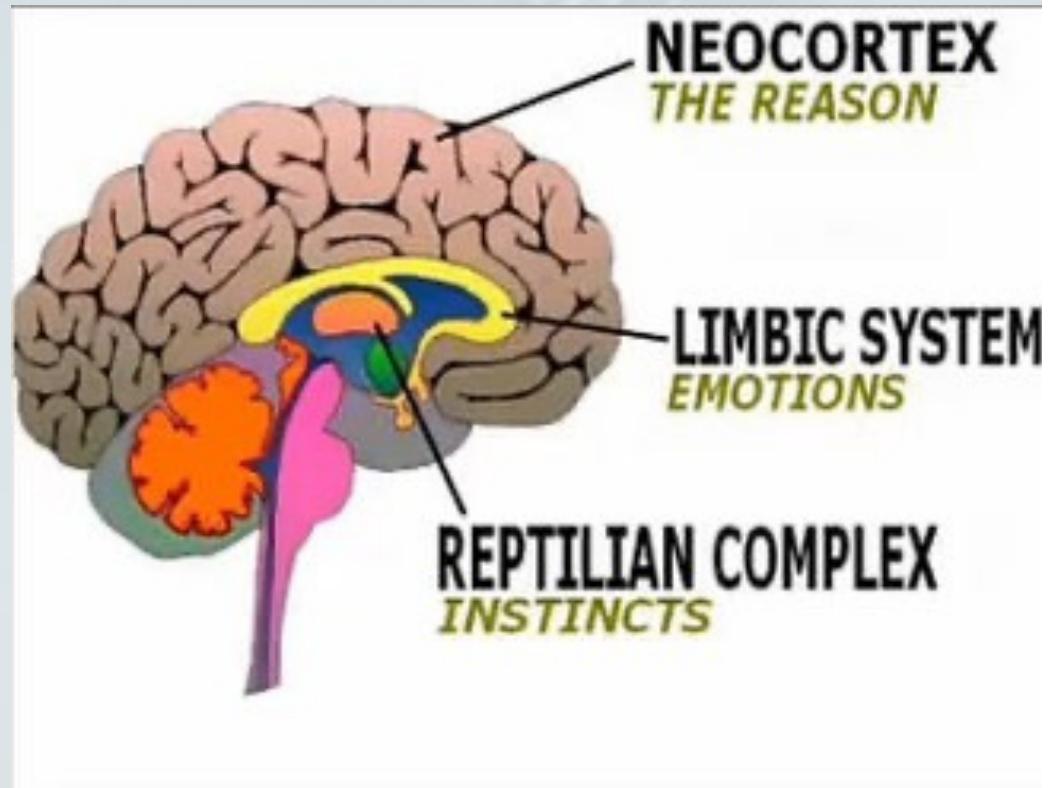


- Rest and digest
- Returns the body to a calm state
- Growth hormones, DHEA, Melatonin
- Decreased heart rate and blood pressure
- Repairs the body

A Simplified Understanding of the Brain Structures

Avoid letting your neocortex cause a conflict between voluntary and involuntary breathing.

- Evolution-designed
- Structure determines function and behaviors
 - I. Perception
 - II. Emotion
 - III. Cognition
- Enlightenment?



Anapanasati Sutta: Mindfulness of Breathing

Mindfulness of In-&-Out Breathing

- "Now how is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing developed & pursued so as to be of great fruit, of great benefit?"
- "There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and **setting mindfulness to the fore.** **Always mindful,** he breathes in; mindful he breathes out."



Deep Concentration (Samadhi): “to bring together”, parallel operation and non-discriminating



Buddhists Vehicles	<u>Aspiration</u>	<u>Related Teachings and practices</u>	<u>Attainment</u>
<i>Human and Celestial Vehicle</i>	To attain happiness in heaven and earth	- The Law and Cause and effect - Taking refuge in the Triple Gems and practice the five precepts.	Happiness in heaven and earth
<i>Sound-hearing (Sravaka) Vehicle</i>	To eliminate all suffering, especially the endless bondage of life and death	- See life as impermanent and full of suffering. Diligently practice the Three Trainings -Four Noble Truths.	Ending the bondage of reincarnation and attaining Arhart
<i>Bodhisattva Vehicle</i>	To attain the ultimate enlightenment and deliver all beings from suffering	With <i>bodhicitta</i> as the cause, compassion as the source and <i>prajna</i> as skillful means. Practices the six <i>pramitas</i> and the four all-embracing virtues.	Ultimate enlightenment and Buddhahood

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



What is our future and how is it determined?



- Everyone wants to live happily
- It is difficult to attain happiness without understanding how our future and destiny are determined.
- How does everything work? Is anybody in charge?

How We End Up at Where We Were 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.

Inherited at Birth
Influencing Conditions

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.

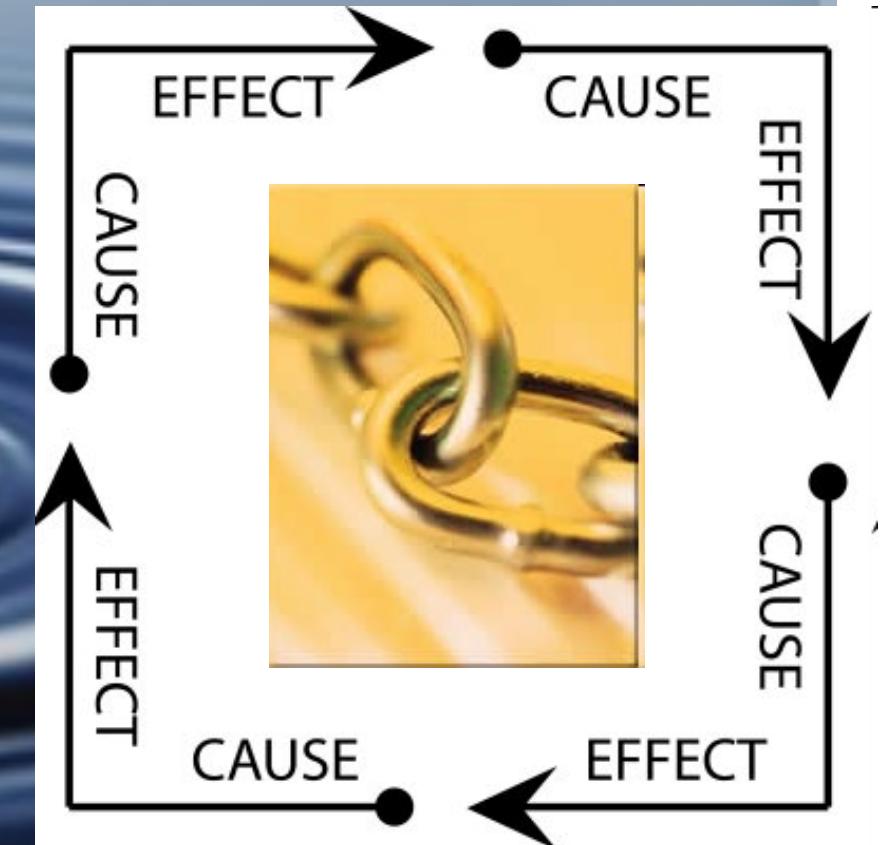
What is Birth and Death?



The Law of Dependent Origination

(paticca-samuppada):

- “When there is this, that comes to be;
 - with the arising of this, that arises.
-
- When there is not this, that does not come to be;
 - with the cessation of this, that ceases.”



Easily Observable

Cause and Effect Relationship

- Apple seed  Apple
- Orange seed  Orange

Third Lesson 2024 Stop Here

Not so Easily Observable Cause and Effect Relationship

- Cheesecake
 - Stress and pressure
- 
- Overweight
 - Heart attack

Difficult to Observe Cause and Effect Relationship

- Cigarette
 - Beef steak
 - EQ
- 
- Lung cancer
 - Global warming
 - Income and happiness

Very Difficult to Observe Cause and Effect Relationship

- Current thought and behavior
 - Thought and behavior in this life
- 
- Future wellbeing
 - Wellbeing in your next life

The Missing Link: DNA

- Apple seed
- Orange seed



- Apple
- Orange



The Missing Link: Accumulation of calories and cholesterol



- Cheesecake
- Hamburger



- Overweight
- Heart attack



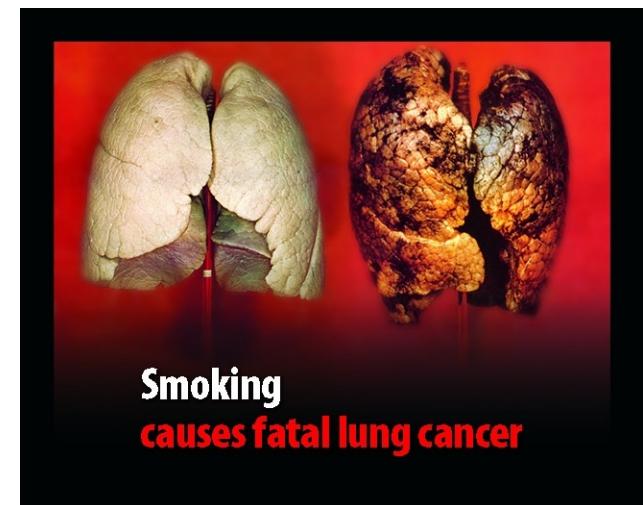
The Missing Link



- Cigarette
- Beef steak
- EQ



- Lung cancer
- Global warming
- Income and happiness



Reincarnation: The James Linegar Case



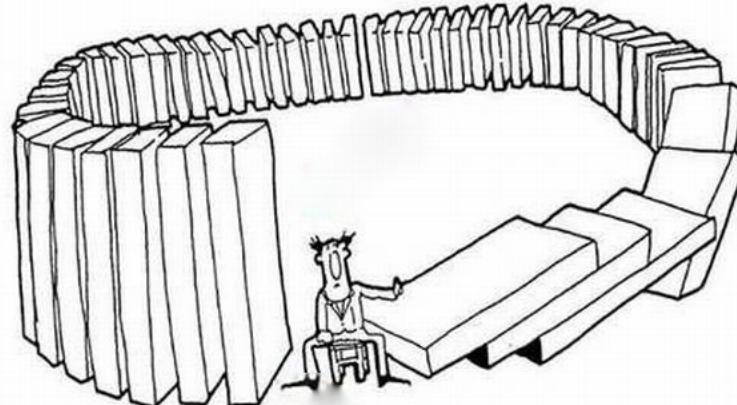
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKNOBbzXJpY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVBSiyVELbU>

- Old link
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnXxC-nVsJY>

The Missing Link: Karma

- Current thought and behavior
 - Thought and behavior in this life
-
- Future wellbeing
 - Wellbeing in your next life

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction



Kamma: Intended Actions would give rise to Corresponding Effects

The Shorter Exposition of Kamma

A student asked the Buddha: “What is the reason, what is the condition, why superiority and inferiority are met with among human beings, among mankind?”

Buddha: "Student, beings are owners of kammas (actions), heirs of kammas, they have kammas as their progenitor, kammas as their kin, kammas as their homing-place. It is kammas that differentiate beings according to inferiority and superiority."

Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta

Definition of Karma



- Karma originally meant ‘action’ which in Buddhism is interpreted to mean mental, verbal, and physical actions—that is thoughts, words, and deeds.
- Karma refers to intentional action, whether physical, verbal or mental.
 - Good karma brings happiness,
 - Bad karma brings suffering.
- In short, karma is an accumulation of ‘causes’ which would bring ‘effects.’
- On a simple level, if we study, we increase the possibility of getting good grades. If we exercise, we increase our possibility of becoming physically fit.

Karma and Destiny



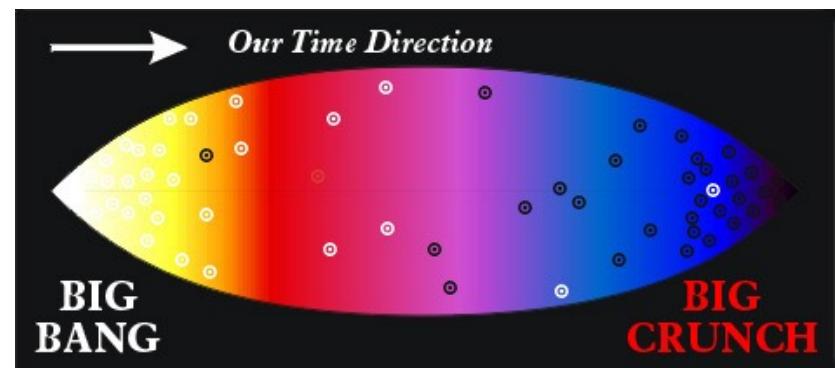
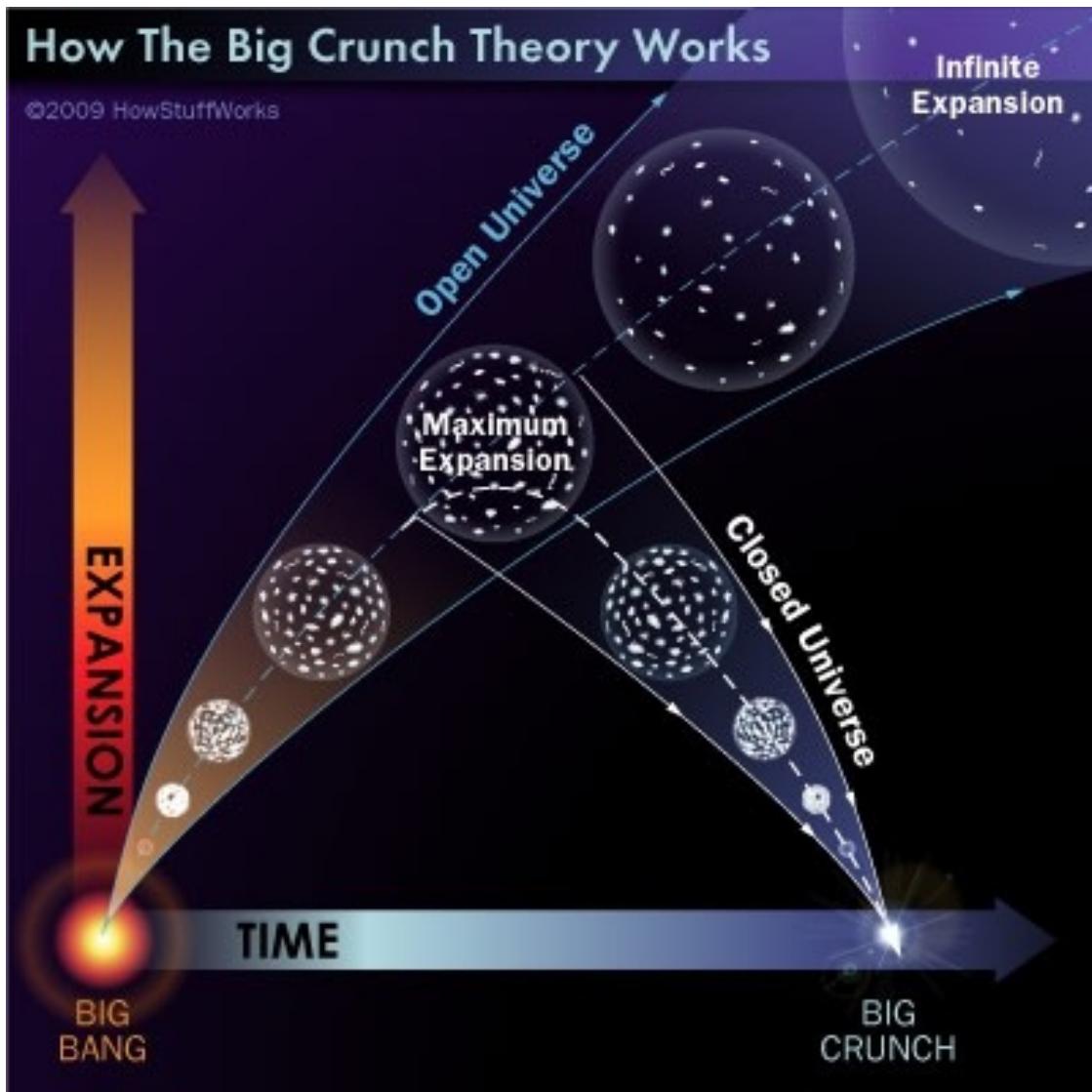
- Buddhism therefore teaches that our fate is not arbitrary, neither is it imposed by supernatural forces.

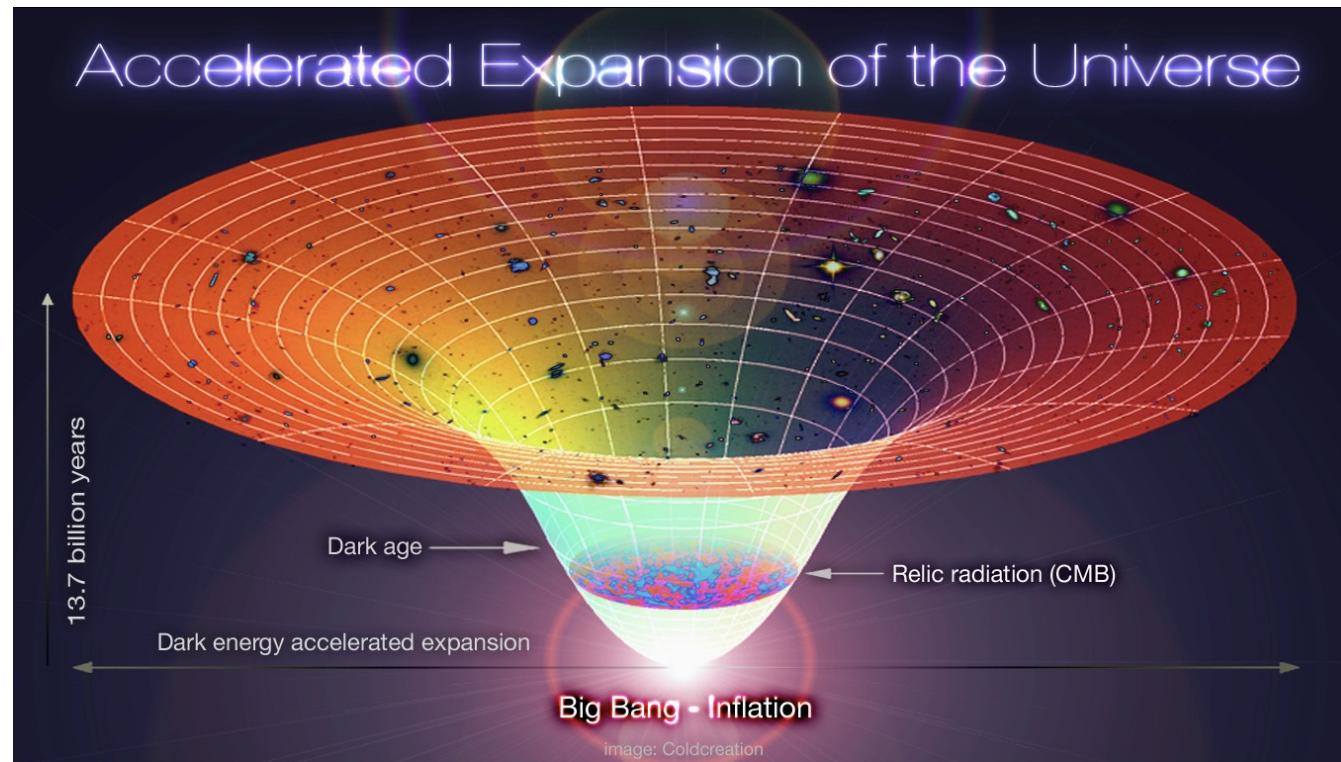
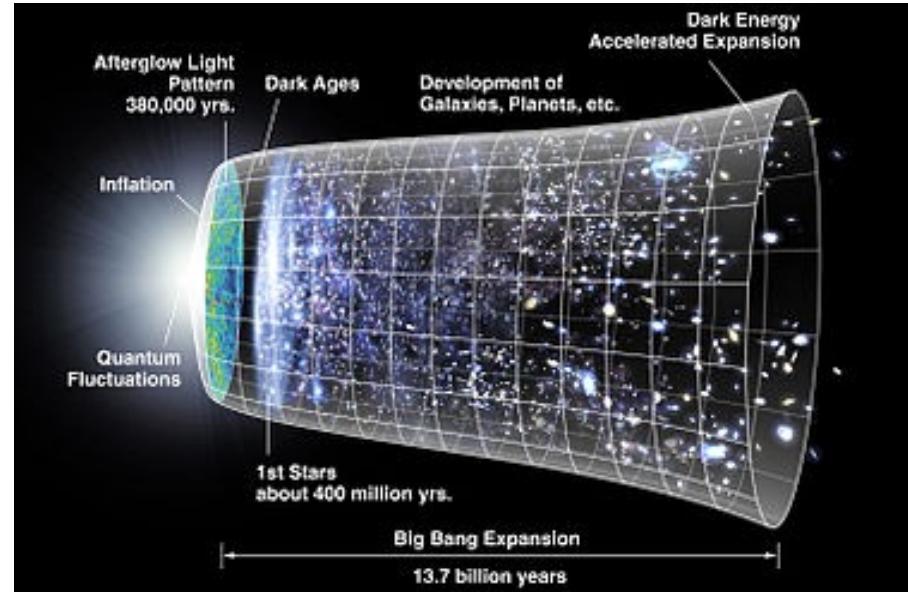
We more or less can create
our own destiny.

How did the Buddha discover Kamma?

Dvedhavitakka Sutta

- "When the mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, rid of defilement, pliant, malleable, steady, & attained to imperturbability, I directed it to the knowledge of recollecting my past lives.
- I recollected my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two...five, ten...fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion:





- 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life.'
- Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life.'
- Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus I remembered my manifold past lives in their modes & details.
- "This was the first knowledge I attained in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose – as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, & resolute.



Karma and Rebirth

- Karma is interconnected with rebirth and reincarnation
 - Good, positive karma leads to good rebirth, enlightenment
 - Good, positive karma comes from right actions performed with good (right) intentions
 - Right intentions, right actions are constituent elements of the Four Noble Truths

Twelve Links of Dependent Origination

- 7. Feeling
- 8. Craving
- 9. Clinging or grasping
- 10. Existence or becoming
- 11. Birth
- 12. Aging and death



- 1. **Ignorance**
- 2. Volition
- 3. Consciousness
- 4. Name and form
- 5. The sources of perception
- 6. Contact



The Shorter Exposition of Karma

The Shorter Exposition of Karma



- "*Beings are owners of kammas, student, heirs of kammas, they have kammas as their progenitor, kammas as their kin, kammas as their homing-place. It is kammas that differentiate beings according to inferiority and superiority.*"

The Shorter Exposition of Kamma

	Action	Karmic consequence
<u>Life-span</u>	“ A <u>killer</u> of living beings, murderous”	Short life
<u>Health</u>	<u>“Harms</u> beings”	Sickness
<u>Beauty</u>	<u>“Angry</u> , much given to rage”	Ugly
<u>Power</u>	<u>envious</u>	Leads to insignificance
<u>Wealth</u>	<u>not a giver</u> of food, cloth, sandals...bed, roof and lighting to monks or brahmins. ...	Poor wherever he is reborn
<u>Wisdom</u>	<i>when visiting a monk or brahmin, <u>does not ask</u>: 'What is wholesome, venerable sir? What is unwholesome?</i>	Stupid wherever he is reborn

Past, Present, and Future



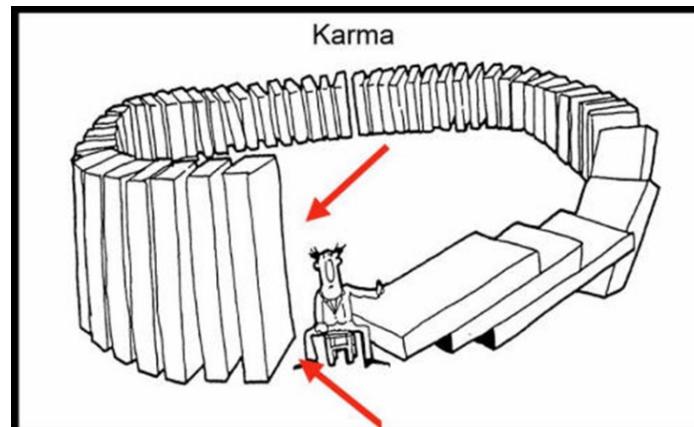
- "If you wish to know the causes of your past life, observe what you are experiencing in this life."
- If you wish to know the effects in your future life, observe what you are doing in this life."

Who do you have to thank?

- Do you consider yourself fortunate in this life?
- What if your future self experiencing difficulties in life?
- What message might your future self have for you?



Is it all because of past
Kamma?
Who is to blame?
Is there a way out of it all?





Moliyasivaka Sutta
Do Not Blame It on Kamma

Moliya sivaka Sutta



What we experience are the result of
the combination of conditions, and
Kamma is one of the conditions.

“That this happens can be known by
oneself; also, in the world it is
accepted as true.



Am I able to change
my Karma?

Lifestyle gets blame for 70% to 90% of all cancers

Cancer Types	Extrinsic risk	Examples of potential extrinsic risk factors*
Breast	substantial	Oral contraceptive, hormone replacement therapy, lifestyle (diet, smoking, alcohol, weight)
Prostate	substantial	Diet, obesity, smoking
Lung	>90%	Smoking; air pollutant
Colorectal	>75%	Diet, smoking, alcohol, obesity
Melanoma	65-86%	Sun exposure
Basal cell	~90%	UV
Hepatocellular	~80%	HBV, HCV
Gastric	65-80%	H. pylori
Cervical	~90%	HPV
Head & Neck	~75%	Tobacco, alcohol
Esophageal	>75%	Smoking, alcohol, obesity, diet
Oropharyngeal	~70%	HPV
Thyroid	>72%	Diet low in iodine, radiation
Kidney	>58%	Smoking, obesity, workplace exposures
Thymus	>77%	Largely unclear
Small intestine	>61%	Diet, smoking, alcohol
Extranodal non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL)	>71%	Chemicals, radiation, immune system deficiency
Testis	>45%	Largely unclear
Anal and anorectal cancers	>63%	HPV, smoking

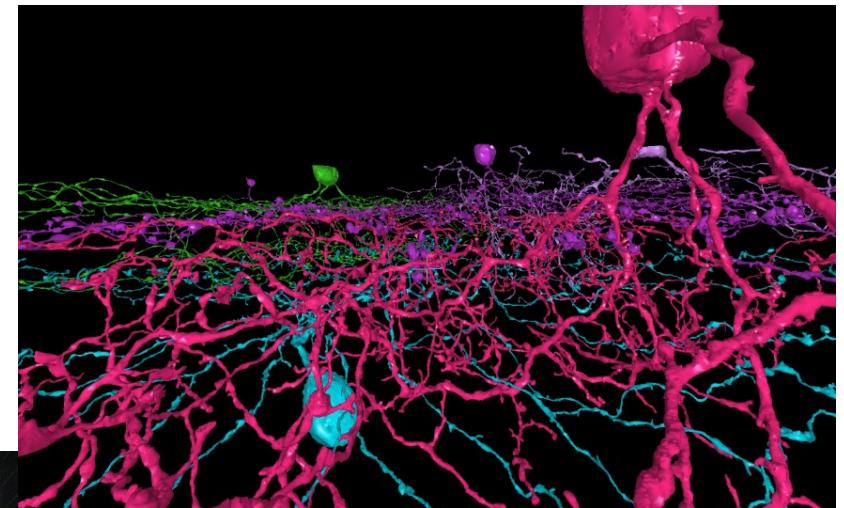
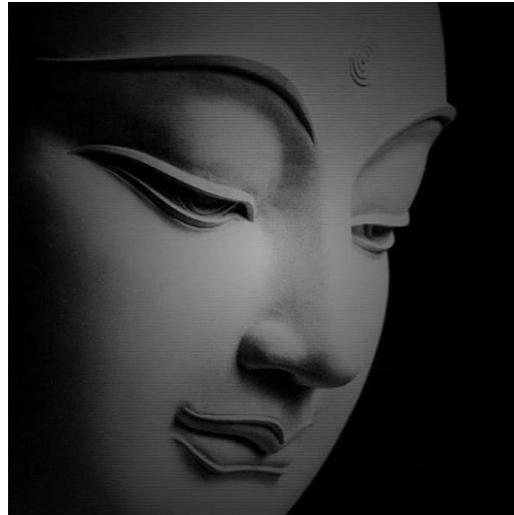
*<http://www.cancer.org/cancer>.

Wu S, Powers S, Zhu W, Hannun YA. Substantial contribution of extrinsic risk factors to cancer development. *Nature*. 2016 Jan 7;529(7584):43-7. doi: 10.1038/nature16166. Epub 2015 Dec 16. PMID: 26675728; PMCID: PMC4836858.

The Greater Exposition of Karma

- Why evil-doer who goes to hell (or some other low state of birth)?
- Why evil-doer who goes to heaven?
- Why good man who goes to heaven?
- Why good man who goes to hell (or other low birth)?







The Six Realms of Sufferings

Deva (heavenly beings)

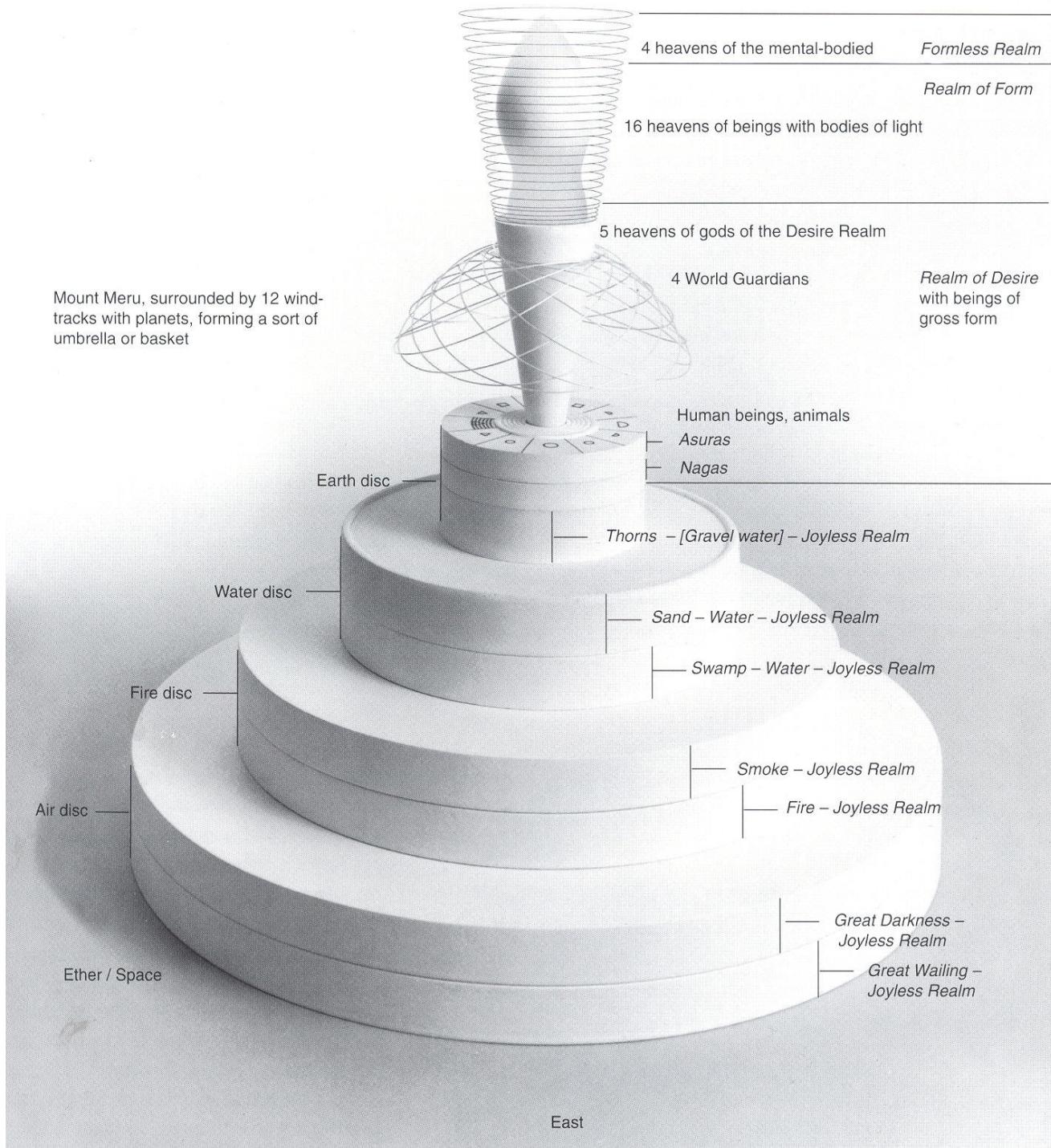
Asura (power-seeking deities)

Humans

Animals

Hungry Ghosts

Beings in Hell



The Buddhist Cosmology

Formless heavens

Pure form heavens

Desire heavens

Asura

(Titans, Envy/competition)

Human (Self centeredness/attachment)

Animals (Dullness/ indifference)

Spirits (Dissatisfaction. Restlessness)

Cold hells (Fear/ Withdrawal)

Hot hells (Anger/ Retaliation)

附表二

小世界諸天圖解

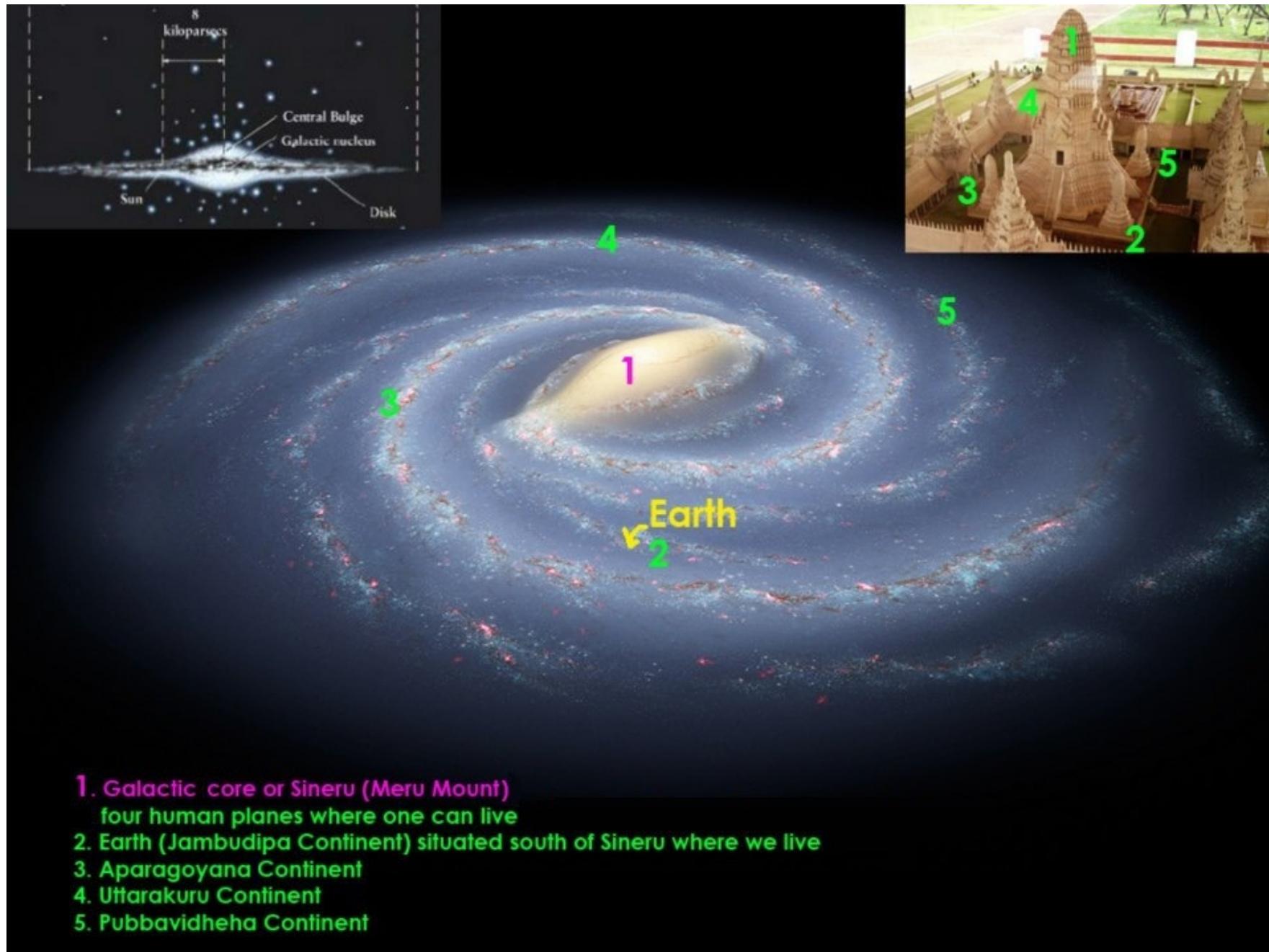
無色界四天壽二萬大劫至八萬大劫有更大的毀滅輪迴過程，故曰：三界有生死輪迴。

四擇 九天	壽一百二十五大劫至一萬六千大劫		
三擇 三天	過淨天壽64大劫	無量淨天壽32大劫	少淨天壽16大劫
二擇 三天	光音天壽8大劫	無量光天壽4大劫	少光天壽2大劫
色界十八天 初擇 三天	大梵天壽60小劫	梵輔天壽40小劫	梵眾天壽20小劫
夜摩天以上	他化自在天 壽16,000歲	人間 1,600年/1日 (欲界第六天)	
空居天依雲而住	化樂天 壽8,000歲	人間 800年/1日 (欲界第五天)	
!	兜率天 壽4,000歲	人間 400年/1日 (兜率內院詳志)	
	夜摩天 壽2,000歲	人間 200年/1日 (欲界第三天)	

欲界六天



以須彌山為中心是為一小世界，此為佛智親見所說，非令人測量而知。





The Salt Crystal Sutta

Am I able to change my
Karma?
Is there a way out of it all?



Good/Bad Karma

- Good, positive karma
 - Good Deeds:
 - Based on **right view**, good intentions, and right actions
 - non-attachment
 - benevolence
 - understanding
- Bad, negative karma:
 - Bad deeds
 - Guided by **wrong view**, motivated by greed, hatred, and delusion (three poisons)

Mission to Create a Better Future



- We can create good karma at any given moment.
- When we realized that we create our own karma and know that we can change it, we should summon up the courage to work for a better future.
- **Commit to a better tomorrow!**

Two Paths:

The Path to good Kamma

- Discipline and structure
- Determination and Concentration
- Right view and Wisdom

The Path to bad Kamma

- Irresponsibility and act at will
- Easily sway by external events and emotions
- Ignorance and delusion



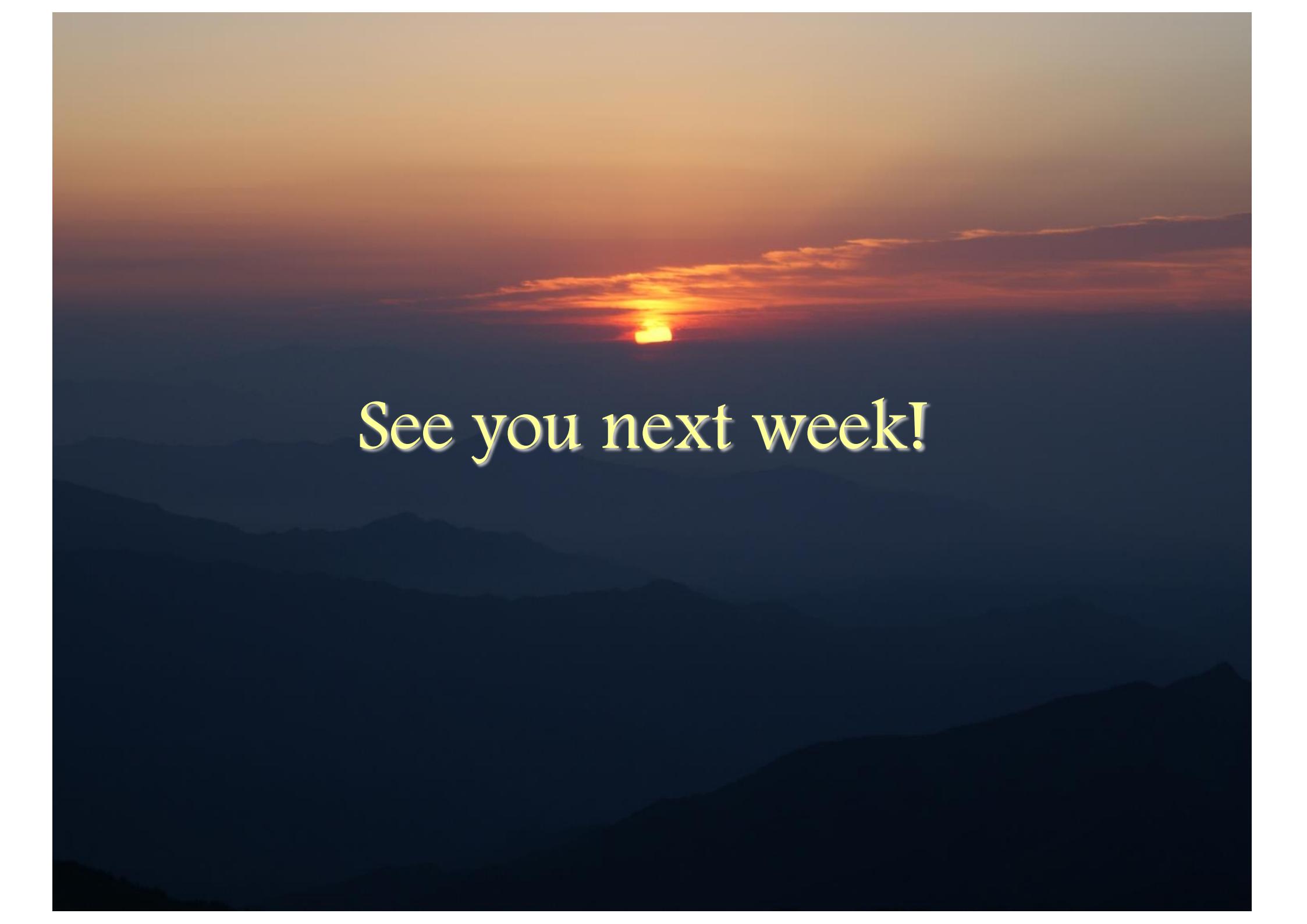


Awareness and Mindful

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

Ignorance and Mindless

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

A photograph of a sunset over a range of mountains. The sky is filled with warm orange and yellow hues, with some wispy clouds. The sun is partially visible behind the mountains on the horizon. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of mountain ridges are visible.

See you next week!