

Extended Essay

Buddhism as a Response to Nietzsche - What it Means to Live a Satisfying and Fulfilling Life.

Research Question: To what extent does Nietzsche offer a convincing response to the Buddhist way of living?

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To what extent does Nietzsche offer a convincing response to the Buddhist way of living?

Introduction

Nietzsche and Buddhism offer distinct perspectives on the way of living, grappling with fundamental questions about the meaning of life, human suffering, and the pursuit of fulfilment. While Nietzsche champions the individual will to power and life affirmation, Buddhism advocates for the cessation of suffering and the attainment of enlightenment. In this essay I am aiming to explore and compare Nietzsche's philosophy with the teachings of Buddhism regarding the way of living. My personal interest stems from my constant study of philosophy in and outside of class which helped me deepen my understanding and knowledge of both philosophies.

Both Buddhism and Nietzsche address questions about the meaning of life, human suffering, and the pursuit of a satisfying and fulfilling existence. While they approach these topics from different perspectives, there are certain elements in Buddhism that can be seen as a response to Nietzsche's ideas. Nietzsche advocated for the "will to power," attempting to articulate the relationships between the natural and normative in a way that avoids both the traps of idealist metaphysics and physicalist reductionism,¹ and emphasising individual strength, self-affirmation, and the pursuit of personal goals. In contrast, Buddhism focuses on the cessation of suffering and the attainment of liberation or enlightenment.² It teaches that suffering arises from attachment and desire, and it seeks to alleviate suffering (or *dukkha*) by eliminating its root causes.

¹Emden, C.J. (2016). *Nietzsche's Will to Power: Biology, Naturalism, and Normativity*. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 47(1), p.30.

²Humanika ; Pendidikan, D. and Humaniora (2020). *Nietzsche's Philosophy and Buddhism: A Comparative Study*. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial*, [online] 3(1).

Buddhism encourages a transformative journey that leads to a state of profound peace and contentment.

Outlining Both Principles:

The Buddhist Perspective:

Buddhism provides a framework for living a meaningful and ethical life, offering practical guidance and principles that can be applied in daily life to cultivate inner peace, compassion, and wisdom. In order to live a meaningful and satisfying life, a Buddhist must abide by certain principles.³ Buddhism recognizes that everything in the world is impermanent, including pleasure and pain. To find true fulfilment, one must let go of attachment to transient experiences, objects, and even the concept of a fixed self. Detachment doesn't mean letting go of everyone and everything in one's life, but to understand that one cannot hold onto things as if they will be there forever.⁴ In order to live life to the fullest, and create the most meaningful experience, a Buddhist must be prepared to let things go. 'Everything changes and nothing lasts forever.'⁵ Buddhism teaches us that everything, including our thoughts, feelings, and cells in our body are always changing and being replaced.

The Middle Way promotes a balanced approach to life, helping us to avoid extremes of self-indulgence and denial, motivating one to find a middle path. It encourages moderation and mindfulness in all aspects of life, including desires, actions, and relationships.⁶ According to The

³Carus, P. (2018). *The Philosophy of Buddhism*. [online] JSTOR

⁴Trí, Q. (2015). *Non-attachment and Impermanence – The Buddha Journey*. [online] The Buddha Journey.

⁵Ferose, V.R. (2020). *SAP BrandVoice: 5 Ways To Design Our Lives For Impermanence*. [online] Forbes.

⁶Wangmo, Dr.K. (2011). *Middle Path and Universal responsibility – A Buddhist perspective*. *The Tibet Journal*, [online] 36(4), pp.3–17.

Buddha, “There is a middle way between the extremes of indulgence and self-denial, free from sorrow and suffering. This is the way to peace and liberation in this very life.”⁷ We are not free if we solely indulge in our desires in order to be happy. We cannot be free if we battle within ourselves and reject the external world. The middle path ultimately helps us achieve freedom. This is a universal truth discovered by all those who awaken.⁸

Furthermore, Buddhism emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and encourages the development of compassion and empathy. By cultivating loving-kindness and showing genuine concern and compassion for others, one can contribute to the well-being of oneself and society as a whole.⁹ It is expressed in Buddhism as “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.”¹⁰ Compassion is not a struggle or a sacrifice, according to Buddhist psychology. Compassion is innate and instinctive throughout our body. By meditating, we gradually expand our consciousness to include compassion for all living things as if they were part of ourselves. We discover that compassion can be reawakened regardless of whether it has been suppressed due to fear and suffering.¹¹ Much like this, great importance is placed on mindfulness and present-moment awareness. By being fully present and attentive, one can experience life more deeply and appreciate its inherent beauty. This practice helps to overcome distractions, regrets about the past, and anxieties about the future.¹² Buddhist psychology places a strong emphasis on exploring and understanding the nature of the self, and many benefits of Buddhist

⁷Waley, A. and Waley, A. (2013). *The Real Tripitaka*. Routledge.

⁸Kornfield, J. (2009). *The Wise Heart : a Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology*. New York: Bantam Books.

⁹Ekman, P., Davidson, R.J., Ricard, M. and Wallace, B.A. (2005). *Buddhist and Psychological Perspectives on Emotions and Well-Being*. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, [online] 14(2), pp.59–63.

¹⁰Waley, A. and Waley, A. (2013). *The Real Tripitaka*. Routledge.

¹¹Kornfield, J. (2009). *The Wise Heart : a Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology*. New York: Bantam Books.

¹²Lomas, T. (2017). *Recontextualizing mindfulness: Theravada Buddhist Perspectives on the Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of awareness*. [online] psycnet.apa.org.

psychology-based meditation have been proven by academics who are interested in self-processes.¹³

In Buddhism, leading a satisfying and fulfilled life entails aligning one's actions, thoughts, and intentions according to these principles. It necessitates self-reflection, self-control, and a dedication to personal growth. By following the Noble Eightfold Path, which includes ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom, individuals can gradually cultivate a deeper sense of fulfilment and find lasting peace. Many of the Buddhist points focus on mental overcoming which only acts as a distraction instead of a solution to the suffering felt in everyday life. Similarly Nietzsche's solution serves as a psychological trick in order to make one feel better about themselves.

Nietzsche's Perspective:

Nietzsche's view on how to live can be understood through his philosophy of life affirmation, self-overcoming, and the pursuit of individual greatness. He believed in embracing life's challenges and asserting one's own values and desires, rather than conforming to societal or religious norms. These key aspects are vital to living a meaningful and fulfilling life, serving as guidelines on how to live. Nietzsche rejected the notion of renouncing life or seeking escape from its difficulties. Instead, he advocated for embracing life in its entirety, including its struggles and hardships. He saw life's challenges as opportunities for growth and self-realisation.¹⁴ Every time one makes an affirmation (a "Bejahung"), which is the most

¹³Gallagher, S. and Shear, J. (1999). *Models of the Self*. [online] Google Books. Imprint Academic.

¹⁴Stern, T. (2019). Nietzsche's Ethics of Affirmation*. *The New Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, [online] 14, pp.351–373.

fundamental statement of willing and of life, this value becomes explicit. This links to the idea of eternal recurrence in which we are stuck in a time loop. This relates to his idea of self-overcoming and self value which aligns with the Buddhist ideology of renouncing yourself as we are stuck in eternal recurrence.

Continuing this, Nietzsche introduced the concept of the "will to power," which refers to the fundamental drive underlying all human actions. He believed that individuals should harness their inner strength and exercise their power to shape their own lives according to their own values and aspirations. It is best described as an irrational authority that exists in every person and can be directed in a variety of directions. According to Nietzsche, we exercise control over other people when we assist or harm them. When we hurt them, we provide them with an arrogant sense of our power. He argues that the best way to feel powerful is through making someone feel indebted to us. The result of this not only increases our power, incentivising others to be on our side. Nietzsche argues that inflicting pain is typically more unpleasant than extending compassion, suggesting that being cruel is a sign of impotence as it is the inferior course of action.¹⁵ This driving psychological idea helps us gain influence over others and the world, leading to a more fulfilling life.

Following this, Nietzsche's idea of overcoming principle encourages individuals to engage in constant self-reflection and self-improvement. He believed in the idea of "becoming who you are" by challenging one's limitations, overcoming weaknesses, and striving for personal excellence. He argues that we must face reality, and that suffering is part of life. It is not to be eliminated, but to be overcome and challenged, ultimately leading to growth. Struggle with

¹⁵Westacott, E. (2019). *Nietzsche's Concept of the Will to Power*. [online] ThoughtCo.

oneself is a necessity in order to transcend one's limitations (physical and mental) and move toward more sophisticated modes of action and expression.¹⁶

Nietzsche criticised conventional moral frameworks and argued for a reevaluation of traditional values. He believed that individuals should go beyond the dichotomy of good and evil imposed by society and instead develop their own moral compass based on their unique perspective and individual desires. He argued that they are only concepts, designed as a form of control to institute moral laws and maintain social order. Nietzsche suggests that the strongest people are marked by a cruelty to themselves, ruthlessly exposing every bias and presumption in order to delve deeper into themselves.¹⁷

According to Nietzsche, we should celebrate exceptional individuals, whom he called "the Übermensch" or "Overman." He believed in the potential for extraordinary individuals to transcend societal limitations, break free from herd mentality, and create their own values and meaning in life. There are two relevant features of greatness, one's character - or their internal conditions, and what someone achieves in their life - their external conditions.¹⁸ However, this could be misused to support ideologies like Nazism, as the Nazis co-opted this term to promote their own racial and supremacist ideas.

Nietzsche's view on how to live revolves around embracing life's challenges, asserting individual values, pursuing self-overcoming, and striving for greatness on an individual level. Similar to Buddhism, he believed that these values and expectations would help society improve, and all individuals lead better and more fulfilling lives.

LOOK AT THIS AGAIN PLEASE!!

¹⁶Mitchell, J. (2016). Nietzschean Self-Overcoming. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 47(3), p.323.

¹⁷Nietzsche, F.W. (2018). *Beyond Good and Evil*. Penguin Books.

¹⁸Hassan, P. (2016). Nietzsche on Human Greatness. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 51(2), pp.293–310.

A Comparison:

Nietzsche and Buddhism have different perspectives on Suffering and Existence. Nietzsche imagines suffering to be an integral part of human existence, a necessity for human growth and self-realisation. He argues that life ultimately holds no meaning, but our ability to endure and overcome this struggle helps build our character and harness our inner strength through our 'will to power'. Many would argue that Nietzsche's view on life is bleak and miserable, that he ignores the benefits of human life, only focussing on the negatives. On the other hand, one could argue that he provides a realistic outlook on our lives. Although he does not cover suffering extensively, he provides a solid base for his theory. Nietzsche completely rejects the religious ideas that suffering has a higher purpose, famously proclaiming "God is Dead and we have killed Him", challenging the belief in a divine order above us. In turn this criticises the concept that suffering and pain result in redemption or reward, instead arguing that this belief only causes harm. His view on suffering isn't entirely negative, claiming that to suffer is to be human, and it is a part of the human experience, and an opportunity to build strength, resilience and wisdom. One should not be attempting to transcend or escape suffering, but accept it, learning to live and embrace it.

This philosophy is closely linked to Nietzsche's concept of 'will to power', where he says that humans have a fundamental drive to assert desires, aspirations and values. The constant process of challenging oneself and pushing past limitations would not be possible without suffering, as this is a key factor in striving to be better. Without pain, confronting fears, weaknesses and limitations would become redundant. Nietzsche was a big advocate for individualism, and one's right to exercise their power to shape their own lives in the face of suffering.¹⁹

¹⁹ Hassan, P. (2016b). *Nietzsche on the Value of Suffering Nietzsche on the Value of Suffering*. [online]

However, there are some drawbacks of Nietzsche's perspective on suffering. For example, some may argue that his focus on individual power overlooks the systematic causes of suffering, suggesting that suffering is an individual experience, unrelated to social, political and economic factors. Emphasising an individual's 'will to power' does not account for other contributing factors, ignoring conditions that may perpetuate suffering in groups, communities and individuals. His philosophy does not adequately account for collective suffering, only focusing on individual power and not acknowledging external factors.²⁰ While his perspective offers valuable insight into overcoming personal struggles, he does not provide a comprehensive understanding of suffering outside of oneself.²¹ Furthering this, Nietzsche's positive outlook on suffering, negates the profound nature of certain forms of suffering. Certain forms of suffering are so extreme that they cannot easily lead to personal development and many critics argue that Nietzsche is too shallow when looking at suffering. Martha Nussbaum whose main focus is suffering in ethics and human capabilities argues that Nietzsche overlooks the reality of suffering, and ignores that sometimes compassion and support is needed from a community instead of individual struggle. Nussbaum suggests that his neglect of empathy and a collective responsibility to help them, emphasising the importance of recognising the complexity and diversity of suffering. While Nietzsche offers a valuable perspective in certain contexts, it is not a universal maxim that is applicable to every situation.²²

Much like Nietzsche, the Buddhist perspective on human suffering (*dukkha*) is an inherent part of human existence, but Buddhism provides a more extensive and comprehensive framework for

²⁰ Panaïoti, A. (2012). *Nietzsche and Buddhist Philosophy*. [online] Cambridge University Press.

²¹ May (eds.), K.G., Simon (2011). *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. [online] Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews.

²² Bjorn Wee, G. (2009). *Nietzsche: Morality and Politics*. [online]

understanding. The Four Noble Truths are a quintessential part of Buddhism, providing an explanation and answer for suffering. The First Noble Truth acknowledges the reality of suffering and all its forms, which is something Nietzsche fails to do. Buddhism does not deny the existence of suffering, but emphasises the need to understand it and its causes. This leads to The Second Noble Truth which explores the causation of suffering, identifying that attachment and ignorance are the root sources. Unlike Nietzsche, Buddhism teaches that suffering can be avoided by removing all attachments and the desire to cling to temporary objects. The Third Noble Truth teaches that when you let go of mental attachments, suffering and pain are lifted and one can reach a state of freedom, but to be truly liberated, one must follow the Eightfold Path which is outlined in The Fourth Noble Truth. This is a practical guide which helps Buddhists understand how to cultivate ethical conduct, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. The constant emphasis of impermanence that Buddhism preaches, helps its practitioners recognise the ephemeral nature of all things in this life. By letting go of fleeting objects, Buddhists are able to recognise that pleasure and pain are also temporary and that oneself is not fixed either.²³

The Buddhist view may seem problematic when looking at it from Nietzsche's perspective as he places extreme importance on the affirmation of life and pursuit of power, which contrasts to a Buddhist idea of non attachment and compassion. Nietzsche may criticise this as he believed that a crucial aspect of human life is asserting desires and 'will to power' and Buddhism is a direct contradiction of this as Buddhists would detach from power, hindering themselves from reaching self-actualisation and living a fulfilling life. Furthermore, Nietzsche celebrates the individual potential to embrace life's challenges and strive for greatness and personal excellence, but Buddhism strives for an end to suffering through ignoring individual temptations and

²³ BBC. (2012). *The Four Noble Truths in detail - Life and teachings of the Buddha - Edexcel - GCSE Religious Studies Revision - Edexcel*. [online] BBC Bitesize.

attachments. The Buddhist's philosophy does not align with Nietzsche's emphasis on breaking traditional values and principles. Nietzsche celebrates personal greatness and growth, whereas Buddhism focuses on removing oneself from attachments and temporary objects, making these two philosophies incompatible in terms of living a meaningful life through the aspect of suffering.²⁴

Nietzsche's perspective on individualism and interconnectedness can be interpreted as very complex, challenging traditional notions. Nietzsche valued the pursuit of self-realisation, personal greatness, and creativity, emphasising the importance of Will to Power.²⁵ He also acknowledged the influence of social and cultural forces on shaping individuals and acknowledged the interconnected nature of human existence. He celebrates the uniqueness and potential of the individual, highlighting the importance of embracing one's desires and passions. Instead of conforming to societal expectations, Nietzsche argued that societal norms and values could restrict the full expression of individual potential and authenticity. The concept of "Übermensch" is tied closely to individualism.²⁶ The "Übermensch" represents the ideal human who has overcome societal constraints and found their own values and desires. The individual not only strives for personal greatness, but lives according to their own moral code. Nietzsche critiqued the herd mentality that often runs a society, and argued that the social and cultural influences on individuals suppressed potential, saying that those shaped by their cultural contexts limit the development of individuality. Nietzsche's idea of "eternal recurrence",²⁷ references the idea that all events in the universe recur infinitely, implying that every choice affects millions of

²⁴ Schacht, R. (1995). *Making Sense of Nietzsche : Reflections Timely and Untimely*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

²⁵ Nehamas, A. (2002). *Nietzsche : Life as Literature*. Cambridge (Ma) ; London: Harvard University Press, , Cop.

²⁶ Higgins, K and Magnus, B. (2007). *The Cambridge companion to Nietzsche*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁷ Robshaw, B. (2020). *Eternal Recurrence Revisited | Issue 137 | Philosophy Now*. [online]

other choices across our interconnected existence. It suggests that individuals are not as isolated as Nietzsche originally assumed, and instead are part of a larger community where everyone has to take care of each other.²⁸ Nietzsche's emphasis on individualism can be interpreted as a reaction to the constraints of societal norms and traditional moral views, his philosophy rebelling against the prescribed teachings of society. Critics will continue to argue that his sole focus on individualism ignores the collective existence of humans and their morality and spirituality that guides them through everyday life. Unlike the Buddhist way of living, Nietzsche's apparent disregard for the wellbeing of others could result in the downfall of a connected humanity.²⁹ Buddhism however places a strong emphasis on everyone being interconnected, challenging individualism and selfish desires, focussing on collective achievements in hopes of cultivating a society filled with compassion and wisdom. The celebration of personal greatness would be interpreted as the succession of egocentric attachments which is what a good Buddhist would avoid. Nietzsche's focus on personal power would be a direct contradiction to Buddhism, as instead of celebrating a community's achievements, it instead reinforces a cycle of suffering by holding onto personal attachments. However, Nietzsche and Buddhism both critique social conformity and traditional values, Buddhism challenging blind adherence to societal norms, encouraging critical thinking and wisdom in an attempt to transcend the illusion of a fixed self.³⁰ Recognition of interconnectedness is one of the core teachings of Buddhism, attempting to offer a solution to suffering and highlighting that all actions have consequences, affecting the individual and the collective. While this promotes compassion and a sense of responsibility for the wider community, Nietzsche disregards the importance of interconnectedness, neglecting the

²⁸ Sedgwick, P.R. (1995). *Nietzsche: a Critical Reader*. Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.

²⁹ Nabais, N. (2001). *The Individual and Individuality in Nietzsche* NUNO NABAIS. [online]

³⁰ Kornfield, J. (2009). *The Wise Heart: a Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology*. New York: Bantam Books.

ethical implications of decisions and their outcomes. Furthering this, the “Übermensch” contrasts with the Buddhist ideals where one can transcend selfish desires and attachments, stimulating the practice of altruistic actions. Nietzsche and Buddhism are incompatible when discussing interconnectedness and individualism. Nietzsche’s idea of will to power generally contradicts many of the central teachings of Buddhism, causing a problematic relationship between the two. Buddhists would interpret Nietzsche’s philosophy as greatly problematic when being compared to their own teachings, differing significantly from the Buddhist ideology of selflessness and community.³¹

In addition to this, Nietzsche’s perspective on means of transformation is characterised by his focus on will to power and the pursuit of personal greatness. According to his philosophy, these are both vital to living a meaningful and satisfying life. He proposed several ideas on how an individual could undergo the transformative process, emphasising the importance of personal willpower, the pursuit of self discipline, self reflection, and the power of art. He frequently promoted the need for desires and passions in order to transcend the barriers placed by society, instructing individuals to strive for personal greatness. Individual willpower is a key attribute when attempting to rise above predetermined constraints. He argues that conventional moral and social norms limit potential, and the only way to live a meaningful life is to break these barriers. He follows this by directing people to become masters of themselves, mastering discipline and control. He viewed discipline as an essential skill all individuals should possess so they can exercise control over their impulses and instincts, ultimately allowing them to govern their potential and direct it towards creative outputs. By exercising self control, one can achieve self

³¹ Panaïoti, A. (2012). *Nietzsche and Buddhist Philosophy*. [online] Cambridge University Press.

mastery and grow beyond their limits, elevating their existence. Following this, he placed a lot of importance on art, culture and aestheticism.³² Nietzsche believed that engaging with art allowed individuals to transcend their ordinary existence, accessing higher realms of beauty and meaning, allowing the individual to interpret art as a transformative force that can expand perspectives, inspire personal growth and challenge conventional views.³³ Furthermore, critical analysis of the self only helps to broaden the individual's mindset, and help justify personal beliefs. He argued that everyone should challenge preconceived notions and ideas in order to fully live a meaningful and fulfilling life. Scepticism is essential when striving for personal growth and development, but Nietzsche has been accused of being too narrow minded when discussing the collective community.

There are many limitations to his approach, especially when evaluated from a Buddhist perspective. The emphasis of transformation through assertion of desires and ego-driven attachments directly contrasts to the Buddhist core values.³⁴ Instead of compassion and wisdom, Nietzsche chooses to lead with personal greatness. In Buddhism, transformation is generally centred around the realisation of the true nature of reality, insight and the recognition of impermanence. This path emphasises mindfulness, meditation and compassion as the best ways to reach enlightenment and live a fulfilling life. Aiming to liberate individuals from suffering and connect them with a community who can support them is the main focus of Buddhism when discussing what it means to live a meaningful life.³⁵ Nietzsche's focus on the "Übermensch" is seen as a perpetuation of mental attachments and power, only allowing an individual to lead a meaningful life, instead of helping the collective reach this goal. Buddhism teaches that

³² Gallagher, S. and Shear, J. (1999). *Models of the Self*. [online] Google Books. Imprint Academic.

³³ Panaïoti, A. (2012). *Nietzsche and Buddhist Philosophy*. [online] Cambridge University Press.

³⁴ Carus, P. (2018). *The Philosophy of Buddhism*. [online] www.jstor.org.

³⁵ Panaïoti, A. (2012). *Nietzsche and Buddhist Philosophy*. [online] Cambridge University Press.

attachments are only damaging, and that only by alleviating yourself from them, can you truly end suffering, and begin to live a good life. These root beliefs are once again, incompatible with Nietzsche's philosophy, with Nietzsche ignoring the state of interconnectedness one needs to truly be limitless. The two theories are aligned when it comes to self-reflection and critical analysis of one's self, their methods of reaching a meaningful life are wildly different.

Finally, Nietzsche holds self overcoming as a vital step in leading a meaningful life. This is closely linked to his idea of transcending societal boundaries and transforming from just an individual to the "Übermensch". According to Nietzsche, individuals possess the ability to surpass their limitations in order to reach their full potential.³⁶ He criticised the moral constraints imposed by traditional values and predetermined morals, advocating for individuals to create their own values and live according to their unique perspective. Through self overcoming, individuals can liberate themselves and act according to their most authentic self.³⁷ By affirming personal desires and passion, individuals can assert their power, breaking the barriers that were blocking them previously, realising true greatness and what it means to live a fulfilling life. However, Nietzsche's perspective has limitations, especially when compared to Buddhism and his potential disregard for the wellbeing and rights of others. He neglects the importance of compassion, especially when it concerns the interconnectedness of humanity.³⁸ While Nietzsche feeds into the delusions of the individual, Buddhism takes a more realistic approach when it comes to asserting personal power and desires. Instead of emphasising the importance of will to power, Buddhism teaches the importance of overcoming the inherent self centred ego and

³⁶ Morrison, R. *Nietzsche and Buddhism: A Study in Nihilism and Ironic Affinities*. 1997.

³⁷ Ridley, A. *The Deed Is Everything: Nietzsche on Will and Action*. 2018.

³⁸ Gemes, K, May, S. *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 2011.

selfishness. Nietzsche wants us to understand the value of personal growth, and the pursuit of personal desires, especially if they will help transform one's life from meaningless to fulfilling. When evaluating from a Buddhist perspective, it becomes evident that Nietzsche's notion of an individual's willpower being the most important part of self overcoming, suggesting that individuals should embrace their desires and harness their will to achieve their full potential, does not align with the Buddhist philosophy.³⁹ Their concept of self overcoming is more closely aligned with the liberation from suffering and the transcendence of the self. In order to truly overcome suffering, you must recognise that all objects are impermanent and that having meaningless attachments will only deter you from reaching enlightenment. Practising mindfulness, meditation and acting with empathy will help the mind develop an insight into the true nature of reality, and nurture the growth that an individual will undergo. Their two different perspectives vary drastically, ultimately making the philosophies incompatible. Additionally, Nietzsche's perspective on overcoming may overlook the profound insights offered by the Buddhist understanding of emptiness and non-self. Buddhism teaches that the self is not an inherent, fixed entity but a fluid and ever-changing process.⁴⁰

Conclusion

To conclude, when comparing Buddhism and Nietzsche, it is evident that Buddhism offers a more comprehensible and balanced approach, aligning with the laws and many moral principles held today. Through the cultivation of wisdom, a meaningful life can be reached and lived in an interconnected state. The recognition of impermanence is a vital part of the Buddhist religion, highlighting that mental attachments can only be detrimental to growth and enlightenment.

³⁹ Van der Braak, A. *Nietzsche and Zen: Self-Overcoming Without a Self*. 2011.

⁴⁰ Panaïoti, A. (2012). *Nietzsche and Buddhist Philosophy*. [online] Cambridge University Press.

While Nietzsche values personal greatness, Buddhism looks out for the community as a whole, prioritising compassion and understanding above all else. This creates a harmonious natural world where the collective work together to reach enlightenment and live a truly meaningful life. Nietzsche does have some good ideas, but his perspective does not include enough about the success of a community to be a reliable guide. The holistic framework offered by Buddhism prompts individuals to be compassionate and kind, helping them towards their goal of a meaningful and fulfilling life. Conclusively, Buddhism provides a path that will transform individuals into a collective, sharing a sense of purpose, contentment and interconnectedness, ultimately guiding them to live the most fulfilling and satisfying life.

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