

Opening Post On Distinguishing Epicurean Philosophy from Buddhism

Post by "Cassius" of December 17, 2018 at 5:55 PM

I am no expert on Buddhism, but it is my understanding from my own reading, as bolstered from statements of people I respect, that (borrowing from a friend) throughout all the schools [of Buddhism] runs a thread that teaches that our existence is characterized by suffering, and that self-denial and intense meditation is required to reach a state of equanimity that is beyond suffering. As such, I have always seen Buddhism, like Stoicism, as at root all about the suppression of desire (which surely includes pleasure) and therefore totally incompatible with Epicurean philosophy.

However when in the face of generalizations like that I get:

"You don't know what XXX said in the year YYYY!" And of course there are hundreds of XXXs and dozens of YYYY's so the implication is we can't get a fair assessment of Buddhism til we have studied all of them.

Further, I get:

"Well that may be the position of the 100 million Buddhists in India, by there is Guru XXX in YYYY who had a couple of dozen followers but he was exactly like Epicurus - so don't judge Buddhism by those 100 million!"

And last but not least for this into post, I get: "But Epicurus is all about "freedom from pain" as the goal of life! That's exactly what Buddhism teaches! "

And I have to just sigh and start over with them on what Epicurus really wrote about pleasure.

That's just a sample. The purpose of this thread and subforum is to collect material that will help us all better distinguish Epicurean philosophy from Buddhism.

I do ask this: Please try to avoid the above dismissals and let's attempt to **fairly** generalize, so that people can read this thread and subforum and be educated about the high-level situation, and not the details which are clearly exceptions to the general rule.

Also: [The Facebook thread that originated this topic.](#)