

# 2022 Epicurus vs Buddhism Compare and Contrast Thread

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 27, 2022 at 10:02 PM

Of the ancient Indian philosophies of **Ājīvika**, **Ajñana**, **Buddhism**, **Chārvāka**, **Jainism**, **Mīmāṃsā**, **Nyāya**, **Samkhya**, **Vaisheshika**, **Vedanta**, and **Yoga**, we'll find the closest companion to Epicureanism in **Chārvāka**. Early Buddhism is most closely related to the Indian school of **Ajñana**, from which Pyrrhonism developed, so, in general, I don't think that comparisons between early Buddhism and Epicurean philosophy are helpful. They are dissimilar and historically unrelated.

In terms of physics, Epicureanism shares the atomism of **Ājīvika** and **Vaisheshika** (though, both traditions propose a deterministic physics) as well as the materialism of **Chārvāka**.

It uniquely shares the ethics of **Chārvāka**, whereas every other tradition devalues hedonism.

We find the most similarity between Epicurean epistemology and **Chārvāka**, which justifies the criterion of direct physical and mental perceptions, without inference, comparison, or speculation. It is most dissimilar from **Ajñana**, which rejects all criteria of knowledge, followed closely thereafter by early **Buddhism**, which avoids making any certain claims.

Epicurean theology is comparatively unique. Epicurus would have been opposed to the atheism of **Ājīvika**, **Chārvāka**, **Nyāya**, and **Vaisheshika**, as well as the agnosticism of **Ajñana** and Buddhism, as well as the immanent dualism and mysticism of **Samkhya** and **Yoga**, and also the divine idealism of **Mīmāṃsā** and **Vedanta**. The Jain universe of multiple, physical deities (the Tirthankaras), is the closest ancient Indian theology that in any way resembles Epicureanism. There is not, to my knowledge, any significant historical link between the two at any point in time.

As far as ancient Indian philosophies go, early Buddhism overwhelmingly contradicts Epicurean philosophy. They are at the opposite ends of the epistemological spectrum, propose completely different goals in life, and are only barely physically compatible if, for no other reason than early Buddhism's refusal to provide *any* hard answers on physics.

Whereas Epicureanism is most similar to **Chārvāka** and, to an extent **Ājīvika** and **Vaisheshika**, early Buddhism shares intellectual similarities with **Ajñana** and Pyrrhonian Skepticism, and the meditative practices with **Vedanta** and **Yoga**. Buddhism's propositions are much closer to Epicurus' opponents than to Epicurus in any meaningful way.