

Welcome BoyH0wdy!

Post by “Cassius” of December 3, 2021 at 4:34 PM

Welcome [Scott](#)

This is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards / Rules of the Forum](#) our [Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean](#) and our [Posting Policy statements](#) and [associated posts](#).

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match some Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from other viewpoints, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit by our community of happy living through the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be most assured of your time here being productive is to tell us a little about yourself and personal your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you have which would help us make sure that your questions and thoughts are addressed.

In that regard we have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

1. ["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt
2. [The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius](#). This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).

3. ["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature")
4. ["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)
5. The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)
6. [Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)
7. [Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)
8. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)
9. [A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)
10. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermetimus](#)
11. [Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)
12. "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially the [section on katastematic and kinetic pleasure](#) which explains why ultimately this distinction was not of great significance to Epicurus.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's ***Epicurus And His Philosophy.***

Welcome to the forum!

Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left," "right," or "center." The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

Post by "Charles" of December 3, 2021 at 9:37 PM

Welcome!

Post by “Scott” of December 4, 2021 at 12:31 AM

Thank you, Cassius, and Charles! I'm looking forward to learning more from the materials listed above, and from the other members. I am a newcomer to Epicureanism. Call me an Epinoob - cause I've only read Dewitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy", the Wikipedia article on Epicurus, and a few related tidbits. BUT... I'm verrrry interested! Short story on me is I have a long relationship with Asian religion, and Buddhism specifically I have studied and practiced for over 40 years. I started with Zen in the late 70s. During the 80s I took 2 years of undergrad study in Philosophy. I discovered Tibetan Buddhism around 15 years ago and dove into that with zeal. Along came Stephen Batchelor and Secular Buddhism just a few years back which helped me with my ever increasing dissatisfaction with the modern reworkings of all the Buddhist mystical magical stuff like karma and rebirth, etc. I heard a Batchelor talk about some of the similarities between Hellenistic philosophy and early Buddhism and I started reading (rereading some) Stoics and other Greek philosophers. Somehow I managed to not gloss over Epicurus this time, as I had done in the past. In short order I was fascinated with him. And now... here I am. 😊

Post by “Martin” of December 4, 2021 at 6:01 AM

Welcome boyh0wdy!

Post by “Don” of December 4, 2021 at 6:21 AM

Welcome [Scott](#)

I like Epinoob* 😊 You've coined a good one there!

You'll find a number of us came to Epicurus's Garden through a similar path as yours via Buddhism and the Stoics. I look forward to your taking part in the discussions!

Check out the podcast to "eavesdrop" on some lively, thought-provoking conversations.

*I couldn't resist coming back in here and giving Epinoob an ancient Greek twist:

Singular Επινοῦβος (Epinoubos), plural Επινοῦβοι (Epinouboi). 😊

The closest real ancient Greek word is ἐπινοια̂ "power of thought, imagination, inventiveness"

That's fun!

Post by "Cassius" of December 4, 2021 at 6:28 AM

Glad to have you BoyH0wdy.

I have lost track of the number of people here who have gone down the Buddhist road, so that is definitely common. So many, in fact, that we probably ought to have a special "How to discuss your Buddhist background on EpicureanFriends" post. 😊

Such a post would probably include something like:

A steady stream of "Epicurus' idea of XXX is a lot like Buddhist ideas of YYY" posts isn't particularly helpful to the goal of the group, since our frank purpose here isn't to display our ability to be eclectic, but to focus on Epicurus with more of a "contrast" than "compare" mindset. But just as discussion of "Epicurus differs from Stoicism in XXX way" is a common and helpful theme here, so posts which discuss "Epicurus differs from Buddhism in XXX way" is also very helpful.

The main reason you don't see those posts from me is that I have no Buddhist background and therefore no strength in writing them, but you'll see a good number of those and if you have similar thoughts please add to the list.

But anyway that is hardly our focus. It's much more interesting to hear general comments from people as they read through Epicurus for the first time, and I think the ability for new people to discuss those reactions with other people who have a greater depth of background is one of the real strengths of our group.

Looking forward to hearing more from you.

Post by “Scott” of December 4, 2021 at 10:44 AM

Cassius, I *totally* agree on bringing up Buddhism and other philosophy in here *only* when and as needed in order to clarify ideas or questions about Epicureanism. I'm certainly not planning on dragging in all my personal baggage just so everyone can wade through it. My plan in fact will be to not say much *at all* in here at first, but instead focus on digesting the content in this site and significant items referenced from this site, giving reasonable diligence to learning what I can from that existing material before firing off questions or thoughts! I want to avoid unhelpful duplication of concepts already clarified in the discussions and provided documents. This site has a clear focus and I like that. Now I must get busy reading! 😊

Post by “Godfrey” of December 4, 2021 at 11:45 AM

Welcome boyh0wdy!

I'm curious as to what Stephen Bachelor has to say about Buddhism and Hellenistic philosophy. My limited understanding is that there was cross fertilization between Greek and Indian ideas. I thought, though, that that was quite controversial from the Buddhist perspective.

There doesn't seem to be much scholarship on the subject. To me it's a fertile area, though not so much for the similarities. Epicurus successfully developed and enriched ideas from certain of his predecessors. Knowing how these predecessors interacted with Buddhism could be fruitful for appreciating how Epicurus evolved particular dogmas.

The danger from a Greek point of view, as pointed out in previous posts, is that it's very easy to read similar ideas into different philosophies and leave it at that, without appreciating the nuance and development involved.

Anyway, that's my long winded way of saying howdy boyh0wdy!

Post by “Cassius” of December 4, 2021 at 12:30 PM

[Quote from boyh0wdy!](#)

Cassius, I totally agree on bringing up Buddhism and other philosophy

Thank you for understanding that my comments were not intended to be harsh. As usual several hours after I wrote that I started thinking - "Boy I bet he thinks I am a jerk....." 😊

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

The danger from a Greek point of view, as pointed out in previous posts, is that it's very easy to read similar ideas into different philosophies and leave it at that, without appreciating the nuance and development involved.

And yes Godfrey's comment is pretty much the reason for my attitude, and it comes from years of seeing that be the chain of conversation over at Facebook. Here I think we're in a different environment where we can and should be much more clear about the purpose of the website, and I think we therefore have much less chance of problems developing. It pretty goes without without saying (since I try to hit it with the subtlety of a sledgehammer) that this site is devoted to the "promotion" Epicurean philosophy, and not just to abstract discussion of it. Of course as part of that we want new people who are open-minded and who are at the beginning stages of thinking through the issues, so constantly going back over the fundamentals and finding new ways to convey those is a very important part of the site that we'll always be doing in one form or another. And probably the best ways to do that involve exactly what we're discussing now - taking aspects of two very different things that appear similar at first glance, but then digging in to the details to see how they arose (in most cases) from very different presumptions, and in that context determining exactly what can continue to be engaged in and what needs to be left behind.

Post by “Marco” of December 4, 2021 at 2:30 PM

Welcome boyh0wdy!.


Post by “Kalosyni” of December 9, 2021 at 11:21 PM

Welcome!

I also came out of Buddhism. There are a few things that I continue to hold onto from my past Buddhist practices, and other things that I've let go.

Good luck in your Epicurean studies!

Post by “Scott” of December 28, 2021 at 1:04 AM

 FYI to all - I had my name "wrong" in this forum. I had the first part of my email address being my moniker when I signed up. Cassius helped me get that fixed. Scott is my actual name.

Post by “Don” of December 28, 2021 at 7:52 AM

Welcome, [Scott](#) !